

**Committee for Education**

# Report on the Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education Volume 1

Together with the Minutes of Proceedings, Minutes of Evidence  
and Written Submissions Relating to the Report

Ordered by the Committee for Education to be printed 1 July 2015

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COMMENCEMENT OF THE DEBATE IN PLENARY**



# Powers and Membership

## Powers

The Committee for Education is a Statutory Departmental Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Standing Order 48 of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Committee has power to:

- Consider and advise on Departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- Consider relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee stage of primary legislation;
- Call for persons and papers;
- Initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- Consider and advise on any matters brought to the Committee by the Minister of Education.

## Membership

The Committee has 11 members including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and a quorum of 5. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

Peter Weir (Chairperson) <sup>2,6</sup>

Sandra Overend (Deputy Chairperson) <sup>7</sup>

Maeve McLaughlin

Jonathan Craig

Ross Hussey <sup>1,8</sup>

Nelson McCausland <sup>3</sup>

Chris Hazzard

Trevor Lunn

Robin Newton

Pat Sheehan

Sean Rogers <sup>4,5</sup>

1 With effect from 04 July 2014 Mrs Sandra Overend replaced Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson  
 2 With effect from 23 September 2014 Ms Michelle McIlveen replaced Mr Mervyn Storey as Chairperson  
 3 With effect from 06 October 2014 Mr Nelson McCausland replaced Mr Stephen Moutray  
 4 With effect from 17 November 2014 Mr Colum Eastwood replaced Mr Seán Rogers  
 5 With effect from 08 December 2014 Mr Sean Rogers replaced Mr Colum Eastwood  
 6 With effect from 11 May 2015 Mr Peter Weir replaced Miss Michelle McIlveen as Chairperson  
 7 With effect from 15 June 2015 Mrs Sandra Overend replaced Mr Danny Kinahan as Deputy Chairperson  
 8 With effect from 23 June 2015 Mr Ross Hussey replaced Mrs Sandra Overend



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# Executive Summary

Following consideration of a wide range of policy initiatives and proposals in respect of Shared Education and as a consequence of its review of Area Planning in which widely varying views on the demand for and treatment of Integrated Education were recorded, the Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The Committee's scrutiny was informed by: numerous written and oral submissions; school visits; informal meetings and evidence events. With Assembly Education Services and Assembly Research Services, the Committee also undertook focus group studies with school children from across Northern Ireland in order to determine attitudes to, and experience of Shared and Integrated Education.

The Committee was greatly impressed by examples of sharing and co-operation in many schools in different sectors and phases across Northern Ireland. The Committee agreed that in order to widen participation there should be a statutory obligation on the Department and its Arms Length Bodies, in line with recent legislation in respect of the Education Authority, to encourage the participation of all schools in Shared Education. The Committee felt that Shared Education was best defined as a whole school educational improvement activity which could take place across all educational phases. The Committee believed that the societal objectives, though secondary to the educational objectives, were important and should extend beyond the reconciliation of the 2 largest communities in Northern Ireland in order to incorporate all relevant Section 75 groups.

The Committee felt that in order to better support Shared Education, the Department should study and disseminate the inclusive and welcoming ethos of successful Integrated; non-Integrated and Special Schools as well pre-school settings and nursery schools across Northern Ireland. The Committee also felt that in order to boost the confident participation of all schools in Shared Education, the Department should provide a programme of support for teachers and wider school communities.

Given the anticipated substantial financial investment in Shared Education, the Committee supported the development and publication of objective impact measures based on both educational and societal progress.

The Committee also supported a flexible approach to the inclusion of single schools in Shared Education programmes where these benefit the wider community and the adoption of shared management or other innovative Shared Education arrangements in rural areas where these are cost effective.

Given the relatively limited uptake of Integrated Education and the very different views expressed by sectoral bodies in respect of its facilitation, encouragement and definition, the Committee agreed that the Department should undertake a strategic review of its approach and relevant actions to-date relating to Integrated Education.

The Committee also felt that the Department should consider the promotion of so-called natural mixing of children from different backgrounds in non-Integrated schools. In order to support further natural mixing in schools, the Committee supported consideration of a revision to the Home to School Transport policy in order to support attendance at Jointly Managed Church schools.

## Recommendations

- 1. The Committee recommends that the statutory obligation to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education – as set out in the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - should be extended to the Department and all of its relevant Arms Length Bodies. The Committee further recommends that the obligation should include the consideration of the incentivisation of participation by all schools in Shared Education.**
- 2. The Committee recommends that Shared Education be defined as curriculum-based interactions that always foreground educational improvement and involve children and young people in sustained whole school/organisation activities across all educational phases while making optimal use of existing IT infrastructure.**
- 3. Further to Recommendation #2, the Committee recommends that Shared Education should be defined as promoting attitudinal improvement and meaningful contact involving children and young people from all relevant Section 75 groups in line with the objectives of the CRED policy.**
- 4. The Committee recommends that the Department should do more to disseminate the good practice in Integrated, other mixed non-Integrated and Special Schools as well as pre-school settings and nursery schools in respect of the development of an inclusive ethos in order to promote Shared Education more widely.**
- 5. The Committee recommends that the Department should work with the Education Authority to provide consistent support for Shared Education collaborations with a tailored programme of training and guidance for teachers, parents, children and communities so as ensure the appropriate recognition and celebration of cultural differences and thus the confident participation by all schools.**
- 6. The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to a wide range of agreed, objective impact measures for Shared Education based on educational improvement in the first instance and societal reconciliation progress in the second. The Committee further recommends that information in respect of the educational and societal impact of Shared Education should be published regularly by the Department.**
- 7. The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to the inclusion of individual schools or educational providers in Shared Education programmes where this can be shown to lead to educational and societal benefit for the wider community and where the participating children and young people include significant levels of representation from different Section 75 groups.**
- 8. The Committee recommends that the Department should do more to promote and secure the support of communities for innovative cost effective approaches to sharing in education in rural areas including e.g. federative or shared management arrangements or other solutions including Jointly Managed Church schools or amalgamations, as appropriate. The Committee further recommends that in order to ensure that support is properly targeted, communities engaged in Shared Education should be required to demonstrate initial and longer term educational and societal benefits.**
- 9. The Committee recommends that the Department undertake a strategic review of its approach to Integrated Education, the terms of reference of which should include: the effectiveness of its actions in encouraging and facilitating this form of education in particular its assessment and treatment of parental perceptions and demand for Integrated Education in the Area Planning and Development Proposal processes; the roles of the sectoral bodies; and the relevance of minority community designation in the enrolment of Integrated schools.**



- 10. The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to the reasons underpinning natural mixing in non-Integrated schools and should also consider measures that it should adopt in order to promote this practice while supporting the principle of parental preference.**
- 11. The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to revising its Home to School Transport policy so as to provide support for children attending Jointly Managed Church schools in line with that currently available for children attending Integrated schools.**

## Introduction

1. At its meeting on 2 July 2014, the Committee for Education agreed to undertake an inquiry focusing on Shared and Integrated Education. The Terms of Reference for the Committee's inquiry were to:
  - review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;
  - identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;
  - identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;
  - consider what priorities and actions 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; and
  - report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendations by Spring 2015.

## Committee Approach

2. The Committee agreed that the inquiry would include oral evidence sessions with a wide range of stakeholders involved in Shared and Integrated Education. The Committee also particularly sought responses from school councils and wrote to all schools to this effect in July and September 2014.
3. The Committee commissioned Assembly Education Services to seek the views of a representative sample of school children on the key terms of references of the inquiry. The Committee also noted the findings of research undertaken by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People on the views of young people. The Committee also noted feedback from Parenting NI on the views of parents.
4. The Committee commissioned Assembly Research Services to produce papers on particular aspects of Shared and Integrated Education in this and other jurisdictions in order to inform its deliberations.
5. The Committee placed an advertisement in the regional press in September 2014 and wrote to stakeholders in July and again in September 2014 requesting written submissions to its inquiry. Around 100 written submissions were received from 86 stakeholders.
6. The Committee received oral evidence from: the Department of Education (2 July 2014; 14 January 2015, 21 January 2015, 29 April 2015 and again on 13 May 2015); Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle (15 October 2014); Professors Knox and Borooah from Ulster University (15 October 2014); Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (5 November 2014); Parenting NI (5 November 2014); Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (19 November 2014); Professor Roger Austin from Ulster University (26 November 2014); Centre for Shared Education at Queen's University Belfast (26 November 2014); Methodist College Belfast (10 December 2014); Community Relations Council and Equality Commission (4 February 2015); Integrated Education Fund and Professor Brandon Hamber from Ulster University (4 February 2015); Belfast, North Eastern, Western, Southern and South Eastern Education and Library Boards (11 February 2015); Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School (11 February 2015); Transferors' Representative Council (18 February 2015); Speedwell Trust (25 February 2015); Drumragh Integrated College (25 February 2015); National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers and the Ulster Teachers' Union (3 March 2015); the Early Years organisation (4 March 2015); Youth Council Northern Ireland (4 March 2015); Sir Robert

Salisbury (11 March 2015); Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education (18 March 2015); and Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership (18 March 2015).

7. To enhance its understanding of Shared and Integrated Education, the Committee undertook visits to the following: Methodist College Belfast (10 December 2014); St. John's Primary School, Moy and Moy Regional Primary School (14 January 2015); Drumragh Integrated College (25 February 2015); Shimna Integrated College (11 March 2015); and Limavady High School and St. Mary's School, Limavady (25 March 2015). Members of the Committee also participated in an informal briefing session organised by NICIE with children from integrated schools on 3 December 2014. The Committee met with Educate Together – an organisation involved in shared education in the Republic of Ireland and in Great Britain - in January 2015. Members also met informally with representatives of St. Columbanus' College on 26 May 2015.
8. The Minutes of Evidence of the oral evidence sessions are included at Appendix 2. Written non-departmental submissions are included at Appendix 3. The Committee's correspondence with the Department in respect of the inquiry is included at Appendix 4. A list of witnesses to the inquiry is given at Appendix 5. Research papers and the findings of the research on the views of school children, undertaken by Assembly Education Services, are included at Appendix 6.
9. The Committee agreed on 1 July 2015 that the report on its inquiry – this report – should be printed.

## Acknowledgements

10. The Committee wishes to record its thanks to all those who participated in the inquiry through the provision of written and oral evidence or the facilitation of Committee visits or evidence-taking events.

## Context for the Inquiry - Integrated Education

11. In 1976, ACT (All Children Together) published a paper with proposals for shared management of schools in Northern Ireland – this is described as an early model for integrating existing schools along with the development of a curriculum to promote 'a common pattern of religious and moral education, and of historical and cultural studies'. Lagan College – described as an Independent Integrated School - was established in 1981. A provision for existing schools to seek Controlled Integrated status was included in legislation in 1986.
12. In 1987, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) was formed as a charitable organisation to co-ordinate efforts to develop Integrated Education; and to support parent groups through the process of opening new schools.
13. Article 64 of the Education Reform (N.I.) Order 1989 gave the Department of Education (the Department or DE) a duty to 'encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education'. Following the passage of the 1989 Order, the Department began to provide support for NICIE
14. NICIE became a company in February 1989. NICIE borrowed money to buy sites and build schools from three of the main banks in Northern Ireland. The school had then to meet capital viability intake criteria set out by the Department over three consecutive years before the Department of Education would vest the school and repay the capital cost of buildings. NICIE built and opened 19 new schools using this funding mechanism. The closure of Armagh Integrated College before it was vested ended this system and left NICIE in substantial debt – around £10m. NICIE indicate that to-date, 24 of the 62 Integrated Schools have come about by changing an existing school's status to integrated status – including 5 post primaries and

- 19 primaries. In 2014-15, around 6.7% of the school population attended Integrated schools – 6,300 at Controlled Integrated schools and 15,600 at Grant Maintained Integrated schools.
15. The Integrated sector contends that growth in Integrated schools has been severely curtailed by vested interests and the failure of the Department or the ELBs (now the Education Authority (EA) to give effect to Article 64. The sector also argues that the Department unreasonably and despite parental demand categorises early years provision as non-sectoral thus arbitrarily exempting this educational phase from its Article 64 obligations.
16. 9 Integrated schools have sought to increase their numbers in the last 5 years – about half have been successful or partially successful though some decisions are still pending. Drumragh Integrated College sought a judicial review of a decision to decline a Development Proposal to increase the school's enrolment level. Prior to the hearing the Minister agreed that the decision would be re-taken. The judicial review proceeded on wider issues. On 27 March 2015, the Department indicated that the relevant Development Proposal had again been declined.
17. An Integrated school should demonstrate reasonable prospects of achieving, over the longer term, a minimum of 30% of its pupils from the minority community where the school is situated. Additionally, Integrated schools are required to have a board of governors with balanced representation.
18. The Drumragh Judgement found the use of an analytical tool (the needs model) in planning educational provision on an area basis to be lawful, but that the Department must ensure that inflexible use of the model did not prevent it from meeting its Article 64 obligations. However, following the judgment, the Minister advised that "... guidance has now been provided to all senior staff within the Department via internal workshops that have presented an opportunity to make clear my expectations that the statutory duties to encourage and facilitate both integrated and Irish-medium education are discharged fully, positively and proactively and to explain the implications of both statutory duties, including in the context of the Drumragh Judgement." Additionally DE was also to provide additional guidance for "the executive non-departmental bodies which are accountable to DE". The Minister indicated that he expected to see "much greater prominence given by our non-departmental public bodies to supporting the Department in encouraging and facilitating both integrated and Irish-medium education...including the new Education Authority, as we move forward into a new business planning period."
19. In November 2014, the Minister indicated his intention to commission a review of Integrated Education. It is understood that the Minister is currently considering the need for and the scope of a possible strategic review of Integrated Education.

## Context for the Inquiry - Shared Education

20. There are a number of previous, current and planned Shared Education policies and related policies and programmes. These are summarised below.

### **Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy**

21. Until May 2010, the Department provided around £3.6m pa of funding across five streams to provide what were described as Community Relations schemes:
- Community Relations Core Funding Scheme (which provided core funding to external organisations involved in community relations work in schools and youth work settings);
  - Schools Community Relations Programme (which provided earmarked funding for community relations work in schools);
  - Youth Service Community Relations Support Scheme (which provided earmarked funding for community relations work in youth work settings);

- Cultural Traditions Programme (which provided funding to the Arts Council for cultural programmes delivered on a cross-community basis); and
  - Community Relations Youth Service Support Scheme (which provided earmarked funding delivered through the Youth Council NI for regional voluntary organisations youth organisations).
22. A review of Community Relations work was undertaken in 2008, which included a report by the Education & Training Inspectorate that identified these schemes as being inconsistent in delivery, difficult to assess, sometimes duplicated existing provision or did not address gaps in provision. As a result these schemes were replaced in March 2011 by the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy with earmarked funding of £1.2m pa over a 4 year period ending March 2015 to support implementation of the policy. This included dedicated support staff in Education & Library Board and the Youth Council NI, practitioner training programmes, a dedicated website to ensure sharing of advice and good practice and the CRED Enhancement Scheme that provided application based earmarked funding for schools and youth work settings for interventions that enhanced delivery of community relations work.
23. The CRED policy was issued by the Department in 2011 and was designed to “improve relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, promote equality and work to eliminate discrimination and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those of different backgrounds and traditions”. CRED was designed to root the skills needed by learners in respect of community relations, equality and diversity in the Revised Curriculum. There were several key actions:
- DE was to issue guidance to all schools in all phases which would help educators to make the connections between the aims of the CRED policy and the formal and informal curricula. DE was to promote CRED and encourage greater sharing and collaboration on a cross-community basis. The Education and Skills Authority (ESA) was to develop relevant indicators which were to be monitored by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The CRED policy was to complement other DE policies providing educators with the skills and experience to deliver a curriculum which includes CRED issues.
  - DE was to develop regional plans for the delivery of the CRED policy and structures within ESA to assist in its delivery and integration with other education policies.
  - In order to deal with reported low uptake of schools community relations programme, CRED was to support education settings to integrate the policy into their ethos through guidance, indicators, capacity building in the education workforce and sharing of good practice.
  - DE was to work with FE and HE institutions and the community relations staff in the ELBs to develop CRED training modules for teachers which would be delivered in a shared environment. DE was also to support training for the non-teaching education workforce.
  - DE was to explore the potential for progression routes so as to ensure that CRED learning was age appropriate and advanced knowledge and skills for children who take part in community relations activities and encouraged the involvement of parents and the community. Although the CRED policy was to be applied in all schools, some support was to be targeted at priority areas experiencing conflict, segregation and disadvantage.

While the Education & Skills Authority was not established, the Department has confirmed that these actions were delivered through the Education & Library Boards, over the period ending 31 March

24. DE had also suggested in correspondence to the Committee that CRED Enhancement funding could be used to support shared work in schools and youth work settings e.g. continuation

- of collaborations established as part of the Primary Integrating Enriching Education (PIEE) project.
25. Earmarked CRED funding was discontinued on 31 March 2015. DE advised that CRED was to be mainstreamed. The Committee understands this to mean that all earmarked funding will be discontinued while schools will be required to continue to implement CRED policies with no funding to do so other than that provided through the Common Funding Scheme.
  26. DE briefed the Committee on 29 April 2015 on the review of the CRED policy by ETI. ETI found that CRED provided good quality opportunities for sustained contact for children and young people to work well collaboratively and discuss issues relating to diversity and inclusion. ETI found, in the most effective settings, that children were confident and demonstrated maturity in accepting and celebrating difference and challenging others' behaviour when appropriate. ETI suggested that more opportunities were needed to accredit learning through CRED. ETI suggested that schools need to improve tracking of progress in the development of the CRED skills necessary for life and work.
  27. ETI found that teaching staff etc. made good use of external agencies and interacted with Area Learning Communities in order to enhance provision and deal with sensitive issues e.g. expressions of sexuality. ETI suggested that children and young people sought enhanced opportunities for a greater understanding of the reasons for division and inequality in Northern Ireland and that there was undue variation in the extent to which children were equipped to deal with controversial issues.
  28. ETI referred positively to school councils enhancing participation and modelling effective democratic processes. ETI suggested that more needed to be done to ensure meaningful non-tokenistic engagement by children in school decision-making.
  29. ETI indicated that the majority of lessons in schools and youth organisations were "very good" or better however between a quarter and a third of PDMU lessons were described as not effective with insufficient mapping of statutory key elements related to CRED across the school curriculum.
  30. ETI indicated that in respect of leadership and management of CRED, the Shared Education and Community Relations team in DE together with the ELB CRED Steering Group and the Youth Council Northern Ireland provided proactive leadership promoting good practice as well as training, guidance and challenge to CRED providers. ETI highlighted the positive role of the ELBs in promoting whole school CRED improvement rather than simply promoting stand-alone policies. ETI suggested that more needed to be done to help schools and youth settings to learn from each other in respect of good CRED practice.
  31. ETI found that schools and youth organisations had a clear understanding of CRED and that this was embedded in School Development Plans and service level agreements for youth organisations. However ETI also reported inconsistency in respect of embedding of CRED across schools and youth organisations. ETI indicated that schools had suggested that embedding of CRED was required within a strategic overview of all policies and that youth organisations identified the need for explicit development of CRED in Priorities for Youth. ETI reported a need for more rigorous evaluation of CRED against the quality indicators by providers.
  32. ETI found that schools and youth organisations supported the holistic development of all children and young people including those with SEN or from newcomer or Traveller backgrounds. ETI found that better practice settings worked in partnership often, through their Area Learning Community, with the local community and consulted widely with parents etc. to understand the backgrounds of children in order to improve their learning and to tackle issues relating to changing demographics, poverty and social issues etc.. ETI suggested that schools and youth organisations needed more support in order to develop and maintain more sustained contact with communities to help promote good relations etc. ETI indicated that

CRED should be more closely based on the rights of the child set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and that multi-agency support was required.

33. In addition to the above, ETI recommended:
- that the CRED policy references Shared Education in light of emerging research and practice;
  - greater targeted support and consistency of access to CRED support organisations be provided so as to enhance school staff capacity and improve community connections;
  - the development of appropriate accreditation of learning through CRED;
  - schools review the quality of PDMU lessons in order to ensure consistently high quality and improve tracking of pupil progress in respect of citizenship and personal development; and
  - voluntary organisations should do more to disseminate good CRED practice in youth settings.
34. ETI described the education system in Northern Ireland as segregated and identified widening equality issues across society. It referred to sector-leading examples of good CRED practice but also indicated that the sustainability of relationships is variable.

#### **Programme for Government**

35. The 2011-15 Programme for Government (PfG) contains 4 DE commitments relating to Shared Education:
- Commitment 70: significantly progressing work on the plan for the Lisanelly Shared Education campus as a key regeneration project;
  - Commitment 71: establishing a Ministerial Advisory Group to bring forward recommendations to the Minister to advance shared education;
  - Commitment 72: ensuring all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015; and
  - Commitment 73: substantially increasing the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

#### **Lisanelly Shared Education Campus (LSEC)**

36. The Lisanelly site at Omagh is to be a shared educational campus where 6 Controlled and Maintained, Grammar and non-Grammar and Arvalee Special School will be co-located and will collaborate together, while retaining their individual ethos.
37. The agreed Outline Business Case indicates that Lisanelly will have “medium sharing”, schools will be provided with a core set of facilities within their own school building, while sharing other infrastructure and the delivery of some teaching. Work is underway to refine and further develop the education model which will consider appropriate sharing at each Key Stage. The campus is to include a Shared Education Hub centred around STEM/STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) provision, where pupils from all schools may be taught together. It will further include a shared sports centre where sports and fitness courses and related facilities will be shared on a campus wide basis. There may also be sharing of common ancillary facilities, such as school meals provision, utilities and maintenance. The schools will also work together in developing a shared ICT infrastructure and shared branding and identity for the Campus. Consideration will also be given to wider sharing of the facilities with other schools and colleges within the Omagh Learning Community. The capital cost of all of this was given as around £110m.
38. 6 schools involved have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to work together on the development and delivery of the campus

### **Ministerial Advisory Group on Advancing Shared Education**

39. In April 2013, the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) published its report on Advancing Shared Education. MAG described Shared Education as the organisation and delivery of education so that it meets the needs of learners from all Section 75 groups regardless of their socio-economic status; involves schools of differing ownership, status, ethos and management type; 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.
40. MAG describes Shared Education as: involving 2 or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.
41. MAG indicated that it did not believe that Integrated Education should be actively promoted as the preferred option in relation to plans to advance Shared Education. MAG indicated that in line with parental choice, the education system “should actively encourage the development of a range of schools with differing types of religious and/or philosophical ethos...” where strong efforts are made to require these schools to collaborate in a sustained and meaningful way.
42. MAG indicated that training, curricular materials and inspections are required to support schools involved in Shared Education. MAG recommended that the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) should in future routinely review the effectiveness of Shared Education provision. MAG recommended that DE – as part of its review of teacher education – should develop a framework for the early and continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers which encourages collaboration between schools.
43. MAG recommended that schools and other educational establishments develop more meaningful relationships with parents and caregivers – ESA was to establish a network to support this and schools would be required to set out in Development Proposals how they are to engage with parents and caregivers.
44. MAG also recommended an independent review of the DE Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy including the delivery of the relevant parts of the curriculum.
45. MAG recommended that all schools be required to establish School Councils. MAG also recommended new legislation to make schools and educational institutions “public authorities” and be required to comply with statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. MAG recommended that ESA with the Equality Commission should establish an Equality Unit to help schools comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.
46. MAG also recommended that DE review how collaboration between mainstream schools and special schools can be enhanced so as to allow most children with SEN where possible to be educated in mainstream schools.
47. MAG recommended that DE, ELBs and CCMS play an active role in promoting Shared Education through Area Planning including the proactive identification of Shared Education options and the provision of “advice on how two or more schools can transfer their status into a ‘shared school’ whereby they maintain their respective form of ethos.” MAG also recommended that DE establish and communicate a transformation process for schools which in line with parental choice allows schools to adopt a particular (presumably new) ethos. MAG defined the different kinds of ethos as: Integrated, faith-based, secular or Irish Medium.
48. MAG also recommended that where there is oversubscription, existing schools should be allowed to expand in a phased and careful manner in line with parental demand.



49. MAG commented at length on academic selection. MAG recommended that the Executive should introduce legislation to prevent schools from selecting on the basis of academic ability (presumably at age 11). MAG recommended that Area Planning for post-primary school be based on all-ability intakes and that diversity of provision – in respect of religious, cultural ethos - be preserved. MAG also recommended a review by DE of the use of streaming and banding in all-ability schools.

**Ministerial Statement – Advancing shared education**

50. On 23 October 2013, the Minister made a statement endorsing the findings and many of the recommendations of the MAG. The Minister indicated that he/DE was to:
- bring forward a statutory definition of Shared Education which would complement the definition of Integrated Education. A unit within the new Education Authority is to have responsibility for the promotion of Shared Education;
  - consider including a sharing premium in the Common Funding Scheme (this was not included in the draft or final CFS for 2014 or 2015);
  - work with OFMDFM on the TBUC shared campus programme (3 shared campuses were selected before summer 2014 – a second call for proposals is underway);
  - ask ETI to include in the inspection of schools how sharing delivers educational benefit and to share associated best practice – ETI was also to undertake a survey of current practice in respect of sharing with a focus on what additional support and development teachers need. ETI is understood to be developing Shared Education indicators, protocols and materials and is to progress the identification of how sharing can enhance educational and social learning. The ETI Chief Inspector’s 2012-14 report included limited reference to Shared Education delivery. Schools engaging in Shared Education will be required to include specific reference in their School Development Plans in respect of their goals to enhance sharing and engage with parents and carers. ETI undertook a review of CRED in the autumn of 2014. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding; Local and Global Citizenship and the Curricular Framework for Youth Work will be reviewed on a rolling basis during 2015-19;
  - include support for sharing in teacher CPD packages. As part of its ongoing work on Initial Teacher Education and continuing professional development, DE is also to develop opportunities for teacher training in respect of Shared Education;
  - encourage schools to adopt the Democra-school programme which facilitates pupil participation in the life of the school – a circular on School Councils was produced and issued to schools following the Committee’s inquiry on this subject;
  - discuss with Executive colleagues making schools subject to statutory equality and good relations duties in section 75 –including perhaps requiring schools to set objectives to enhance equality. It is understood that the Minister wrote to OFMDFM seeking its views on the practicalities of legislation designed to designate schools as “public authorities”.
  - ensure that Special Schools are included in shared campuses or shared projects where the demand exists. DE indicated that it is to work to develop the role of Area Learning Communities so as to encourage the participation of Special Schools and pupils with disabilities in Shared Education;
  - bring forward a range of sharing options for schools and communities;
  - provide clear practical advice on how to bring forward a Development Proposal for sharing.
  - bring forward guidelines on the development of Area Plans to ensure shared education is encouraged;
  - meet parental demand for different types of school which are sustainable and feature collaboration and sharing not competition and duplication;

- allow schools to change their ethos by adopting new management schemes; and
- promote all-ability schools where academic and vocational learning is the norm through the Area Planning process.

### **Shared Education Baseline**

51. The School Omnibus Survey is described as a multi-purpose web-based survey which is sent to all principals in grant-aided schools and is designed to collect a range of required information as determined by DE policy teams. The 2013 survey comprised 7 sections, one of which was Shared Education. A total of 569 responses were received for the Shared Education questions, giving an overall response rate of 52%. The results were as follows:

- The majority of respondents (76%) reported that they had been involved in Shared Education with another school during the last academic year (12/13). Participation in Shared Education was higher in post-primary and special schools and at 83%, WELB appeared to have the highest levels, while SEELB reported the lowest level at 70%.
- Of those respondents that have partnered with another school, 72% involved more than one class, while 15% indicated sharing at a whole school level.
- The majority of respondents (65%) shared on a cross community basis, with over a third (35%) involving sharing between post-primary and primary.
- Almost half (47%) used earmarked funding, such as CRED, Extended Schools or Entitlement Framework to finance shared activities, while 43% used their LMS budget. Over one third (36%) used external funding (e.g. IFI / Atlantic Philanthropies).
- The most common costs related to transport (80%), sub-cover (56%) and facilitators (44%).

### **Sharing Works: A policy for Shared Education**

52. DE launched a consultation on its draft Shared Education policy and the draft Shared Education Bill on 5 January 2015. DE briefed the Committee on the feedback to the policy consultation on 13 May 2015.
53. The draft policy covered all statutory and voluntary Early Years settings; primary, post-primary and special schools; and non-formal educational setting including youth work settings. The vision for and definition of Shared Education set out in the draft policy is in line with that described by the MAG in its report i.e. cross-sectoral co-operation delivering educational benefits and promoting good relations etc.. DE gave some examples of Shared Education including – shared curriculum based classes; schools sharing resources; joint pastoral policies; shared CPD for teachers or BoGs; and shared accommodation.
54. The draft policy specifically indicated that Shared Education “involves the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.” However DE expects that Shared Education will be organized so as to provide these learning opportunities in such a way as to promote inclusion for children from different socio-economic or racial, family or other backgrounds.
55. The draft policy indicated that it is envisaged that Integrated schools could partner with other types of school in the provision of Shared Education. The draft policy described Integrated schools as being at the upper end of the continuum of sharing. Indeed it is suggested that by advancing Shared Education more schools may “move along the continuum to a more fully integrated model”. DE indicated that it will continue to encourage and facilitate Integrated Education in parallel with the advancement of Shared Education.
56. The draft policy indicated that Shared Education partnerships can be designed to include Irish Medium schools. DE also indicated that it will continue to encourage and facilitate IME schools in parallel with the advancement of Shared Education.

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57. DE advised that the objectives/outcomes of the draft policy are to embed sharing in the ethos of all schools, improve educational including reconciliation outcomes, contribute to a more harmonious society while providing: all children with an opportunity to participate in a continued programme of high quality, progressive Shared Education; more opportunities for teachers etc. to work collaboratively in order to improve educational delivery; better access to learners to high quality teaching.
58. DE set out an action plan for Shared Education which included relevant legislation (see below) and a regional team within the Education Authority which will work with Shared Education partnerships to promote, plan and implement shared activity; and working in conjunction with officials in ETI and Council for the Curriculum Examination and Assessment (CCEA), develop a strategy for advancing Shared Education and commission research etc.. ETI has developed a Shared Education continuum self-assessment tool –similar to that used in the PIEE project and the Sharing in Education Programme report.
59. DE advised that it is to review funding arrangements for Shared Education after 2018 - as DSC Shared Education funding ends in 2018 and Peace IV funding ends in 2020.
60. The draft policy again referenced a requirement for schools to set out sharing goals in School Development Plans and the intention to require ETI to report on sharing in schools and sharing generally in the Chief Inspector's report. Schools are also to be required to include engagement plans for parents etc. in respect of Shared Education.
61. DE again referenced the new teacher professional development strategy indicating that from initial teacher education to CPD opportunities for teachers to learn together will be provided. DE also again mentioned ETI's planned reviews of CRED, PDMU etc. as part of an effort to align policy and appeared to indicate that CCEA will be commissioned to amend curricular support materials in support of Shared Education where deemed necessary.
62. The draft policy indicated that schools will be encouraged to find meaningful ways of giving children and young people a voice and responding to their views through the use of school councils.
63. The draft policy also indicated that with OFMDFM, DE was to consider the designation of schools as public authorities requiring some level of compliance with duties relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. DE subsequently clarified that there would be no attempts to change legislation in this regard until the need for change had been established and a public consultation had been held.

#### **Draft Shared Education Bill**

64. The Education Act (NI) 2014 placed a duty on the EA to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education. That Act did not include a definition of Shared Education. The Department proposed to bring forward another bill – the Shared Education Bill – which would provide the relevant definition and place relevant obligations on the Department and some of its Arms Length Bodies. The Department briefed the Committee on 13 May 2015 on the feedback from the consultation on the draft Shared Education Bill.
65. The Department indicated that it was anticipated that the Shared Education Bill would grant DE; CCMS; Youth Council NI and CCEA the power to facilitate and encourage Shared Education. Shared Education would be defined in the Bill as education together, provided by two or more grant-aided schools or educational service providers, which is of educational benefit and involving those of different religious belief. The Bill is also expected to require Shared Education to include those experiencing different levels of socio-economic deprivation.

#### **Jointly Managed Church Schools**

66. The Department issued a circular in April 2015 on Jointly Managed Church schools. The Department briefed the Committee on 29 April 2015. DE indicated that the policy was

produced in line with Shared Education developments and in response to an interest from Controlled and Maintained schools to establish jointly managed church schools. The policy was produced following discussions with the Transferors and the representatives of the Catholic Trustees.

67. DE advised that in order to establish a school in line with the circular, a Development Proposal will be required. DE defined a jointly managed church school as a grant-aided Voluntary (or Other) Maintained school providing Shared Education with a Christian ethos with Trustee representation agreed by the Transferors and the Catholic Church and managed by a BoG with balanced representation from both main communities. The Education Authority would be the funding authority as is presently the case for Other Maintained schools e.g. most IME schools. As is also the case the BoG would be the employer of the teachers in the school whereas the EA would employ non-teaching staff.
68. DE suggested that a Trust be formed - with Trustees appointed through a deed of appointment – acting as the legal representatives of the school. DE indicated that it would require the Trustees to be representative of the Transferor and the Catholic Churches and that (foundation/ trustee) governors appointed by the Trustees would also be representative of Transferor/Catholic Churches. DE additionally indicated that it would expect the EA governors to be representative of both communities.
69. The school's ethos and arrangements for religious instruction etc. will be the subject of a formal MoA between the Transferors and the Catholic church. The BoGs will implement the agreed ethos. The premises and site of the school would be vested in the Trustees with a lease or assignment from either the Education Authority (in the case of a formerly Controlled school premises/site) or the Catholic Maintained Trust (in the case of a formerly Catholic Maintained premises/site). DE indicates that it did not expect the legal ownership of any school site to change.
70. DE advised that it was envisaged that Jointly Managed Church schools will usually be established following the amalgamation of Controlled and Maintained schools but that they can also be new schools where no existing provision is in place. In the case of an amalgamation, the jointly managed church school will not be subject to a minimum enrolment criteria for receipt of recurrent funding. For the purposes of Home to School Transport arrangements, a jointly managed church school will be considered to be within both the “Controlled and other Voluntary” AND the “Catholic Maintained” categories.
71. For the purposes of Temporary Variations to a school's enrolment, Other Maintained are currently treated separately from Controlled and Maintained schools – that is to say changes to their enrolment are not dependent on the impact they may have on Controlled and Maintained schools. DE advised that jointly managed church schools would also be treated in this way.

**Together: Building a United Community**

72. The Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) strategy was launched by OFMDFM in May 2013. TBUC included commitments under a number of priorities. The first of these was: “Our children and young people” – related commitments included the creation of 10 Shared Educational campuses.
73. The TBUC strategy document highlighted the obligation on statutory Early Years providers to contribute to improving relations between communities in line with the CRED policy. The strategy referred to a proposed buddy scheme which would pair a child from one section of the community with a child from a different community or ethnic background. The TBUC document indicated that consideration will be given to establishing community-led jointly run nursery and childcare facilities in interface and contested areas.
74. The TBUC document also highlighted the segregated nature of education in Northern Ireland and indicated that greater mixing in respect of traditions, identities and levels of social

deprivation can lead to greater tolerance, raised expectation and improved educational performance especially for the most deprived pupils. In line with the objective of enhancing community relations, the TBUC document also referred to the development of age appropriate anti-sectarianism resources.

75. The TBUC document indicated that the TBUC strategy will provide more opportunities for sharing within teacher training and that this may be reflected in the Department of Employment and Learning 2-stage study of teacher education infrastructure. Indeed, the study commissioned by DEL made a number of references to the importance of Shared Education and exposure to this form of education for student teachers.
76. In January 2014, the Education Minister formally launched the Shared Education Campuses Programme – designed to provide capital support for facilities at schools to be used on a shared educational basis. The T:BUC Strategy document had a target of commencing 10 new campuses within the next five years. 3 projects were selected in July 2014:
- Shared STEM and sixth form facilities for St Mary’s High School, Limavady and Limavady High School.
  - Shared Educational Campus for Moy Regional Primary School and St John’s Primary School, Moy.
  - Shared Educational Campus for Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle.
77. The Department briefed the Committee on 2 July 2014 on the TBUC Shared Education Campuses programme. DE advised that although the 10 Shared Educational Campuses are to share features of the Lisanelly model, this was a unique project featuring a large site with a stable long term enrolment.
78. DE stressed that all Shared Education Campuses must be endorsed by their Planning Authority to ensure the proposal meets the criteria in the Sustainable Schools Policy, or where this is not the case, provide an explanation as to how the proposal contributes to the delivery of sustainable provision in the Area going forward; must have educational benefits; must have the support of the local community and be endorsed by Managing Authorities and have the support of parents. Projects were to be favoured which include co-located or nearby schools and evidence of existing sharing was now essential.
79. DE advised in correspondence (July 2014) that projects would be evaluated and scored against a number of essential and desirable criteria. DE was asked (January 2015) if an application involving e.g. only a Catholic Maintained and a “Catholic Controlled voluntary Grammar school” or those projects with less than 15% minority participation would score poorly against the assessment criteria; DE advised that they may not meet the cross-community test, though it would depend on the actual application. A second call for projects was launched in October 2014. An announcement on the successful projects in the second call was expected to be made in June 2015.

#### **DSC Shared Education Signature Project**

80. On 17 September 2014, OFMDFM announced 3 new signature programmes – Dementia (DHSSPS in the lead), Early Intervention (DHSSPS in the lead but involving DE) and Shared Education (DE only). The programmes are to be co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies. The Shared Education programme is designed to mainstream Shared Education and has attracted £10m of support from Atlantic Philanthropies.
81. The business case for the Shared Education Signature Project indicated that only schools at level 2 or higher of the sharing continuum - i.e. regular and sustained contact - will be eligible for support from the project. The business case suggested that this would equate to around 65% of all schools.

82. The Shared Education Signature Project is to be delivered by the Education Authority through a regional mechanism with a dedicated support team. It was argued that this has the lowest costs and risks and higher benefits in respect of improved confidence and competence for teaching staff.
83. Total resource costs were given as £24.5m – initial spending of £1.2m in Year 0 rising to £8.7m in Year 3. Transport costs were estimated at £5.5m with sub-cover, training etc. costing £14m. There were no capital costs.
84. Funding of £25m – comprising £10m from Atlantic Philanthropies; £10m from OFMDFM and £5m from DE – will be available from 2014 to 2018. The Atlantic Philanthropies funding in Year 3 is dependent on a DE commitment to mainstream Shared Education in the longer term. Outcome assessment for the project were to be based on:
- improving levels of Key Stages 2 and 3 and GCSE achievement including maths and English for participating schools;
  - increasing provision of shared classes (other than for the Entitlement Framework) from 23% of participating schools to a level to be agreed by 2017-18;
  - increasing reconciliation outcomes including Cross Group Friendships, Positive Action Tendencies while reducing Intergroup Anxiety – based on a longitudinal study which is being undertaken by QUB;
  - increasing from 15% to 20% of participating schools those involved in whole school sharing; increasing 1-class sharing from 13% to 80% of participating schools and increasing joint delivery of PDMU and Learning for Life and Work by 2017-18;
  - provide professional development for some teachers in 95% of participating schools by 2017-18;
  - refine the QUB continuum of Shared Education by end of 2014/15 and further develop quality indicators by 2017-18 with all participating schools progressing by 1 step in the sharing continuum (compared to self-assessments made at application stage);
  - Shared Education featuring in; DE business plans, EA Resource plans, ETI inspections for all schools and school development plans.
85. ETI was to review and evaluate the level and effectiveness of sharing in participating school partnerships. Atlantic Philanthropies may also commission additional research in this regard.
86. An Expert Advisory Committee – nominated by OFMDFM, DHSSPS, DE and Atlantic Philanthropies – was to provide advice on the Shared Education project and on evaluation and performance and will report through the Shared Education Signature Project Programme Board to the Atlantic Philanthropies / DSC Programme Board. The first call for projects was scheduled to be made in November 2014. The first tranche of partnerships to be funded were announced on 30 March 2015.

#### **Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) / Shared Education Learning Forum**

87. The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) funded projects that enabled young people to participate in Shared Education activities and to provide sustainable models of good practice that are designed to inform future practice in education. The Sharing in Education Programme (SiEP) was managed by the IFI liaison team in the Department of Education and supported 22 projects. The projects included: facilitated discussion of controversial topics; creative delivery of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) aspects of the curriculum; development for teachers on issues of diversity (the Classroom Re-imagined Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers – the CREDIT project); a review of the shared history of the 2 main communities in Northern Ireland; a welcoming schools project for all young people regardless of religion or race; shared learning experiences involving sport, culture,

social skills; a parenting programme for parents and school staff; a cross-border identity and friendship project; and a youth programme for NEETs.

88. IFI indicated that over 46,000 children, young people, parents and school staff were involved in the SIEP in the period 2010-13 in all Education and Library Board areas. In addition to the above, the Atlantic Philanthropies who jointly funded three of the 22 projects also funded the Shared Education Learning Forum composed of: the Centre for Shared Education (CSE) at QUB; the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Programme; and the Primary Integrating / Enriching Education Project (PIEE) developed by the North Eastern ELB.

#### **Centre for Shared Education (CSE) at QUB**

89. The Centre for Shared Education (CSE) was established by the School of Education in Queen's University Belfast in May 2012. The CSE defines Shared Education as: *'Collaborative activity between schools from different sectors that is underpinned by a commitment to reconciliation objectives and can contribute towards school improvement, access to opportunity and more positive intergroup relations in divided societies'*.
90. Prior to the formal establishment of the CSE and subsequently, its associates undertook related research and work as part of the Sharing Education Programme in Northern Ireland:
- Sharing Education Programme 1 (2006-2010) SEP1 is described as an activity based programme encouraging the development of institutional links and trust through working together involving 65 schools and 3,500 pupils.
  - Sharing Education Programme 2 (2010-2013) SEP2 partnerships started in September 2010 involved 72 primary and post-primary schools and annually approximately 5,000 pupils. SEP2 was based on the Area Learning Communities focusing on societal, educational and economic outcomes.
  - Sharing Education Programme 3 (2011-2014) SEP3 works with partnerships from all previous programmes (43 schools making up 17 partnerships and over 4,000 pupils). SEP3 was designed to take a number of key school partnerships to a higher level of collaborative relationship that complements current Departmental policy around Area Based Planning - again focusing on educational and societal return.
  - Foyle Contested Spaces (2011-2014) This programme is described as a schools based initiative involving 3 post-primary and 5 primary schools in Derry/Londonderry with a total of 1,161 pupils. The 8 schools have developed an educational programme for pupils between the ages of 8 to 15 which utilises PDMU and Learning for Life and Work elements of the curriculum to address social issues facing young people.
91. CSE describes its mission as promoting Shared Education as a mechanism for the delivery of reconciliation and educational benefits to all children, delivered through: research, Shared Education programmes and education and training for practitioners. The research strand supports a programme of comparative national and international research that aims to enhance understanding of school-based sharing, the collaborative process, and associated outcomes.
92. CSE developed a 6 stage spectrum of sharing from "Schools in Isolation" to "Institutional Interdependence". CSE indicated that no schools in Northern Ireland are currently at the final "Institutional Interdependence" stage – though it was argued that such a situation might arise as a consequence of the T:BUC Shared Education Campus programme.

#### **Peace IV**

93. 45m Euro – 20% of the total Peace IV budget of 229m Euro – was initially allocated by the European Regional Development Fund to Shared Education – it is understood that the final figure will be 30m Euro. The specific objective being: "the creation of a more cohesive society by increasing the level of sustained contact between school children from all backgrounds

across the Programme area” (Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland border counties). A key attribute of all shared education activities will be the on-going and sustained sharing of classes; subjects, sports and extra-curricular activities.

94. The programme’s effectiveness is to be measured by: the number of children sustaining a friendship or cordial relationship with a person or persons from the other community; increased understanding and tolerance for the other community; improved educational outcomes; teachers trained in shared education across the whole curriculum; development of networks involving all members of the school community; governors and parents trained in shared education values; and joint delivery of the curriculum.
95. Activities are to be designed to incorporate a whole school approach to sharing involving the wider community. Children at all phases are to be involved. Cross-border partnerships are to be encouraged. Activities are to support children’s understanding and tolerance of difference including religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability or political affiliation.
96. The Special European Union Programme Board (SEUPB) consultation closed on 29 July 2014. The Committee wrote to SEUPB indicating its support for the proposed measures within Peace IV (and indeed other funding streams) for the encouragement of Shared Education across all educational phases. The Committee urged SEUPB to encourage Shared Education programmes supported under Peace IV to capitalise on the extensive learning from previous Shared Education projects including the NEELB PíEE project and the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education partnerships. The Committee also strongly indicated that the relevant Peace IV projects should support the development of guidance which helps all schools to get involved with Shared Education.
97. The Department advised that proposals for Peace IV funding will not be approved until autumn 2015 and are expected to be focused on the 24% of schools not currently involved in sharing as well as youth to school and early years settings.



## Consideration of Evidence

98. All non-departmental written submissions are included in Appendix 3.
- Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle
99. Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School shared their experience of Shared Education with the Committee. They reported that around 140 pupils from each school undertake shared curricular classes each week. The Boards of Governors (BoGs) of both schools have agreed core values and a mission for the Shared Education partnership – largely based on improving educational provision. The schools have formed collaborative sub-committees and take a shared approach to School Development Planning for 14 to 19 attainment. The partnership was described as allowing the delivery of the Entitlement Framework with the involvement of Northern Regional College. The schools support a joint school council and undertake shared careers events as well as joint sporting and charity activities.
100. The schools contended that the enablers for Shared Education are:
- a strong and equal partnership between participating schools underpinned by an understanding of the purpose of the partnership and the needs of the schools;
  - commitment at DE, ELB/CCMS and Trustee level based on their acceptance of Shared Education as an economically viable option which preserves culture and identity while delivering educational improvement;
  - confidence of parents and pupils based on strong communication channels, robust protocols, Service Level Agreements and shared educational policies;
  - training and development of governors and staff; and
  - co-location of schools so as to minimise the costs and impracticalities of travel from school to school.
101. The schools also contended that their partnership is very much in keeping with the objective of the CRED policy in terms of improving relations between communities through educating children to develop respect for others and by the provision of formal and non-formal educational opportunities to build cross-community relationships. However the schools agreed that support for the partnership depends very much on the maintenance of the educational capabilities of each school. The schools maintained educational excellence by close joint monitoring and tracking of pupil progress and the development of a collegiate approach among teaching staff towards the partnership and discipline and attainment issues and extra-curricular activities. The schools also indicated that they place a high value on a shared culture of pro-active pastoral care for pupils and parents evidenced by daily exchange of information on absentees and events; regular pastoral contacts involving year heads etc.; regular departmental meetings; parents' afternoons; and a joint 6th form council etc. The schools synchronise holidays and staff development days; co-ordinate timetable development; and align staff performance objectives.
102. The schools reported meaningful engagement with external agencies in the locality which supports the partnership. The schools had received support from the Centre for Shared Education at QUB and have recently successfully secured funding from the T:BUC Shared Campus Programme. The schools highlighted concerns in respect of the rundown of support from the Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS) and uncertainty in respect of funding to support the delivery of the Entitlement Framework.

### **Professors Knox and Borooah, Ulster University**

103. Knox and Borooah contended that there is a high degree of religious segregation in primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. It was indicated that the level of segregation is higher in Controlled and Maintained non-Grammar post-primaries although the non-Grammar

post-primary sector also sees the highest proportion of pupils attending Integrated schools. It was contended that Catholics are far more likely to attend Controlled Grammars than Protestants are to attend Catholic Voluntary Grammars.

104. Knox and Borooh contended that the benefits of Integrated Education are generally societal rather than educational. Indeed it was argued that Grant Maintained Integrated schools perform as poorly, or nearly as poorly, at GCSE as the worst performing sector i.e. the Controlled non-Grammar sector. Knox and Borooh argued that parental choice in respect of post-primary school is largely determined by school examination performance at GCSE rather than whether the school ethos is linked to integration and societal reconciliation.

105. Knox and Borooh contrasted Integrated Education with its focus on wider societal goals with Shared Education which it was argued was centred on creating inter-dependencies which support improved school performance. It was contended that sharing and federative arrangements between better and poorer performing schools can have a significant positive impact on student outcomes. Knox and Borooh appeared to suggest that the focus of Shared Education programmes should alter from collaboration and trust-building exercises to raising educational standards, tackling inequalities and thus contributing to a more inclusive society.

#### **Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)**

106. NICCY referenced Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which indicates that education should prepare a child for “responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.” NICCY suggested that the aims of Shared Education – which it recorded as promotion of equality of identity, respect of diversity and community cohesion – are in line with Article 29.

107. NICCY also made reference to the findings of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in respect of the need to facilitate the establishment of additional Integrated schools as a means of reducing segregation in education in Northern Ireland. NICCY highlighted the absence of any reference to Integrated Education in the Programme for Government.

108. In order to inform the MAG on Advancing Shared Education, NICCY undertook a consultation with children and young people between October 2012 and January 2013. The consultation had 2 strands:

- 38 workshops involving 750 8-10 year olds and 14-17 year olds in a sample group of (21) schools representing all sectors including: 11 primaries, 10 post-primaries and 1 special school. The sample included urban and rural schools; selective and non-selective schools; and schools involved or not involved in Shared Education. The workshops were supplemented by 20 interviews with principals or other members of staff.; and
- surveys of around 4000 children aged 10 to 11 years (Kids’ Life and Times Survey) and 1000 young people aged 16 years (Young Life and Times Survey). Surveys were completed on line, on paper or via the telephone.

109. Access Research Knowledge (ARK) devised 2 modules of questions in associated with NICCY. The consultation questions sought children’s views on Shared Education and Area Planning.

110. In respect of Shared Education, NICCY’s consultation found:

- Primary 7 school pupils had limited understanding of the concept of Shared Education however a high percentage of respondents – over 75% - had undertaken shared trips or projects or had shared facilities with children from other schools. Just less than two thirds of primary school respondents reported that these activities involved children of a different religion. Primary pupils, where they had experience of sharing, generally reported positive views on it.;

- Post-primary pupils appeared to associate Shared Education with the delivery of the Entitlement Framework and the work of Area Learning Communities. Post-primary respondents were more likely to have taken part in shared projects than shared classes and generally recorded positive feedback in respect of both. Positive views appeared to be linked to the opportunity to make new friends and to a much lesser extent: to gain an insight into other schools or to gain access to a broader curriculum. Some students reported only limited interaction with pupils from other schools during shared classes etc.. A small number of students reported concerns related to being the minority in the classroom or to receiving adverse commentary from students from other schools. Around half of post-primary school respondents reported concerns in respect of additional travelling to school as a consequence of more shared classes.;
- The survey found that around two thirds of school children at primaries and post-primaries believed that the main drawback to Shared Education might be increased bullying.
- The majority of pupils generally indicated that Shared Education should not be limited to bringing the 2 largest communities together but should include pupils from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- School staff reported generally positive views of sharing activities but highlighted the difficulty in negotiating parental consent for participation in sharing owing to: the impact “of the Northern Ireland conflict on the local community” and concerns in respect of the erosion of their own identity. School staff suggested that although the majority of parents supported sharing, a minority had voiced dissent usually in respect of cross-community issues. However parents also had concerns in respect of the transport arrangements for pupils and in terms of teaching quality in other schools
- Staff welcomed the opportunities sharing brings in respect of extending curricular provision although some concerns were expressed in respect of teaching quality in other schools. Staff commented on logistical challenges to sharing largely in respect of transport costs but also in terms of timetabling shared classes. Staff highlighted the importance of CRED funding for sharing activities – to meet transport costs and provide teacher cover. Staff also welcomed improvements in the inclusion of Special Schools with the wider educational community that sharing facilitates. Special School staff argued that exposure to children in Special Schools provided beneficial insight for mainstream school children.
- Irish Medium school staff reported difficulties in participation in Shared Education owing to the absence of dual medium learning opportunities;

111. In respect of Area Planning, NICCY’s consultation found:

- School pupils had limited understanding of Area Planning. Around 50% of pupils expressed concern in respect of the hypothetical closure of a neighbouring school and the transfer of pupils to their school.
- Some school staff expressed concerns in respect of the impact of Shared Education on Area Planning – the suggestion apparently being that shared provision could undermine the job security of teachers. Others argued that Shared Education was an attempt to avoid the government’s obligations in respect of Integrated Education.

112. NICCY suggested that consideration be given to:

- a definition of Shared Education. NICCY argued that many pupils are wrongly viewing any interaction between schools as Shared Education and that there is some variation in Shared Education content with some activities going beyond enhanced curriculum provision to promote mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity etc..;
- clarifying the aims and intentions behind all Shared Education endeavours, supporting schools, undertaking regular pupil feedback and managing parental concerns and

expectations in order to avoid unsatisfactory “shared but separate” educational experiences in schools.;

- promoting Shared Education in primary schools and across all school types through enjoyable practical activities in alternative environments;
- challenging preconceptions and stereotyping prior to Shared Education activity in order to allay pupils’ fears in respect of bullying and perceived differences in ability and religion.
- overcoming logistical barriers to inclusion in Shared Education for Special Schools;
- how Integrated Education with its existing shared learning environment fits alongside Shared Education; and
- how Shared Education can be supported in the Area Planning process.

### **Parenting NI**

113. In response to the inquiry, Parenting NI undertook an on-line survey of parents’ views in respect of Shared and Integrated Education. The consultation was distributed to members of the Parenting Forum and was completed on-line in early October 2014. There were around 200 respondents who completed all questions. Most respondents were female, married, urban with an even split between Catholics and Protestants. Around two thirds of respondents had a child who currently goes to an Integrated school or pre-school.
114. Respondents generally commented in positive terms about Shared Education highlighting its value in sharing resources and promoting equality and inclusion. Parenting NI reported that “parents thought that Shared Education should be provided under one roof, in the same school, where there is an ethos of respecting difference and being tolerant of differences.”
115. Parenting NI indicated that respondents reported the barriers or disadvantages to Shared Education included: limited real mixing between children which does not tackle cultural differences; lack of resources; questionable and variable educational quality depending on the partner schools; bullying concerns if one community is in the minority; religious differences being highlighted as different school uniforms and religious education policies would be in use.
116. Respondents commented positively in respect of Integrated Education. Parenting NI reported that parents stated “that to be an inclusive school, the teaching of religion either needs to focus on all religions or not be taught at all”. Parenting NI report that most respondents felt that religion should be a personal choice catered for outside of school.
117. Parenting NI indicated that respondents reported the barriers or disadvantages to Integrated Education included: level of integration may vary depending on location of schools; perceived loss of identity; perceived lack of moral vision in the absence of traditional religion teaching; lack of funding and limited availability of places; lower educational standards.
118. Parenting NI reported that respondents had made the following suggestions in order to promote Shared and Integrated Education: shared teacher training (at a single campus); more funding for Shared Education programmes and Integrated schools; an agreed vision and commitment from policy makers; removal of or changes to teaching of religion in schools; Early Years cross-community or Integrated provision; changes to school policies in respect of flags and emblems in schools; mixed home to school transport provision; shared 16+ timetabling to promote sharing between schools.

### **Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)**

119. NICIE reminded the Committee of the statutory duty to ‘encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education’. NICIE also made reference to the Drumragh judgement and the assertion that Integrated Education ‘is a stand alone concept, that is to say the education together at school of protestant and roman catholic pupils...as opposed to

integration within school of any other distinct set of pupils'. NICIE called on DE to actively implement Article 64 to encourage and facilitate Integrated Education.

120. NICIE contended that the most significant barrier to Integrated Education is the unequal approach to education planning - arguing that CCMS has a statutory duty to plan for the Maintained sector, the ELBs plan for the Controlled sector but the Integrated sector has to rely on parents to plan this provision for themselves with support from NICIE only, who have no statutory remit for planning. NICIE highlighted the absence of a central and agreed mechanism to consult with parents in respect of demand for Integrated Education. NICIE argued that it is crucial that the legislation clarifies at an operational level how Article 64 is to be implemented and that the new Education Authority has a clear responsibility to plan for Integrated Education.
121. NICIE argued that by linking pre-school provision to single identity schools children are becoming divided at the earliest age. NICIE called on DE to only fund pre-school provision that is non-denominational. NICIE indicated that it believes that the role of Special Schools in providing Integrated Education is often not recognised and that the legal barrier preventing Special Schools from becoming designated as Integrated schools should be rescinded.
122. NICIE commented on the unsustainability of current education provision referring to unjustifiable duplication and triplication of services NICIE called on the Committee to fully endorse its initiative 'Positive Partnerships for Integration' which develops simpler routes for transformation of Maintained and Controlled schools.
123. NICIE emphasised the importance of preparing teachers to support diverse and inclusive learning environments and called on DE to implement actions arising from the International Review panel on Teacher Education in Northern Ireland.
124. NICIE highlighted its support for the concept of Shared Education where it is based on building community relations through connecting children and young people however NICIE contended that Shared Education is a completely different concept to Integrated Education. NICIE supported a clear definition of Shared Education and argued that this should focus on its role as a tool for reconciliation. NICIE contended that Shared Education should be seen as a step on the journey to Integrated Education.
125. In response to CCMS / NICCE submissions, NICIE accused the Catholic church of being historically implacably opposed to Integrated Education and appeared to argue that there is "a critical difference between catholic and integrated schools where an equality of respect is evident for all." NICIE reiterated its argument in respect of the costs of division in education and again called for a "Patten style inquiry" or commission to desegregate schooling in Northern Ireland and also to consider the appetite for Integrated Education which it contended is significant and growing. NICIE also called for all publicly funded schools to be owned by the state.

**Professor Roger Austin, Ulster University**

126. Professor Austin gave evidence on the Dissolving Boundaries programme. This was an initiative funded jointly by the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Education and Skills in the Republic of Ireland – the 2 Departments provided around 1m Euro in 2000-2004; DE provided £0.5m in the period 2008-2014; initial capital costs were met by Eircom and Dell. The programme ran from 2000 until August 2014 when funding was discontinued by both Departments. The programme was managed by the Schools of Education at the University of Ulster and at the National University of Ireland (Maynooth) who worked closely in Northern Ireland with the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), c2k and Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).
127. The programme invited primary, post-primary and special schools in both jurisdictions to form partnerships and to develop a relationship based around a particular curriculum-related project. There were 3 objectives: to engage pupils in collaborative curricular projects; to

promote mutual understanding through collaborative cross-border links; and to promote sustainability of the use of technology in schools.

128. Professor Austin indicated that using ICT as the main means of communication, the programme (supported by face to face meetings with teachers and pupils) linked 50,000 young people, 570 schools and 2,600 teachers through cross-border work in special, primary and post-primary schools. It was indicated that in order to achieve best results, schools should link up for at least one school year through regular online contact - with face to face meetings ideally occurring at the beginning of the programme.
129. In 2010-11, the Department of Education in England commissioned research from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) into educational programmes across the United Kingdom that were building “resilience” amongst young people to address difficult issues to do with identity and community cohesion. Dissolving Boundaries was identified as the best example of the above in Northern Ireland. In the NFER analysis, alignment with other school policies was identified as a key ingredient in the design of the programme as was open communication and regular feedback from schools; the adoption of a young person-centred design for the programme and an emphasis on the importance of identity and self-confidence for pupils. In respect of the latter it was indicated that this was supported through social and curricular contact via mixed cross-border teams which undertook team-building exercises.
130. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate (DESI) in the Republic of Ireland undertook a joint evaluation of the Dissolving Boundaries programme in 2010-11. The findings were very positive with quality of leadership and management; planning; teaching and learning; support; and achievement of standards being described as generally “good” or better. ETI/DESI indicated that there was strong and commendable linkage between the programme and the curricular requirements in respect of the use of ICT.
131. Professor Austin argued that the use of ICT may enable more sharing between schools and serve to overcome the logistical / transportation / cost problems highlighted by many other respondents to the inquiry. It was further argued that the focus on ICT within the programme matches the focus on the same kind of cross-curricular skills for Key Stages 1,2 and 3. It was indicated that the programme supported community cohesion by promoting face to face or ICT-based contact between peers in school.

#### **Centre for Shared Education (CSE) at Queen’s University Belfast**

132. CSE argued that the existing largely separate education system in Northern Ireland perpetuates division. CSE appeared to accept what is termed “the reality of separate education” but argued that Shared Education provides an opportunity for creating porous boundaries and bridging mechanisms between sectors while delivering a necessary model for building relationships between different socio-ethno-religious groups of pupils/schools. CSE contended that effective collaboration between schools can improve pupil performance; enhance teacher development and motivation; and increase the breadth of the curricular offer.
133. CSE contrasted Shared Education with Integrated Education arguing that the former elevates educational outcomes in respect of core curricular areas as opposed to reconciliation objectives thus enhancing its appeal among divided communities. CSE suggested that these communities may be wary of government-sponsored “community relations” initiatives which they may view as an attempt to denigrate or assimilate distinct identity groups. Integrated Education was described as being an effective mechanism for relationship building but which has only a limited appeal among parents. CSE also contrasted Shared Education with short term largely ineffective contact initiatives which are not curriculum based and which do not offer opportunities for sustained contact. CSE indicated that although educational objectives are foregrounded in its Shared Education programmes, it also provides support for teachers to tackle community relations issues.

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134. CSE contended that Shared Education brings different social or ethnic or religious groups into sustained contact with each other through inter-school collaboration thus lessening anxiety and promoting empathy and better relations. The groups involved in the contact must have equal status; the contact must be in pursuit of common goals; the contact must be characterised by co-operation not competition and must have the sanction of appropriate authority figures. In order to support contact which is “intimate and sustained rather than superficial in nature” and which allows for self-disclosure and the time and space for friendship development, CSE indicated that a high degree of institutional support is required. CSE asserted that the common goal of educational improvement for schools involved in Shared Education must be superordinate to the community relations goal.
135. CSE contended that Shared Education measurably lowers anxiety among pupils towards members of other ethno-religious groups. CSE indicated that anxiety in respect of initial contact is often higher for children with expectations of negative personal consequences or for children from more socially deprived backgrounds or for children from communities with higher historical levels of tension. CSE compared the reactions of children in schools involved in Shared Education with those in the same school who were not involved. CSE concluded that the Shared Education programme was an important determinant of attitudes.
136. CSE also indicated that where children attend schools with a relatively high level of mixing of the 2 communities (i.e. over 10%, so-called supermixed schools) - regardless of whether the school has an Integrated ethos or not but provided that there was a supportive climate for inter-community contact – anxiety about the other community is lower and attitudes are more positive.
137. CSE contended that the barriers to sharing between schools – proximity, travel and timetabling – are overcome by the better Shared Education partnerships.
138. CSE argued that the lack of a co-ordinated policy or clear definition of Shared Education has created a policy vacuum which allows it to be labelled as light-touch and supporting the status quo; affects the depth of meaningful activity; and limits Shared Education’s potential to effect lasting systemic change. CSE called for legislation which will provide a consensus around the definition of Shared Education. CSE argued that further pilot schemes are not required and called for a wide-ranging review of DE policy including Area Planning and the Entitlement Framework so as to ensure that they support Shared Education in future and to establish the basis for the development of policy and strategy.
139. CSE contended that Shared Education should be characterised by: the formation of a strong collective identity; strong professional relationships; opportunities for teacher and organisational development; tangible collective commodities including shared resources; and strong strategic advocates.
140. CSE indicated that strong Shared Education partnerships will naturally evolve into a strong institutional relationship based on mutual benefit.

#### **Methodist College Belfast**

141. Representatives of Methodist College Belfast gave evidence of the school’s experience of sharing and described its ethos. It was argued that the latter had led to a high and sustained degree of mixing of pupils from the 2 main communities and other minority groups. The school was reported to be significantly involved in sharing activities with other schools.
142. Founded by the Methodist Church in 1865, Methodist College, Belfast described itself as an inter-denominational, co-educational grammar school, where “pupils of all faiths and none are welcomed into a safe, supportive and inclusive environment”. The school gave its aims as providing: equal opportunities for all where the diverse talents of pupils are appreciated, nurtured and celebrated; the development of intellectual curiosity, critical debate, active and independent learning, and the pursuit of excellence.

143. The College is a voluntary grammar school. The membership of the Board of Governors is appointed by the Conference of the Methodist Church and the Department of Education or elected as representatives of parents and academic staff. The maximum enrolment is 1810 pupils (current enrolment 1753) between the ages of 11 and 18. Around 43% of students are Protestant; 21% are Catholic and 34% are designated as Other Religion or Religion Not Known. 3% of children are entitled to Free School Meals. 7% are recorded as having Special Educational Need. Around 82% of school leavers go on to Higher Education. 15% go on to Further Education.

**Community Relations Council (CRC) and Equality Commission (the Commission)**

144. Both organizations highlighted in their submissions, the importance of education both formal and informal as a critical player in supporting reconciliation, good relations etc. and in tackling inequality and promoting equality of opportunity. CRC highlighted the role of education in providing opportunities for engagement and enrichment. The Commission argued that societal mixing and social cohesion is limited by separation in educational provision. The Commission argued that the rights of parents to select faith-based schools should not be allowed to overshadow the importance of education in maximizing good relations etc..

145. In the absence of a definition of good relations, the Commission referred to the need for a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding as well as ensuring an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility or harassment while also tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. CRC recommended that schools; BoGs etc. should have a statutory duty to promote good relations and that training for educational organisations should include good relations modules.

146. In respect of a definition for Shared Education, both organisations supported the MAG definition and called for clarity in respect of the relationship between Integrated and Shared Education. The Commission indicated that the definition should highlight how Shared and Integrated Education should interact in order to achieve the overarching educational and societal policy goals.

147. Both organisations generally argued that Shared Education should impact meaningfully on all learners at all phases of education from pre-school to tertiary levels and that this should be achieved by children routinely learning in shared classes via a shared curriculum. The Commission felt that sharing with Special Schools could play an important role in challenging stereotypes and promoting positive attitudes and inclusion in respect of disability. It was also suggested that the concept of sharing should be central to the system of education as a whole; should be supported by a statutory obligation and that the relevant definition should describe a continuum of sharing in schools.

148. It was suggested that the Department should utilize the existing body of research on Shared Education programmes in order to inform coherent policy development in which all educational policies are aligned in support of Shared Education and to engage schools etc. not presently involved in sharing through the production of guidance. In support of this, CRC called for an audit and evaluation of education sharing activities. CRC argued that Shared and Integrated Education were part of a family of policies designed to enhance cohesion in society. The Commission referenced the absence of guidance to schools which wish to collaborate via a federation or confederation or shared communities of learning. Reference was also made to barriers to sharing including: academic selection at 11; separate teacher training arrangements; and the exemption for teachers in respect of Fair Employment legislation. The Commission also referred to “differential patterns of enrolment to education providers” as a barrier to sharing. CRC also recommended changes to educational structures in order to promote sharing in support of better educational outcomes.

149. In respect of enablers for Shared Education, a greater role for Area Learning Communities was suggested as was increased funding via the Common Funding Scheme. It was also recommended that sharing (educational and governance) indicators are developed and



used through the Delivering Social Change programmes to mainstream sharing. CRC raised concerns in respect of the need for DE support to ensure that lessons learned from Shared Education programmes to-date are not lost when the relevant funding comes to an end. CRC also highlighted “weakness” in Area Planning policy and local Area Plans in respect of Shared and Integrated Education. CRC recommended changes to the Area Planning process including a requirement for schools to explore options for sharing which promote normalized interaction and engagement. CRC also called for facilitative dialogue supported by DE and involving parents and children at local Area Planning level in order to encourage Shared and Integrated solutions and to also deal with ethos and identity issues using the UNCRC framework.

150. It was further recommended that maximum use be made of the CRED policy by enhancing funding support and aligning curriculum content more carefully with CRED aspirations. The Commission highlighted the need for better consultation by DE with children and young people in the development of Shared Education policy including the development of a robust recording and evaluation system for feedback. The Commission also indicated that it had commissioned QUB to undertake in-depth research into educational inequalities in Northern Ireland which it hoped will be published in 2015.

**Integrated Education Fund (IEF); Professor Brandon Hamber, Professor Alan Smith, Ulster University**

151. IEF described the education system in Northern Ireland as segregated and providing limited opportunities for children to interact with other communities or appreciate other perspectives and cultures. Prof Hamber indicated that it is questionable whether non-Integrated schools are able to supply the “core skills which a child need to exist, work and play alongside children from other backgrounds”. IEF referenced research which established that mixed religion schools would reduce sectarianism. Prof Hamber referenced research which suggested that religious segregation “promotes less positive attitudes of others”.
152. IEF argued that “educating all children together is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides.” IEF called for wide-ranging reform of education leading to new arrangements “where children learn and are taught together in their local area”. IEF also indicated that it respects the wishes of parents who select various types of school as long as the schools are “wholly inclusive and provide full equality of opportunity.”
153. Prof Hamber and IEF quoted a number of studies highlighting high levels of support for Integrated Education. Both argued that the barriers to Integrated Education included the Area Planning process and called for changes which would require real and very significant parental demand to be recognized by increasing Integrated school places. IEF contended that limited increases in the Integrated school population was wholly a function of limited access to school places. IEF disputed previous evidence from Knox and Borooah that attainment in Integrated schools was lower (with some exceptions) than other types of school. However IEF accepted that attainment was probably a more important consideration for parents than whether there was an Integrated or other ethos.
154. IEF argued that Shared Education unlike Integrated Education provided only limited and poor quality opportunities for collaboration between pupils of different communities. Prof Hamber described Integrated schools as having an explicit ethos to recognize and celebrate diversity whereas even so-called supermixed schools had an over-riding ideology and culture which made it difficult for children of other faiths to feel that their backgrounds had equality of position in the school. Prof Hamber also argued that Shared Education was essentially “a sticking plaster on a system that is largely not conducive to creating positive attitudes between groups.” He suggested that the context of segregated schools would inevitably undermine any achievements associated with sharing.
155. IEF indicated opposition to a statutory obligation to promote Shared Education suggesting that this was a way of “side-stepping the issue of desegregating our education system”.

Prof Hamber suggested that the major sectors exerted a stranglehold on education and had “vested interest in keeping education segregated”.

156. IEF argued that DE should enhance the curriculum to support understanding of political, cultural and religious difference and that schools should be required with the support of DE to embed these principles in their ethos. IEF argued that the promotion of Integrated Education should inform other policies for example shared housing etc.. IEF argued that all grant-aided schools should be required “to be inclusive spaces” that are open to all children, teachers etc. from all backgrounds. IEF argued that funding should be provided to schools in order to encourage greater integration and that progress in this regard should be evaluated by ETI using agreed measures. IEF also recommended: a review of the cost of segregated education; the establishment of a single authority for the administration of education; the establishment of a single teacher training system; the establishment of a single model of governance for all schools; the extension of Fair Employment legislation to all teachers; and the extension of Section 75 to all schools.
157. Prof Hamber recommended some of the above as well as: DE support for the expansion of existing Integrated schools; DE support for schools undertaking sharing in order to convert to Integrated status; realignment of Shared Education resources to support and encourage Integration; and setting a timetable for the full integration of the education system by 2024.
158. Prof Smith made many similar points to IEF and Prof Hamber. Prof Smith also argued that Shared Education initiatives are not new and that sustainability and effectiveness concerns have not been addressed. He argued that the DSC Signature Project societal measures should be compared with the impact of Integrated Education and are based on attitudinal changes which won’t allow evaluation of institutional or systemic change. He highlighted the high costs of the project and the logistical challenges of pupils moving from school to school. Prof Smith argued that an obligation to promote Shared Education would leave the Department open to legal challenge if it failed to meet its targets for Shared Education.

Prof Smith questioned the value of the Lisanelly shared campus project given the limited level of sharing at Key Stage 3. Prof Smith recommended: redirecting the Atlantic Philanthropies money to support voluntary cross-sectoral amalgamations; and introducing measures to require schools to make their workforce, governors and enrolments more diverse.

#### **Belfast, North Eastern, Southern, Western and South Eastern Education and Library Boards (ELBs)**

159. The ELBs advised the Committee of their previous and current support for Shared Education and related programmes including the Primary Integrated and Enriching Education project (NEELB); the Sharing in Education Programme (WELB); and the Shared Education Campuses Programme (SELB) etc.. ELBs indicated that there is already significant policy experience of sharing in Northern Ireland and that future sharing policies should be subject to a rigorous evaluation which establishes the level of successful mainstreaming.
160. The ELBs highlighted that there appeared to be limited awareness and understanding among some stakeholders of Shared Education owing to the absence of a clear definition and uncertainty in respect of the relationship with Integrated Education. WELB described Integrated Education as “only one facet of Shared Education”. BELB highlighted the importance of the definition setting out the primacy of educational benefits for learners while also giving some recognition to the positive societal consequences of Shared Education. BELB indicated that the latter should be assessed through longitudinal studies of young people’s attitudes, behaviours, understanding and reconciliation skills. NEELB also identified economic benefits associated with sharing and argued that the development of a teaching “staffing spine of mutuality” was key to successful sharing projects. Some ELBs referenced increasing diversity in sectors and the need for a definition of Shared Education which recognized this. BELB indicated that the definition should require schools to adopt a sustained approach to sharing which is not limited to the 2 main communities in Northern

- Ireland. ELBs referenced the need for a coherent policy framework which established a clear purpose and rationale for sharing which marries up with other policies e.g. CRED and the relevant parts of the curriculum.
161. WELB argued that sectoral definitions are no longer always accurate or helpful – citing the increasingly large number of parents who choose to designate their children as neither Protestant nor Catholic but as “Other” and a number of schools defined as being in a particular sector but with high proportions of pupils from the community which might previously have been expected to identify with a different sector. WELB suggested that the religious profile of children in many Controlled schools now matches Integrated schools and that consequently the obligation to promote and facilitate formally Integrated schools fails to recognize and disadvantages those Controlled schools in which “natural sharing” has evolved. WELB called for the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project to target support to mixed Controlled schools of this type. WELB also called for a review of school intakes in order to assess the changing pattern of enrolments.
162. WELB recommended that DE develop a strategic plan for cross-sectoral collaboration underpinned by a statutory obligation requiring schools to share; revisions to the School Building Handbook; the development of Schemes of Management and admissions policies for Shared Schools; and the development of governance models for shared campuses which address inequalities in respect of land ownership. NEELB called for a statutory obligation to facilitate and encourage Shared Education. NEELB also indicated that a fully integrated system of schooling is not achievable and that collaboration between sectors should be supported. BELB suggested that School Development Plans and Area Plans should be required to consider sharing options.
163. The ELBs sought an audit and baselining of existing shared activity in order to better define future progress and identify good models of sharing which could be used as a re-source, along with advice and guidance, to support the mainstreaming of sharing. Some ELBs argued that the baselining exercise should be used to identify those schools not involved in sharing. These ELBs argued that contrary to the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project objectives, these schools rather than those undertaking some level of sharing should receive targeted support. SELB suggested that the Integrated sector should play a role in sharing its experience of teaching children about diversity, respect and tolerance for others.
164. In respect of enablers for sharing, ELBs emphasized the importance of clear and committed leadership in BoGs and school leadership teams. ELBs highlighted the need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) which focuses on sharing and which would support teachers who may feel less confident in undertaking this work in some less receptive communities or who may need to tackle concerns or resistance from a minority of parents. BELB indicated that CRED is not currently embedded in ITE and that this should be addressed as DE moves forward with Shared Education. ELBs also identified the importance of local factors including supportive Area Learning Communities, parents and communities as well as close proximity of schools as enablers for sharing.
165. BELB made reference to the importance of partner schools feeling equal and confident with the “history, ethos and value system” in each school being understood and respected. BELB indicated also that the “development of cultural awareness, dialogue and understanding is of central importance in preparing young people for adult life” and is key to widening pupil horizons and providing ways of thinking beyond local contexts.
166. ELBs referenced the need for a significant level of sustained resources including new structures and staff in the Education Authority in order to support the mainstreaming of Shared Education and to meet core costs including transport etc. BELB highlighted the importance of maintaining CRED Enhancement funding. In respect of barriers to sharing, BELB suggested that schools with a more affluent socio-economic pupil profile may be

resistant to sharing in case it has an adverse impact on pupil attainment. WELB appeared to have identified academic selection as a barrier to sharing.

167. NEELB argued that Special Schools have much to offer in respect of peer education and that they should play a prominent role in Shared Education projects.

#### **Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School**

168. Much of Ceara's submission did not address the terms of reference of the inquiry. A representative of Ceara indicated that children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) should generally be educated in appropriately resourced mainstream schools which have "an inclusive orientation". Ceara recognised however that for some children with severe and complex needs, a placement in a Special School would continue to be the most appropriate option. Ceara recommended that staff from Special Schools should support mainstream schools through the Area Learning Communities in delivering education for SEN children.
169. Ceara recommended that Shared Education should include a focus on removing barriers to children with SEN including the promotion of interagency working. Ceara recognized that Shared Education encompasses a broader range of issues than disability. Ceara recommended that schools and units be established with what was termed an "integrated" approach i.e. that would allow children with SEN to attend mainstream school; that dual enrolments be permitted; that collaborative working arrangements between health and education services be encouraged to better facilitate mainstreaming of SEN children; and that Further Education colleges co-operate with schools to provide equality of opportunity for SEN students.
170. A representative of Tor Bank argued that DE policy tends to focus on more enhanced opportunities for mainstream school children to the detriment of the Special School sector. Tor Bank argued that Shared Education / Integrated Education definitions should explicitly refer to learners of all abilities in all schools and should focus on curricular entitlement and inclusion. Tor Bank argued that its values match those of Shared Education while also seeking to service an enrolment from both main communities and the newcomer communities. Tor Bank contended that Special Schools were in fact the first schools that were fully integrated and inclusive and which, despite the absence of policy support from DE, developed links with partner schools in the wider community.
171. Tor Bank argued that owing to current legislation, Special Schools are usually designated as Controlled and are unable to designate themselves as Integrated. Tor Bank sought a change to legislation to permit this and is working with NICIE in respect of a transformation process. The absence of formal Integrated status was said to inhibit the school's journey to full inclusiveness. It was also argued that Integrated status would provide access to other funding streams and allow the school to act as "a hub for community cohesion, community inclusion and peace reconciliation".
172. Tor Bank expressed support for the idea that Shared Education should raise school standards and follow a school improvement agenda which gives greater curriculum entitlement and opportunities for inclusion.

#### **Transferors' Representative Council (TRC)**

173. TRC's submission was endorsed by the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland. TRC indicated its support for the concept of Shared Education citing involvement in the advisory body of the Centred for Shared Education at QUB and the Lisanelly shared campus. TRC argued that Shared Education provides educational benefits particularly at post-primary while also providing "demonstrable reconciliation benefits". TRC suggested that research supports the view that separate schooling can heighten bias and prejudicial stereotyping. TRC appeared to indicate that the curriculum must be the driver for sharing and cited the positive example of sharing in the delivery of the Entitlement Framework.

174. TRC argued that as the concept of Shared Education is not widely understood by parents etc. a statutory definition of Shared Education similar to that proposed by the MAG is required. TRC supported a spectrum of types of sharing reflecting local circumstances and including sharing of facilities, courses, pupils, staff and buildings. TRC believed that sharing should be focused mostly on Controlled and Maintained schools with Integrated schools making an important contribution and with a role for Special schools in all area sharing plans.
175. TRC indicated that it believes that Shared Education encourages co-operation rather than competition between schools. TRC argued that Shared Education requires: parental and governor support and ownership; capacity building among principals and staff; sufficient recurrent resources and often, though not necessarily, close proximity between sharing schools. TRC indicated that although it believes that a fully integrated system of schools is ideal, it is not achievable. It therefore called for Shared Education to be mainstreamed with a statutory obligation on the Department to incentivise creative sharing which recognises local need and the settings of individual schools. TRC indicated that the Controlled Schools Support Council and Education Authority should have key roles in promoting Shared Education.
176. TRC highlighted concerns in respect of the different patterns of ownership between the Controlled and Maintained sectors – in the former, land and buildings are owned by the ELBs; in the latter ownership rests with the Trustees. TRC referred to ongoing work involving DE and the 4 churches to develop a guidance paper for jointly managed church schools – all 4 main Churches would be joint trustees and managers of such a school with a jointly appointed BoG with an agreed vision and ethos based upon the Christian faith. The provision of Religious Education would be agreed by the Churches and the parents. TRC indicated that this kind of school might be proposed in some rural situations where schools from both sectors might be otherwise lost.

#### **Speedwell Trust**

177. Speedwell indicated its support for both Shared and Integrated Education. As its experience is limited to Shared Education projects, Speedwell's evidence was confined to this aspect of the inquiry.
178. Speedwell argued that there is clear demand for Shared Education - 2012 Young Life and Times survey indicated that about 25% of children and young people had no friends in the other main religious community and 45% indicated that there were no facilities for young people of different religions to meet. Speedwell contended that opportunities for sharing serve to alter attitudes positively and reduce community divisions. Speedwell also contended that the OFMDFM Good Relations Indicator Report for 2011-12 reported a significant reduction in schools undertaking community relations activities.
179. Speedwell argued that a statutory definition of Shared Education is urgently required and that it should refer to the facilitation of sustained and meaningful contact between children from the two main religious traditions. Speedwell suggested that the MAG definition, which references sharing between schools in different sectors, allows for sharing between say a Catholic Maintained and Catholic Voluntary Grammar school without a cross-community element. Speedwell also claimed that the Department's School Omnibus Review of 2013 also allowed schools to record activities as being shared even if they only included schools from the same sector. Speedwell argued that the current interim definition(s) of Shared Education and the associated absence of clarity make it impossible for the Department to robustly monitor and assess the quality of Shared Education undertakings by schools.
180. Speedwell contended that only 15% of schools involved in sharing do so on a whole school basis. Speedwell also argued that a large proportion of children have no exposure to sharing at all. Speedwell therefore indicated that it believes that every school should be under a statutory obligation to facilitate and encourage Shared Education and that every class in every school should be given the opportunity to participate in meaningful Shared Education.

181. Speedwell referred to a survey of 130 schools which it had undertaken in June 2014. In respect of barriers/enablers to sharing, the survey highlighted: transport costs; the need for a neutral environment; curriculum pressures which prevent the mainstreaming of sharing and ensure its relegation to that of “add-on” rather than essential element of a pupil’s learning experience; the importance of ownership by senior school leaders and commitment of other staff; and lack of dedicated financial resources. Speedwell advised that in its experience limited parental opposition to sharing has always proved to be manageable through dialogue and engagement.
182. Speedwell referred to its own experience of good practice in sharing including the: Diversity and Drums project (which encourages pupils to appreciate cultural diversity); Connecting Communities project (which encourage pupils to think about cultural diversity) and the Schools’ Engagement Project (which involves engagement with the PSNI on diversity; symbols and flags; and safety-related work e.g. internet; stranger danger etc.).
183. Speedwell criticised DE in respect of the limited evaluation of the sharing aspects of Community Relations Equality and Diversity policy. Speedwell argued that DE should require CRED policy to include cross-community work and that DE should consider a synthesis of the CRED and Shared Education policies with cross-community sharing being at the centre of the new policy. Speedwell argued that schools should be required to report annually on CRED work and should be subject to monitoring by ETI.

#### **Drumragh Integrated College**

184. Representatives from Drumragh Integrated College indicated support for both high quality Shared and Integrated Education provision. Drumragh referred to contact theory – mentioned in the CSE submission – which contends that meaningful supported contact between children of different communities can lead to reduced community tension/division. Drumragh argued that Shared or Integrated provision can only be of good quality if learners are immersed in a learning experience that encourages the development of mutually respectful values. Drumragh called for statutory definitions for Shared and Integrated Education accompanied by obligations on all schools to facilitate and encourage one and/or the other.
185. Drumragh argued that Integrated Education requires young people to define their culture and identity; to present this confidently and to respect others. Drumragh argued that an Integrated Education environment proactively counters sectarian and divisive messages and supports mutual respect. In respect of barriers to Integrated Education, Drumragh appeared to suggest an absence of a wholehearted and active support from DE and the Assembly for Integrated Education. Drumragh called for: proactive practical support for new Integrated schools; over-subscribed Integrated schools to be allowed to grow; a statutory seat and a voice on Area Planning groups in respect of Area Planning; the promotion of the Integrated choice through the Area Planning process as well as equal emphasis, political support and resourcing for Integrated Education and quality Shared Education.

#### **National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the Ulster Teachers’ Union (UTU)**

186. UTU and NASUWT submissions were based largely on commentary on the MAG report on Shared Education. UTU / NASUWT appeared to endorse the MAG definition and vision and argued that there should be a statutory obligation on the Department to encourage and facilitate Shared Education as defined by the MAG. However NASUWT indicated that an agreed definition and a clear, coherent and practical implementation framework were required prior to the application of any related statutory obligations. NASUWT indicated that the framework should, among other things, focus on developing sharing capacity for those institutions with no history of partnership. NASUWT also felt that further Shared Education action should be preceded by clarity on the role of the Education Authority.

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187. UTU/NASUWT indicated general support for the MAG recommendation that Section 75 be applied to all schools - requiring them to promote equality and good relations - insofar as this would not increase the bureaucratic burden on schools. NASUWT highlighted concerns and suggested caution given that the extension of the Section 75 obligations might have unforeseen consequences for schools.
188. UTU/NASUWT indicated support for the removal of academic selection at age 11. NASUWT referred to competition between schools as a barrier to sharing and indicated that selective schools involved in Shared Education should be required to take an active and direct role in the education of pupils enrolled formally in other schools. NASUWT argued that such arrangements would require new school accountability measures. NASUWT also referred to more use of Area Planning to promote all-ability post-primary schools. UTU also commented on Area Planning matters and expressed some concerns about adequate consultation associated with the MAG recommendation in respect of the transformation of schools to another ethos.
189. UTU contended that Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development should support teachers in delivering Shared Education. However UTU also argued that voluntary and community agencies should play their part in dealing with sensitive issues in schools. UTU also contended that the buy-in of parents and carers is essential if Shared Education is to be advanced. NASUWT appeared to argue that parental involvement in the education system was currently limited and linked this to ineffective/inappropriate school accountability measures.
190. NASUWT commented that it supported the MAG view that Integrated Education was a distinct sector rather than a model upon which the development of Shared Education should be based. NASUWT appeared to indicate that DE should fulfil its responsibility to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education. However NASUWT also suggested that “the privileging of integrated education in its current form can not be regarded as a cohesive or credible approach to the development of shared education.” NASUWT highlighted concerns that it believes parents would have “about their children’s education being wholly undertaken in institutions founded on a multi-denominational Christian ethos”.
191. UTU commented that CRED funding is insufficient to allow all schools to participate in Shared Education. UTU argued that support for schools should include a Shared Education premium in the Common Funding Scheme underpinned by reviews by the Education and Training Inspectorate to confirm that funding is well spent and an independent review of the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding and Citizenship areas of the curriculum. NASUWT expressed some concerns about a Shared Education premium – suggesting that Shared Education might be a pretext to reducing educational investment and arguing that the associated funding might be at the expense of other areas of education.
192. NASUWT also commented on increasing demands on school staff – suggesting that the staff burden of partnership arrangements needs to be properly assessed and resourced. UTU indicated its support for the establishment of schools councils as a mechanism for children’s views to be considered. UTU also recommended further collaboration between Special Schools and the mainstream sectors in respect of Shared Education. NASUWT called for a review which would assess how Shared Education might best meet the educational needs of children in mainstream and Special schools.
193. NASUWT commented at some length about practices in other jurisdictions in which they felt that education had been commoditized to the detriment of an overarching educational strategy.

#### **Early Years organisation**

194. The Early Years organisation contended that the “shared/integrated education pathway begins in our pre-school settings, groups, day nurseries, parent and toddler groups and Sure Start programmes.” Early Years argued that Shared and Integrated Education should

embrace an ecological framework – this appears to mean that sharing and integration begin at pre-school and continue throughout primary and secondary education levels. Early Years argued strongly that sharing must be linked to children’s positive sense of their own identity with a clear perspective on children’s rights and supporting services which tackle inclusion issues. The ecological approach suggested by Early Years appears to extend to wider support networks involving parents and communities as well as education providers supported by outreach work designed to engage hard to reach families.

195. Early Years indicated that policy currently failed to recognise how limited emotional development can impair a child’s ability to learn. It was also argued that other barriers to sharing and integration include: failure to engage hard to reach communities; absence of practitioner training and support; lack of policy or agency connectedness; and tokenism in earlier projects.
196. Early Years commented at some length on the Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) Respecting Difference Programme. This is linked to the curriculum for children aged 2 to 7 and includes shared parent and BoG workshops where attitudes to difference are discussed and socio-emotional development is promoted. Early Years indicated that the programme was used to address invisible community divisions which can sometimes be present in rural areas. Early Years also made reference to the Toybox Project (which is described as a rights-based outreach service designed to reduce social and educational exclusion for Traveller children); the OFMDFM Faces and Spaces project and the NI Rural Development Council Rural Respecting Difference Programme – all of which promoted community learning and focused on hard to reach families.
197. Early Years contended that in order to support sharing and integration, the following was required:
- voluntary and community capacity development including greater understanding of Section 75 obligations;
  - changes to Initial Teacher Education so as to ensure knowledge and understanding of diversity issues informs all aspects of the curriculum; and
  - participatory whole community engagement – Early Years is doing some work to establish a “robust focus on participatory evaluation pedagogy and practice.”

#### **Youth Council Northern Ireland (YCNi)**

198. YCNi welcomed “developments aimed at enhancing the shared experience of young people within formal education”. YCNi indicated its role in delivering the CRED policy across Regional Voluntary Headquarter Youth organisations. YCNi appeared to contend that reconciliation was the key objective of Shared Education and highlighted the need for long term resource support.
199. YCNi appeared to support the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education. However YCNi argued that this should not be at the expense of Integrated Education or existing CRED related work plans. YCNi appeared to accept that Integrated and Shared Education were part of a continuum of provision.
200. YCNi highlighted the valuable experience of youth work practitioners who may be able to support the roll-out of Shared Education. YCNi argued that this should be part of a wider strategy designed to enhance the shared educational experience of all. YCNi further suggested that this should be supported by a regional arms length body which would promote peace-building work.

#### **Sir Robert Salisbury**

201. Sir Robert Salisbury suggested that Northern Ireland has too many small schools and too many types of school. The consequences of this level of choice were said to be: an arbitrary and artificial separation of children from the age of 3; substantial and unsustainable



- transport and other costs; restricted curriculum offers in neighbouring, competing schools; and failure to address a long tail of underachievement. Sir Robert suggested that in future parents may have to pay – particularly for transport – in order to support the current range of school choice.
202. Sir Robert recommended that the views of children and young people be sought on education with a view to challenging the vested interests of institutions and particular faiths. Sir Robert indicated that there was previously a need to develop a separate Catholic education system in order to address restricted opportunities for that community. Sir Robert indicated however that the separate Catholic education system “is now clearly part of the problem.” Sir Robert called on all vested interests associated with all sectors to “moderate their entrenched views” and consider the benefits of bringing all children into a single education system supported by a financial incentive package to underpin school reorganisation.
203. Sir Robert recommended that rather than the Committee considering the relative merits of Shared or Integrated Education, Members should consider how education can move to a system which educates all of our children together – based on all-ability Integrated schools.
204. Sir Robert contended that the Area Planning process has permitted separate development of educational sectors leading to the effective capping of the Integrated sector and limitations on the number of new Integrated schools. He called for the facilitation of cross-sectoral amalgamations – possibly leading to transformation to Integrated status - where school closure is threatened. However Sir Robert was also critical of some Shared Education projects which he described as “clearly designed as a survival device to protect small schools which may be under the threat of closure”.
205. Sir Robert highlighted barriers to Integrated Education including the Integrated sector’s concentration on: establishing new schools rather than transforming existing schools; the ethos of Integration rather than on academic attainment; and replicating academic selection rather than developing a “truly integrated ethos”. Sir Robert argued that the expansion of the Integrated sector has been hampered by a lack of strong committed political support and by the continuation of academic selection.
206. In order to enable the growth of Integrated Education, Sir Robert recommended that all pre-school and nursery provision be Integrated. He called for the urgent implementation of Integrated Teacher Training. He also recommended the development of regional 6th form provision linked to Further Education colleges – a similar recommendation was made in the review of the Common Funding Scheme.
207. In respect of Shared Education, Sir Robert indicated that it should be supported as part of the process of Integration. He commented that the educational outcomes of Shared Education schemes are usually ill-defined and difficult to quantify. He also indicated that Shared Education schemes face longer term logistical challenges in respect of joint timetabling and transport etc. which can not be addressed by short term funding support. Sir Robert was highly critical of Shared Education projects which have children from different schools sharing the same building – he described this as likely to perpetuate division.
208. Sir Robert suggested that all Shared Education projects be time bound and include an evaluation of the benefits. He also suggested that in order to support Shared Education, the structure, purpose and composition of BoGs will need to be reviewed.

**Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education (NICCE)**

209. NICCE argued that where a school has a Catholic ethos the school often has an educationally excellent record and always makes a positive contribution to the well-being of society. NICCE described Catholic schools in Northern Ireland as being “among the most racially, ethnically and linguistically integrated.” CCMS highlighted in its submission examples of a number of Catholic schools with a high level of religious mixing e.g. St Columbanus’ College – 41%

- Catholic children; 36% Protestant children and 23% children designated as other or no religion. CCMS contended that these schools are “shining examples of integration, inclusion and diversity which has (sic) arisen naturally over a period of years.” CCMS therefore contended that the education system in Northern Ireland is not as “segregated” as others have suggested. Both CCMS and NICCE take exception to the use of the term “segregated” to describe schools upholding a religious, cultural or linguistic ethos.
210. CCMS/NICCE commented at some length in respect of Integrated Education. NICCE argued that Integrated post-primaries were not oversubscribed overall and that in some areas children from all backgrounds were selecting Catholic ethos post-primaries in preference to Integrated schools. CCMS generally contended that Integrated Education has not succeeded in educating Protestants and Catholics together – pointing out that: most Integrated school pupils are designated as having no religion or a religion which is neither Protestant nor Catholic; parental preference still follows traditional religious affiliation or is based on educational quality or a conveniently located school; and when schools transform the percentage of Protestant enrolments tend to fall.
211. NICCE challenged the assertion that Integrated schools represent the best or the most appropriate way for schools to contribute to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. NICCE argued that Integrated schools aren’t the most practical or effective way of promoting community tolerance. NICCE suggested that more positive societal attitudes recorded in Integrated schools are not necessarily linked to the ethos of the school but may rather be a consequence of parental values. NICCE also recorded some annoyance that major political figures from overseas focus on the Integrated sector’s work on peace and reconciliation and ignore similar work in other sectors.
212. CCMS indicated that the factors preventing further growth in Integrated Education include: continuing cultural, political and social division and socio-economic differences perpetuated by grammar schooling based on academic selection.
213. CCMS argued that given the failure of Integrated Education to significantly address division in society, DE should evaluate the appetite for Integrated Education and should dispense with its obligation to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education. NICCE appeared to agree arguing that the existing obligations serve to actively promote one sector over another which it was felt would deliver neither educational nor societal benefits. CCMS/NICCE argued that focus should be transferred to other initiatives which would “support a spectrum of shared options based on educational provision and access rather than on a political or philosophical basis.” NICCE argued that Integrated schools should not be the “preferred option” in relation to plans to advance Shared Education.
214. CCMS/NICCE indicated that Shared Education should: promote a culture of tolerance and reconciliation; support a pluralist approach to education and the curriculum; and support parental choice insofar as it does not lead to excessive cost. NICCE argued that parental choice and diversity in respect of faith-based education was a fundamental human right. NICCE contended that the current diverse provision in schools in Northern Ireland is not simply “a regrettable remnant of historic ethno-political divisions in our society” but is in fact the hallmark of a diverse and pluralist society. NICCE called upon the Committee to publically recognise the rights of parents to faith-based educational choice. NICCE also challenged the view that extensive school choice leads to excessive costs – arguing that Northern Ireland’s education system has roughly the same level of costs as Wales.
215. CCMS contended that respect for diversity in education required the maintenance of “respect for each individual education sector or provider”. CCMS argued that this has been delivered in Northern Ireland through the CRED policy; CREDIT initiative and through collaboration between the teacher training colleges and in the USA and Scotland etc. through Shared Education campuses. CCMS indicated that it envisages the latter including the sharing of “instructional practices... students working inside each other’s classrooms learning from

and understanding each other, developing relationships and respecting the existence of each other's school".

216. CCMS recommended that in order to encourage sharing, the Department should:
- use the Area Learning Communities to promote sharing at all educational phases;
  - make CRED a key part of the curriculum;
  - encourage joint school curriculum development days;
  - explore options to employ staff working in a number of sharing schools;
  - encourage joint school extra-curricular activities; and
  - encourage joint school parental workshops.
217. CCMS/NICCE also contended that in order to promote Shared Education, the Department should promote a social balance in schools by ending academic selection and enforcing equality of access based on agreed criteria and thus creating a stable multi-sectoral equal system which can allow further sharing to be explored on a bottom-up basis. CCMS appeared to suggest that the responsibility to promote Shared Education should lie with schools and with the Department.

#### **Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership**

218. The two primary schools in Brookeborough (St Mary's Primary School and Brookeborough Primary School) briefed the Committee on their experience of Shared Education. The schools indicated that they have been developing cross-community linkages for over 40 years. Following a request at a joint parents' meeting of the two school communities, on 27th February 2014, a survey was undertaken to ascertain the support for a shared campus in Brookeborough. The survey was reported as finding overwhelming support for a Shared Campus, from parents, prospective parents, governors, staff and members of the local community.
219. A proposal was submitted to DE under the Shared Education Campuses Programme however this proposal was not successful. The schools applied again under the second call and await the Department's decision. The Fermanagh Trust facilitated a further community survey in regard to this application in March 2014, distributed to parents, staff, churches and the wider community. The outcome was that 93% of the community supported a shared campus. The schools indicated that the campus has the support of all the political parties in Fermanagh District Council. Representatives of the schools also indicated that there was a high level of community support for continued sharing in the locality.

#### **Assembly Education and Research Services – Feedback from Schools**

220. Assembly Education Service undertook a number of focus groups with children from schools from across Northern Ireland representing all of the main educational sectors. Assembly Research Service also reviewed the findings of the 2012 Kids' Life and Times and Young Life and Times survey data.
221. A summary paper is included at Appendix 6. The findings were as follows:
- More primary than post-primary pupils had participated in Shared Education (88% at primary compared to 55% at post-primary);
  - A majority of respondents to the survey thought that Shared Education was a 'good idea', with greater support evident at post-primary;
  - Catholic students were more likely to state that Shared Education was a good idea and less likely to say that they had not enjoyed the projects they had participated in than their Protestant counterparts;
  - A number of students questioned the value of Shared Education and suggested that it could emphasise differences;

- Potential advantages highlighted by young people included increased educational opportunities, making new friends and greater tolerance;
- Perceived disadvantages included having to mix with people perceived as being very different to them or disruptive, challenges around integrating during Shared Education and having to travel to another school; and
- There was support for Integrated Education among most participants in the focus groups, although some stated that they preferred to attend school alongside others of a similar background.

## Findings and Recommendations

222. The Committee considered: 100+ written submissions; feedback from an informal evidence event; and 24 formal oral evidence sessions to the inquiry. The Committee undertook 5 visits to Integrated schools and Shared Education projects. The Committee commissioned Assembly Education Services to obtain feedback from a representative sample of school children and Assembly Research Services to review the findings of the 2012 Kids' Life and Times and Young Life and Times survey. The Committee also commissioned a number of research papers on relevant related matters.
223. The Committee reviewed a wide range of opinions, suggestions and assertions: from school children and young people; from parents; from teachers and their representative organisations; from academics; from stakeholder organisations and from the Department of Education. The Committee's findings and recommendations in respect of its inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education are set out below.

### **The need for sharing and integration in Education**

224. The Committee was very much impressed by the extent and meaningful character of sharing and co-operation by many schools within sectors and indeed between different sectors across Northern Ireland. Members noted that sharing often includes cherished, popular activities many of which have been undertaken by some schools for decades. Members felt that these local initiatives had often been generated by communities and school leaders, largely, though not always independently of the Department and its Arms Length Bodies. Notwithstanding the above, the Committee noted with concern that a proportion of schools remained uninvolved in sharing activities. The Committee agreed that in order to address this going forward and to generally promote the clear educational benefits of sharing, a clear policy definition is essential. This is discussed further below.
225. The Committee also agreed that the Department and all of the relevant Arms Length Bodies should be statutorily obliged, in line with the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education. Members felt that this should include the consideration of the incentivisation of participation by all schools in Shared Education rather than the application of statutory obligations for schools, as is discussed further below.
226. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #1: The Committee recommends that the statutory obligation to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education – as set out in the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - should be extended to the Department and all of its relevant Arms Length Bodies. The Committee further recommends that the obligation should include the consideration of the incentivisation of participation by all schools in Shared Education.**

227. In respect of integration, whether that be in a school, formally defined as Integrated or in a non-Integrated school in which children of different backgrounds mix together quite naturally, the Committee noted that demand for this kind of inclusive ethos education, in various parts of Northern Ireland and for various reasons, is high. The Committee noted that across the different sectors where natural integration or mixing was significant in schools, there was a clear commitment to educational improvement and an all-inclusive and welcoming ethos in which cultural differences were accepted and celebrated. The Committee therefore agreed that in order to promote greater mixing in schools and facilitate natural integration, Departmental policy should be reviewed and amended if necessary in order to support the associated parental demand. This too is discussed further below.

## Shared Education

### **Defining Shared Education**

228. As indicated above, Members were very much impressed by the attitudes and actions of school leaders and school communities involved in Shared Education activities. The Committee noted that most witnesses identified the urgent need for policy clarity in respect of Shared Education. Indeed, following the passage of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, and the anticipated placing of a statutory obligation on the Education Authority to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education, a statutory definition for this policy area will also now be required.
229. It is understood that a Shared Education Bill will be introduced to the Assembly shortly. During the expected Committee Stage, the Committee will likely confirm its views in respect of the statutory definition for Shared Education. In the meantime, Members agreed to consider the current characterisations of Shared Education and the nature of a useful policy definition.
230. During the inquiry the Committee noted a number of different descriptions of Shared Education including that used by the Ministerial Advisory Group which covers inter-sectoral co-operation always involving 2 or more schools. The Committee also noted DE's draft Shared Education policy and draft Shared Education Bill which appeared to employ different definitions – e.g. the latter didn't reference educational sectors and also referred to religious affiliation as well as levels of social deprivation of children. Additionally the Committee noted a number of Shared Education programmes which appeared to employ variants on the definitions mentioned above.
231. The Committee agreed that Shared Education has become a widely used umbrella term often referring to very different, highly valued activities some of which date back decades in certain school communities. The Centre for Shared Education (CSE) observed “..the terminology of shared education has now become so ubiquitous that it has been applied to a vast range of different things.” CSE felt that this had allowed the detractors of Shared Education to characterise it as light-touch and supportive of the status quo.
232. The Committee felt that the absence of policy clarity appeared to be a consequence of Departmental strategy. When asked about what is/isn't Shared Education, officials indicated: “We look at everything on a case-by-case basis. There is no definite, ‘You can’ or ‘You cannot’...We need to look at whether it is bringing a good community balance and a good social balance together.” Additionally when Members sought clarity on the relative importance of societal reconciliation and educational objectives, DE appeared to try to square the circle by saying: “...we see reconciliation outcomes as integral to and interdependent with educational outcomes and not as something separate, irrespective of the educational context or setting.”

### **Defining Shared Education – the educational benefits**

233. In the absence of necessary clarity from the Department, the Committee considered how Shared Education might be defined.
234. Witnesses discussed the educational context for Shared Education, CSE arguing that this should be based on pupils engaging “in sustained curriculum-based interaction” where “educational priorities are foregrounded...which means that teachers do not feel under the same pressure to engage with issues that are controversial, although many do.”
235. The Department emphasised the importance of collaboration between schools indicating that the Shared Education policy “...is based on research that shows that, when schools collaborate, they can improve educational outcomes, and, if they do it on a cross-community basis, reconciliation outcomes.” DE also indicated that a “..very good school can raise the standards of other schools and share with them how it has reached that standard.” Professors Knox and Boroah argued that “...at the core of the shared education model is this idea of

creating interdependencies between schools, and at the core of that is good collaboration.” and “...shared education is more likely to be beneficial where you have two or more schools of different management types and the end goal is to im-prove education outcomes.”

236. Witnesses indicated the barriers to this kind of collaboration including simple logistics including excessive pupil travel times and costs. However Professor Austin argued in respect of logistical barriers to sharing that “.. insufficient attention has been paid to the role of ICT.... every school in Northern Ireland already has all the equipment that they need to work together.” The Committee noted the achievements and popularity of the Dissolving Boundaries which used IT infrastructure in an innovative way in order to support school collaborations.
237. Some witnesses highlighted the low number of schools in DE’s figures involved in whole school sharing. It was even suggested that this was evidence that some engagement in Shared Education was tokenistic and was in some cases part of a strategy to defer the closure or rationalisation of unsustainable rural schools.
238. A number of organisations pointed out that Shared Education should not be restricted to primary and post-primary school children in school settings only. The Early Years organisation for example argued for the inclusion of pre-school settings in sharing activities referring to the proposed Together: Building a United Community buddy scheme. The Youth Council NI highlighted its long term role and long-standing obligations to promote cross-community interactions involving young people. “The core principles for the delivery of shared education, the policy aim and the objectives need to be amended to be inclusive of Youth Service and the bodies that support its work”.
239. The Committee accepted the need for policy clarity and a statutory definition for Shared Education. The Committee agreed that Shared Education should promote educational improvement through curriculum-based interactions. The Committee felt that although societal or reconciliation considerations were important, they should not outweigh educational objectives.
240. The Committee felt that the educational benefits of Shared Education should be experienced by children and young people in all phases of their education. Members agreed that the best use of existing IT infrastructure should be made in order to tackle the very real logistical challenges associated with school interactions. In order to manage the perception of tokenism, the Committee felt that Shared Education should generally be focused on whole school involvement and that the Department should promote this kind of engagement.
241. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #2: The Committee recommends that Shared Education be defined as curriculum-based interactions that always foreground educational improvement and involve children and young people in sustained whole school/organisation activities across all educational phases while making op-timal use of existing IT infrastructure.**

#### **Defining Shared Education – the societal benefits**

242. In addition to the educational benefits of Shared Education, the Committee considered the nature of the associated societal benefits.
243. CSE indicated: “We have had short-term contact initiatives or full immersion integrated education. The shared model, which is theory-informed, plugs the gap between the short-term contact initiatives, which are known to be largely ineffective, and integrated education, which is effective but which has had limited impact or appeal.” Professors Knox and Borooah also highlighted the differences between Integrated and Shared Education, arguing “The scope of what is referred to as ‘shared education’ is actually a lot broader than the scope of integrated education, because it refers to all section 75 categories.” Representatives from Integrated schools disputed this and argued that their inclusive ethos extended well beyond the 2 main community designations.

244. In terms of the relationship between Integrated and Shared Education, the Department clarified that it viewed Integrated Education as the apex of the continuum of sharing and that consequently "...it is not a question of either/or with regards to integrated education and shared education." Given the linkage between the 2 policy areas, the Committee therefore noted with surprise that although the draft Shared Education policy gave particular recognition for Integrated schools as exemplars of best sharing practice, the Shared Education Bill is not expected to reference Integrated Education at all.
245. In respect of the impact of Shared Education on relations between the 2 largest communities in Northern Ireland, CSE argued that "...contact between pupils from different divided groups, which, in the case of Northern Ireland, are Catholic and Protestant, reduces prejudice, increases trust and generally promotes a more positive response to the out-group, or the other."
246. The ELBs however also highlighted the changing nature of the school population – with more children designating as neither Catholic nor Protestant but "Other" and an increase in newcomer children who are generally less likely to identify primarily with the Northern Ireland community designations. Although newcomer children currently account for only a small proportion of the school population – around 8k at primary and around 2k at post-primary – in other jurisdictions e.g. the Republic of Ireland and in geographical areas of Northern Ireland they form an important part of an increasingly diverse school enrolment.
247. In its draft Shared Education policy, the Department appeared to support the view that Shared Education would involve a wide range of Section 75 groups – not just the 2 largest religious communities. However in the revised draft Bill, it is anticipated that Shared Education will be much more tightly defined and limited to "the education together of those of different religious belief and socio-economic background". The Committee understands that in the case of the latter this means participating schools must be representative of different religious belief and different socio-economic background.
248. In its evidence TRC highlighted some concerns about socio-economic levels of deprivation becoming a requirement for Shared Education projects. TRC indicated that "a major piece of work needs to be done on helping with socio-economic disadvantage in education." but that this should sit outside Shared Education in order to ensure an appropriate level of focus.
249. As part of the inquiry, the Committee also considered the overlap between Shared Education programmes and the CRED policy and scrutinised the Department's decision to discontinue earmarked funding for the latter. Although a distinction appeared to have been drawn by the Department between CRED – a curriculum-based policy - and Shared Education – a programme designed to enhance educational improvement and societal reconciliation by co-operation between schools – the Committee noted that following the discontinuation of CRED earmarked funding, DE believed that there would be a degree of substitution of CRED by Shared Education. DE indicated: "The advancement of shared education, including the provision of funding, will allow educational settings to continue to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction between young people from different community backgrounds."
250. The Committee noted the very high level of participation in schools and youth settings for CRED activities and the significantly positive impact on inter-communal attitudes. The Committee understands that the mainstreaming of the CRED policy is currently subject to review. The Committee hopes that notwithstanding budget constraints, earmarked support for some CRED projects might be resumed in future. In any event, the Committee agreed that CRED should continue to play an important role in improving attitudes in schools and relationships in respect of Section 75 groups.
251. In respect of the societal focus of Shared Education, the majority of Committee Members felt that in line with changing patterns of religious designation; increasing diversity in the school population and the impact of socio-economic deprivation on educational attainment, the key societal objective for Shared Education should not be limited to solely improving relations between Protestants and Catholics. The Committee felt that the Department should also



exploit the natural synergy between the common societal objectives of the CRED policy and Shared Education.

252. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #3: Further to Recommendation #2, the Committee recommends that Shared Education should be defined as promoting attitudinal improvement and meaningful contact involving children and young people from all relevant Section 75 groups in line with the objectives of the CRED policy.**

**Shared Education – widening engagement / providing support**

253. As indicated above, the Committee studied the welcoming ethos of a number of Integrated and other mixed non-Integrated schools which provided evidence to the inquiry and which were involved in Shared Education partnerships. The Committee also considered evidence from 2 Special Schools in respect of Shared Education. Members visited Ceara School (as part of its consideration of the SEND Bill); noted the high level of mixing between the 2 largest communities and indeed other communities; and were greatly impressed by the inclusive nature of the school and its proactive engagement with mainstream post-primaries. Members also felt that pre-school settings and nursery schools provided positive examples of an inclusive ethos. Members felt that in order to support Shared Education, greater use should be made of the experience and practices of these schools.

254. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #4: The Committee recommends that the Department should do more to disseminate the good practice in Integrated, other mixed non-Integrated and Special Schools as well as pre-school settings and nursery schools in respect of the development of an inclusive ethos in order to promote Shared Education more widely.**

255. During the inquiry, feedback from school pupils in respect of Shared Education highlighted some concerns about engagement and interaction with children from other communities. Some witnesses referenced the importance of establishing cultural certainty among participants prior to the commencement of Shared Education programmes. Others mentioned the need for support for parents and communities as a prerequisite for successful sharing. The teaching unions highlighted the expertise in the voluntary sector and the need for relevant training for teachers both at Initial Teacher Education and through Continuous Professional Development.

256. The Department emphasised the importance of strong connections between schools and communities: “.. we expect schools to have good connections with the community; parents to be well aware of what the shared education programmes are doing; schools to be using community resources; and, when possible, bringing in people from the community with experience of different areas — for example, if history is being taught, there may be people with a recent experience.”

257. In respect of partnerships between schools and the Peace IV programme, DE indicated that building “the capacity of organisations to develop collaborative working where there is no history of partnerships between those schools will be addressed through the work that we have undertaken with the Special EU Programmes Body. The design of the shared education thematic area within Peace IV will recognise that organisations that have not yet engaged in sharing need a different type of support.”

258. In respect of teachers, DE advised that it “has a commitment to liaise with higher education institutions and other relevant education providers on aligning their approaches to professional learning for shared education practitioners” and that appropriate training will allow teachers “first and foremost to address their own bias and what they perceive to be difficult issues in interacting with children and young people in the same forum.”

259. The Committee welcomed the provision of Shared Education support for pupils, parents and communities to be provided by teachers and other (community and voluntary) facilitators. Members also welcomed the Department's assurances in respect of training for teachers in Shared Education as part of ITE and CPD for teachers. The Committee noted with disappointment that the Department appeared to be incapable of giving a clear explanation the term "equality of identity" in the draft Shared Education policy. The Committee felt that it was essential that this term be properly defined in the final version of the Shared Education policy.
260. The Committee felt that the supporting activities for Shared Education should ensure that those involved have received appropriate training in developing the cultural certainty of participating groups with a view to sustaining a lasting partnership of equals. Members believed that this would go some way to improve engagement with those schools not currently involved in Shared Education.
261. The Committee also felt that the replacement of the Education and Library Boards by the Education Authority provided an opportunity for the Department to address what was described as patchy support for Shared Education in parts of Northern Ireland. The Committee agreed that the Department should ensure a consistent level of good quality support by the Education Authority for school communities undertaking Shared Education.
262. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #5: The Committee recommends that the Department should work with the Education Authority to provide consistent support for Shared Education collaborations with a tailored programme of training and guidance for teachers, parents, children and communities so as ensure the appropriate recognition and celebration of cultural differences and thus the confident participation by all schools.**

**Shared Education – measuring the impact**

263. Sir Robert Salisbury suggested in evidence that all Shared Education programmes should be required to demonstrate educational and societal impact within a reasonable timescale.
264. In respect of educational impact, the Committee noted Departmental confirmation that it is to use the end of Key Stage Levels of Progression (LoPs) to assess educational improvement in the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Programme. Members felt that given: the concerns previously expressed by the General Teaching Council NI in respect of the efficacy of LoPs; the very low levels of participation; and the ongoing related industrial action, it was both surprising and unwise for the Department to link participation in Shared Education with the implementation of LoPs. That said, the Committee accepted that given the important linkage between Shared Education and educational improvement, it was essential that a reasonable and acceptable educational measurement be developed.
265. The Committee noted that societal measures of improvement related to Shared Education were even more difficult to establish. DE advised in respect of the DSC project that: "... the business case has identified three measures that Queen's, which has done a lot of work around this measurement and reconciliation, has come up with. They are across good friendship, positive action tendencies and inter-group anxiety. So we have very clear measures for the Delivering Social Change signature project that we will expect to be moving, and we set out targets for those. Part of the difficulty is that we need to make sure that this work does not become a bureaucratic overhead for schools and that it is understandable to teachers." DE indicated that going forward it has... "asked the inspectorate, over the four-year period, to consider other measures that we can use." DE advised however that: "The concept of measuring reconciliation outcomes is one that we have all struggled with."
266. The Committee accepted the need for objective measures of societal progress but felt that in addition to attitudinal surveys this should include, in the medium to longer term, other macro-societal changes including some or all of the following: the level of natural mixing in schools; the development of shared campuses; the transformation or establishment of new Integrated

schools; the establishment of Jointly Managed Church schools etc. – all of which might point towards a reducing level of sectoralisation in education in Northern Ireland.

267. Given the substantial investment of resources in Shared Education through a large of number of schemes, the Committee agreed that the objective measurement of impact both educational and societal was sensible and necessary.

268. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation.

**Recommendation #6: The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to a wide range of agreed, objective impact measures for Shared Education based on educational improvement in the first instance and societal reconciliation progress in the second. The Committee further recommends that information in respect of the educational and societal impact of Shared Education should be published regularly by the Department.**

#### **Shared Education – Obligations for Schools**

269. The Department of Education's statistics indicate that 24% of schools are not involved in sharing. The Speedwell Trust - an organisation involved in Shared Education - contended that the level of tokenistic participation was much higher. In order to counter this, some witnesses suggested that Section 75 obligations including the promotion of good relations or participation in Shared Education should be extended to include all schools.

270. In respect of obligations on schools relating to sharing, the Department advised: "The experience that we have built up over a number of years and all the research indicate that you need community support. If we started obliging communities to go down that route, you are going against that."

271. In respect of Section 75 obligations for schools, DE indicated that: "Other jurisdictions have what is sometimes referred to as an 'equality-lite' scheme for schools. It is light on bureaucracy as opposed to light in ensuring that they meet the groups. There are other ways to move that forward, and we would want to explore this area as part of that. OF-MDFM is in the lead on that process."

272. Although the Committee agreed that it supported the extension of equality practices in respect of employment in schools, Members felt that the extension of other obligations would amount to a significant bureaucratic burden for schools with limited benefit for school children etc. and society at large.

#### **Shared Education – including individual schools**

273. The Department has generally defined Shared Education as involving 2 or more schools or educational providers in a collaboration designed to effect educational improvement while also addressing societal concerns.

274. A number of witnesses suggested that Shared Education could be undertaken in a single school where that school's ethos had led to a significant level of representation of the minority community. Methodist College, for example, argued that the "... word 'shared' does not necessarily have to mean that people who tend to be from different backgrounds meet and use the same facility. It is better...to have those same people under the same roof being educated in the same way by the same people and enjoying the same experiences, and that is really where the qualities of tolerance and equality come into play."

275. The Committee noted a number of mixed schools in different parts of Northern Ireland and in different sectors. Members were impressed by their commitment to an inclusive ethos even where there was a strong religious identity. The Committee did not accept Professor Hamber's argument that supermixed schools inevitably had an over-riding ideology and culture which made it difficult for children of other faiths to feel that their backgrounds had equality of position in the

school. The Committee also did not accept his argument that the context of so-called segregated schools would inevitably undermine any achievements associated with sharing.

276. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #7: The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to the inclusion of individual schools or educational providers in Shared Education programmes where this can be shown to lead to educational and societal benefit for the wider community and where the participating children and young people include significant levels of representation from different Section 75 groups.**

**Shared Education – rural sharing and sustainability**

277. Sir Robert Salisbury argued that Shared Education in some rural settings has been used to maintain unsustainable school provision. He indicated that some of “...the (shared education) schemes were clearly designed to protect schools that were under threat of closure.”

278. The Committee took evidence in respect of Shared Education projects in Moy and Brookeborough and other rural school sustainability projects. The Committee noted the lack of commentary from the Equality Commission / Community Relations Council in respect of these particular projects and their general observations that there “...is research in other areas which shows that, where you have one building and that building is used in a segregated way, it actually makes the situation worse....That reinforces segregation. It re-inforces mindsets and attitudes.” The Committee also noted evidence from the Integrated Education Fund and Professor Hamber who suggested that “Shared campuses may seem like a well-intentioned, perhaps, stepping stone in some people’s eyes towards greater integration in the education system, but evidence from other contexts suggests that it might actually increase animosity.”

279. In respect of Moy, the Committee strongly felt that a positive community relations endeavour designed to promote inclusion and co-operation between the 2 main communities in an isolated rural area had been badly misrepresented by some stakeholders. Although some Members felt that another solution to the situation in Moy might have been employed – i.e. a single new Integrated school - the Committee believed nonetheless that the shared campus plans would lead to educational improvement and were also an important milestone in developing local community relations. In respect of Brookeborough, Members were also impressed by the positivity, enthusiasm and inclusive ethos of the co-operating schools. That said, the Committee noted that other collaborative solutions including federative or shared management or other arrangements could, if they garnered community support, provide more cost effective solutions.

280. As part of its review of Area Planning, the Committee accepted that a level of rationalisation of the schools’ estate in rural areas was necessary given inevitable demographic changes and that Shared Education should not be used to delay inevitable changes to school provision in rural or other areas. The Committee therefore felt that the Department should do more to counter potential misuse of Shared Education support and require participants to commit to longer term progress.

281. Overall the Committee generally supported the Shared Education campus and similar projects that it had studied but felt that the Department should ensure that these should lead to further and improved educational co-operation in the longer term.

282. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #8: The Committee recommends that the Department should do more to promote and secure the support of communities for innovative cost effective approaches to sharing in education in rural areas including e.g. federative or shared management arrangements or other solutions including Jointly Managed Church schools or amalgamations, as appropriate. The Committee further recommends that in order to ensure**

**that support is properly targeted, communities engaged in Shared Education should be required to demonstrate initial and longer term educational and societal benefits.**

### **Integrated Education**

283. The Committee considered evidence from a number of passionate adherents of the ethos of Integrated Education – these included school children; principals and teachers; representative organisations and academics. Members were particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and sincerity of pupils from Integrated schools and greatly enjoyed the formal and informal interactions undertaken in this regard during the inquiry.
284. The Committee also considered evidence from representative organisations and academics who expressed contrary opinions in respect of Integrated Education.
285. Although the Committee generally encourages policy debate, Members were taken aback by a number of exchanges between certain organisations and individuals with differing views, in which facts were substituted by opinion and which consequently did little (or nothing) to illuminate the matters at issue. That said, Members felt that the heated and unreasonable nature of some of the exchanges provided a very useful insight into the sectoral landscape of education in Northern Ireland.

### **Integrated Education – low uptake**

286. Despite a long-standing Departmental legal obligation to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education, this sector accounts for only a small proportion of schools and pupils in Northern Ireland. Witnesses disputed the reasons for this.
287. The Integrated Education Fund and Professor Hamber contended that the Department had not lived up to its obligations and had failed to take proper account of parental demand through the Area Planning process: “Comprehensive research on the subject has concluded that the main reason for preferences for integrated education not being met is insufficient numbers of shared spaces to accommodate demand.”
288. NICIE argued that low uptake of Integrated Education was a consequence of none of the sectoral bodies being obliged to formally plan for Integrated Education: “Despite the Minister saying that he wants area-based planning to be for areas not sectors, individuals not institutions, and that he wants innovative solutions, the CCMS has managed and planned for the Catholic side, and the ELBs have managed and planned for the controlled side, and nobody is managing planning for the integrated side...”
289. Others offered contrary arguments. Knox and Borooah argued that academic performance drives parental choice and that as the performance of some Integrated schools was in their opinion, poor, low levels of uptake were therefore unsurprising: “...the (Integrated) sector is undersubscribed by about 9%” and “...the controlled integrated sector is a very poorly performing sector... that drives parental choice in terms of those schools.” “Ideologically, people can say that they welcome attendance at integrated schools, but the evidence tells us that their choice is informed by educational preference, rather than whether it is an integrated school.”
290. Sir Robert Salisbury and the Centre for Shared Education (CSE) at QUB agreed that surveys which consistently show very high levels of support for Integrated Education do not translate into enrolments in Integrated schools. Sir Robert said: “You get returns that say that 80% of parents want integrated education, but they do not opt for it when it comes to it.” Representatives of CSE said: “When you have 80% of respondents to a survey saying that they would send their children to an integrated school, you would expect every integrated school to be bursting, and that is not the case.”
291. CSE contended that Integrated Education was less popular than expected as it tended to foreground reconciliation objectives at the expense of educational attainment and that Integrated Education was viewed by some communities as eroding its identity.

292. This was strongly disputed by Drumagh Integrated College and other witnesses who highlighted the recognition and celebration of identity and the commitment to academic excellence as key parts of the ethos of Integrated Education.
293. The Committee struggled to determine whether limited uptake of Integrated Education is a consequence of relatively poor attainment by some Integrated schools and/or limited availability of Integrated places owing to either competition from, or unfair treatment through the Area Planning process by, other sectors and/or the failure of the Department to properly gauge and plan for parental preference in respect of Integrated Education and/or an over-estimation of the enthusiasm of parents by the sector for the current brand of Integrated Education.
294. The majority of Members of the Committee did not accept the claims made by witnesses that Integrated Education inevitably undermined community identity and that it wrongly and always foregrounded reconciliation objectives at the expense of educational attainment. Members did however feel that perception issues in respect of Integrated Education may serve as a limit to uptake in some communities.
295. In respect of parental enthusiasm, it is clear that in various parts of Northern Ireland support for integration – whether that be formal (in an Integrated school) or natural integration (sometimes in a mixed or in a so-called super-mixed school) – owing to demographic reasons or a perception of excellence or an inclusive ethos or other reasons, is high. However the majority of Members also felt that given the limited over-subscription in Integrated schools generally, the levels of parental support for Integrated Education reported by the sector do not appear to be matched by actual demand for school places.
296. In its position paper on Area Planning, the Committee had previously set out its views on the Needs Model which underpins Area Planning. The Committee noted that Needs Model projections had never been amended in order to enhance Integrated sector provision in line with parental demand. The Committee also noted the shortcomings of the Needs Model in respect of its failure to promote mixing in schools and its inability to recognise an increasingly diverse school population with a growing level of inter-sectoral transfers.
297. Also as part of its consideration of Area Planning, different treatments for the Irish Medium sector when compared to the Integrated sector were noted – e.g. different levels of support for home to school transport; the establishment of IME post-primary provision with very low initial enrolments; and a high level of surplus IME primary provision in e.g. Belfast, compared to a relatively low level of Integrated provision in the same area which was over-subscribed. This was felt to be notable given the identical statutory Departmental obligations to facilitate and encourage both types of education.
298. Some Members disputed the above analysis, labelling it as a simplistic summary which fails to appreciate the fundamental differences and the historical development of both sectors. Other Members contended that neither the IME nor the Integrated sectors should be the subject of statutory obligations to facilitation and encouragement as the development of educational sectors should be simply driven by parental preference and educational need.
299. The Committee felt that the disparity in claims and the perceived different treatments for sectors could be addressed in a Departmental review which encompasses how it meets its obligations in respect of Integrated Education. The Committee understands that a limited review may have been undertaken following the Drumragh judgement. However very little information on the outcome of this review has been published.

**Integrated Education - sectoral bodies / community designation**

300. All or almost all witnesses to the inquiry appeared to concede that Integrated Education was at “the upper end of the sharing continuum” or at the “apex” of sharing. Despite this, the evidence indicated a considerable level of opposition from some witnesses to an increase in the number of Integrated Education schools. These submissions were at times characterised

- by terse exchanges and unedifying disputes often played out in the press with more measured oral contributions made by some of the same protagonists at the Committee.
301. NICIE appeared to accuse the Catholic church of being historically implacably opposed to Integrated Education and appeared to argue that non-Integrated schools indirectly pro-moted division. NICIE indicated in written evidence that there is "...a critical difference between catholic and integrated schools where an equality of respect is evident for all."
302. CCMS'/NICCE's retort was to call for the rescinding of the relevant Departmental obligation. IEF and Professor Hamber strongly opposed this indicating that "Societies that have made the transformation from highly sectorised education systems have not done it through voluntary integration. Desegregation in the United States would not have happened if it had been left to parents to integrate voluntarily."
303. TRC indicated: "We have not really been opposed to integrated education. As Protestant Churches, our line has been that, where a community wished to develop integrated education and there was no threat to controlled school provision, we have supported it." "Our main focus has been controlled schools, and defending controlled schools has been our key purpose."
304. CCMS/NICCE set out its difficulties with Integrated (and Controlled) Education highlighting what it saw as the absence of a guarantee of a Christian ethos while expressing support for Jointly Managed Church schools, arguing that in the latter "...the legal construct guarantees the religious ethos" whereas in Controlled schools "...there is no legal protection to a religious ethos in those schools."
305. The Committee also noted very surprising suggestions that, following the Drumragh judgement, the Department may be about to amend the role of sectoral bodies in respect of the obligation to facilitate and encourage Integrated Education. CCMS/NICCE indicated: "... if we interpret Judge Treacy's ruling in a particular way, CCMS and, indeed, the boards have an obligation now to promote integrated schools when we do not have an obligation to promote our own schools."
306. The Committee was nonplussed by the heated and antagonistic nature of some of the exchanges between sectoral organisations and recorded its concern in respect of the unfair, inaccurate and ill-informed claims that were made about other sectors' ethos and commitment to tolerance. The Committee agreed that it simply did not accept that non-Integrated schools directly or indirectly promote division or that they lack an ethos of tolerance and respect. The Committee felt that this was evidenced by popular mixed and su-per-mixed non-Integrated schools throughout Northern Ireland. The Committee also did not accept the criticism of Controlled and Integrated schools which implied that they might perhaps in some way not fully support or respect a Christian ethos. This too was evidenced by many schools in those sectors which clearly demonstrate the contrary.
307. Given the frequency and nature of the unedifying exchanges between sectoral bodies, the Committee was forced to the conclusion that a key barrier to improved co-operation between sectors and increased mixing in schools may be the unhelpful attitude of some of the representative bodies of the educational sectors.
308. Amid the questionable claims and counter claims, the Department usefully provided written evidence on the actual degree of mixing in Integrated schools – almost all have over 10% enrolment from the minority community. DE indicated that Integrated schools should aim to have more than 30% representation from the minority community and "...the majority of integrated schools have achieved the 30% target." However DE advised that there "... is much more to integrated status than simply the religious intake..." and referred to the work of NICIE in respect of the ethos of Integrated schools. DE also indicated that there "...are important aspects of integrated provision that are much more than just a numbers game about minority population at the school."

309. Witnesses to the Committee's recent scrutiny of Area Planning referred to a growing practice among parents of designating their children as neither Protestant nor Catholic and called into question the relevance of community designations in schools generally and in defining Integrated schools in particular.
310. The Committee noted calls from a number of witnesses for wide-ranging reviews of Integrated Education accompanied by targets and obligations to greatly improve uptake.
311. The Department advised that the Minister is considering the need for and the scope of a strategic review of Integrated Education. The Committee believes that this strategic Departmental review may provide an opportunity to consider issues in respect of the uptake of Integrated Education as well as the relationship between sectoral bodies and the meaningfulness of the current Departmental definition of an Integrated school which is linked to the community designation of the enrolment.
312. The Committee therefore made the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #9: The Committee recommends that the Department under-take a strategic review of its approach to Integrated Education, the terms of reference of which should include: the effectiveness of its actions in encouraging and facilitating this form of education in particular its assessment and treatment of parental perceptions and demand for Integrated Education in the Area Planning and Development Proposal processes; the roles of the sectoral bodies; and the relevance of minority community designation in the enrolment of Integrated schools.**

**Integrated Education - natural mixing**

313. In written evidence, the Department indicated that there were a number of non-Integrated schools in primary and post-primary sectors - roughly equal to the number of Integrated schools - with over 10% enrolment from the minority community.
314. The Committee also received evidence from the ELBs and from post-primary schools in respect of relatively high levels of natural mixing or integration i.e. where children attend schools in sectors with which their parents might not be expected to identify – this is largely confined to Catholic children attending Controlled schools or non-Catholic Voluntary Grammars etc.. The Committee noted that although the vast majority of Catholic children attend Catholic Maintained primary schools – nearly one and a half times as many Catholic children attend Controlled primary schools as attend Grant Maintained Integrated or Controlled Integrated primary schools. The Committee also noted that of the 74k Catholic children enrolled in post-primaries – around 4k are at Integrated schools; 2k are at Controlled schools and 2k are at non-Catholic Voluntary Grammars.
315. The ELBs appeared to suggest that this process is often driven by a perception of academic excellence, demographics, traditional local practices or possibly, limited supply of Catholic Maintained schools. Methodist College Belfast identified an underpinning inclusive ethos as key: “Perhaps the defining feature of natural integration is the move away from the simple Protestant and Catholic approach and into something that is socially inclusive and does not depend on a formula to produce results.”
316. Given that the numbers of Catholic children attending mixed non-Integrated schools appeared to be of a similar order to the Integrated sector, the Committee was surprised that neither the Department nor the Education and Library Boards nor CCMS could provide anything more than anecdotal evidence in respect of this important feature in schools. Although the Committee supported the continuation of the principle of parental preference in respect of school choice, the Committee also felt that what might be called natural mixing in non-Integrated mixed schools was welcome and was worthy of further study. The Committee also felt that the Department should explore policies to encourage natural mixing.
317. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:



**Recommendation #10: The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to the reasons underpinning natural mixing in non-Integrated schools and should also consider measures that it should adopt in order to promote this practice while supporting the principle of parental preference.**

**Integrated Education - Jointly Managed Church schools**

318. During the inquiry, the Department produced a circular relating to Jointly Managed Church schools. The Committee understands that a Jointly Managed Church school is to be a grant-aided Voluntary (or Other) Maintained school providing Shared Education with a Christian ethos with Trustee representation agreed by the Transferors and the Catholic church and managed by a Board of Governors with balanced representation from both main communities. The Education Authority would be the funding authority as is presently the case for Other Maintained schools e.g. most IME schools. As is also the case for Other Maintained schools, the Board of Governors would be the employer of the teachers in the school whereas the Education Authority would employ non-teaching staff.
319. The Committee struggled to understand the material differences between a Jointly Managed Church school and a Controlled Integrated school. NICCE indicated that it believed that the former would include a legal guarantee for the Christian ethos whereas the latter would have no such guarantee. The Committee sought but did not receive absolute clarity from the Department on the nature of the legal guarantee for the Christian ethos in Jointly Managed Church schools. DE indicated: "School ethos is not prescribed in law, but it is very important. There are legal differences in the constitution of the schools, through the boards of governors, which can be perceived as an additional legal protection"
320. The Committee did not accept that Jointly Managed Church schools provided any additional guarantee in respect of the Christian ethos as compared to Integrated schools and noted little material difference between both types of school. Thus, the reasoning underpinning some sectors' enthusiasm for the latter and reticence or apparent opposition to the former remains unclear.
321. The Committee also noted with concern that the benefits in respect of home to school transportation support available to Integrated schools will not be extended to Jointly Managed Church schools.
322. The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendation:

**Recommendation #11: The Committee recommends that the Department should give consideration to revising its Home to School Transport policy so as to provide support for children attending Jointly Managed Church schools in line with that currently available for children attending Integrated schools.**

**Integrated Education - Special Schools**

323. The Committee noted evidence from 2 Special Schools who were seeking to transform to Integrated status. The schools felt that they were in effect Integrated but believed that transformation would deliver access to a different governance arrangement with a higher level of delegation. They explained that it was "...a control element for us. It is about looking at how we can develop and the governance of our schools, which we feel, at the minute, is very much dictated by a board model that is quite outdated for special schools to move forward."
324. The Committee noted that the schools in question had not consulted with parents and appeared to believe that a change of status would necessarily alter their level of budget delegation. The Committee also noted written evidence from the Department indicating the current legal barrier to the transformation of Special Schools to Integrated status.
325. The Committee accepted that Special Schools enjoy a high level of mixing between the 2 largest communities and indeed other communities and that this is supported by the

inclusive ethos of those schools. The majority of Committee Members did not agree that transformation of these schools would serve any practical purpose. Members also felt that there was no evidence that transformations to Integrated status would be supported by the parents of children enrolled in Special Schools. The Committee therefore made no recommendation in this regard.



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Appendix 1

# Minutes of Proceedings



# Minutes of Proceedings Relating to the Report

9 April 2014	Terms of Reference
28 May 2014	Terms of Reference and Written Evidence
18 June 2014	Oral Evidence – Joint briefing IEF and ETI, and Fermanagh Trust Briefing
25 June 2014	Terms of Reference
2 July 2014	Terms of Reference and Oral Evidence – Department of Education
10 September 2014	Press Release
15 October 2014	Oral Evidence – Focus group programme, Assembly Research Joint briefing from Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College and joint briefing from Professor Knox and Professor Borooh
5 November 2014	Oral Evidence – the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and Parenting NI
19 November 2014	Oral Evidence - Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
26 November 2014	Oral Evidence Queens Centre for Shared Education and University of Ulster Dissolving Boundaries
10 December 2014	Oral Evidence – Methodist College Belfast
14 January 2015	Oral Evidence – Department of Education - Shared Education Campuses Programme
21 January 2015	Oral Evidence – Department of Education and Education and Training Inspectorate
4 February 2015	Oral Evidence – Joint briefing from Community Relations Council and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and joint briefing from Integrated Education Fund and Professor Hamber, Ulster University and Professor Smyth, Ulster University
11 February 2015	Oral Evidence – Joint briefing from Education and Library Boards and joint briefing from Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School
18 February 2015	Oral Evidence – Transferors’ Representative Council
25 February 2015	Oral Evidence – Speedwell Trust and Drumragh Integrated College
3 March 2015	Oral evidence – Joint briefing from NASUWT and UTU
4 March 2015	Oral Evidence – Early Years and Youth Council Northern Ireland
11 March 2015	Oral Evidence – Sir Robert Salisbury
18 March 2015	Oral Evidence – Joint briefing from Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education and a joint briefing from Brookeborough Primary School and St Mary’s Primary School, Brookeborough

29 April 2015	Joint briefing from Department of Education and Education Training Inspectorate - Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy and Department of Education - Jointly Managed Schools
17 June 2015	Draft Inquiry Report
24 June 2015	Draft Inquiry Report
1 July 2015	Agreement of Report

## Wednesday 9 April 2014

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Karen Jardine (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Sharon Young (Clerical Officer)  
Emma Swan (Clerical Officer)

**10.01am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

##### **5.1 Area Planning and Shared Education**

The Chairperson referred Members to information from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education relating to the Area Planning Process, which had been noted at the previous meeting.

Members also noted in their tabled items a letter from the Integrated Education Fund regarding the possible terms of reference for the Committee's planned inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education.

Members also noted a letter from the Department responding to Committee queries in respect of the IEF Report: The Business of Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the information received and take it into consideration when drawing up the Terms of Reference for the planned Committee inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 28 May 2014

### Greenmount Agricultural College

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Emma Swan (Clerical Officer)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Chris Hazzard MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA

**10.00am** The meeting commenced in private session.

**10.04am** The meeting entered public session.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted a response from the Department in relation to the Committee's proposed Inquiry into Integrated and Shared Education.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to defer further consideration of the Terms of Reference pending the receipt of further information from the Department on the Shared Education issues raised by the Minister in his statement of 23 October 2013

**[EXTRACT]**



# Wednesday 18Th June 2014

## Corinthian Conference Room, Fermanagh House, Enniskillen

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:05am without a decision-making quorum. The Committee proceeded to hear evidence under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5).

The Committee agreed to alter the order of its agenda as indicated below.

**1. Sharing in Education Programme – briefing by the International Fund for Ireland; Education and Training Inspectorate; University of Ulster.**

**10:07am** The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairperson of the Board of the International Fund for Ireland; Professor Colin Knox, University of Ulster; and John Hunter, Education and Training Inspectorate, Department of Education, briefed the Committee on the Sharing in Education Programme.

**10:17am** Jo-Anne Dobson joined the meeting. The Committee gained a decision-making quorum.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11:08am** Sean Rogers left the meeting. The Committee lost its decision-making quorum but continued to hear evidence under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5).

**11:10am** Sean Rogers rejoined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision-making quorum

**11:37am** Jo-Anne Dobson left the meeting. The Committee lost its decision-making quorum but continued to hear evidence under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5).

**11:39am** The witnesses left the meeting.

**2. Shared Education – briefing by the Fermanagh Trust**

**11:40am** The following witnesses joined the meeting:

Lauri McCusker, Director of the Fermanagh Trust and Catherine Ward, Shared Education Programme Manager, Fermanagh Trust, briefed the Committee on Shared Education.

The Committee noted a briefing paper from the Fermanagh Trust.

**11:45am** Jo-Anne Dobson rejoined the meeting. The Committee regained its decision-making quorum.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12:38pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Fermanagh Trust seeking written information on the socio-economic and other benefits of Shared Education particularly in rural areas.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 25 June 2014

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Sharon McGurk (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Jonathan Craig MLA

**10.00am** The meeting commenced in private session.

#### **2. Committee Inquiry- Shared/Integrated Education- Terms of Reference**

The Committee noted the draft Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

**10.46am** Robin Newton joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed give further consideration to the Terms of Reference following a Departmental update on Shared Education at the Education Committee meeting of 2 July 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Inquiry should include an informal evidence event involving school councils from different sectors and from across Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee also agreed that the Inquiry should include visits / engagement with schools from different sectors and from across Northern Ireland including: Shimna Integrated College and Drumragh Integrated College.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 2 July 2014

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Jo-Anne Dobson MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)  
Kiera McDonald (Legal Advisor) (Item 1 only)

**Apologies:** Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA

**9.38am** The meeting commenced in private session.

**10.09am** The meeting entered public session.

**10. Committee Inquiry – Shared / Integrated Education – Update on Shared Education – Departmental Briefing**

**11.39am** Officials joined the meeting:

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice, Department of Education; Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education and Community Relations Team, Department of Education; and Eve Stewart, Head of Irish Medium and Integrated Education Project Team, Department of Education.

**11.48am** Maeve McLaughlin rejoined the meeting.

**11.48am** Stephen Moutray rejoined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.13pm** Stephen Moutray left the meeting.

**12.26pm** The meeting entered private session.

**12.39pm** Departmental officials left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department suggesting that it thoroughly explores all options for collaboration and synergy between the three Delivering Social Change funding streams and projects.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a copy of the draft guidance being prepared by officials to promote Shared Education including the sharing continuum information.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the SEUPB as part of the consultation on Peace IV:
- indicating its support for the encouragement of Shared Education across all educational phases;
  - urging SEUPB to encourage programmes which capitalise on learning from previous Shared Education projects including the PIEE project and the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education partnerships; and
  - suggesting that the relevant Peace IV projects should support the development of guidance which helps schools to get involved with Shared Education.

#### **11. Committee Inquiry – Shared / Integrated Education – Terms of Reference**

The Committee considered the draft Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed the amended Terms of Reference for its Inquiry into Shared/Integrated Education as follows:
- Review the nature and definition of Shared Education and Integrated Education across all educational phases – including consideration of the need for a formal statutory definition and an obligation in statute to facilitate and encourage Shared Education;
  - Identify the key barriers and enablers for Shared Education and Integrated Education;
  - Identify and analyse alternative approaches and models of good practice in other jurisdictions in terms of policy interventions and programmes;
  - Consider what priorities and actions 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; and
  - Report to the Assembly on its findings and recommendations by Spring 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to all schools and relevant stakeholders inviting them to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry.

**[EXTRACT]**

# Wednesday 10 September 2014

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mervyn Storey MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Stephen Moutray MLA  
Robin Newton MLA

**10.00am** The meeting commenced in private session.

**10.17am** The meeting entered public session.

### 6. **Draft Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to meet informally with the Joint Department of Education / Department for Employment and Learning Careers Review Panel on Tuesday 23 September 2014.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme as amended.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to endorse a press release regarding its inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Employment and Learning seeking:

- information as how the further and higher education sectors currently interact with Shared Education programmes and the Integrated Education sector; and
- details of DEL policy in respect of how these sectors should interact with Shared Education programmes and the Integrated Education sector in order to comply with relevant obligations and the Programme for Government.

**[EXTRACT]**

# Wednesday 15 October 2014

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)  
James Stewart (Assembly Education Service) - item 1 only

**Apologies:** Sandra Overend MLA

**10.01am** The meeting commenced in private session.

### **1. Draft Forward Work Programme.**

**10.35am** Assembly Education Service joined the meeting.

James Stewart, Assembly Education Service, briefed the Committee on the pupil focus group programme to be provided by the Assembly Education Service in support of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content with the focus group programme but that it should include examples of so-called 'supermixed schools' i.e. single non-integrated schools which include a high degree of mixing of pupils of different faiths etc..

**10.48am Assembly Education Service left the meeting.**

**10.48am** The meeting entered public session.

### **5. Matters Arising**

#### **5.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry**

The Chairperson advised Members that additional submissions to the inquiry had been added to the SkyDrivePro link.

The Committee noted that as previously agreed, submissions to the inquiry were to be published on the Committee's webpage.

### **6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education: Written Briefing**

The Committee noted a written briefing on the Committee's Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The Committee noted that as previously agreed, a blog of the meeting's evidence to the inquiry would be published on the Committee's webpage.

**10.51am** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from Ballycastle High School and Cross & Passion College**

**10.52am** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Mrs Barbara Ward, Principal, Cross and Passion College; and Mr Ian Williamson, Principal, Ballycastle High School briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11.01am** Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11.53am** Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

**11.55am** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to visit Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from Professor Knox and Professor Borooah**

**11.56am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Professor Colin Knox, Professor of Public Policy, University of Ulster; and Professor Vani Borooah, Emeritus Professor of Applied Economics, University of Ulster briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**12.00noon** Seán Rogers left the meeting.

**12.03pm** Maeve McLaughlin re-joined the meeting.

**12.41pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.56pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**12.56pm** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking further information on the Shared Education Signature Programme in particular how the Programme will facilitate Shared Education becoming a core element of strategic planning within the Department and schools.

**[EXTRACT]**



# Wednesday 5 November 2014

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Jonathan Watson (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**10.06am** The meeting commenced in private session.

### **6. Matters Arising**

#### **6.1 Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education**

The Chairperson advised Members that additional submissions to the inquiry had been added to the SkyDrivePro link.

The Committee noted responses from the Department of Education regarding the Shared Education Signature Programme and the Shared Education Campuses Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk should confirm whether Belfast Education and Library Board; Southern Education and Library Board and the South Eastern Education and Library Board are to make submissions to the inquiry.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to accept responses to the inquiry received after the published deadline.

The Committee noted that, as previously agreed, submissions to the inquiry were to be published on the Committee's webpage.

### **7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People**

**10.35am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Patricia Lewsley-Mooney, Commissioner; and Alison Montgomery, Senior Policy and Research Officer briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11.11am** Trevor Lunn left the meeting.

**11.26am** Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

**11.29am** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**11.29am** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking further information on the Department's reported plans to seek feedback from pupils on a biennial basis.

**8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- briefing from Parenting NI**

**11.32am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Clare-Anne Magee, Director for Parenting Forum, Parenting NI; and Nicola McKeown, Participation Worker for Parenting Forum, Parenting NI briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11.33am** Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

**11.39am** Jonathan Craig re-joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.10pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Parenting NI seeking information on the levels of responses from parents in respect of the establishment of a single teacher training facility.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 19 November 2014

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Colum Eastwood MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)  
Pamela Dugdale (Public Finance Scrutiny Unit – Assembly Research) -  
item 1 only

**Apologies:** None

**10:04am** The meeting commenced in private session.

#### **2. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Written briefing paper inquiry submissions**

The Committee noted a written briefing paper on submissions to the Committee's inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11:06am** Robin Newton re-joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a programme of oral evidence sessions including representatives from the early years, Irish Medium and youth sectors.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to commission a paper from Assembly Research on the 'Educate Together' programme in the Republic of Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee also agreed to seek an informal meeting in January 2015 with the Oireachtas Select Sub-Committee on Education and Skills to discuss issues relating to Shared Education.

#### **8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education**

**11:33am** NICIE witnesses joined the meeting.

Noreen Campbell, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); Helen McLaughlin, Vice Chairperson, NICIE; and Frances Donnelly, Senior Development Officer, NICIE briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11:45am** Pat Sheehan re-joined the meeting.

**11:48am** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12:44pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**12:56pm** Colum Eastwood left the meeting.

**1:02pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to NICIE requesting further information on its Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2014 and proposed organisational review.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 26 November 2014

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Colum Eastwood MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Chris Hazzard MLA

**10:05am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

##### **4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Employment and Learning Committee regarding its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

#### **5. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Dissolving Boundaries Programme, University of Ulster**

**10:16am** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Professor Roger Austin, University of Ulster; Antoin Moran, Principal, Ballyhacket Primary School and Alison McConnell, teacher, Carr's Glen Primary School briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**10:34am** Danny Kinahan joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**10:58am** Robin Newton left the meeting.

**11:18am** The witnesses left the meeting

**11:18am** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on the discontinuation of funding for the Dissolving Boundaries programme and confirmation in respect of contacts with the University of Ulster in the development of Shared Education policy.

#### **6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Centre for Shared Education, Queen's University Belfast**

**11:20am** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Professor Joanne Hughes, Director of the Centre for Shared Education, School of Education, QUB; Professor Tony Gallagher, Pro Vice Chancellor, QUB and member of the Centre for Shared Education; Dr Gavin Duffy, Research Associate, Centre for Shared Education, QUB and Professor Miles Hewstone, Director, University of Oxford Centre for the Study of Intergroup Conflict briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11:51am** Nelson McCausland joined the meeting.

**11:51am** Colum Eastwood joined the meeting.

**11:59am** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**12:29pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking confirmation in respect of contacts with the QUB Centre for Shared Education in the development of Shared Education policy.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 10 December 2014

### Methodist College, Belfast

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Sean Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Chris Hazzard MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**10:03am** The meeting commenced in private session

**10:15am** The meeting entered public session.

#### **7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Methodist College**

**11:15am** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Scott Naismith, Principal, Methodist College Belfast; Neill Jackson, Chairman, Board of Governors; Michael Humphreys, Member, Board of Governors; Reverend Dr Janet Unsworth, Member, Board of Governors; and Sir Desmond Rea, Member, Board of Governors briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12:01pm** Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

**12:17pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 14 January 2015

### Ryandale Inn, Moy

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Sean Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA

**10:28am** The meeting commenced in private session

**6. Departmental Briefing - Together: Building a United Community – Shared Campuses Programme**

**10:49am** Departmental officials joined the meeting.

Jacqui Durkin, Director of Area Planning and Roisin Lilley, Shared Education Campuses Manager briefed the Committee on the Department's Shared Campuses Programme – Together: Building a United Community (TBUC).

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11:34am** Nelson McCausland joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek the revised scoring criteria for the second call for Shared Campus projects as well as a timeline and further information on the successful projects in the first call.

**11:43am** Officials left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**



## Wednesday 21 January 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Sean Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None

**10:07am** The meeting commenced in private session.

**8. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Departmental briefing Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy; Draft Shared Education Policy & Draft Shared Education Bill**

**10:55am** Departmental officials joined the meeting.

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice; Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education and Community Relations Team; Dr Suzanne Kingon, Shared Education and Community Relations Team; and Dr John Hunter, Education and Training Inspectorate briefed the Committee on the Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy; draft Shared Education Policy & draft Shared Education Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11:11am** Nelson McCausland re-joined the meeting.

**11:33am** Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

**12:20pm** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**12:21pm** Officials left the meeting.

**12:21pm** Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

**12:21pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward to the Department for response a number of outstanding questions relating to the briefing.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a further oral briefing at the conclusion of the Committee's Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education and sight of the Education and Training Inspectorate's report on the CRED policy, when available.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to Glenveagh Special School seeking an informal meeting to discuss issues relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision and the anticipated SEN and Inclusion Bill.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 4 February 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None

**10:08am** The meeting commenced in public session.

The Chairperson, Michelle McIlveen declared an interest indicating that a member of her immediate family is a member of the Equality Commission.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

##### **4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in respect of the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project and an Assembly Research paper on Shared and Integrated Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the submissions should be published on the Committee's webpage.

#### **6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Community Relations Council and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

**10:20am** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Peter Osborne, Chairperson, Community Relations Council; Dympna McGlade, Policy Director, Community Relations Council; Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission NI; and Darren McKinstry, Director of Policy, Equality Commission NI briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**10:48am** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**11:01am** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

**11:21am** Danny Kinahan left the meeting

**11:27am** Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

**12:14pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education- Integrated Education Fund; Professor Hamber and Professor Smith**

**12:16pm** Witnesses joined the meeting.

Tina Merron, Chief Executive, Integrated Education Fund; Sam Fitzsimmons, Communications Director, Integrated Education Fund; Professor Brandon Hamber, INCORE, University of Ulster; and Professor Alan Smith, UNESCO Chair, University of Ulster briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12:35pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**1:02pm** Seán Rogers left the meeting.

**1:25pm** Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

**1:25pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification on whether the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project (or any other Shared Education programmes) will provide support or guidance to schools wishing to undertake voluntary cross-sectoral amalgamations.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Equality Commission seeking sight of the research commissioned with Queen's University Belfast on Educational Inequalities and further information on the Equality Commission's position in respect of religious instruction in schools and the shared campus proposal for Moy Regional Primary School and St John's Primary School, Moy.

*Agreed:* The Committee also agreed to write to the Community Relations Council seeking its views on the shared campus proposal for Moy Regional Primary School and St John's Primary School, Moy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek further information on the BBC Spotlight programme regarding the shared campus proposal for Moy Regional Primary School and St John's Primary School, Moy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Integrated Education Fund seeking further information on the 'Delving Deeper Programme'.

**[EXTRACT]**

# Wednesday 11 February 2015

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)  
Barry McLernon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None

**10.08am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

##### **4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department in respect of the CRED policy; the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project and the draft Shared Education policy and Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the correspondence should be published on the Committee's webpage.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Department on the consultation on the draft EQIA relating to the proposed removal of CRED Enhancement funding.

#### **5. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Education and Library Boards**

10.13am The witnesses joined the meeting.

Paul Lawther, Assistant Senior Education Officer, Belfast Education and Library Board; Ray Gilbert, Senior Education Officer, North Eastern Education and Library Board; John Unsworth, Assistant Senior Education Officer, Southern Education and Library Board; June Neill, Deputy Head, Curriculum Advisory Support Services (CASS), Western Education and Library Board; and Nicky McBride, Chief Administrative Officer, South Eastern Education and Library Board briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**10.30am** Robin Newton left the meeting.

**10.38am** Seán Rogers joined the meeting.

**12.00pm** Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

**12.00pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Western Education and Library Board seeking a fuller explanation of its reference to the non-partisan nature of Boards of Governors.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the South Eastern Education and Library Board seeking information on the SEELB's experience of shared education and inviting a response to the Terms of Reference of the Committee's inquiry.

**6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School**

**12.03pm** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Dr Peter Cunningham, Principal, Ceara Special School and Colum Davis, Principal, Tor Bank Special School, briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.33pm** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**1.07pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking information on the budget process for Special Schools and commentary in respect of the allocation of additional support for newcomer children attending Special Schools.

**[EXTRACT]**

# Wednesday 18 February 2015

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None

**9.41am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

##### **4.1 Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry**

The Committee noted further correspondence from the Department on the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project and other support for schools wishing to undertake cross-sectoral amalgamation.

The Committee also noted correspondence from the Western Education and Library Board relating to Shared Education projects in Fermanagh.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed for this correspondence to be published on the Committee's webpage.

#### **5. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Transferors' Representative Council (TRC)**

**9.44am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Reverend Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Reverend Donald Ker, Secretary of Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland; and Reverend Dr Ian Ellis, Secretary to the Church of Ireland Board of Education and Secretary to the TRC briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**9.45am** Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**10.05am** Pat Sheehan joined the meeting.

**10.05am** Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

**11.04am** The witnesses left the meeting.

**11.05am** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**11.05am** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 25 February 2015

### Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh

- Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA
- In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**10.26am** The meeting commenced in public session.

The Committee did not have a decision-making quorum. In the absence of a decision-making quorum, proceedings continued in line with Standing Order 49(5).

#### **12. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Speedwell Trust**

**10.28am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Eamon McClean, Manager, Speedwell Trust; Eric Reaney, Trustee, Speedwell Trust; Libby Robinson, Principal, Edwards Primary School, Castleterg and Brian McGurk, Principal, St Patrick's Primary School, Castleterg briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11.25am** The witnesses left the meeting.

#### **13. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Drumragh Integrated College**

**11.26am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Nigel Frith, Principal, Drumragh Integrated College; Caen Fahy, Sixth Form Student, Drumragh Integrated College; Cara Monaghan; Sixth Form Student, Drumragh Integrated College and Zara Hemphill, Sixth Form Student, Drumragh Integrated College briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.10pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**



## Tuesday 3 March 2015

### Room 29, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** None

**3.43pm** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### **7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - NASUWT and UTU**

**4.01pm** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Teresa Graham, Northern Ireland President, National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT); Justin McCamphill, National Official, NASUWT; Gillian Dunlop, Past President, Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU); and Diane Nugent, Past President, UTU briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**4.13pm** Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

**4.14pm** Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

**4.14pm** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**4.21pm** Trevor Lunn left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**4.34pm** Seán Rogers left the meeting.

**4.36pm** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

**5.25pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 4 March 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:  
None

**9.33am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### 6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Early Years

**11.10am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Siobhán Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer, Early Years and Pauline Walmsley, Director of Knowledge Exchange, Early Years briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11.19am** Sandra Overend left the meeting.

**11.27am** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**11.29am** Danny Kinahan left the meeting.

The Clerk called on Mr Craig to speak. Mr Craig proposed that Mr McCausland do take the chair of the Committee. Mr Lunn seconded the proposal and, in the absence of other nominations, the Clerk asked Mr McCausland to take the chair.

**11.44am** The witnesses left the meeting.

#### 7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Youth Council Northern Ireland (YCNI)

**11.47am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

David Guilfoyle, Chief Executive, YCNI; Norma Rea, Development Officer Equality Principles, YCNI; and Joanne Stainsby, Project Officer, YCNI briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11.49am** Danny Kinahan returned to the meeting and resumed the chair.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**12.27pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**12.35pm** Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

**12.38pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to YCNI seeking a breakdown of its administration costs and funding.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 11 March 2015

### Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**10.27am** The meeting commenced in private session.

#### **7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Sir Robert Salisbury**

10.53am The witness joined the meeting.

Sir Robert Salisbury briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**11.45am** Trevor Lunn left the meeting.

**12.06pm** Seán Rogers left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5), continued to hear evidence.

**12.09pm** Seán Rogers returned to the meeting and the Committee regained its decision-making quorum.

**12.15pm** Robin Newton left the meeting. The Committee consequently lost its decision-making quorum but, under the provisions of Standing Order 49(5), continued to hear evidence.

**12.20pm** Robin Newton returned to the meeting and the Committee regained its decision-making quorum.

**12.25pm** The witness left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 18 March 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Chris Hazzard MLA

#### **2. Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry – Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education**

**9.56am** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Jim Clarke, Chief Executive, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; Malachy Crudden, Head of Education Standards, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and Father Tim Bartlett, Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**10.00am** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

Seán Rogers declared an interest as a member of a Board of Governors of a Catholic school.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson passed on her condolences to Mr Gerry Lundy, Deputy Chief Executive, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools on the recent death of his mother.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

**10.34am** Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

**10.45am** Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

**11.41am** Nelson McCausland left the meeting.

**11.52am** Robin Newton left the meeting.

**12.02pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**12.02pm** Pat Sheehan left the meeting.

**9. Shared and Integrated Education Inquiry – Brookborough Primary School and St Mary’s Primary School**

**12.27pm** The witnesses joined the meeting.

Hazel Gardiner, Principal, Brookeborough Primary School; Dermot Finlay, Principal, St Mary’s Primary School, Brookeborough; Iris Barker, Western Education and Library Board (WELB); and Mary Hampsey, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) briefed the Committee as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.**

**12.31pm** Danny Kinahan re-joined the meeting.

**1.12pm** Seán Rogers left the meeting.

**1.14pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**1.22pm** The witnesses left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 29 April 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Robin Newton MLA

**10:07am** The meeting commenced in public session.

**10:43am** The meeting moved into public session.

**6. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - Review of and next steps for Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy – Department of Education / Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) oral briefing**

**10:44am** Officials joined the meeting.

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice, Department of Education; Paul McAlister, Assistant Chief Inspector, Education and Training Inspectorate and Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education & Community Relations Team, Department of Education briefed the Committee on the next steps for the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11:37am** An official left the meeting.

**7. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – Jointly Managed Church Schools - Departmental oral briefing**

**11:37am** An official joined the meeting.

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice, Department of Education; Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education & Community Relations Team, Department of Education and Suzanne Kingon, Shared Education and Community Relations Team, Department of Education briefed the Committee on Jointly Managed Church Schools as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**12:13pm** Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting.

**12:14pm** The officials left the meeting.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking sight of the Department's CRED policy update and details of the Young Life and Times survey results in respect of relevant pupil attitudes.

- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking:
- clarity on the legal protection of the Christian ethos within Controlled, Integrated and Jointly Managed Church schools - including a definition of the Christian ethos;
  - information on the Department's considerations in respect of the withdrawal in certain circumstances of Home to School transport support for pupils whose parents do not wish them to attend a Jointly Managed Church school; and
  - clarification on the differences between a Jointly Managed Church school and an Integrated school;

**[EXTRACT]**



## Wednesday 13 May 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Danny Kinahan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

**10:02am** The meeting commenced in public session.

#### 9. **Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education - final oral Departmental evidence session**

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Education in respect of Jointly Managed Church schools and a report on the ePartners programme from Ulster University.

**11:19am** Officials joined the meeting.

Faustina Graham, Director of Collaborative Education and Practice, Department of Education; Andrew Bell, Head of Shared Education and Community Relations Team, Department of Education and Suzanne Kingon, Head of Irish Medium and Integrated Education Team briefed the Committee on the Department's draft Shared Education Bill and draft Shared Education policy as part of the inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**11:20am** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

**12:17pm** Chris Hazzard left the meeting.

**12:45pm** Jonathan Craig left the meeting.

**1:04pm** Seán Rogers left the meeting.

A question and answer session followed the briefing.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider a response at its next meeting to the Department in respect of the draft Shared Education Bill.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking:

- clarification on whether Shared Education funding for schools is contingent on participation in the Levels of Progression;
- clarity on the use of the phrase 'equality of identity' within the Shared Education policy;
- figures relating to non-Integrated schools that meet the criteria for Integrated status in respect of the religious breakdown of the enrolment and the membership of the Board of Governors;

- figures relating to Integrated schools in respect of the religious breakdown of the enrolment and the membership of the Board of Governors;
- figures for the number of people who attended the Department's Shared Education Bill/policy public consultation events;
- clarification on the legislative position in respect of Special Schools adopting Integrated status; and
- sight of the Shared Education continuum model produced by ETI for the Early Years and Youth sectors.

**1:13pm** Officials left the meeting.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 17 June 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Sandra Overend MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Christopher Jeffries (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Nelson McCausland MLA

**9.34am** The meeting commenced in private session.

**1. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – draft report - written briefing**

The Committee considered the draft report on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

**9.35am** Chris Hazzard joined the meeting.

**9.43am** Seán Rogers joined the meeting.

**9.47am** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to re-consider the report in greater detail on 24 June 2015.

**10.10am** The meeting moved into public session.

**[EXTRACT]**

## Wednesday 24 June 2015

### Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Sandra Overend MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Paula Best (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Danielle Saunders (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Ross Hussey MLA

**9.36am** The meeting commenced in private session.

#### **2. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – draft report - written briefing**

**9.47am** Sandra Overend joined the meeting.

**10.09am** Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

The Committee noted a further response from the Department of Education in respect of the use of the phrase ‘equality of identity’ in the DE draft Shared Education policy.

The Committee also noted that a copy of ‘The Economics of Schooling in a Divided Society – The Case for Shared Education’ by Professors Knox and Borooah was available in the Committee office.

The Committee considered the draft report on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered a number of revisions and agreed to consider the final version of the report at its meeting on 1 July 2015.

**10.35am** The meeting moved into public session.

**[EXTRACT]**

# Wednesday 1 July 2015

## Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Peter Weir MLA (Chairperson)  
Sandra Overend MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Jonathan Craig MLA  
Chris Hazzard MLA  
Nelson McCausland MLA  
Maeve McLaughlin MLA  
Seán Rogers MLA

**In Attendance:** Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mark O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)  
Alicia Muldoon (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:** Ross Hussey MLA  
Trevor Lunn MLA  
Robin Newton MLA  
Pat Sheehan MLA

**9:49am** The meeting commenced in private session.

### **1. Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education – agreement of Inquiry Report - written briefing**

**9:50am** Maeve McLaughlin joined the meeting.

The Committee considered the report on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education.

*Agreed:* The Committee read and agreed the Introduction section of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee read and agreed the Consideration of Evidence section of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee read and agreed, subject to a single amendment, the Findings and Recommendations section of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee read and agreed the Executive Summary and Summary of Recommendations sections of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee read and agreed the summary of the contents of the Appendices of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content to order that the report be printed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content for an extract from the minutes of today's meeting to be included in the appendices of the report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the report (as amended) be the Sixth Report of the Education Committee to the Assembly for the current mandate.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it was content to put down the following motion for debate in plenary:

'That this Assembly approves the report of the Committee for Education on its Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education [NIA 194/11-16] and calls on the Minister of Education to implement the recommendations contained in the report'.

The Committee noted that the report would be embargoed until the start of the debate in plenary but that prior to that, a copy of the report would be shared with the Department of Education.

**9:58am** Jonathan Craig joined the meeting.

**10:00am** The meeting moved into public session.

**[EXTRACT]**



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Appendix 2

# Minutes of Evidence





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18 June 2014	IEF/ETI and Fermanagh Trust
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19 November 2014	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
26 November 2014	Queens Centre for Shared Education
26 November 2014	University of Ulster Dissolving Boundaries
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14 January 2015	Department of Education - Shared Education Campuses Programme
21 January 2015	Department of Education and Education and Training Inspectorate
4 February 2015	Community Relations Council and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
4 February 2015	Integrated Education Fund and Professor Hamber, Ulster University and Professor Smyth, Ulster University
11 February 2015	Joint briefing from the 5 Education and Library Boards
11 February 2015	Ceara Special School and Tor Bank Special School
18 February 2015	Oral Evidence - Transferors' Representative Council
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25 February 2015	Drumragh Integrated College
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4 March 2015	Youth Council Northern Ireland
11 March 2015	Sir Robert Salisbury
18 March 2015	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education
18 March 2015	Brookeborough Primary School and St Mary's Primary School, Brookeborough
29 April 2015	Joint briefing from Department of Education and Education Training Inspectorate - Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy.
29 April 2015	Department of Education - Jointly Managed Schools
13 May 2015	Department of Education



# 18 June 2014

## Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Mervyn Storey (Chairperson)  
 Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Seán Rogers

## Witnesses:

Mr John Hunter	<i>Education and Training Inspectorate</i>
Dr Adrian Johnston	<i>International Fund for Ireland</i>
Professor Colin Knox	<i>University of Ulster</i>

1. **The Chairperson:** I welcome Professor Knox, Dr Adrian Johnston and John Hunter. Thank you for making the journey to Fermanagh to join us. Our journey down this morning was very pleasant. Your presentation is on the sharing in education programme (SiEP) run by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and its evaluation by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). I will hand over to you, and then we will, undoubtedly, have questions from members.
2. **Dr Adrian Johnston (International Fund for Ireland):** Committee members, thank you for giving us the opportunity to come here this morning. I am delighted to be here to share the work and some of the findings from programmes that the IFI has run over the last number of years to 2013, specifically the sharing in education programme and the shared education programme (SEP).
3. As you can see, I am joined this morning by John Hunter from the Education and Training Inspectorate, who evaluated 19 of the projects in the sharing in education programme for us, and Professor Colin Knox from the University of Ulster, who appraised three of the shared education programmes for

us. I suppose that I should clarify the difference between the two.

4. The sharing in education programme refers to the 19 projects that were core funded by the International Fund for Ireland and delivered through the Department of Education (DE). The shared education programme refers to three programmes that were co-funded by us and Atlantic Philanthropies. They involved Queen's University Belfast, the North Eastern Education and Library Board, through the primary integrating/enriching education project (PIEE), which, I know, some of you will be aware of, and, of course, the Fermanagh Trust.
5. As independent funders, the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies were able to commit a huge amount of money, effort and resources to the programmes. That helped to shape the proof of their concept and to widen the discussion on shared education.
6. The IFI has invested around £18 million in these programmes. Prior to their inception, the fund had, at its core, youth and education programmes, and, before this, we contributed up to £21 million to those. They were a precursor to the shared education programme. The IFI board believes that these two programmes are probably among the most important, meaningful and impactful programmes that we have supported over its 27-year lifetime.
7. From 2008, the fund has been involved in shared education. To promote sharing and reconciliation, we have helped in the region of 65,500 children to take advantage of shared education opportunities across 22 projects. They spanned all sectors of education from early years — I know that some of you are aware of some of the teacher training and development opportunities — and involved engagement with the whole family network.

8. Reconciliation has been core to the fund's activity over 27 years, but so, too, has the vision of a prosperous and shared society, and we felt that education was a core component of that. Through this programme, we have delivered high-quality educational experiences. We have shown how standards can be raised right across the education sector and how sharing can, therefore, contribute to a better society for everyone.
9. The programmes make a very compelling case for sharing. That is backed up by practice and by a wealth of research, which confirms the benefits of shared education: improved academic outcomes; economic advantages for schools and wider society; enhanced reconciliation outcomes; and, because of the appreciation of diversity and mutual respect, more rounded young people in the education system.
10. From these programmes, we have a rich vein of research, which, I am sure, will be talked about. That learning is free for the Department to utilise as it sees fit in its consideration of how schools can become more involved in sharing. We believe that, as we all move forward, the projects that were shared under the shared education banner have a role to play in a genuine shared future. The proven models in the sharing in education programme and the SEP can make a real, meaningful impact, not only on the Department's plans but on the Programme for Government commitments and, ultimately, the Together: Building a United Community strategy.
11. I am sure that you saw the SiEP evaluations back in December. Those were distributed to the Committee. As the evaluations show, most of the targets that were put in place for the programmes were not just met but, in some instances, very much exceeded. The young people who took part gained academically, and, for some, it was their first contact with peers from different community backgrounds.
12. I would like to pay tribute to all of the pupils, parents, teachers, schools and to the whole school network that contributed to the project's success. I would also like to pay tribute to Atlantic Philanthropies, which had the vision and helped to core fund some of our activity, and the Department of Education for its guidance and support through the International Fund for Ireland liaison team and its engagement at project level. That should be commended.
13. As I said at the outset, IFI believes that it has made a huge commitment of money and effort to shared education. We believe that the legacy of the development of the programmes and models stands to benefit all schools and learners. Thank you for the invitation, and thank you very much for your support and interest in this work. We are quite happy to take any questions that you might have for us.
14. **The Chairperson:** Thank you. Colin or John, do you want to make any comments at this stage?
15. **Professor Colin Knox (University of Ulster):** No, thank you.
16. **The Chairperson:** John, we would like some clarification on the role of ETI. There was much discussion of ETI in the Assembly yesterday, and it created a bit of interest. Can you explain ETI's role in the sharing in education programme in particular? Was it a facilitator or did it act as the inspector?
17. **Mr John Hunter (Education and Training Inspectorate):** We were commissioned to provide an evaluation of the sharing in education programme, but it was a learning curve. We had to learn to work differently and much more developmentally with the projects. That is because the programme was new and different. As mentioned, the approach was not that this was a journey that would have an end product. We were to work alongside, support and provide ongoing commentary and advice to the IFI. In fact, one of the strengths was, I think, the interim report, which served as a reminder of the need to continue to think of the aims and objectives of shared education in each of the

- projects. We were not there to police the system; we were there to work and learn alongside it, but, at the same time, to provide an objective evaluation.
18. **The Chairperson:** Did ETI write the final evaluation report?
19. **Mr Hunter:** Yes.
20. **The Chairperson:** In that final report, there is a recommendation that ETI develop further quality indicators and material on good practice for dissemination to schools. Where are we with that? Correct me if I am wrong, but has ETI ever produced material on particular aspects of educational provision? Historically, that was the remit of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA). So that we are clear in our mind, will you clarify where all this is leading to?
21. **Mr Hunter:** Coming from the special education side, I take a lead on a lot of survey work, and much of our work was based on developing indicators. Together Towards Improvement, for example, was designed to allow schools to recognise how we work but also to provide indicators so that they could benchmark the whole practice.
22. This evaluation was not, in itself, unusual. What was unusual was that we had to work towards an interim report and develop the indicators as we learned from the practice, from the project and from the aims and objectives. Quite a lot of the indicators emerged from our work with the projects and our knowledge of how they were outworking, particularly from the aims and objectives as set. We produced those for the report and have been tasked by DE to develop them and have them ready for September or October.
23. **The Chairperson:** Of this year?
24. **Mr Hunter:** Yes.
25. **The Chairperson:** That will, I assume, be for dissemination to all schools.
26. **Mr Hunter:** Yes.
27. **The Chairperson:** Professor Knox, we have always valued your input to the Committee: your reports, assessments and evaluation of a number of issues. We are here today, rightly so, in Fermanagh. To those who have joined us in the Public Gallery, I would like to say that we are delighted to be here. There have been some very good examples of work undertaken by the Fermanagh Trust, which we will hear from later. Shared education has been very much put in focus as a result of the Treacy judgement, and, yesterday, we had a debate in the Assembly that we will no doubt regurgitate at some stage during this Committee meeting. In light of that judgement, we all recognise that, as far as one eminent member of the legal profession is concerned, there is a distinction between integrated education and shared education. Colin, from your experience and professional viewpoint, what do you believe could be the long-term implications of that in light of what has been going on with the sharing in education programme, the proposals from the Executive on how we roll this out and how it all plays out with the integrated sector and shared education?
28. **Professor Knox:** Start with an easy question, Chairman. *[Laughter.]* First, thank you very much for inviting us along to share our views with you. You asked a question about the links between shared and integrated education. We have always — when I say “we”, I am talking about the shared education programme within the wider SiEP family — seen shared education as part of a graduated journey towards greater interdependence between schools. The starting point is acknowledging that greater interdependence promotes the kinds of things that Adrian mentioned, such as better education outcomes, better reconciliation outcomes and better economic benefits for the school sector. In fact, we have developed a graduated system. It is like a benchmarking system and can place any school on a scale of “no sharing” right through to “integrated”. So we do not see this as a case of either/or; we think that schools are on a journey.

29. I will use a bus metaphor. The end point of the journey might be integrated schools, but many schools will choose not to buy a ticket for the full journey. They will choose, because they want to protect their identity, to get off the bus sooner, at, for example, collaboration. They will, perhaps, as collaboration enhances the performance of both schools, choose to take that journey a bit further. It is unfortunate that people tend to say “shared education versus integrated education”. In fact, in Fermanagh, the other projects at Queen’s and the PIEE, integrated schools were part of the programmes. They were not in any way excluded, and many played a constructive part in them. We in shared education were not saying that we were a sector apart.
30. I want to link to a point that John made. One of the roles that ETI will play in the outworking of this through the new £25 million Delivering Social Change shared education programme will be to work to develop the kind of graduated system in which schools can see where they are on the scale and how they can, if they want to, scale up. If they want to become more interdependent and feel that there are educational, reconciliation or economic benefits from doing so, there will be funding available to them to make that enhanced journey.
31. I do not want to paint this as either/or. There are opportunities for schools here depending on where they are now, where they want to take this and the extent to which they want to broker interdependencies with other schools. There is not a one-size-fits-all model. A good case in point is Fermanagh, where a number of rural schools have decided that their fate lies in much greater interdependency. Lauri and Catherine from the Fermanagh Trust will be able to give you good examples of where that works well.
32. We are not saying that the only route for schools will be a shared future, an integrated sector or single-identity schools. There are options. We have demonstrated that this range of model can work. It will depend on circumstances therein. Our research found that the area-planning process was, in our view, a crude instrument and one that has created the spectre of this being about closing schools down.
33. We did some costings. If you closed all the schools that are unviable in DE terms, you would save about 3% of the education budget. Is that worth it for all the angst that will come to your doorstep when the primary school plans are issued and constituents are knocking on your door, asking, “Why are you closing our school”? There are options to broker relationships that could create much more sustainable schools and interdependencies; make the boundaries between controlled and maintained schools much more porous; and, in some cases, save rural communities. I am stealing Lauri’s thunder here, but that is, essentially, a model that has worked well in this county.
34. **The Chairperson:** We will pick up on the economic benefit with Lauri and his colleagues. Let us look at what are set out as being the overall economic, reconciliation and educational benefits. Often, we look first at the educational benefit. If there is none, the other elements seem to become secondary. That is a common flaw when we start to look at programmes like this.
35. John, how does ETI give qualitative expression to the educational programme in a way that gives it an evaluation? In many respects, you are not comparing like with like because there are nuances: for example, a rural as opposed to an urban setting, and, particularly here in County Fermanagh, you have very isolated communities. How do you get a sense of that equilibrium of quality outcome?
36. **Mr Hunter:** First, if shared education is about anything, it is about respect for difference. So we have to begin by accepting the realities that come with a system that is separate and divided. People like me come from the viewpoint that, whatever the sector, it should be a part of, not apart from. Shared education has the potential to remind

- us that we should not live in silos and that by sharing, learning and working together, there are dividends for others.
37. In that sense, one of the themes to arise from the evaluations, from Colin and from our side, was that, to promote shared education, we must look at localised contacts because schools must work within their locality. The issues that come into play in an interface area will be different from those in a very wide rural area. In the old inspectorate terms — I have been long in the game — we have to look at, not look for. At the beginning, we decided that we would move towards writing about the shared education that we find on inspection. We decided to start by identifying good practice for schools and learners and, in so doing, identify and celebrate that through the inspection process as a benchmark for others, but not as a structure in which they cannot think in and reflect their local context.
38. **The Chairperson:** Finally, before I go to members, your paper has an example of the education benefits, which you link to economic benefits. The example is of the four selected primary and post-primary schools involved in the shared education programme. You translate the investment of £2 million across the four projects into increased lifetime earnings of £25 million for participants in the study. Will you expand on that a wee bit, because the Minister is telling us that we will not have a big lot of money? However, on Monday, he will announce considerable capital investment. We get caught in this difference between capital and resource. The overall Northern Ireland education budget — £2.1 billion or £2.2 billion — is not a paltry sum, but money is spent on a variety of other things, and sometimes the Committee has seriously questioned whether we ever get any value for money from them. Here is a project that involved a partnership between Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland, with some money put in by the Department. Could any better economic model be presented? Would any other model be as much of an incentive? I do not in any way want to take away from reconciliation and the value of communities and schools that are different coming together, but is that economic model being sold in such a way that we all understand its ultimate benefits?
39. **Professor Knox:** That is a very good question. I do not think that it has been sufficiently well sold, Mr Chairman. The references here are academic. We have sold it to peer colleagues throughout other parts of the UK and beyond. I think that we have done a bad job at, if you like, putting that into a language that is comprehensible for policymakers and learners.
40. I will go back one step: one of the reasons why we are passionate about shared education is that we see significant educational benefits here. How do you demonstrate and provide evidence to ensure that that is the case? The example that you referred to was a relatively small-scale study, with four selected primary and post-primary schools. They were selected because they were part of the shared education programme administered through Queen's University, PíEE and the Fermanagh Trust. We went into those schools and did an in-depth analysis with all the information, data, usage and number of kids participating. We talked to principals about how shared education had enhanced the curriculum offer for those kids and how they had been able to share resources and expertise. In other words, we tried to quantify how interdependency between those schools had translated into educational benefits.
41. In crude terms, it was a cost-benefit analysis. Working alongside principals, teachers, parents and students, we asked what they saw as the educational benefits flowing from working together, the costs of doing that and what contributions were IFI and Atlantic making. We had to operationalise that in some way. Principals said that, as a consequence of working with those

- schools, children were more likely to get better GCSEs.
42. In one case, there was a partnership between primary and post-primary schools, where the post-primary teachers came into the primary schools to teach a foreign language. We asked principals to what extent they thought that those children were more likely to go to university as a consequence of working collaboratively, and we put costs on those.
43. The study has been published, so economists have to make certain assumptions about these things. Some of those assumptions can be challenged, and we are up for that. The outworking showed that, for an investment of £2 million from IFI and Atlantic, the net educational benefits of getting better GCSEs, language skills and the prospect of kids going to university, worked through the lifetime of the programme, were £23 million.
44. There is great potential in the Delivering Social Change shared education programme to expand that research beyond a small-scale study. We are also aware of research in England that went much further on collaborative models of stronger and weaker schools — to put it crudely — coming together to enhance the overall performance of those two types of school.
45. We are convinced that there are quantifiable educational benefits as a result of collaboration. With the new programme, we hope to be able to demonstrate that in a wider landscape since the new Delivering Social Change programme is aimed at all schools in Northern Ireland, including those that have had no shared opportunities so far. I am sorry that that was such a long-winded answer.
46. **The Chairperson:** Members made some interesting comments in the House yesterday on their views of integrated education. There is a huge challenge for us. On the way here, I passed schools that are in splendid isolation, and you wonder how they relate to other schools, even in their own sector. I went past one very isolated rural post-primary school, and, further down the road, there were other smaller schools. You wonder whether they have any real connection with one another, other than being feeder schools for the post-primary school. You wonder how much of that there is, because that is where we take shared education to a completely different level.
47. I have said repeatedly that we have got ourselves into a very narrow trench where shared education is solely about getting Catholics and Prods together, and that is the only issue that we are interested in. That narrow view does a disservice to shared education. It is part of it, but there is a wider context and issue, which has much wider implications and benefits.
48. Thanks for that, Colin.
49. **Dr Johnston:** The fund's position was never that, when the shared education programme was developed, integrated education was part of it. The integrated education sector could partake in the choice that was available to all pupils, students and families if they wished to have that choice. At that time, it was still the norm that 93% of our students were being taught in what you might term a single identity schools, but at least with an element of segregation amongst them in the schools. From a reconciliation perspective, the fund thought that that norm had to be challenged — there was a desire for that, even in society — and for an element that brought students together in facilities. That is why the fund initially became engaged. However, there is common factor about isolation. We have talked about the issue before at the fund, and we keep talking about Fermanagh, but Fermanagh is a great example of how isolated communities and schools can come together in a shared way. At the core of that, the common factor in all programmes is educational outcomes for the students and the schools identifying their potential weaknesses and other schools' strengths and collaborating across topics and facilities to be able



to raise academic achievement for all pupils. In the integrated sector, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) delivered projects for us throughout the shared education programme. So, the fund has never seen this as a shared versus integrated argument whatsoever. In fact, integrated education was very much part of our thinking and the choice that will be available for families and pupils.

50. **Mr Hunter:** I want to widen that slightly. I looked at the 19 projects, and one of the major and important outcomes is not simply academic — we debated long and hard about aspects that showed that there were improvements in learning outcomes — but it made pupils better learners, in our view, because of the social dividends. The fact that they were able to work and learn alongside pupils in other schools meant that they had to have a sense of who they were and where they were coming from and articulate that across various lessons. The social aspect is vital, as is the fact that it helped to raise their language understanding of shared education, reconciliation and prejudice. Getting youngsters into discussions and debate allowed them to begin to challenge, and all this is beginning to show that the curriculum itself is a major vehicle for shared education. Lots of it was hidden in the history programme, and we did a short scoping study of Key Stage 4 history because we were concerned that there was diversion and diversity there. Critical thinking skills were also beginning to show an effect. Academically, that will improve outcomes, but it will take some time.
51. We must not forget the impact of staff and schools coming together physically, which throws up major themes. We need to get in strongly at initial teacher education level and at early school development level, and we need to be innovative and different, expect the unexpected of all the outcomes and maybe not be too hung up on this leading to improved GCSE results. One of the words that comes across strongly to me in all the projects is

“engagement”. I am also responsible for pupils who fall out of the school system and into alternative provision. Those numbers are rising, and there is potential for interest, because one striking feature is that the quality of teaching is the route to improvement and that it was more innovative and different, and used people other than teachers. That brought something new, different and more creative that helped engagement. So, the outcomes will take time, but they are engaging pupils. You could swear on it, where I am coming from, that it led to special and mainstream schools working much more closely together rather than their being siloed and isolated. The dividends were quite sizeable, and it will take time to embed them and for standards to rise. That is the wider view.

52. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation. I will keep to the World Cup theme. In the run-up to Bosnia's game last week, there was an interview with Edin Dzeko in one of the Sunday papers in which he talked about his experiences at school in Sarajevo. The parallels were frightening; he talked about kids in different uniforms being sandwiched together in classrooms, but the divisions always remained. They knew that they were different because they were wearing different uniforms in the same classroom. I could not help but think of Moy and our own situation here and draw parallels straight away. He said that he felt that it was a superficial reconciliation project.
53. It started me thinking about playing devil's advocate and looking critically at what we are talking about today. The IFI has spent nearly €1 billion on projects, yet we have more peace walls now than ever. I know that one of the IFI's targets is to encourage economic and social advancement. The gap between the wealthy and the poor in our society is probably worse now than ever. Again, to play devil's advocate, are we in danger, looking back 20 years, of saying that it was a superficial project, that it did not go far enough and that, for whatever reason, it has not done what it said

- on the tin? Do we need to take a new route? Do we need to intensify what we are doing? It was the parallel that I saw that caused me to think about that. The subject was frighteningly provocative for me, anyway. I want to throw that out there and hear your thoughts on it.
54. **Professor Knox:** I will jump in. That is a very fair and rational observation, and drawing on the World Cup is probably apt in that sense, with the example you have given. We have attempted to learn from previous experiments — if I can call them that — with reconciliation, community relations and good relations work, which could be distilled into things such as the education for mutual understanding (EMU) programme. There has been a significant step change beyond those types of well-meaning but broadly superficial programmes, when we put two sets of kids on a bus to the Giant's Causeway, they had a good day, came back and forgot about it.
55. **The Chairperson:** It is a good place to go.
56. **Professor Knox:** It is a good place to go, but they forgot about the substantive reconciliation benefits. There has been a substantive step change in what shared education is doing. I take John's point entirely about this being more than just education benefits, but one of the significant selling points of shared education is education benefits for parents. They are much more willing to let their kids be part of a shared education experience if they think that it will enhance education outcomes. I am not for one moment devaluing the wider, rounded experience that those children will get, but the fact that it is embedded in potential improved education outcomes means that parents are much more willing to let their kids participate in it and support it as a means of improving their kids' education. What parent does not want their child to have a better education experience?
57. The experiences across SiEP and SEP are that that model, which is built on a wide body of research by colleagues from Queen's University on sustained contact, not one-off experiences, not only improves education outcomes but produces much better reconciliation outcomes. At one stage, one might have been able to say that they could end up with the kind of superficial reconciliation experience that you described, but I think that we have moved on significantly from that. We have much greater hopes and aspirations for shared education, not least because the role of the inspectorate will now be very helpful in embedding that in an inspection system in which schools will expect to be looked at for their shared experiences.
58. **Mr Hunter:** I will make a small point. The most important thing about your World Cup example is that everyone is playing, and there is a set of rules that they all live by.
59. **The Chairperson:** For those who qualified. [*Laughter.*]
60. **Mr Hunter:** What is nice about it is that it allows for different styles of playing and so on, so there is commonality. The Welcoming Schools project did something because it raised the importance not only of schools and pupils but of schools opening doors to welcome the parental body, the environment and the community. If shared education is to be significant, it cannot work in isolation from the parental aspect or a local community. The report points out that there are different starting points, and we have to recognise that there are schools out there that have not participated or did not wish to participate. Colin is quite right; if it is shown that, by learning across and alongside others that we can improve the quality of learning, it will sell itself over time. Who is to say? Maybe we will get to the World Cup in due course.
61. **Dr Johnston:** I will respond from the fund's perspective. You are quite right: we have contributed €1 billion to projects over 27 years, and I can clearly see how some projects could be deemed superficial. Projects can look superficial if there is no means to an end, or if change is not implemented at the end of a project. The very distinct difference in the shared education

- programme — this is where the fund sees it as having the most impact — is that it has paved the way for the legislative change that is required to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to take part in shared classes and facilities.
62. Key to that — Colin touched on it — is that families have also embraced that ethos. A real societal change has been implemented through the shared education programme, and we have seen that with parents or communities who may not have engaged in peace and reconciliation activities historically but who are doing so because they see that there is an opportunity or advantage for their son, daughter or family. That is the real difference in the shared education programme, which is why I understand where you are coming from in that some projects in the past could have looked very superficial, but a distinct change has been made at legislative level as well as at community level.
63. We have to be mindful that some young people have excluded themselves from the education system, and, from the fund's perspective, one of the key elements of shared education is how to engage with those young people as well. There are young people who are excluded from formal education — maybe they have excluded themselves or have just dropped out — and that is a key focus of the fund at the moment. At the end of the shared education programme, we do not just say, "This is where it ends": It is about the young people who are not getting those opportunities, how we can engage with them, maybe get them back into formal education and looking at other opportunities for them.
64. **Mr Hazzard:** I agree that we are seeing an intensification, which is good. I think that NICIE is looking to a Macedonian example of integration through language, crossing language barriers and so on, which is a very good sign. I wanted to put that point out there to play devil's advocate for a minute.
65. **Mr Rogers:** I do not want to hit too hard those of us who were involved in EMU many years ago by talking about its superficiality, but one of my first experiences of shared education was when Limavady High School and my school in Kilkeel met and were in each other's classrooms for a couple of days. If you look at that from the outside, it seems crazy — two schools from opposite ends of the Province — but, when I reflect on it, the important thing is that we had to start somewhere. My good friend in Limavady High School, David Dunlop, was pushing for this, and I have seen how that school has come on in sharing education and how it is working and learning together with St Mary's. I also saw that in my own school.
66. Many years ago, our cross-community activity was a biannual soccer match — that was it — but that has come on as well, and now there is work and learning together. We all have to start the journey in different places, but it is important that we take it on. John, you say that about 70% of schools are involved in sharing. Is that all cross-sectoral sharing? Will you put a bit more meat on the bones about the quality of sharing?
67. **Mr Hunter:** If you see it as layers of sharing, some people simply had meetings, and the approach was almost tokenistic, but that has changed over time. Fundamentally, when relationships develop and good relationships work, it moves to strategies. Through the IFI programme, we are beginning to see, more and more, the term "shared education" fighting its way into school development planning. Unless there is a whole-school approach, and school leaders are willing and committed to driving it, it will remain as token sharing.
68. I can give an example. I sat in a classroom in which youngsters from two schools were being led by a teacher who was talking about the words of reconciliation. What was interesting, being the magpie in the system, was that they sat apart from one another and spoke through the teacher. After having a conversation with the teacher and going back to it, the dynamics had

- changed. In addition, the teacher almost allowed the youngsters to control the setting. They moved towards talking, but not about the words of reconciliation. I sat in on a simple lesson in which the youngsters talked about what they did at the weekend. They suddenly found that, while living in different places, there is a commonality between where we go, what we do, whether we have a drink and whom we support. People began to make friendships. To me, that was much more significant than their learning the language of the formalised side. It takes time, and schools do it differently.
69. Schools have linked up for drama and developed relations because of smaller pupil numbers for particular subjects, so that has widened. It enhances the early learning communities. Strangely enough, it is more difficult in schools that are closer together. It is easy to link up with a school that is far away because it is not a rival. However, the closer the schools are, the more local superstitions there are. They have to do it in a nice, simple, straightforward way. That usually happens because two teachers have become friends at work. It then becomes bigger and stronger and moves out to the broader population. For it to really work, however, it has to have commitment at leadership and whole-school level.
70. When the interim report was published, it was significant that the projects that were not doing well had taken their eye off the ball. I am thinking of one project in which the youngsters linked together on a football scheme, with Celtic and Rangers being the two teams. The footballing skills were developing really well at the beginning, but their knowledge of reconciliation and working together was not. So, rebalancing, building, monitoring and evaluation, preferably by the organisers themselves rather than by external people like me, is the way I think that it will move forward. In that sense, the numbers are growing.
71. In one programme, the two university colleges got together. The programme has now finished, but they have sustained it. They still maintain the links and the development, so sustainability is developing. Welcoming Schools also made links. In another couple of programmes, people gained accreditation and are using that as leaders in their organisations. There are lots of dividends that prove that it will develop more and more over time. As someone who went through the EMU programme, I always thought that it had wonderful potential and wondered why the goalposts had moved. This has helped to kick-start the concepts that were in that, as has the CRED programme.
72. **Mr Rogers:** Is that good practice being disseminated to all schools?
73. **Mr Hunter:** It has been available through the report. One of our core targets for the next couple of years is that we should produce resource material. If we put another hat on, we produced resource material for special educational needs, which has been highly valued by schools. We think that we now need resource material of best practice for shared education so that it would provide a stimulus and a benchmark and something that shows how others have gone on this journey and how people can develop it. That is part of our thinking with the next round of shared education — that it should end up with physical material.
74. A lot of the projects have produced some wonderful material, and they are living within the projects. There was a conference to disseminate that, but I will take the comment that it needs to be much wider and shared much further through better networking than we currently have.
75. **Mr Rogers:** The report talks about the production of a shared education continuum tool. Was that produced?
76. **Mr Hunter:** There is a diagram, which was our attempt to show the beginnings of it. Putting some meat on the continuum is the task that has been handed to me and my team to produce for the Department for the end of September. Therefore, there would be something against which new

- projects could be benchmarked. The desire of that is to allow schools to see shared education not as an event but as a process. They can see where they currently are and move themselves through school development and targets along that, away from being isolated, being siloed or being single identity towards having a shared and wider identity working across the continuum. It is not just running one way. It is a continuum that will go in different directions. It is still a process.
77. **Mr Rogers:** I think that it would be a useful tool for schools, particularly for their self-evaluation, to see where they are and what they need to embed in their school development plan as they go ahead.
78. **Professor Knox:** I will just add a quick point to that to update the information about the ETI's work. As part of the business plan for the Delivering Social Change shared education programme — the £25 million programme — colleagues at Queen's, based on their experience of the shared education programme in the three projects, have developed a graduated scheme to allow schools to position themselves in that in terms of applications for funding. Point 1 is where schools have not had any prior contact at all, and it goes up to, I think, point 4, where you have the Limavadys of this world, who are essentially interdependent.
79. **Mr Lunn:** I do not want you to think that I am in any way hostile to what you are doing. I had better say that at the start. It might sound as if I am, but I am not, honestly. Your programmes are terrific, and I have no doubt that there are educational benefits and some societal benefits. Frankly, there is a vast difference between those two benefits. That is what worries me.
80. Sharing has been around for years, long before the IFI came along. My daughter participated in the shared language scheme between Friends' School and Rathmore. I hate to say how many years ago that was, but it was probably 25. The big push is on now for shared education. I think that, to some people, it is a convenient alternative to pushing for the real thing, which is integrated. I have no expectation that our whole system will somehow become integrated in my time or my children's time. It is not going to happen.
81. Take as your starting point the word "reconciliation", which has been used quite a bit: I do not believe that children at age four or five need reconciliation. They just need to enter a school situation where working together, living together and playing together are the norm. To me, if Together: Building a United Community is to mean anything, that has to be a very valid part of the structure. You can move on to housing and all the rest of it, but, as far as possible, they should be brought through school together.
82. I know that you have done a fair bit of inspection work on this, John. I understand how you can evaluate the educational benefits, though I think that trying to isolate the educational benefit of the sharing programme, as opposed to what might have happened if the schools had not been sharing, must be difficult, given the way in which she looked at that. How do you evaluate the societal and community benefits?
83. **Mr Hunter:** There are a couple of things. I am looking at one project, which, as part of its outworking, employed a researcher who did a questionnaire. Out of that, they looked at the attitudinal change in those who participated and in the wider community. I think that we have to evaluate the impact through the eyes and the presentation of the participants in this.
84. I am a big believer in schools producing their own evidence of the importance of what they do on behalf of youngsters in the community. Our job should be to quality-assure that externally to ensure that they are doing it in the correct way. I take the point that it is difficult, but I think that, when schools continually work together, it becomes — I think that we used these words in the report — "The way we do things around here".

- When we get to that stage, we know that we have actually done something significant.
85. **Mr Lunn:** This is the way that we do things around here, but we have no intention of coming together. We will continue to use separate uniforms and premises and to come together for educational benefit. As each group of children goes through each school, it is the same procedure over again on a seven-year cycle.
86. **Mr Hunter:** I think that we have to take a longer-term strategy. When you move into the FE sector, the training side and the university side, the issues that were apparent in a segregated system are no longer there. So, I think that we have to prepare folk at that younger stage. I think that the curriculum is a major vehicle for that. The PD&MU and Learning for Life and Work are routes to give youngsters the skills that they need, which they have to take out and beyond the school classroom.
87. In my day, you got into the classroom and you taught. That was it; nobody bothered you. Now you are measured as a whole school, and we are moving towards being measured as a school community. We are also moving towards area learning communities. Therefore, the dividend for an area learning community must be seen through the improvements in wider society. How we will measure it is not that easy, and how we will write about it is even tougher. However, I still think that it is important to have that goal.
88. **Mr Lunn:** You say that, by the time they get to FE and university level, the issues are no longer there. You want to go to Queen's University. I think that you will find that the issues are still there, and they are partly there because of what has gone before.
89. **Mr Hunter:** Yes, what has gone before.
90. **Dr Johnston:** Integrated and shared education are tools to get to a specific point, and they are both trying to get to the same outcome. For me, the change in shared education is a very complex one because of the sectoral choice that exists here. You have to manage that change across all those sectors as well as in society. That is what makes it more difficult.
91. On Mr Roger's earlier point about Kilkeel and Limavady, they started at two very different places, and that is very important. That is part of that change that has to be managed as well. It is at the point now where Limavady High School and St Mary's in Limavady have put in an application for a shared campus, which St Mary's would not have done had it not been for the engagements with Limavady High School.
92. **Mr Lunn:** They are two separate schools.
93. **Dr Johnston:** They are two separate schools, but they have brought each other along in shared education.
94. While I take your point that children at four and five do not need to be taught about reconciliation, studies by Early Years and other organisations have shown that, at that age, prejudice can be very much ingrained in young people. The problem that we have in our society is that, by the time the young people get to the point where reconciliation is required, sectarianism has potentially been ingrained in them from an early age because of the way in which they have been taught. I think that it is very important that, at the age of four or five, they are taught not necessarily about reconciliation but about mutual respect and diversity.
95. **Mr Lunn:** Would that not be easier under the one roof?
96. **Dr Johnston:** Ultimately, it might be better under the one roof. The starting point that shared education is at, at this moment in time, is doing some elements of that under the one roof. My point, earlier, was that the complex change has to be managed across all sectors and across society, and we have to realise that that is a real challenge. I think that that is the challenge for shared education. That has been the challenge for integrated education since its inception. What

- we have now is a tool. The shared education and methodologies that have been developed have been accepted across sectors and across society as a potential movement. What we have here now is movement — cross-sectoral, cross-society movement on getting to shared, integrated or, ultimately, the outcome that we all want.
97. **Mr Lunn:** I hope that you are right about that. You say that integrated and shared education are on the same journey in wanting to see the same outcomes. I keep saying this, but, beneficial as shared education can be, some of us think that it is prolonging the situation. There is no incentive for schools, except maybe the very enlightened schools, to contemplate coming together or to have a much greater element of sharing. It is a convenience. It is certainly a convenience in educational terms, because you can develop the full curriculum much more easily; in fact, I think that that was the original reason for it. It is also a convenience in that things can stay the way they are. There is no end product here.
98. **Professor Knox:** With respect, I disagree with that. We cannot force the pace of parental choice. The Drumragh judgement will, hopefully, help to address the situation in some schools.
99. **Mr Lunn:** I am coming to that.
100. **Professor Knox:** Some schools, not many, in the integrated movement are oversubscribed. I think that shared education will demonstrate to parents the educational benefits of working collaboratively across sectors and that reconciliation benefits will flow from that. I think that parental choice will become more informed by the experience of shared education and, therefore, will open up opportunities, for those who wish to take them, to move to fully integrated schools. At the moment, my judgement is that parents are making choices based on educational outcomes. Unfortunately, the integrated sector schools do not perform that well in educational outcomes. I think that that is a greater factor for parental choice than reconciliation is.
101. **Mr Lunn:** I would challenge that, for a start.
102. **Professor Knox:** I will show you the statistics.
103. **Mr Lunn:** We will compare statistics some time. Integrated schools have a reasonable performance level. We have been doing a bit of research on this. It is an interesting fact, Chairman, that the much-maligned Protestant working-class boys perform just as well in the integrated setting as the working-class Catholic boys. I will show you that some time when we get it developed.
104. We could talk around this all day. I do not run down, in any way, what you are doing. It has to be beneficial. The amount of money that is coming in is terrific, and I hope that it continues. But I wonder where it is leading. I cannot see the end of the journey. In addressing our societal problems, various building blocks are referred to, such as Together: Building a United Community, in particular. The most basic building block is to try to stop this generational transfer of prejudice. The way to do that is by letting the kids get to know each other. Are they getting to know each other? Are they getting enough information that might help them to remove their prejudices and preconceptions about the other side in a shared education system? I am not sure about that. Is there a proper reconciliation programme that is specifically devoted to that? I think that you mentioned one in particular.
105. **Mr Hunter:** There is ample evidence, through the projects, that it is moving all of the participants to think critically and to gain a sense of understanding and a respect of the other side.
106. It was interesting to find, sitting together in a classroom, youngsters who had never met before and never expected to meet. Communication has to start somewhere. So, we have to start with, as you said, bringing these youngsters together. We have to be real: this society

- will not say tomorrow that all kids will go to the local school. I wish that it were, but that is not the situation. Therefore, we have to work to break down barriers that could drive us further apart and to show that there is a journey towards respect, understanding and being able to articulate your own feelings, concerns and beliefs. The development of our well-being in our education system has to be vital to that.
107. As I looked at these projects, one of the things that I enjoyed was that the teaching was different. It was less formal and more innovative. There was greater use of different people and facilitators, and the youngsters began to engage and enjoy it. In that, as they learn, friendships develop. Education has to maintain those friendships and the social integration. I take the point that that may be easily facilitated if they were all to go to the same school tomorrow, but they are not. This is —
108. **Mr Lunn:** Yes. Sorry, Chairman. I am almost done. The friendship aspect is interesting. There have been programmes galore down the years, not necessarily involving schools. Kids have been to the Giant’s Causeway, Corrymeela, Glendalough — you name it. They have been to America. They go and mix, and they come home and do not mix. What happens to 10-year-olds who have formed some kind of a friendship in a shared programme and then go off to different schools? Is there any evidence that those friendships are maintained?
109. **Professor Knox:** I can give you verbatim the results of a study carried out by social psychologist colleagues at Queen’s, specifically on the reconciliation outcomes of the shared education programme. Professor Joanne Hughes and Danielle Blaylock completed the study and the findings state:
- “Researchers have also considered the impact of pupils’ participation in the Shared Education Programme on cross-group friendships and intergroup anxiety. The study confirms the value of contact as a mechanism for promoting more harmonious relationships that can help promote social cohesion in a society that remains deeply divided.”*
110. If that is not conclusive evidence of the reconciliation benefits of shared education, and I am sure that those colleagues would share the empirical analysis behind those findings, I am not sure what is.
111. **Mr Lunn:** I would love to see the evidence that sits behind those findings. I do not doubt the finding at all, but it is not quantified.
112. **Professor Knox:** Well, they have quantified it.
113. **Mr Lunn:** But the point is, as I said at the start, that there has to be some benefit from what you are doing. I do not mean to sound critical here, but —
114. **The Chairperson:** I think that we have to face up to the fact — this point was made before — that we are placing a huge expectation on our schools to answer and to solve all the problems in our society. They play a very important role, but let us include ourselves in this. Politicians by our actions, words and deeds, churches by their actions, words and deeds, and organisations by their actions, words and deeds contribute immensely to perpetuating the division in our society. While I accept the points that are being made about getting the outcome, I think that it is unfair. Society will never be perfect. We live in a fool’s paradise if we believe that, if only we all went to one school, somehow when we come home at 3.30 pm, all the problems that we face in our communities would disappear. That will not happen. It would make a huge benefit and maybe a huge contribution, but a balance needs to be struck in these things.
115. There is one thing before we go to Jo-Anne, and then Chris wants to come back in to bring this to an end. We have talked about the huge amount of money that has been spent. You can see that this is a political point; it is not the Chair’s point. You can see the Department, at the minute, using money to change the outlay of schools, as in whether they are grammar schools or



non-selective grammar schools. If you want a newbuild, you will get a pound or two if you move away to this new world of a non-selective grammar. That is an attempt to use money to change the dynamic. Given the fact that, with the exception of independent schools, every one of our schools is funded 100% by the state, does the state not now have a duty to say, "Well, hold on; we are not continuing to perpetuate segregation"? Is there not a contradiction in policy terms? On one hand, the state/Northern Ireland plc/the Executive are saying that they want shared communities. They want us to live together and do all these things. Equally, they will still give you millions and millions of pounds £2.2 billion to continue to live apart in terms of education as one element of that overall society. Is there not an argument for the Executive to look at the issue in a more holistic way and not to continue to fund unless you can actually deliver? They have done it in other areas. Why can they not do it in this one? I am playing devil's advocate on that one.

116. **Mr Hunter:** In some ways, yes. It would be the brave politician who would declare the end product and say that this is where we should be and that is that. You may be a politician today, but maybe not tomorrow. *[Laughter.]* However, there is something important in rewarding schools that achieve. I had an opportunity — not paid for by the Department, I have to add — to look at schools in Germany. I am on the European special educational commission. An interesting aspect of schools that I saw in Germany was that those that get to a high standard are rewarded. Our system rewards schools that fail. They found it extremely difficult to understand why our benchmarks were such. While I could explain until I was blue in the face that we are terribly nice and want to help those that are failing to improve, they were of the view that it is down to you to improve and if you do not improve, you do not get those benefits. So, it was a nice contrast. I was thinking that it actually said something of Northern Ireland. We have no foreign policy. We do not look out enough. We

tend to look in. If shared education is doing something in your classroom, in your school and in society, we need to look out more to see how others do it.

117. We had an example yesterday of the Assembly looking outwards with regard to ETI and saying what we should be like and how we should change. I think that that is equally to be welcomed. We are always in the process of change. It is one step at a time for some. For others, it is a leap of faith. Some are already halfway there. We cannot say that this one is right and that one is wrong; we simply have to evaluate them against the dividends for that school, that community and the process in its longer term. Another day without returning to violence is an important day. That, to me, is society's measure of our improvement. To me, education is the route to goal for all improvement. Why should I not say that? But I think that is how we change attitudes.
118. There is something about the earlier conversation and getting too focused on outcomes. You were saying that the youngsters have gone away, done something and come back to their separate parts. However, they do not forget. Their experience must be such that it is a quality experience that they do not forget. Each of them may take forward that experience into their life cycle and work. There may be outcomes that are more difficult to measure. There may be case study outcomes that we could look at. Certainly, I think that the outcomes are there. They may be staring us in the face. We need to be quite clear about what we are moving from as well as what we are moving towards.
119. **The Chairperson:** You make a valid point, John, that every peaceful day is progress. There is no doubt about that. That is not to say that, in bringing two or many different traditions together, somehow, those traditions are inherently wrong. It is a misconception that, somehow, you have to try to dilute or change. It is about how we can accept that there are differences and live together.

120. Eighteen years ago, I had an experience — I will not bore you all with it — when I went to Corrymeela in my constituency. It was a place that I was never much in, traditionally or historically. It changed my perception. I made a friend whom I have to this very day. He was a former Minister in the Irish Government. He and I have had a long friendship that all started in Corrymeela. It did not change me into an Irish republican — I think that I can say that reasonably conclusively [*Laughter.*] — nor did it change him, who happens to be de Valera’s grandson, Éamon Ó Cuív, into an Ulster Prod. I can tell you that we are very close friends. He respects me; I respect him. I know that he would never do anything to cause me harm, and he knows that I would never do anything to cause him harm. That is a lasting, beneficial outcome. If we can translate that into our schools, we will not see it played out on our streets.
121. **Mr Lunn:** I assume that you were not a seven-year-old when that happened?
122. **The Chairperson:** No, I was not; I was 10-ish. [*Laughter.*]
123. **Mr Hunter:** We moved that out from the group of inspectors who were taking the lead on it to the wider inspectorate. It is interesting that we have just completed a one-day staff development in Corrymeela. We did that to make a point and show that there was a history in one place where they had been working on this long before us and also to say that we were not meeting in a formal educational setting. We are asking the inspectorate to widen its view and its approaches. Yesterday will ask it to do that even further. That was a significant aspect for us.
124. **Mrs Dobson:** How do you follow that conversation? I apologise for missing the start of your briefing. It is further from Waringstown than I anticipated. I know that a couple of my questions have already been touched upon. Forgive me if they have.
125. The International Fund, as we know, defined shared education as follows:
- “young people from diverse backgrounds learning together, enabling them to recognise and value diversity and develop higher levels of mutual understanding.”*
126. That is certainly to be admired. Trevor touched on the issue earlier. Does it recognise the integration that has been best practice and promoted in state-controlled schools in Northern Ireland for decades? There are many wonderful best-practice examples of sharing across the education system in Northern Ireland. I commend what you are trying to achieve and what has been achieved already. Were any local examples taken into consideration when planning the 19 projects or were examples from overseas used?
127. **Mr Hunter:** This is the wrong thing to say, but the widest link was between schools in Northern Ireland and schools in the Republic. That was the width of it; it did not go further in that sense. It also looked across ability and disability and gender. So, there were lots of variables in it that the projects were free to suggest, but the aims that they set for themselves were those that we measured them against. In many ways, those folk came up with aims that were extremely difficult to achieve — as you do when you apply for funding for anything. The core aim of impacting on all the participants remained the same. They did not go out and beyond in that sense.
128. They used a variety of media, such as film makers, Cinemagic, ICT, youth workers alongside teachers/facilitators and parental involvement. In fact, some lessons were for parents and pupils. There was variety and change; in fact, the multi-aspect of it made it. You have only to look at the titles of projects to see the major impact that they made. They were looking at Classrooms Re-imagined, Facing Our History and Welcoming Schools. I think that all those are ingredients that shared education does not have a right to own; however, it certainly facilitated those key aspects being brought into that setting. It did not look out and beyond, although participants would have had a

- knowledge and brought expertise from that perspective.
129. **Professor Knox:** Let me just add to that. You were looking at experiences in Northern Ireland, John, and some of the work from the shared education programme has been disseminated internationally, so that colleagues at Queen's University are working in Macedonia, Bosnia, Israel/Palestine and in Los Angeles with some of the Charter Schools. So, dissemination is going outwards. From my limited knowledge of their work abroad, some of that stuff is now quite advanced in Macedonia.
130. **Dr Johnston:** That is the point that I was going to make, Colin. The evidence and the practice developed through this programme are being disseminated internationally, because of the best practice that came from it. A key point is that, we, the fund, as an organisation, looked at the project proposals to make sure that they did not come just from education and library boards and that they were not just the historical types of education projects that would come forward. We looked at projects from organisations outside the formal education setting that linked into the education setting and took some of the best-practice lessons that they had learned through their own projects that had international dimensions and brought them into the formal education setting. It was not localised; we were looking at their overseas experience, the international dimensions of their projects and bringing them into an education setting.
131. **Mrs Dobson:** It is obvious, from reading through the pack that we were given, that the 19 projects cover some very varied and wide topics to do with sharing; it has been very interesting to read. If you were to single out for us two examples of what worked best and an example of what did not work that well, what would you focus on?
132. **Mr Hunter:** It would be unfair to pick because, between them, there was variety, the audiences were different, and their aims and objectives were slightly different. However, I will answer your question by saying that what made success was that there was a very clear idea that remained throughout the project. Leadership was vital; support was important; support that became ongoing support was significant; and a willingness to adapt and change. So, in that sense, there were certain ingredients — leadership, ownership and so on — that were important.
133. If projects are to be successful, they have to be based on a clear understanding of where you wish to go and how you wish to get there. One of the criticisms that we would make is that the projects had too short a lead-in time. You need a wee bit longer to consolidate pupils' thinking, planning and getting to know one another and identify their roles and responsibilities. That, to me, was something that could have been developed further, but that is in hindsight. The other thing is that, if a project is to be successful, it needs to reward itself continuously, see its own celebration, celebrate those who are participating; and the end product really has to measure the journey that all have made, including that of those who planned it. It has to find a sustainable way, out and beyond.
134. If, for example, in schools, a project is driven through the curriculum, it is cost-effective. One of the things that comes out of this is that schools need to work together. Apart from shared education, it is important that they network. I am thinking of a teacher of one subject in one school needing to link with another. That link across is important. We have a link across history teachers, and, just this week, we have international history teachers here looking at the teaching of history. We need to promote that because, historically, teachers have gone to different training colleges, have not met and have not shared. That, to me, in the Classrooms Reimagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers (CREDIT) programme between St Mary's and Stranmillis, was a vital dividend, because it equipped

- the teacher and, if the teacher is not equipped with it, it will not develop.
135. **Professor Knox:** I want to add something about the three shared education projects. It was a very good question, and I was trying to get my thoughts together to answer it specifically. For the three projects that we were involved in — these are not necessarily in order of importance — sustained high-quality contact was a key prerequisite for them to work. As John said, leadership in the school was significant; if we got leadership from the principals, it was more likely to work. The relationship between teachers, often finding some commonality on an individual level, was hugely important. A focus on the curriculum was a key prerequisite, since our projects had a very specific education focus. The sharing of resources between teachers was also hugely important in helping each school to develop.
136. The other thing that struck us was teachers' pragmatism. Teachers are hugely pragmatic individuals who have to make things work within the very tight confines of their school day. The last point — perhaps this should have been the first — is that there needs to be a willingness to fail and not to be blamed for it. In some cases, trying to be innovative and creative led to things not working. One of the premises that underpin the shared education programme was that it was OK to fail, although not continuously, because you can learn from that.
137. **Mrs Dobson:** It is very difficult for them to take the chance and put their head above the parapet.
138. **Professor Knox:** Indeed, particularly in risky areas like that.
139. **Dr Johnston:** The fund looked at this as a proof of concept; it was work that had not been done in the past, and so it was OK to fail. I do not think that there were any failures in any of the projects that came through either of the programmes. Some projects were done exceptionally well.
140. I will touch on teacher development. From our experience of talking to teachers individually at events, the journey that teachers have gone on has been exceptional. Some have identified that, through their own teaching methods, they may have been developing prejudice in pupils. Sustainable relationships are built up between teachers and schools.
141. There is potentially a lack of resources for the teacher support element of curriculum development. Today, we talked about pupils and schools and reconciliation. However, we hardly touched on ensuring that our teachers have enough curriculum resources and having the skills and resources to deal with contentious issues in the classroom. That could be improved in future, certainly as an outworking of this work.
142. **Mrs Dobson:** I have a couple of final quick points. I was pleased that the final evaluation report recommended that ETI should develop further quality indicators and good practice that can be distributed to schools undertaking shared education. Can you let us know whether those have been developed and how widely they are being circulated? Can you let us know whether you plan to share any of the results of the pilots with schools to encourage sharing and all the aspects of sharing that can be considered with the neighbouring schools, for example? I am thinking that a legacy for the projects has begun already.
143. **Mr Hunter:** The process ahead is to take the indicators that we used for the project and develop them further for use by all schools. That work is sitting on my shoulders. It will be developed in consultation with other people who have a hell of a lot to contribute, including the work in Queen's and the people who are part of the project. Whatever is produced will be the result of a lot of ingredients. Our aim is to have it ready in draft form by September. Our second aim is that it should be disseminated to all schools; therefore, it will be open and transparent. It will be there as a benchmark or pilot that can be adapted and changed over time in light of experience. However, it is a work in progress at this stage.

144. We should never forget that an important ingredient is fun; it has to be pupil-, children-, parent- and community-centred, and there has to be fun and enjoyment in it. That is how they get the true value out of it and how they remember it. That fun element was there in an awful lot of the practices that I have gone to see, and I think that that breaks down barriers more quickly than anything else.
145. Professor Knox: I am not speaking as a funder, but I guess that, from the perspective of IFI and Atlantic, the ultimate legacy of projects such as this is that they become embedded in the system. Through the Delivering Social Change project, we are seeing the Department putting its own resources into something like this for the first time, which is hugely welcome. If an implementation plan comes out of the National Administration Guidelines (NAG) report, there is potential for legislation to come into place behind it. Developments on teacher training and teacher development, which I guess IFI and others will continue to support, will ultimately lead to the embedding of shared education as a concept in the mainstream education system. As I say, I am not talking as a funder, but I suspect that that will be one of the ultimate legacies.
146. Dr Johnston: I suppose that you want me to say yes or no then; do you? *[Laughter.]*
147. The Chairperson: Have you any money with you today? *[Laughter.]*
148. Dr Johnston: Success for us is the fact that this was a proven concept. It is about developing models and ensuring that they are there for dissemination. For us, this is success. It is success for us that we are sitting here today talking about shared education at a legislative level. As Colin rightly says, for us, implementation is the ultimate goal. We would like to see that moving along. There are complexities around area planning, the ESA and everything else, and those will be developed. Ultimately, however, we would like to see the implementation of a shared education ethos as integral to how education is delivered to all our students.
149. Mr Hazzard: I have one final point that is timely following the incident yesterday. Where do racism and the increasing number of people from other parts of the world who are making Ireland their home fit in to shared education?
150. Dr Johnston: That goes back to the point that I raised earlier about early years, four- and five-year-olds and prejudice. A personal belief of mine is that, if you remove sectarianism, something else may fill the void. Over a long period we have been focusing on sectarianism rather than prejudice. All prejudice, whether sectarianism or racism, comes from the same place. It is extremely important for the future that we teach our young people, at a very early age, about mutual respect and diversity. Shared education plays a role in that not just across racist divides but all section 75 divides.
151. Mr Hunter: One of my team is responsible for newcomers. Having visited schools and spoken to key players, she recently produced a short report. It is pleasant to report that newcomer youngsters do not face many difficulties in school. They do well, and schools do a great deal to ensure that they are assimilated and respected. Schools are an oasis, despite what communities are doing. I think that schools are taking a lead on this one.
152. **The Chairperson:** Thank you very much for a very useful and informative presentation. Adrian, I thank you and ask you to convey to the IFI our appreciation and thanks for the past provision of financial support. We look forward to continued financial support. Colin, thank you for the work that you do and the reports that we have received. The Committee appreciates the value of those. John, in case you are feeling left out and thinking that, after yesterday, we are beating the inspectorate up, that is not the case. We are glad that you were listening. We thank you for the work that you do and ask you to convey that to your colleagues. You are welcome to stay to hear the next presentation.



# 18 June 2014

**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Mervyn Storey (Chairperson)  
 Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Seán Rogers

**Witnesses:**

Mr Lauri McCusker *Fermanagh Trust*  
 Ms Catherine Ward

153. **The Chairperson:** I welcome to the Committee this morning — I am welcoming them to their own building — Lauri McCusker, the director of the Fermanagh Trust, and Catherine Ward, the shared education programme manager of the Fermanagh Trust. I want to say a word of appreciation and thanks for allowing us the opportunity to come here today, for facilitating us and for your hospitality. It is much appreciated, Lauri, and thank you for the information that you have provided. I want to say a word of appreciation to you, on behalf of all those who have been involved in the work of the trust, for the journey that you have commenced in Fermanagh. It has been exemplary, and you are to be commended on your work. We are glad to be here. I ask you to speak to the paper if you wish, and then we will have some questions.
154. **Mr Lauri McCusker (Fermanagh Trust):** Thank you. It is a delight to have you here this morning. Hopefully, being in our own house will not make me let my guard down too much. *[Laughter.]* We would like to take you quickly through the briefing paper and highlight the challenges that we face and our thoughts on them.
155. The Fermanagh Trust is not an education body; we are a community development trust. Like all good organisations, we look to see how we can make a difference and a positive contribution. In 2007 and 2008, when we were looking at what the big issues were externally and what the potential big issues were for County Fermanagh in the coming five or six years, education came onto our landscape. We looked at what was happening in education and what that could mean for County Fermanagh.
156. I will make particular reference to two pieces of work that were being done at the time. One was a document produced by the Western Education and Library Board, which was a post-primary review of controlled schools in Fermanagh. At the same time, a review of the Catholic sector was produced by the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education. Those two documents looked at the future of post-primary schools in the controlled and maintained sectors, but were operating in a parallel world. The future of post-primary schools in this county was being looked at to determine the future for the next 30 or 40 years. The two documents were produced as if the other world did not exist.
157. That got us thinking: what does that mean? When we discussed it further, we recognised that it potentially meant that an area-planning process would be initiated at post-primary level and subsequently at primary level and that we would be living in a parallel world. It was from there that we came to the concept of shared education in Fermanagh. Alongside that was our experience of working with cross-community playgroups, which provide the preschool education in large parts of the county.
158. What could we do in that big picture? How could we make a positive contribution? What was the potential impact of those policies? What was the potential impact of an area-based planning process in parts of rural Fermanagh where you have majority and minority communities and, in some cases, very large majority and very small

- minority communities? What were the implications for rural Fermanagh? What were the implications for our young people? What were the implications for society in 10, 15 or 20 years' time of decisions that mean that education will not exist in those areas for that particular sector? That is where we came at shared education from.
159. In 2008, we did significant research. We talked to 400 parents directly and asked them whether the concept of working more closely with their nearest neighbours would be attractive and of value. We talked to the wider community and to the school communities, by which I mean boards of governors, principals, teachers and wider staff, etc. The feedback was that they were up for working more closely together. We then secured support from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and the Atlantic Philanthropies. We got significant support of £2.1 million for a four-year programme. That is around £500,000 per annum to go on developing and building relationships between more than 50 schools in Fermanagh. When you break that down on a county-wide basis, you can do the sums.
160. At the start of 2009, we went into what is termed in some government Departments as a design-and-build phase. In 2009, we went out and talked to the schools. We said that we had these resources and that we wanted to give them to the schools to build on the thoughts that they had shared with us earlier. We said that we would do it in such a way as to develop strong collaborative linkages to develop schools and school communities in neighbouring areas. In summary, the model consisted of joint curriculum planning; regular shared classes; joint staff development; sharing of facilities and resources; shared teachers and teacher exchanges; joint events and training; and workshops for parents. Substantial numbers took up that opportunity. In fact, we were very surprised — pleasantly surprised — that the appetite and willingness was there.
161. We do not have to explain to you politicians about community relationships and challenges in border and other areas. Fermanagh, like many other places, has gone through its tragic and difficult times. So, we were delighted that the uptake was there. Ultimately, there were not a lot of resources for schools. When you look at the number of schools and the amount of resources, you will see that it was not as if they were getting hundreds of thousands of pounds. We were delighted that the appetite was there for schools to work with, to reach out to and to join their nearest neighbour or neighbours and work in partnership. The widespread support was very important. We had political support locally, and we had the support of the Churches and the wider community. The framework was there that meant that there was willingness, and people were not taking big risks, because that support environment was developed and explained.
162. What were the benefits? Following on from the previous presentation to the Committee, I can say that substantial research and evaluations have been done of different elements of the programme, including the teacher exchange scheme. Those documents are available. The key strength of the Fermanagh shared education model since it started in 2009 is that it involved partnering with your nearest school, regardless of size. In other words, you work with your neighbours. In most cases, people had neighbours to work with. In some cases, they did not necessarily have a natural partner because of the geography of Fermanagh. It was very important that that was directly related to the curriculum. The easy thing is to go for after-school programmes, but we wanted it to be curriculum-based. It was about regular activity and regular classes. We called it a premium, and we wanted to make sure that everyone could get some of the resources. We looked at the resources that we had and said, "If schools apply, this is what they can access". So, there was fairness, and we built a formula around that. There is a geographical focus. Anyone who



- understands community development will know that you often look to see what your neighbours do. If your neighbour has successfully developed a credit union, why can we not do that? It is the same with shared education. Schools see that other schools are doing that and say that they can do it. As I said, there was a geographical focus, and people were able to share their experiences across that.
163. In the partnerships that were developed, we were constantly learning from one another, so we used the opportunities to bring together principals, teachers and others to learn from one another and to share good practice. It increasingly became the norm for shared education to take place. It became quite natural, because it was going on at such a level and to such an extent. Very importantly, we trusted the schools and the principals. Principals came together and teachers came together to decide what their needs were, and that was very important. We said, “You tell us how your working together can add value to and meet the needs of your schools and your school communities”.
164. I will now deal with some of the key successful features of the programme. We felt that teacher exchange was invaluable, and there are real lessons there that can be shared and picked up across Northern Ireland. We have no doubt about that. Why have people working in splendid isolation in schools when you have neighbouring schools from which you can access that skill set and that learning? We think that that can make a real added benefit to education. The respecting difference programme was very important. It was being delivered on a cross-community basis, for not only the children and the teachers who were being trained up on it but parents. Parents were learning together about respecting difference. That was important because it started to build links and friendships among parents. That is very important in rural areas, where those links may not have existed.
165. From learning in the first year, we built another element into the programme in the second year, and that was partnership-building. That was around giving resources towards joint staff development on common needs in partnered schools, and joint training, events and meetings for governors and parents. It is fascinating to see boards of governors come together for the first time when they have been operating in a village for 20 or 30 years yet have never been in the same room together. They are doing the same jobs but have never talked about the needs of children and how they can work together for the betterment of all the children in the community. There was the development of joint school policies and strategies and the development of shared education policies and agreements, as well as the wider sharing of resources, facilities and expertise.
166. We then came to area planning. I remember going out to schools and talking about the area-planning process that is being kick-started. There was quite an interesting reaction. Quite a number of schools said, “Lauri, these things come and go. Do not worry about it”. They told me to see what happened in three or four years’ time. They said, “That is education, Lauri. That is the way of the world”. I said that it is very important, and I was told by the schools that it is not really that important. I think that the schools have been proved right, but we will come to that. For us, area planning was very important in getting the schools to think about their future. Shared education was about the here and now, about this year, and about the school development plan this year and next year, but area planning is about schools looking to five years’ time and 10 years’ time.
167. Very importantly, the area-planning guidelines that the Minister issued included the need to look at shared education, but, when the initial papers came out at a primary-school level from the Western Education and Library Board, they excluded the need to look at shared education. Following some toing and froing, we were delighted when the Western Board reissued its guidelines for area planning to the primary schools in the county to include

shared education. That is addressed in our paper. Interestingly, 14 partnerships in Fermanagh produced substantial submissions to the area plans. Those were submitted last June, and schools are still waiting to hear back. Those things were not considered to be just pieces of paper but as boards of governors coming together: what is our plan for the future together? They were considered by principals, staff and the wider community. There were community consultation meetings around joint working in the area-planning process. Those substantial submissions by schools jointly — 14 submissions, involving approximately 37 schools — have been sitting on a shelf for a year. Imagination, thought and the building of relationships for the future have gone into that process. For those 37 schools that have thought about this, it is a journey. In last week's paper, I saw that one of the learning communities created between four rural schools had launched its plan to say, "This is our future together in this area". That is where shared education has taken those schools. We just hope that the system allows them, and their imagination and their creativity on joint working in the future, to be caught up with.

168. Those plans include things such as joint governors of committees; joint curriculum planning; mainstream and shared teacher exchanges between schools in the long term; and joint staff development. Although two schools still exist, they become extremely fluid in their relationships. Who knows what that will look like in 10 years? Six or seven years ago, when the authorities were producing documents, it was a parallel world. For me, the difference is an integrated, shared education. The schools are not in a parallel world now, and that is what the schools in Fermanagh have achieved with a bottom-up approach.
169. There are very strong strengths in the cross-sectoral proposals presented, and we feel that those really match governmental and societal aims — a point that was brought up during the previous presentation. We think

that those proposals really tie in with the Programme for Government commitments; the ministerial advisory group (MAG) report; the Together: Building a United Community strategy; the rural White Paper from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; and, more recently, the announcement of the consultation process for the Peace IV programme.

170. Finally, what do we see as the challenges going forward? Shared education cannot be seen as a programme. If it is seen as a programme, these guys may as well go back to where they were six years ago and get back into area planning in the parallel world that they were in. We should not allow that to happen. When the Minister made his address on the issue on 13 October, he said that sharing must be in the "DNA of our education system". If it is in the DNA of our education system, the projects and proposals will flourish, as will sharing, closer cooperation and joint working. However, it needs to relate to all areas of education, not only area planning. For every decision that the Department makes, it needs to think of its impact on the community at large. For example, if a capital build announcement comes out next week, what will be the implications of that for the community and for society?
171. We firmly believe that there needs to be a joined-up approach across the various elements of education policy development, but there is a gap. Communities are up for this. There is no doubt about that. It is clear that the Executive, in their Programme for Government, are up for it. I know that there are challenges with relationships, etc, but the direction of travel that you have set is that you are up for this, but where does the support come from? As I said at the beginning, the Fermanagh Trust is not an education body. How do we get the support mechanism in place to ensure that schools get the support to guide and facilitate them along the path of sharing? In this room in February 2013, four schools sat down with representatives from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

- Those schools were on a journey and wanted guidance. They were promised guidance, but they still have not got it. Those schools took risks, and in their communities there might be one or two knockers. It is hard for schools to go on a journey unless guidance and support is there from the powers that be.
172. The way in which schools are funded should encourage sharing, not competition. That can be built into the common funding formula. In addition, and this is really important if you are interested in mainstream and shared education, there needs to be a joint budget between schools that are working together. Every school has its code — school 115, for example — and its goal within the board. We need to help to facilitate shared education so that schools can pool resources; for example, how school 115 and school 222 are going to spend their resources together this year. That is a mechanism, but it is an important mechanism.
173. On area planning, where education authorities are going down the road of closing schools, they need to consider the impact and potential of working with their neighbours. That needs to be explored, and options considered. That may be happening in one other area, but it should be the rule rather than the exception. What does this mean for us as a community and what are the opportunities for the broader community? I know from recent work that we were asked to support in other parts of Northern Ireland that those are real challenges that communities are facing.
174. Do the managing authorities have the time, resource, expertise or commitment to help school communities explore options and develop shared models? We may see how the Delivering Social Change programme works out, but, to date, with some exceptions, that is not inbuilt in how the managing authorities do their work. Even though the direction of travel from the Programme for Government and the area-planning guidelines has been quite clear for some time, we have not seen that commitment carried through.
175. Recommendation 15 from the MAG report states that the Department, education and library boards and the CCMS should provide:
- “advice on how two or more schools can transfer their status into a ‘shared school’ whereby they maintain their respective forms of ethos.”*
176. Those things are very important. We need to see an action plan around those.
177. Finally, there needs to be a clear process and support mechanism for schools wishing to bring forward cross-sectoral models in the area-planning process. Schools are up for it. I am convinced about that from all the evidence, but the mechanism and the system need to support them.
178. That is a quick sharing of where we are at and how we see the world through the eyes of shared education in the county. Hopefully, it has been helpful.
179. **The Chairperson:** Thank you, Lauri, and thank you for the paper that you gave us, because it is useful. We may not be in a parallel world, as you said, but do you think that you are still being held as a hostage to fortune because of the unwillingness, inability or whatever of the managing authorities to deal in a serious, meaningful way with the issue, for have we not seen in that county some of the worse examples of protectionism in sectors at the expense of what happens in any other school or sector?
180. **Mr McCusker:** Going back to 2007 and those documents, we had long discussions in this building on how we best use the resources from the IFI and the Atlantic Philanthropies and whether resources should be used to support sharing at post-primary-school level. The direction of travel that the managing authorities have taken is quite clear. It has been outlined. I think that, in the Assembly yesterday, we possibly saw the outworkings of that in one instance.
181. There was also a challenge for us, because the Western Board and the Department were saying that shared education should not get involved

- in the entitlement framework of the learning communities, as that was being resourced by government. So, the situation was complex.
182. Look at how post-primary schools in Enniskillen work together under the leadership and direction of Devenish College, which took the lead and brought schools together. On Fridays, 400 post-16 pupils share a range of subjects in a range of venues and schools across Enniskillen. People chose what they wanted and could show the benefits of sharing, but the managing authorities have their own world. We hoped that the area-planning process would change the direction of travel or help persuade people to think about shared options, but that was not the case in the post-primary schools, and we have seen the outworkings of that with Lisnaskea High School and other things. We worked tremendously well with Lisnaskea High School in the Lisnaskea, Derrylin and Rosslea area. Wonderful sharing was taking place, but that was not considered by the managing authorities.
183. **The Chairperson:** That all happened prior to the Western Board changing the terms of reference for area planning. You referred to changes that it made and has now reissued.
184. How much of an impact do you think the reissuing of that element of the process will have on the initial area plan, particularly in the primary sector? There was such a hiatus with the areas plans, and this Committee — it is not often that someone thinks that this Committee does anything of value or worth — issued a very clear warning to the Minister and the Department not to issue primary school area plans, because you will set the education world afire. They did not listen and went ahead, and we now have a document across the country that means that nobody knows what their worth or value is or where they are going, yet we are sitting in a county today in which one education and library board has reissued guidance about a plan that we do not even know will go anywhere.
185. **Ms Catherine Ward (Fermanagh Trust):** The pro forma was issued in May 2012, and the school communities completed that. They had only a two-week time span to get it completed. They got an extension and that is the revised pro forma, which included the shared options. School communities brought together governors, and they thought about whether to put in shared options. They consulted parents and held meetings and then filled in the pro forma, and a number of the partnerships at that stage said, “We would like a shared model explored or developed for our partnership”. That was before the draft plan was issued. When the draft plan came out, only one of the partnerships was mentioned as a shared model. So, the rest were not in even the draft plan. That was very unfortunate, and a major opportunity was missed, because, when they were consulting on the draft plan, schools would have been consulting on a shared option. We talked to the sectors and the managing authorities about that. Although the pro forma was issued on behalf of the area working group in the Western Board, which makes up all the sectors, the other sectors did not see the pro forma submitted by the schools.
186. **The Chairperson:** That is the point that I want to get to: it was a document, but it was not a document that everyone had been involved in and agreed that it should go out on behalf of everybody; that is, the managing authorities. The Western Board produced it —
187. **Ms Ward:** It said in the covering letters —
188. **The Chairperson:** Yes, it did, but — correct me if I am wrong — is it not the case that there were elements of the managing authorities who then said, “We did not see that in the way in which it is now being presented”?
189. **Ms Ward:** I do not know what took place subsequently other than that, when the draft plan came out, it did not reflect what people had asked for.

190. **The Chairperson:** Yes, and that was based on the partnerships, and there was only one mentioned.
191. **Mr McCusker:** By doing that, you are sending a strong signal to the schools that have put forward submissions before the draft plan.
192. **The Chairperson:** They are just going to ignore you.
193. **Mr McCusker:** Yes, so all this stuff is of no value.
194. **Ms Ward:** All that took place after the post-primary plan had been issued.
195. **The Chairperson:** Yes, and there has been nothing since. It has all gone underground and quiet. I am disappointed.
196. **Ms Ward:** The schools had hoped that the final plan would come out in autumn, because there was going to be a consultation period, and they were getting ready for that. Then, they thought it might come out in April. So, a whole academic year has gone. They certainly have not lost momentum, but parents are asking what is happening, because they were consulted and put in their responses to the consultation process. They are wondering what is happening and where this is going.
197. **The Chairperson:** One of the downsides of all this is that it will further compound the scepticism and suspicion that parents have about any proposal that is brought to the table ultimately being implemented. We are sitting in a county and a town where an element of the education provision was promised. I will name the college, because it is the reality. It is Devenish College, and it is a scandal that we have never seen the implementation of a proposal that is almost 11 years old. That is a stand-alone issue that has been in this county for all those years, and parents are very sceptical as to whether anything happens within the system and view it as a continual perpetuation of stagnation. The view is that, if we do not do anything, something will happen, because the system will eventually go in a particular direction. That is not the area planning, that is throwing —
198. **Mr McCusker:** Schools and school communities have embraced shared education in a context of flux and uncertainty. They may have been ignored when putting forward proposals etc, but they have embraced shared education. That shows that there is a real appetite for sharing, collaboration, joint working and closer working together when all this other stuff is out there and is impacting on people.
199. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks, Lauri, for your very detailed and thorough presentation, which summed up some of the fantastic work that you have been doing. You talked about local communities wanting to steal from their neighbours being a good idea, and the Fermanagh Trust is a great platform for change.
200. I looked at your document and the part of it that covers the partnerships. How can we make sure that the partnerships are sustainable and future-proofed? How can we best put into practice elsewhere the knowledge and experience that the Fermanagh Trust has garnered over the years?
201. **Ms Ward:** I will answer the first question. When the programme was being designed, one of the core elements was that it would be designed for sustainability. We have seen too many excellent projects that are now “have-been projects” and people talk about them in the past tense. We were determined to avoid that when we designed this. Therefore, it was not something done unto the schools; the schools delivered the shared education themselves.
202. On occasion, they may have brought in a specialist, but, by and large, they were delivering the shared classes in one another’s schools themselves. That developed the links and the capacity and built the relationships between the school communities. They had the autonomy to do that, which empowered them because they had ownership of what they were doing. That is the most

- sustainable thing, because, whilst we get frustrated about area planning, I am not overly concerned because, as Lauri said, that learning community is four partnerships that are officially launching their partnership and are saying, “This is how we are going to conduct our education from here on in, as a partnership”. So, the partnerships are still driving forward. The area planning process might be slightly left behind, but they are moving on.
203. You asked about sustainability. These partnerships plan to continue and hope to have an opportunity to submit bids when the mainstream funding from the Department of Education opens, because they need some funding for transport and for substitute teacher cover so that staff can meet to do planning and so on.
204. We would really like it if, when the area plan is published, it gives official recognition to these partnerships. Sometimes, we see area planning as being purely about infrastructure, capital and the schools estate, but it is also about how schools deliver the curriculum and about how they do their business, so it could also include partnerships, federations and confederations.
205. We also talked about wanting guidance from the Department. There are shared faith models and shared managed schools. There is a range of things, and these partnerships need that at the moment in order to plan their path forward.
206. **Mr McCusker:** In moving forward, we have many other areas of work outside shared education. The trustees have a strategy in place. When the trustees met recently to discuss our continued involvement in shared education, they made a commitment to continue to work with these partnerships until 2016 to try to offer support and guidance to them where needed.
207. We have a challenge in that some schools from outside Fermanagh are looking for support and guidance and are also looking at shared education, so we are trying to work on that at the minute, and I will do my best to utilise that. We are a very small team. We have two and a half members of staff working in shared education. It was always about the schools. It is not about the Fermanagh Trust; it is about the schools and how we utilise those staff resources. The critical thing for us is mainstreaming Delivering Social Change and the roll-out of the Peace IV shared education programme resources. Delivering Social Change is where it is at, and the implementation of the ministerial advisory group’s report is important. Hopefully, schools can continue on their journey. That is where we see things.
208. **Mr Hazzard:** You mentioned Delivering Social Change, T:BUC, Peace IV and whatever else it may be. How do we ensure that those are complementary?
209. **Mr McCusker:** That is very important. This really needs to be joined up. I was at a school last night that was having its fiftieth anniversary celebrations. It is looking for news on a shared campus proposal, and that is what everybody was asking me about. Another question I heard was this: “It is great news about Peace IV. When do we get the money?”. We need joined-up thinking around Delivering Social Change, the Peace IV programme and T:BUC. That needs to be done at the most senior level of government.
210. **Ms Ward:** The last thing that we want is to have schools applying for a cocktail of funding from a range of sources and trying to meet the demands of every programme. Schools do not have the time to do that; they want to deliver the curriculum. The point that you are making is very important: there is a strategic plan in how this is all rolled out.
211. **Mr Hazzard:** Lauri, you touched on senior levels of government, and we talked about the enthusiasm on the ground. You alluded to a gap in the middle. From my experience in and around the east Down area, I think it is fair to say that there is increasing if not massive demand for, if not a

- shared education campus, certainly a new integrated school between, for example, Lagan College in Belfast and Shimna Integrated College in south Down; something in the middle. There is increasing demand there. We see that in Ballynahinch especially, where the popularity of an integrated primary school is clear. However, from senior levels of government, everything just seems to slow down and stop in that middle gap. How do we overcome that, or what needs to be done to empower the people at the bottom and meet their demands? There is no use in having parental choice if that choice does not mean anything.
212. **Mr McCusker:** The shared education programme was supported by Atlantic Philanthropies and the International Fund for Ireland. They empowered Queen's University Belfast, the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Fermanagh Trust. It would be interesting to find out why the funders chose the three. One was an organisation in Queen's University, one was a local community foundation and one was a statutory organisation.
213. The people in Queen's and the North Eastern Education and Library Board all did the job well. The model could be either/or. I am not talking about organisations but about types of organisations. If it is to be mainstreamed, I think the lead player needs to be the managing authority or authorities. There should definitely be some support and resources for the facilitation of school communities. It is a different mindset. It is not top-down but bottom-up. To do that work, you have to allow those grass roots and empower the school communities to develop and move forward. Again, going back to the previous discussion, if that is just left to the managing authorities, as it currently is, we are going to continue in a parallel world.
214. **Mr Hazzard:** I cannot help but move beyond the idea that managing authorities and sectors are always going to look after their own strategic interests. Look at the South and the pluralism and patronage forum, which went out to the very basic level of citizenship-type forms that were filled in and a questionnaire. Is that something that —
215. **Ms Ward:** Part of the strength of this programme was our independence in that we did not belong to one or other sector, but how do you roll that out on a large-scale basis? That independence was crucial. The localised support — knowing those school communities and where they have come from — was also a big factor.
216. **Mrs Dobson:** Thank you for your presentation. Lauri, you are obviously very passionate about sharing education and what you do, and I commend you for that. You have engaged in shared education since 2009, and obviously you can see the benefits for the pupils involved who have passed through primary and post-primary schools. It is good to see that, by the fourth year, pupil numbers had more than doubled. Why do you feel that demand increased so rapidly between year 1 and year 4? Do you think the parents were central to that crucial rise in demand? Obviously, the community and the parents see the benefits. Will you take us through the reasons why you feel that demand increased in those years?
217. **Mr McCusker:** Maybe first of all people were putting their toe in the water. It is OK to go in? Is it too cold or am I going to get a shock? I think maybe school communities were trying it. Then, schools saw the benefits when relationships were being built. If you have a P6 teacher sharing with another P6 teacher from another school, no longer operating in isolation but sharing and learning, and they go back to their staffroom and talk about that experience, it can rub off on other colleagues. I think it is organic. Parents' involvement —
218. **Mrs Dobson:** It is crucial.
219. **Mr McCusker:** Absolutely crucial. When we started on the journey, we went to parents first and asked 400 of them across Fermanagh what they were up for

- and what they were not up for. We asked what was possible. We have always thought that parents are the backbone. I think there were a number of things. It was people putting their foot in the water in the first year to see whether it was OK. Would they get their heads knocked off? Would somebody come round and say, "Actually, you shouldn't be going up to that other school. What are you doing?". But it was acceptable and there were benefits from it. The education benefits and kids simply coming home and sharing their stories — I think all that rubs off and helps to build momentum.
220. **Mrs Dobson:** As you said, the views of the parents and the community are crucial in building an education programme.
221. **Mr McCusker:** Absolutely.
222. **Mrs Dobson:** I want to touch on area planning again, which we have spoken about quite a lot. In your brief, you called for the shared models to be explored in the area planning process. I know that the Chair spoke about this at length. I have been extremely critical in my constituency of the Southern Board for its relentless attack on the Dickson plan, which has been supported by the community it has served for over 40 years. What is your view on the link between the boards and the schools, and how reflective are they of the community opinion in the area planning process?
223. **Mr McCusker:** I could take you to about 10 schools whose views would be highly negative. Sometimes, I still find it challenging to understand the relationship between the managing authorities and individual schools. Is that relationship about managing, facilitating or being supportive? We just have to look to this week to see where a school community feels extremely hard done by because of a decision taken by its managing authority. Managing authorities undoubtedly have a very difficult job given the current level of uncertainty regarding their future, but, in some schools, they can seem quite aloof from the school itself. Some people in those school communities keep them quite aloof purposely; it is better having them 30 miles or 90 miles or 100 miles away so that they can get on and do their bit. For some others, it is about personalities and relationships. I do not know anything about the Dickson plan.
224. **Mrs Dobson:** How long have you got?
225. You spoke passionately about the impact of decisions if they are inflicted on the community, and you talked about looking at the bigger picture five to 10 years down the line. I commend you for what you are doing; it has been great to listen to. Things need to improve. If a system loses the support of the community, our children will be the worse for it, and that is the reality.
226. **Mr Rogers:** Thanks to Lauri and Catherine for a very worthwhile and passionate presentation. You summed it up when you said that shared education is not a programme but is in the DNA of the future of rural Fermanagh and many rural areas throughout the North. Do you believe that area planning is inhibiting the ability to develop shared education and our ability to keep our rural communities intact?
227. **Mr McCusker:** That is a very good question. In one way, area planning can provide the impetus for sharing and closer working. In another way, it can scare the — out of communities because it puts people out there as having no future. It is interesting that, when the draft area primary school plan was produced, in many instances, it used the term local area solution. So, village A has two schools, both of which do not have the magic number of pupils. To Catherine and me, the local area solution means that there are two schools working closely together. The local area solution to managing authority A means closing that school and the pupils going to the school in the village down the road. The local area solution to managing authority B means closing their school and moving their pupils to another village down the road. That is all that local area solution means. If the



- draft plan says that we are interested in options A, B and C, and we want to do a community consultation on options A, B and C, that is area planning. If area planning is done correctly, it can be beneficial for closer cooperation, sustainable communities, which fits into the rural development agenda, and good relations, which fits into the OFMDFM agenda, T:BUC and all that type of stuff. However, if area planning is done badly, it can be detrimental to good relations, rural development and community development in that area. The schools are saying that they want to do it for the benefit of good relations, community development and rural development, but what is the process saying? For the benefit of what? For our young people? It does not make sense as it is currently planned and implemented.
228. **Mr Rogers:** I think that you have answered my question, Lauri. It really is a travesty that the good work here and the bottom-up approach that could feed into a really good area plan is not even getting out of the cupboard. That is just a comment.
229. **Ms Ward:** Area planning is a very valuable tool, but it depends on how it is used.
230. **Mr Lunn:** I like your assessment of local area solutions. I think that you just about got it in one. That is a warning, is it not?
231. I greatly admire what you are doing with the programme. You have gone further in Fermanagh with the direction of travel that I would like to see this going in than perhaps has happened in other places. I do not need to elaborate on that.
232. In your paper, you refer to the evaluation regarding learning for change consultancy in 2010. Have you done any assessment since 2010 in terms of the development of relationships, friendships and all that sort of stuff?
233. **Mr McCusker:** Absolutely. We worked with the North Eastern Education and Library Board and Queen's University, and together we commissioned consultants to look at the impact of shared education from the outset of the programme to the end of last academic year. We have that information, and I will make it accessible — I will share the links with the Committee Clerk. There is a lot of reading in it and a lot about the social and educational benefits and the economic elements.
234. **Ms Ward:** You talked about the impact, and I was glad to hear some of the input from the inspectorate this morning. We had very frustrating initial meetings with the inspectorate and the Department about impact. They clearly wanted to look at the impact on the pupil, and we kept trying to explain the community impact and the impact on the parents.
235. With the programme, a great number of parents are involved in the partnership, and they come together regularly for training, workshops and all that. They use community venues such as Orange halls and church halls — all their local facilities. Those venues may once have been single identity, but they are now being used by all sections of the community. I was trying to explain to the inspectorate that we need to look at the whole community impact, and that it is not just about the impact on individual pupils. Even when you take that whole community impact into consideration, you see that it gives pupils a sense of place, identity and who all belongs to our community. I was always fearful of an ETI inspection evaluating a very small impact and not that wider ripple impact.
236. **Mr Lunn:** Lauri, you talked about the way that the schools have developed and how they work together, to the point that you distinctly said that you have four schools here that are taking risks and really cooperating in a meaningful way. You also talked about the various models that are potentially out there for shared management and all the rest of it. If you look at that and what eventually will happen with area planning — God knows when it is going to happen — you will see that there are inevitably going to be situations in which schools will have to close. It does not make any sense. We have 1,200 schools; we do not need that number. I am with the Minister:

- just because a school's numbers are low does not mean that it has to close. I completely agree with him. There are other factors in play there such as sharing, community involvement and all the rest of it. You know the criteria. Is it possible that the working relationships will become so close and that the barriers will have been broken down so much in this county, which is leading the way in some ways, that an amalgamation might be seen as the preferred outcome? I mean across the sectors.
237. **Mr McCusker:** Yes, absolutely, but six years ago it was not a possibility. Six years ago, some people were challenging shared education as a concept. If we had gone to many parts of this county where there are two schools in the same village and said that it was a possibility, they would have laughed at us. They are not laughing now. It is a possibility; of course it is. For some schools, it might be a possibility in 20 years.
238. When you see forced mergers or attempted forced mergers of schools and the resistance, court cases and whatever might be the case — I am not just talking about this county but other areas — you learn that, if you work from the bottom up and build relationships, links, connections etc, when people talk about maybe taking the next step, it is much easier. Whereas, the top-down approach that forces people together does not do that. I think that shared education offers people the potential; no, it is more than that — it offers them the space to have those conversations about the next steps, ie area planning and producing plans.
239. **Mr Lunn:** Finally, you talked about the use of community facilities and mentioned Orange halls. I recently read a report by the Orange Order in Fermanagh. It was a good report and quite a hopeful document. That tallied with what you said. You are getting a movement from all directions in Fermanagh that maybe the rest of the country should be listening to and watching. I wish you well with it. I think that you have done great work.
240. **The Chairperson:** Members, thank you very much. Catherine and Lauri, thank you. I think that it has been very useful. Your paper has been exceptionally helpful and useful.
241. Earlier, we had a telling comment from the representative of the ETI, who talked about rewarding success and what he had seen during his experience in Germany. Unfortunately, it would seem that, given the plans that are prevailing in Fermanagh and the particular issues with the Collegiate, there is a desire to punish success rather than expanding successful schools.
242. It is timely that we are here and that we have had the discussion. As we have done in the past, we will continue to work with you and others in promoting and trying to advance some of these things in a very challenging climate. Thank you. We wish you well for the remainder of your work and look forward to it being embedded more and more in what goes on across Northern Ireland plc.

## 2 July 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Mervyn Storey (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Stephen Moutray  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Mr Andrew Bell *Department of*  
 Mrs Faustina Graham *Education*  
 Ms Eve Stewart

243. **The Chairperson:** Faustina, you are welcome back. Andrew, it is good to see you again and, Eve, thank you for being with us. Faustina, I take it that you will give the first part of the briefing.
244. **Mrs Faustina Graham (Department of Education):** Thank you very much, Chair. We welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on the Department's work to advance shared education in line with the Programme for Government (PFG) commitments and the related actions identified in the Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) strategy.
245. Shared education has been defined as education that will provide opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together. Additional detail of the definition, which was agreed by the ministerial advisory group, includes education that meets the needs of and provides for the education together of learners from all section 75 categories and every socio-economic status. It involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements.
246. Ultimately, it is a form of education that will deliver educational benefits to learners in the context of efficient and effective use of resources, promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. That is a lot of detail on what shared education covers, but, at the same time, it is hugely important that the detail is there to ensure that all elements of the work are encompassed in the definition.
247. The Department has been involved in education on a collaborative and shared basis for a number of years through its various policy initiatives, such as community relations; extended schools provision and the entitlement framework. Latterly, the Department has been involved as managing agent for the 22 International Fund for Ireland (IFI) shared education projects. Shared education forms an important pillar of the Minister's policy for community relations, equality and diversity. It is important to see it under that umbrella term when one looks at the definition that we have just provided.
248. A ministerial advisory group was established in July 2012 to inform the Minister's decision on how best to advance shared education. Its report, which drew on the experience of existing shared education projects, was published in March 2013 and contained 20 separate recommendations. In accepting the report, the Minister encouraged a public debate on how best to advance shared education. Then, after a period of reflection, the Minister accepted the recommendations of the report in his 22 October statement to the Assembly. Work to take forward the recommendations has been ongoing across various teams in the Department. Our directorate is coordinating that work as well as delivering on some of the specific recommendations.
249. You will have received a paper in advance of this morning's briefing that outlines the current position against

- each of the 20 recommendations, so I do not intend to address each of those, but it may be useful to provide a summary of some of the key actions in which members will have an interest, given your planned inquiry into shared and integrated education.
250. A number of the ministerial advisory group's recommendations were made in the expectation that the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) would be in place. That would have ensured a central focus on shared education. In the absence of ESA, the recommendations will be addressed in light of the Minister's proposal to replace the current five education and library boards with a single board from April 2015. In the interim, the Minister has made it clear that he expects education and library boards to take a consistent regional approach to encourage and facilitate shared education.
251. The first recommendation is for funding for shared education. In accepting the ministerial advisory group's recommendation that provision needs to be made to address the additional cost to schools engaging in shared education — that is recommendation 3 — the Minister has indicated his intention to mainstream funding in the longer term. While the ministerial advisory group recommended a shared education premium within the common funding formula, the Minister has reserved his position on whether that is the most appropriate way to fund shared education. The Minister previously indicated that discussions were ongoing with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and Atlantic Philanthropies to establish a shared education programme that would provide funding for schools to embed shared education. The Minister has indicated that he will use the shared education programme to determine how best to mainstream shared education funding for schools. Work on that programme is at an advanced stage, and it is expected that an announcement will be made over the coming weeks. That would allow funding to commence early in the 2014-15 academic year. I will brief the Committee later on the detail of the programme.
252. The programme, which will be delivered through the education and library boards, has been designed to address a number of the ministerial advisory group recommendations. They include encouraging and facilitating shared education, which is the ministerial advisory group's recommendation 2; developing a framework supporting the early and continuing professional development of teachers that encourages its delivery through shared education, which relates to recommendations 6 and 7; evaluation by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), which will facilitate the sharing and dissemination of good practice, as referred to in recommendations 4 and 5; and looking at how best to engage with and meet the needs of parents, care givers and pupils, as referred to in recommendations 9, 11 and 14.
253. The programme will provide an opportunity to trial practices and approaches that will facilitate the longer-term direction of work to advance shared education in other relevant bodies. As with schools, opportunities will be taken to see how this pilot work can influence the work of the education and library boards and the Education and Training Inspectorate.
254. Members will be aware that proposals for Peace IV include a significant investment in shared education. Discussions are ongoing with the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) on how Peace IV funding for advancing shared education can be best used. That remains subject to the outcomes of their public consultation. I will provide the Committee with more information on that later.
255. Three of the recommendations, numbers 1, 12 and 13, related to legislation for shared education and to designating schools as public authorities. It was intended that they, too, would be taken forward via the draft Education Bill, but, in the absence of the Bill, the Minister

- is considering alternatives, including the possibility of a stand-alone Bill to define shared education. The Education Committee will, of course, be briefed on that at the appropriate juncture.
256. The legislation to designate schools and other educational institutions as public authorities is, in the first instance, for OFMDFM. The Minister will write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to communicate the detail of the recommendations and to seek their views on the practicalities of designating schools for section 75 purposes. To assist in that process, the Department is undertaking a review of approaches to equality legislation for education settings in other jurisdictions. That work is ongoing.
257. Three of the ministerial advisory group recommendations, 6, 7 and 8, related to teacher education. As part of the work to finalise a new teacher development strategy, the Department will ensure that it includes provision for teachers to learn together and preparation for teaching in a shared education setting. Account will also be taken of the outworking of the independent review of the teacher education infrastructure, which was commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and published yesterday.
258. I turn now to area planning and its role in delivering shared education solutions. Committee members will wish to note that area planning terms of reference and subsequent guidance already encourage shared education options to be put forward. A prerequisite for any shared model is that a proposal must have the support of its community, be sustainable and be capable of delivering high-quality education. This morning, you have already received a separate briefing on the shared education campuses programme. Consequently, I do not plan to say anything additional, other than that it will complement the work on advancing shared education by targeting those infrastructure projects aimed at improving or facilitating sharing initiatives in local schools. In addition, the Minister has indicated his intention to produce guidance on sharing options for schools and communities. This will be in the form of practical advice on implementing types of shared education models. A number of schools have expressed interest in a jointly managed model, one that would provide shared education within a Christian ethos in a school managed by a joint board of governors representative of the two main communities. Positive discussions have been ongoing with the Transferors Representatives' Council and Catholic trustees on the potential for this model. It is anticipated that the guidance will be published during the period of your inquiry.
259. Given that the Committee's inquiry will address both shared and integrated education, it may be helpful for me to say a few words about integrated education and how it aligns with shared education. Shared education, by definition, involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangement. That, in short, is what I explained in more detail at the beginning of the briefing. Sharing across schools is at different levels along a continuum, and integrated education should be at the upper end of that continuum. As with schools of any other management type, integrated schools will be expected to partner with a school of differing management type to meet the Programme for Government commitment. This will provide opportunities for sharing the good practice developed in the integrated sector and collaborative opportunities that can equally benefit pupils attending integrated schools.
260. I trust that this provides members with an overview of our work to progress shared education, and we are very happy to take any questions.
261. **The Chairperson:** Thanks, Faustina. I have a couple of points for clarification. When the Department talks about management type, does that include FE? I worry that, with this very defined view of shared education, there is a risk that it is all about getting two

- religious traditions together, namely Roman Catholic and Protestant. Shared education, for me, is more about the type of school because we have all-ability schools, grammar schools, integrated schools, single-sex schools and further and higher education.
262. Area planning is a shambles. There is an area plan for post-primary provision, but, in some areas, FE is outside the loop and is doing its own thing. FE is going ahead and deciding to spend money and, by pulling out of areas, leaving a deficit in the entitlement framework. Is there an expansion of the remit of shared education to include FE?
263. **Mr Andrew Bell (Department of Education):** The ministerial advisory group report specifically mentioned the FE sector, and, as you know, that is not the responsibility of the Department. We will engage with colleagues in DEL. In fact, we have had some preliminary engagement, but we need to have further engagement on how we make sure that there is some alignment. How this rolls out is for the Department for Employment and Learning rather than us, but it is included in the ministerial advisory group recommendations.
264. **The Chairperson:** The two Ministers have discussed the issue, and I welcome the fact, Faustina, that you referred to the announcement by the Minister for Employment and Learning yesterday on initial teacher training. Clearly, if shared education is to mean anything, it has to commence in the facilities that currently train our teachers. There is the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) programme and work on collaboration, but it is clear from the comments in the House on Monday that there are some who believe that we should still have segregated teacher training provision in Northern Ireland. They support that, yet they want to talk about shared education and how we can collaborate.
265. Recommendations 18, 19 and 20 of the ministerial report were not accepted by me or my party, nor will they be. That is not a Committee view but a personal view, and others can make their own decision. If the Minister is introducing proposals in relation to those recommendations and has accepted the recommendations in their entirety, what work is being done on those three recommendations that we should be made aware of?
266. **Mrs Graham:** You have the paper that we sent to you, which explains the Minister's position on that. Andrew, do you want to share that with the Committee? I have it here, but I would have to —
267. **Mr A Bell:** The Minister, in his statement to the Assembly in October, made his position clear. He accepted the recommendations and, as members will know, he also welcomed and endorsed them. He said that, until the Assembly ends academic selection, he will continue to promote all-ability schools in which academic and vocational learning is the norm. That is the Minister's position on the recommendations.
268. **The Chairperson:** Andrew, I hope that that is not code for discriminating against selective schools.
269. **Mr A Bell:** That is certainly not the policy intention. Shared education has to be about sharing with all schools.
270. **The Chairperson:** One of the challenges in how we square that circle comes in recommendation 16, which deals with area-based planning in the school estate. These things are always heavily caveated depending on who the author of a report is, but it states:
- "Where there is sufficient, viable and consistent parental demand, the Department of Education should actively support the establishment of schools and other educational institutions with a particular religious, philosophical or cultural ethos."*
271. If that happens to be a grammar school, what will the Minister do? He said that he accepts three recommendations in the report that we end academic selection. That is code for saying that grammar schools will not be allowed, but, if it suits you to have "grammar" in

- the title of your school so that you get funding, we will be quite happy to allow you to have that. There clearly is:
- “sufficient, viable and consistent parental demand”*
272. for grammar schools, which I use as an example. There are other examples in our educational provision. So how does the Minister square recommendation 16 with his position of supporting and promoting only non-selective schools?
273. **Mr A Bell:** As you know, the ministerial advisory group addressed that in its considerations, as it felt it was key to part of the whole sharing picture. However, it made it clear that, while it recognised that those recommendations were controversial, the other recommendations could be taken forward in their absence. We are working on the other recommendations, and I do not envisage any impact on those schools. In fact, when we ran the IFI programme, schools from across all sectors, including the grammar sector, were involved. Our experience is that, in some cases, it can be easier to get Catholic and Protestant schools to share than grammar and secondary schools.
274. **The Chairperson:** Andrew, you are making an assumption that grammar schools do not educate pupils from both traditions. I would nearly go so far as to say that some grammar schools are better examples of integrated schools than some integrated schools with “integrated” above their door. Let us play the numbers game in which the threshold is 30%: over 30% of pupils in the one voluntary grammar school in my town come from the Roman Catholic community. It is more integrated than an “integrated school” six miles down the road.
275. **Mr A Bell:** It is not about the intricacies within schools. The policy is very clear that it is about schools across different sectors sharing. From that point of view, I agree. We have the statistics and know that a number of grammar and other schools have very representative pupil communities, but they are not integrated schools.
276. **The Chairperson:** Yes, controlled schools.
277. **Mrs Dobson:** Thank you for your second briefing today, Faustina. You have had a busy morning. I understand that DE will work to develop the role of area learning communities so that they can encourage the participation of special schools and pupils with disabilities in shared education. Area learning communities do a fantastic job. How do you envisage the development of that role?
278. **Mrs Graham:** For special schools, in particular?
279. **Mrs Dobson:** Yes.
280. **Mrs Graham:** One of the pieces of work referred to in the recommendations is the work that has been ongoing over a number of years between special schools and mainstream schools. Dr John Hunter, who spoke to the Committee two weeks ago, led work on developing the projects that allow the mainstream and special schools to work together and, subsequently, guidance on how best those partnerships can be developed. We have a copy of that here if you are interested. The interesting thing with regard to mainstream and special school partnerships is that it is probably good practice for all partnering arrangements. So, very interesting work has been done, and there is recognition from the last piece of work, which involved 24 partnerships of special and mainstream schools and recognition of the learning benefits for all the pupils who were involved in those examples. Really solid work has already happened. Other schools will be able to build on that as this work develops.
281. **Mrs Dobson:** There are such rewards for both schools. They gain so much from that collaboration.
282. **Mrs Graham:** Absolutely.
283. **Mrs Dobson:** The withdrawal of entitlement framework funding from schools has, however, hit the ability of special schools in my constituency to engage in sharing. What specific measures can area learning

- communities bring forward? Do you plan to provide additional funding to help special schools? It would be so detrimental to lose that ability to work together, and I know, as I said, from speaking to principals and teachers in special schools in my constituency that they have gained so much. Losing it is a very real fear.
284. **Mrs Graham:** We recognise very clearly that in all of this work at present there is that need for additional financial support and, in some instances, where people have not started their journey, for incentives also but with the longer-term aim of all this becoming part of the fabric and ethos of all schools. So, it is important to look at additional financial resources as something that allows those partnerships to develop in the first instance. What you have described there is that, where there is a withdrawal of funding, it can almost make people feel like that will come to a stop. I would like to think that, in the schools that you are referring to, that will now be engendered to find a way to continue that.
285. In the programmes that we are talking about this morning — we referred to them briefly but will talk about them in more detail subsequently — there will be clear opportunities for schools that have demonstrated very clear learning outcomes and benefits for all their pupils to access that money, whether it is on a school-to-school partnership basis or, indeed, on an area learning community basis. My one caveat is that it needs to be about sharing in the broadest sense and in the sense of the definitions that we have provided you with this morning, because it cannot just be a replacement for entitlement framework funding; it needs to further those learning outcomes that you described and the benefits that you have seen for all the children involved.
286. **Mrs Dobson:** There certainly is that willingness to continue; it is just about the issues and the funding. Do you plan to provide additional funding to help special schools?
287. **Mrs Graham:** I said in the briefing that, if the announcements that we anticipate take place, we hope to have that money available to schools early in the autumn term, and, from our perspective, it is about ensuring that the actions by other people now happen with the speed that they need to happen to allow the schools to progress. So, we are ready to go with that.
288. **Mrs Dobson:** Great. Thank you.
289. **Mr Kinahan:** I am fascinated at seeing it all being pushed and working forward. The question I asked previously, Faustina, was this: how will we push forward so that every school is looking at it all? You mentioned that you will produce sharing options at some stage in the future. Will that then go to every school to show them all the different ways of doing things?
290. **Mrs Graham:** To progress this, the really important thing from an education perspective is, first and foremost, how we build on the successes of the work that has already happened. You had a briefing on the work of the 22 International Fund for Ireland projects. In my former role, I led that work for the Education and Training Inspectorate. At that time, we set out to try — and we were successful — to work at empowering schools with regard to that work rather than it being something that, in the longer term, would continue to be an add-on and a separate piece of work for the schools. Historically, that is what happened. We have seen some good pieces of work begin, but once the funding is withdrawn, they become something that was almost a luxury as opposed to an integral part of what the school does.
291. In that work, we tried to work with all of the project leaders and the schools to create a common language of evaluation that all of the participants could share, so that we would build capacity in the system with regard to identifying what was good about the work they were doing and where they still needed to travel on that journey towards full sharing, if you want to look at the longer-



- term goal, particularly that of jointly managed schools, as we are beginning to see.
292. Our schools are a microcosm of our society broadly, so all of our schools are at different starting points. It really is about trying to see where the school or the partnership that we are looking at is at and trying to encourage those schools to move along what we have described as a continuum to help them identify where they are. I would like to think that that is something that we can encourage the schools to do as opposed to being something that is in some way prescriptive.
293. The Northern Ireland curriculum has all of the elements that are required for shared education, and if we can continue to ensure that people are really clear about how shared education can contribute to the realisation of the Northern Ireland curriculum, we will win hearts and minds.
294. **Mr Kinahan:** That is excellent.
295. When it comes to the funding of this, one school has asked whether the Delivering Social Change budget will still be a part of it as we move forward in each of the library board areas.
296. **Mrs Graham:** I said in the briefing that the Minister has reserved judgement on the whole mainstreaming of the funding, because the ministerial advisory group advised a premium that would go towards that. However, again, whatever the issues are around the common funding formula, the intention was to try to streamline the process. Certainly from my experience of working with schools, sometimes the money that was going into schools for separate pockets of work was either not always utilised in that way or people were not always clear about the multiple funding streams that were coming into schools.
297. So, in reserving judgement, the intention is try and see how this work develops over the next three to four years and use that as a basis to do something that is practical and sensible from the school's perspective and ensures that the money is getting to the schools.
298. **Mr Kinahan:** The Chair mentioned including FE colleges. We had a very interesting document from Professors Borooh and Knox about six months ago, which indicated that there is more sharing between the voluntary schools than others. Is that within the scope of what you are doing?
299. **Mrs Graham:** Between who?
300. **Mr Kinahan:** I am trying to think about how to put it. I am talking about your grammar schools, where you have suitable people, and secondary schools nearby, and creating more sharing between those schools.
301. **Mrs Graham:** Absolutely. That is key to both of the programmes that we referred to this morning: Delivering Social Change and Peace IV. It is fundamental to the programme that there is sharing at the level that a school or the partner schools can accommodate. So, the expectation is, in any of these funding arrangements, that schools will be able to demonstrate clear outcomes on improvement over the time that they will be involved. But, again, there should be realistic expectations about the starting point for each of the schools.
302. With reference to FE, we can still do better. There is still work to be done there. The FE sector has done some very good work in community relations, and we need to move towards clearer partnership arrangements between FE and schools in that area.
303. **Mr Kinahan:** Thanks for the hard work. Thank you.
304. **Mr Newton:** I thank the witnesses for coming today. I have two questions, if that is OK.
305. I go back to the issue of the previous panel. Mrs Dobson asked a probing question about encouraging a geographical spread of campuses and so on. I sought clarification on that and got an assurance that we are not going for geographical spread and instead are

- going for a grass-roots initiative, where the schools and community can support such an initiative. I am glad that you are reinforcing that that is the position. In the Minister's 22 October statement on advancing shared education, he indicated that his Department would:
- "bring forward ... guidelines on the development of area plans to ensure that shared education is encouraged".—[Official Report, Vol 88, No 8, p4, col 1].*
306. Is there not a contradiction in terms there, in that the area plan is being constructed in such a way to encourage shared education, yet we are looking for an ethos of it coming from grass-roots initiatives?
307. **Mrs Graham:** You have to approach any type of work like this both ways. As I said earlier, it is important to try and avoid prescription for schools on the one hand, but, equally, area planning has to take into account the efficient and effective use of our resources. So, there is the grass-roots work that, as you say, will inform the area plan, but area planning, in its entirety, should include all of the options and opportunities that are there. I do not see encouraging sharing as contradictory; to be honest, I think that that can be facilitated in the area-planning process.
308. **Mr Newton:** Would I be cynical in describing the dividing line between being encouraging and prescriptive as a huge chasm?
309. **Mr A Bell:** Having run projects with the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) over the past six years, we know from experience that that is extremely difficult to do unless you have the support of the communities. When the Minister made his announcement about shared education, he called for communities to bring forward their proposals and ideas, and some communities have done so. So, it is that bottom-up approach. It also reflects the fact that area plans need to take into account proposals from communities. Again, like Faustina, I do not see any contradiction between the two.
310. **Mr Newton:** I am glad that you have reassured me on that. Thank you. May I refer to the management arrangements for the shared campus, once the model is agreed? Will you consider it to be a single campus, even though its parts may be on separate sides of the road? Will you consider that to be "a campus"? You used the expression "jointly managed". What would that look like?
311. **Mr A Bell:** Shared education is not just —
312. **Mr Newton:** Will it be "campuses" or "campus"?
313. **Mr A Bell:** Shared education is not just about schools coming together on a shared education campus; it is about all schools sharing with another school. Those on a single campus are easier to do because they are located next to one another. From that point of view, there should not be any difference between the two in relation to the campus.
314. **Mrs Graham:** I referred to one particular model, which was that of jointly-managed schools. That work is ongoing. We have met various representatives of the transferors' council and the Catholic trustees, where they have instigated those discussions. As I said, we are hopeful that that guidance may come to fruition in the duration of the inquiry. The truth is that we are trying to work through that whole process, because it is a process and not something to which we would automatically have answers. Otherwise, we would have been in that space before now. We have found those discussions helpful in throwing up issues that will be difficult or complicated, but, most importantly, how we have worked together has given a sense that there is a will to overcome any obstacles. That always makes for a process that you think can come to useful fruition.
315. **Mr Newton:** If you end up with 10, do you envisage having 10 different management models?
316. **Mrs Graham:** I was talking about a particular approach. Under the educational campuses that Diarmuid

- talked about this morning, how that would move forward would come down to the bid that comes in for a project. Obviously, at the moment, we have Lisanelly under development. Again, in that situation, we will have a number of schools that are, at the moment, independent of each other but there will be the basics of how a huge campus will be managed where there will be elements of sharing. Sharing, in that sense, is something that is defined differently in the sense that it is how you manage a process. How far you go along the continuum that we talked about would be down to the individual schools concerned in conjunction with their employing authorities.
317. We are keen to push that sharing as far as we can in the interests of children and young people, but we have to look practically at what can work for people. It is not the case that there would be 10 different management types; there may be lessons that each group, as it is established, can learn from the others. Technically there could be, but I do not envisage that being the case; I would think that we should be able to accommodate ways of learning from one another, but it is a developing process, and we all have to learn from it.
318. **Mr A Bell:** The key thing for us in this particular programme is that where they are on shared campuses, the schools do not wait until they arrive on the shared campuses before they start doing the necessary work ahead of that. This programme will give those schools that will be moving to shared campuses the opportunity to be sharing before they arrive on the campus and to resolve some of the issues that might otherwise occur.
319. **Mr Newton:** Whose responsibility is it to arrive at that management issue? Is it the Department or the schools?
320. **Mr A Bell:** Are you talking about the jointly-managed schools? It would be where two or more schools would want to come together. They would discuss that model with the boards and bring forward development proposals on that basis. The concept that we are talking about is in relation to a school that would have representation of both communities on the board of governors. You would be talking, potentially, about two schools of different management types coming together to form a jointly-managed whole.
321. **Mr Newton:** Is that concept written down somewhere?
322. **Mr A Bell:** That is what we are working on with the transferors and the Catholic trustees, who have been very supportive of the whole concept. We are quite clear that they can work together on that model. It came about because when the Minister invited schools and communities to bring forward proposals, some schools came forward to the Department saying that they would like to explore the idea, and we have been working with those schools. However, it has proved to be more complex than originally thought, because it touches on such a wide range of different issues from admission policy to transport. For schools that wish to look at that model, our guidance will be around the practical aspects that they need to consider so that schools and communities are fully informed of the issues ahead of their decision.
323. **Mr Newton:** Are you able to share that work with the Committee even though it is not complete at the moment?
324. **Mr A Bell:** I am sure we could do that.
325. **Mrs Graham:** As long as it is on the understanding that we are still working on it with the groups concerned.
326. **Mr Rogers:** Most of my points have been addressed, but I have just one or two more to make. What special help or consideration is being given to rural schools, isolated rural schools in particular, that are keen to promote shared education?
327. **Mrs Graham:** Again, that would form part of their proposal in the sense that isolated rural schools in particular, in forming a partnership with another school, would articulate what their issues are and how those can be met

through the project. That is where we are trying to look at customising any of those partnerships to what the schools need in that particular situation. If there is a will to work with another school, and there are justifiable reasons, such as the obvious one of transport, for schools working together, that will be facilitated through the programmes that we are talking about. Obviously, we can talk in a little bit more detail about that shortly.

328. **Mr Rogers:** You mentioned Peace IV funding. What consideration has been given to cross-border sharing?
329. **Mr A Bell:** As you know, Peace IV will involve cross-border sharing. We have already had preliminary discussions with the Department in the South about those and, indeed, as of this week, we are planning to have further meetings to take that forward. This is obviously in light of the fact that Peace IV is still under public consultation. Therefore, we need to have those conversations, because their proposals could change as result of the public consultation. Certainly, we are working with our colleagues in the South on some examples of that. When we had the shared education programmes funded by the IFI, we had a number of schools in border areas that were working on a cross-border basis because it made sense geographically. We had maintained schools in Fermanagh that were working with schools across the border and in a number of different areas. There are some examples of how that can operate.
330. **The Chairperson:** In conclusion, with regard to the recommendations from the ministerial advisory group, recommendation 12 said:
- “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”.*
331. According to the briefing,
- “The Minister has accepted the ... recommendations and agrees that schools*

*have an important role in promoting equality of opportunity ...*

*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.”*

332. Has there been approval from the bishops and the Transferor Representatives’ Council (TRC) on this? If you take the current position that the trustees have in relation to the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO), they believe that the element that allows them to use the certificate in religious education falls under that remit. Ironically, the current Minister of Education is the only Minister who oversees an organisation that has an exemption from equality legislation. Given all the cries that we hear about having equality, treating everybody the same and so on, how is all that practically? I get the sense that this is shifting this over to OFMDFM and saying, “Well really, equality is your responsibility, we do not want to get involved in all this”. Is there buy-in to that idea? What discussions have there been with the managing authorities around the whole concept of designating schools as public bodies in this way? That would be a monumental shift in the way in which schools are governed or designated under legislation.
333. **Mrs Graham:** I will hand over to Andrew for the detail on that, because it is quite complex. First and foremost, I think that it would be hugely important to ensure that we look at the practicalities of this and that we look at what schools are already required to do. In particular, from our perspective, it is about looking at the administrative burden and what that means for schools. Those are the areas that are key in all of this. With regard to OFMDFM, observing the protocols of that is the first port of call that the Minister needs to go to. I do not think that that is in any way absolving ourselves of responsibility, because we have to look at what this will actually

mean for schools and how it fits with the curriculum and the curriculum requirements that are already there. Most importantly with the administrative burden, we are trying to meet the responsibilities that we have. Andrew will talk about the detail of the work that has been done.

334. **Mr A Bell:** As Faustina said, this will be a complex area. We have been focusing on trying to understand and reduce the administrative burden on schools because that was one of the specifics that the ministerial advisory group looked at. It talked about a light version of the equality scheme. We have been looking at other jurisdictions. We have looked at the position in England, Scotland, Wales and the South of Ireland. We have looked further afield to the Asian economies, Canada and Finland, all of which have issues. Understandably, the most common systems are those that are closest to us. However, there have been issues with those individual systems, some of which we have already addressed through the likes of the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) policy. In the South, there are issues around educating pupils to have self-respect and respect for others, which is what our CRED policy already does. There are versions of the scheme — England is one model that we have been looking at, and schools there are required to publish equality objectives under the equality duty placed on schools. We are looking at those models to see what is key.
335. The other factor in all of this, which also involves the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, is the fact that the Equality Commission has around 200 public authorities listed on its database. If we add 1,200 schools to that, it would have a significant impact on the Equality Commission as well. Therefore, all of those factors need to be taken into account.
336. **The Chairperson:** It would certainly be an administrative burden for the Equality Commission if that were placed in its responsibility. Thank you for that.



## 15 October 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Ian Williamson	<i>Ballycastle High School</i>
Mrs Barbara Ward	<i>Cross and Passion College</i>

337. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome Mrs Barbara Ward, who is the principal of Cross and Passion College, and Mr Ian Williamson, who is the principal of Ballycastle High School. You are both very welcome to the Committee. Thank you for making the journey from Ballycastle. I ask you to make an opening statement, and members will follow up with questions.
338. **Mrs Barbara Ward (Cross and Passion College):** Thank you. I will open proceedings. My name is Barbara Ward, and I am the principal of Cross and Passion College in Ballycastle, which is a non-selective school. There is a long history of no 11-plus in the area. The school is the product of the amalgamation of the old Cross and Passion Convent Grammar School with the Star of the Sea Secondary School in 1976. It is an all-ability, non-selective context. The school has 756 pupils. I have been principal there for 15 years; I am in my fifteenth year.
339. **Mr Ian Williamson (Ballycastle High School):** I am Ian Williamson, the principal of Ballycastle High School, which is also a non-selective and all-ability school that has an enrolment of 417 pupils. I was vice-principal at the school for two years and have been principal for four.
340. Our collaborative partnership in Ballycastle caters for a potential combined enrolment of 1,173 pupils. The purpose of the partnership is to provide a curriculum at Key Stages 4 and 5 that meets the educational needs, interests, abilities and aspirations of all pupils, supports the local economy and provides pathways into further and higher education. The partnership has grown organically over a significant number of years, primarily to meet an educational need in the Ballycastle area. There have been significant social benefits from it to our local community.
341. **Mrs Ward:** Our schools are set in a rural context. The hinterlands or contributing area to the schools is the town of Ballycastle and a range of rural communities in all directions from it. Interestingly, Ballycastle High School has a smaller, although significant, number of pupils who live in the town, and its rural hinterland is to the west of the town. For Cross and Passion College, the catchment area is the town and the communities to the south and east. The town is the north Antrim focus for post-primary schooling.
342. The current situation is a maintained Catholic post-primary school and a controlled post-primary school, namely Ballycastle High School. The arrangement, which we will describe to you in more detail in a moment, enjoys the support of the wider community. The business community is very proud of the partnership and is keen to work with us to enhance it. It definitely has the support of pupils, parents, employers and the general public. We have two schools, each with its own identity and ethos. We teach the core curriculum: all the Key Stage 3 teaching and learning

- is done in the core school. At Key Stage 4, the children study languages, science and learning for life and work. All the core subjects that all pupils from both schools do are taught in the core schools. At Key Stage 4, they share some of the option blocks, which gives more choice, and post-16 there is much wider sharing. Ian will describe that in a bit more detail. The key issue is that the shared learning kicks in at Key Stage 4, but each school has its own identity and ethos. That offers parents a choice of their child receiving a faith-based education or not
343. **Mr Williamson:** As we pointed out, the initial desire to build on meeting an educational need has grown and developed over decades into a symbiotic relationship, which has resulted in the success story that the arrangement in Ballycastle has become.
344. The enrolment in both schools, barring occasional variations, is holding its own, with a significant increase in post-16 enrolment. We have retained the confidence of our own community, and we attract significant interest from young people and parents in neighbouring communities. Large numbers of children are sharing and are happy to do so. Over 25% of the combined whole school enrolments are in collaborative classes. At Key Stages 4 and 5, 43% of all pupils in both schools participate in collaborative lessons, which works out at 66% of Ballycastle High School pupils and 31% of Cross and Passion College pupils.
345. Parents and pupils are confident about the arrangement, which is backed up by comments and anecdotes as well as by more formal self-evaluation. We have developed something in Ballycastle that works for us.
346. **Mrs Ward:** Ian talked about meeting an educational need, which is one of the big drivers for the partnership. Between our two schools, we have been able to meet the requirements of the entitlement framework and exceed them where it has been appropriate to do so.
347. We are meeting the needs of a huge range of learners: children of all abilities, aptitudes, interests, social and economic backgrounds and so on. Therefore, the partnership allows us, through sharing, to expand choice for all children. We deal with every type of learner, from the young person who could have 4 As with 3\*s at A level and 11 As, including 10 A\*s at GCSE, right through to children with special educational needs. The sharing allows us to provide for that full range of young people in the community.
348. One of the things that we have been able to do is meet the needs of the local economy. An important part of post-primary education is meeting the needs of those who go into further and higher education, but every community, particularly rural communities, needs people with the skills and qualifications who will thrive and provide employment to survive. The partnership has allowed us to make that a key consideration. With our local business community, we have looked at the additionality and asked what additional courses our young people will engage in.
349. We have been able to look at qualifications in hospitality, agriculture, science, creative media production and enterprise. For example, for the subject of business studies, there is a general A level but there is also an applied A level. So, again, you are meeting the needs of a great range of young people as well as the needs of the local economy.
350. **Mr Williamson:** The substantial improvements, particularly in the last two years, in the results in both schools at Key Stage 4 coincide with the extension of our collaboration and shared education into Key Stage 4. This year, 93% of pupils in both schools achieved five GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C. When we look at the percentages achieving five GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and Mathematics, the figures are 77% and 63%.
351. Both schools are significantly above the Northern Ireland average, and we



- genuinely believe that the significant improvement in our outcomes has been down to the quality of teaching and learning in both schools, the dedication of staff, the support of pupils and parents and, importantly, the impact of the increased curriculum provision that we have been able to offer, which has been massive.
352. **Mrs Ward:** To conclude on why our outcomes improved — and were they not improving there would be no point in doing this — it has really enhanced the engagement of young people. They now have a choice that they did not have before, and, in having that, we are meeting their educational and aspirational needs. As a result, there is choice, their interests are provided for, and there are alternative qualifications. They are being taught by subject specialists, because, sometimes, to offer a subject in a small school you have to ask somebody to come on board who may not be experienced and qualified. However, through the sharing, we have been able to share subject specialists and so on. It has also brought about a sharing of good practice, a strong sense of collegiality between the staff of both schools and so on. Ian will tell you how we hope to take it into the future.
353. **Mr Williamson:** Finally, you may be aware that, in July, we featured in a Department of Education announcement on shared campuses. We are delighted and grateful to be one of three in Northern Ireland. Our proposals are for two core schools and two shared centres — one concentrating on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related subjects and the other around performance and creativity-related aspects of the curriculum. We also believe that there is a capacity in the shared centres to allow for additional facilities that we could share, for example a library, meeting areas, supporting special educational needs, careers etc.
354. We look forward with anticipation to moving forward and securing investment to support what we do in Ballycastle. We
- believe that investment will underline what has been good practice over a significant number of years and will, in essence, be seen as a reward for what we are doing. We feel that, in many respects, it is what the pupils and the people of Moyle demand. You are all invited to visit us in Ballycastle at any time.
355. **Mrs Ward:** We hand over to you now.
356. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much and thank you for the invitation. It would be useful to see the work that you have done. The previous Chairman spoke very highly of the partnership. I was always a bit dubious, thinking that there was perhaps a north Antrim bias there. However, having read your paper and heard from you, I can see the enthusiasm. I am very impressed by the level of collaboration throughout the schools, including from your governors and school councils. The fact is that it has developed naturally to meet an educational need with regards to the curriculum. I am impressed by the fact that you have seen an improvement in your results, which is primarily what this is about. However, does the model work for you because of your geographical location, proximity to each other and the relative isolation of Ballycastle?
357. **Mrs Ward:** Undoubtedly, geographical proximity is what you might call an enabler, because it allows children to move to and from schools in a short time. So, yes, that is an enabler, and it certainly makes sharing much more doable and practical. In a sense, our rural isolation is a factor, but not necessarily the case. I suppose that I am saying that I do not believe that that is the only context in which it can work. There is a lot of potential for sharing to meet an educational need, to expand the curriculum either in our type of context or in other circumstances. Long distances and travel times are expensive economically and in lost learning time.
358. **Mr Williamson:** We are not unique in our geographical circumstances, I

- have been informed. For example, and Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) said that there are examples of other schools in similar proximity that may not necessarily have reached the point that we are at. So, while it may not be a one-size-fits-all, I believe that the model that we have in Ballycastle would be sustainable in other communities.
359. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There is a difference in your enrolment numbers.
360. **Mrs Ward:** Yes.
361. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** How do you ensure that it is a partnership of equals?
362. **Mrs Ward:** That is not easy to do. The whole thing comes from governance and the fact that there is a strong commitment to the concept of sharing. Yes, there is a larger partner and a smaller partner, but both of us would lose if the partnership did not exist. We are codependent. Together, we can deliver the curriculum and the entitlement framework and meet all the other needs; we would not be able to meet all those needs if we were apart. It is in neither of our interests for the other school not to be there. So, from the purely pragmatic perspective, both schools need to be thriving. In a partnership, both schools need to be confident of their own identity and success and proud of their school as well as the partnership. I think that that is what we have managed to do.
363. **Mr Williamson:** I agree. There is a sense of pride in what we do. I believe that there is a genuine empathy and sense of respect for each other and for each other's differences, which includes numerical differences and the demographic of the community. Being good neighbours and engendering a sense of respect ensures that we are mindful of the need to be equal in reality and of the perception of equality.
364. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** OK; that is interesting.
365. Finally from me, you have said that it works for you. We are looking at shared education and at integration in the broadest terms. Do you believe that there is a need for a formal, statutory definition of shared education?
366. **Mrs Ward:** If it is to be a part of the system in the wider sense, that will probably become important at some point in future for policy and funding. In our partnership, we are looking forward with great anticipation to the shared education buildings. If you think about it in respect of law, policy and all of that, there is a gap that needs to be thought about and looked at. If it is to be part of the system, it needs a policy and legislative framework of some kind. In time, out of this could come shared appointments, shared administrative staff etc. We want to avoid duplication but, at the same time, allow for different identities to share and work together.
367. **Mr Williamson:** From a system point of view, there is no doubt that there is potential to benefit from economies of scale. I have not read it to any great extent, but, given what we know shared education to be and our experience in Ballycastle, we both believe that the definitions of shared education offered by the ministerial advisory group hit the nail on the head and are adequate.
368. **Mr Craig:** Ian and Barbara, I am going to keep my contribution to two questions because I got told off last week for asking far too many. I listened to you saying that the threat of mutual destruction was really the driver that brought you together. However, I am interested to hear from you what has kept you together. Mutual destruction is a negative. What are the positives that keep you together?
369. **Mr Williamson:** In the context of my tenure at Ballycastle High School, which is four years as principal and two years as a vice-principal, the policy imperative of the entitlement framework was a factor in moving into collaboration at Key Stage 4. Historically, post-16 collaboration goes back decades. The big positive is the genuine collaboration

- in building relationships and sharing staff and professional development. That adds value to what we are doing. We have mentioned the potential for economies of scale and efficiencies. It is a genuine sharing of good practice. As principal of a controlled sector school, I believe that we have benefited from our involvement with a maintained sector school. We have benefited from an awareness of the differences in ethos of educational outcome, which I believe to be a driven ethos. We, as a school, have gleaned benefit from that ethos. We have shared, and I believe that Cross and Passion has benefited from us also.
370. **Mrs Ward:** Yes, it has been about survival, but that is probably the lowest common denominator. Outcomes and seeing that, together, we can provide more opportunities for young people to succeed is probably the biggest driver for us. The cohort of young people who just got their results in August were the first to come through with this enhanced choice. To be honest, I wish that you had been there to share in it. For the very first time, children from the lower quartile of the ability range were coming in proud to have achieved results, instead of coming in, getting results and running away or the results having to be posted out to them because they were so afraid of what they would see. These children had an opportunity to succeed. We were surrounded by young people who were so delighted with their success that they did not want to go home. They were hanging around talking for hours. It is an absolutely amazing motivator and driver for me personally that, together, we can see young people really gaining from this on the educational front.
371. I will give you another anecdote from the summer that illustrates it very clearly. Two young women came to me on A-level results day and talked to me as if they knew me. I kept saying to myself, "They cannot be my students. Surely I am not losing my head; I don't recognise them." They were two students from Ian's school who were over to say, "Thank you. We had a great time here. We really loved it. We now have friends for when we go to uni. Your teachers were so nice to us." They felt that it was important to come over and say that to me.
372. It is about the friendships that have developed between the young people, the better educational outcomes, and the fact that I have come to know the Protestant and unionist community much better through my engagement in the process; that is equally the case the other way round, and it is there for the young people too. Our parents are confident in the choice that they are making about the type of school, yet there is meaningful and authentic sharing going on.
373. **Mr Williamson:** I agree. That is a big thing that we have seen. Yes, we have indicated that educational need was the priority in driving this, but I have to say that, from my perspective, the icing on the cake is what I believe to have been a very obvious societal and community benefit from our engagement, namely the rapport and relationships that exist between pupils. We are always mindful of the differences, and we take it from one day to the next. However, I think that there is a genuine feeling among all our stakeholders that what we do is making a difference and that we are playing our wee part.
374. **Mr Craig:** I know from talking to Mervyn, our previous Chair, that there is a lot more positive in this than there ever was negative. I am glad that you have drawn that out.
375. Touching on that goes to the heart of my second question, which we were thinking about earlier. The children are drawn from different cultural backgrounds: one school is predominantly nationalist/republican, and the other is predominantly unionist/loyalist. How do you explore explaining the cultural differences to each so that there is a mutual understanding of their backgrounds? How do you deal with that issue?
376. **Mr Williamson:** We talked earlier about things growing organically in the school.

- Systems and networks have developed over the years. There were curriculum developments such as Learning for Life and Work and around citizenship. Work has been done in that area over the years. Although we are not involved in pupils sitting in collaborative classes at Key Stage 3, a lot of work is done through workshop activities and joint events. We have been involved, for example, in the North Eastern Board PIRCH (partnership, inclusion, reconciliation, citizenship and history) programme and PEACE III programmes. A lot of foundations have been laid at Key Stage 3 through programmes like that. We also do in-house programmes to develop those relationships at Key Stage 3.
377. We have worked, historically at sixth form and more recently also at Key Stage 4, on developing induction programmes. We put a lot of work and effort into making sure that those things are explored in the early stages of a new term and pupils are made aware that we are different and that you do not have to hide that. It is about being respectful and having an awareness that we are different but moving forward together. Having used the expertise of organisations such as the former Spirit of Enniskillen Trust, we have gleaned our own expertise and increased our capacity to work through that with young folk. I believe that that is nurtured through the ongoing development of relationships. However, you cannot take it for granted. The danger is in thinking that you are sorted. You are not. You have to work hard at it and be mindful of what is going on in a community. Something that happens can have repercussions, so you keep an ear to the ground, your finger on the pulse — all of the clichés — and you react quickly to any circumstances that come to the fore.
378. **Mrs Ward:** We are very mindful that most of the children's attitudes and values, particularly as they relate to our particular political context here, are nurtured at home. We cannot take for granted the values and beliefs of any child. So, the induction programmes in year 11 and at post-16 put some of that on the table, and there are some quite open discussions. Our experience is that these young people are able to have discussions that their parents, the previous generation, could not, and that includes me. We were of a generation who did not speak about such things in polite company. That is changing, so these young people are helped, enabled and prepared to go into a cultural context that is quite different from their own and to see that as non-threatening in any way, shape or form.
379. **Mr Craig:** I promised that I would ask no more questions. I wish you all the best in your efforts. I think that you are doing a fantastic job.
380. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks very much for your presentation. Straight off, I want to say that I am really impressed by what you do. I already knew a fair bit about your work — you could not be friendly with Mervyn Storey and not know about it.
381. Both schools are strong to start with, although I know that, numerically, you are slightly different. You each have a good record, a good financial position and plenty of confidence in your school. There is no threat to either school or from either school, which must have played a big part in this being readily accepted. You say that the partnership has grown organically and grown out of the necessities of the curriculum. For me, that is a genuine starting point for sharing, and I thoroughly approve. Frankly, the way that it seems to have developed in your case reduces my slight scepticism of sharing as a concept because, clearly, it works. What interests me is the pupil engagement: if it does not lead to societal benefits, I slightly query it. Beyond curricular activities, do you have activities outside school hours that both sets of pupils join in? If so, what are they?
382. **Mr Williamson:** One of the most recent, which we started through our involvement with the shared education programme with Atlantic Philanthropies and Queen's University, was the

- development of a joint rugby team in junior school, at Key Stage 3. Ballycastle High School is traditionally a hockey school, and we wanted to develop rugby, so the two schools are working together on that. There is a range of extra-curricular activities, not all of them related to sport. There is drama sometimes and a whole range of joint music activities. There are also more informal arrangements and anecdotal examples: for instance, the sixth form formals have a good attendance from pupils from both schools now, so that relationship has developed as well.
383. **Mrs Ward:** Friendships.
384. **Mr Williamson:** Yes, friendships have developed, too. I am conscious that the formalised relationships around sport etc are positive. Music is very strong, with a joint choir and so on, and we have a joint student council. There is a range, and not all are sustained from year to year. Some go on from year to year; others crop up from time to time. If something happens, we will promote it and push it on.
385. **Mrs Ward:** You mentioned rugby. We had a great event last year, the very first rugby match on Cross and Passion soil. That was a great day for us. Pupils see the hockey team or the hurling team go out, and they realise that this is sport. For this generation and these particular young people, that is all there is to it. They share classes with boys who play rugby or hockey. Equally, boys and girls from your school share classes with our pupils and know people in their outside life who play other sports. All those sorts of things are slowly breaking down. We tell pupils that they can express their cultural identity and can be who they are. It is about really getting to know each other and accepting the richness, as opposed to the threat, that that brings.
386. **Mr Lunn:** That is very impressive, particularly the school formal because that is a voluntary activity. If your pupils are managing to mix at that level, I suppose the natural question is this: have you had any marriages yet?
387. **Mrs Ward:** No, but we have had to manage some fallings-out. A small thing that the local business community noticed was that, for many years, the high school children did not circulate in Ballycastle town. Now, with the growth of the sixth form, the sixth formers are comfortable with each other and real friendships have developed. At lunchtime, the sixth formers from both schools are allowed to go into town, and they go together. That happened because the high school students went to Ian and said, "The Cross and Passion students are allowed to go downtown at lunchtime, and we want to go with them". That was the first time that a couple of hundred young people from both traditions were together in our local cafes, shops and so on, which was great to see.
388. **Mr Lunn:** I think so, too. When the Committee went to Limavady a couple of years ago, it was noticeable there as well. A number of schools there are quite close together, and you could literally see the kids mixing in the street. How far apart are your schools?
389. **Mrs Ward:** The width of a road, whatever that is.
390. **Mr Lunn:** I wish you well. It is a terrific example of what can be achieved. I would love to come up and see it.
391. **Mrs Ward:** You are very welcome to do that.
392. **Mr Kinahan:** You are an example to us of how to do things. I get the feeling that it is the energy of you two and, presumably, of all the teachers that really makes it work. I am intrigued. You talked about economies of scale, but, presumably, there has been quite a cost. The briefing paper states that one of you has a small deficit, the other a small surplus. Did it cost a lot to get you to where you are, or did you manage to get there within fairly tight budgets?
393. **Mrs Ward:** The entitlement framework funding has been crucial in allowing us to add to the curriculum and, equally, in allowing and facilitating the coordination that is needed to share. That is the

- same for any school trying to deliver the entitlement framework in partnership. Other funding through shared education has allowed us to be innovative and, in a sense, to trail-blaze a bit. It has allowed us to unpick collaborative leadership and examine what that means; to think about what quality looks like in a shared education setting; to develop our senior leaders wearing their collaborative hats; and to look at school structures, school policies and school development planning.
394. In a sense, the school development plans for both schools, certainly as they pertain to attainment, teaching and learning and improving outcomes, have to be one and the same, or broadly similar. It has taken a lot of additional effort on our part and on the part of our teachers — heads of department, pastoral leaders, senior management and principals. All had to take a step outside their comfort zone to develop the structures, protocols and policies and to look at accountability and so on, all of which are needed to make the partnership work.
395. **Mr Williamson:** In earlier generations, the extent of collaboration was such that funding was not as critical. It was more of an exchange, and people were happy just to do it. However, it is imperative for us to sustain our current level of funding into the future. In particular, entitlement framework funding has been an absolute imperative for us. We believe that the question of whether something comes out of the common funding formula to support shared education needs to be given a lot of thought. It is a valuable resource.
396. **Mr Kinahan:** That is why I raised it. I think that we should look into the common funding formula in detail. You mentioned how well things are working with businesses and universities. Ballycastle is slightly off the main road, but that is about to get better. How far afield were your business links? Do many students go on to university, not necessarily only in Belfast or Coleraine but across the water? Are you getting all the help that you need from businesses? What can the Committee do to encourage the business and university link?
397. **Mrs Ward:** Young people are going to local universities and to Liverpool, Glasgow, London and Manchester etc. More and more young people want to engage in post-16 education formally in school, so the number taking HNDs and foundation degrees through the further education route is increasing. Local employers are very concerned that the young people are able to go further afield to university and feel that our two schools really need to look at and provide the skills needed in the local economy and provide well-educated, confident young people who will stay in the area. We are the biggest employers in the town. After us, you need to look to Coleraine and Ballymena, so there is a fair exodus of cars from the area every day. However, we have the local rural community, local farms and so on.
398. **Mr Williamson:** Our experience, as with any school, of engaging with local businesses for a range of educational visits etc has been very strong. A lot of the bigger employers in the broader hinterland beyond Ballycastle have always been supportive. In my experience of working with folks in the private sector and business world, you have only to ask, and they genuinely will come up to the mark and support you. Hot air and a lot of chat do not always go down too well with them, but, if we have a request, they will meet us. That has been our positive experience locally and slightly beyond the Moyle area.
399. **Mr Sheehan:** Thanks, Ian and Barbara, for your presentation. Like everyone else here, I am very impressed by what you have done. I do not want to rain on your parade — what you are doing is excellent — but I know Ballycastle well, and it was not a hot bed during the conflict. In Ballycastle, there were not the same fault lines in society as there were in other places, so I wonder whether what is happening in Ballycastle is transferable to other areas where the conflict and fault lines were deeper.

400. You talked about a partnership of equals. All good partnerships are based on the ability of the partners to compromise at times. You have not discussed any area on which either school had to compromise. Has that happened? Has there been a need at any stage to compromise?
401. **Mrs Ward:** At a purely practical level, we have had to compromise on the independence of the two schools to run their timetable and their school day exactly the way they want to. We had to agree, and both schools had to move on very practical arrangements such as the timetable, the beginning and end of the school day and holidays. Previously, both schools did that independently. For Ballycastle High School, for example, Lammas Fair was a school day, but our school was always off. Those compromises are on organisational and, in a sense, fairly mundane things, although they are very precious to people, too. In a sense, both schools have had to be mindful of the greater good when having to change holiday arrangements and so on.
402. There has been no compromise on the quality of education. We work to a common purpose, and there is no necessity for educational compromise of any description. We cannot operate as two completely independent entities, but there is nothing of real significance that we have had to compromise culturally, educationally or in any other way.
403. **Mr Williamson:** At a micro level, in the context of departments working so closely together on an educational basis, there has been compromise on deciding which examination board to work with.
404. **Mrs Ward:** Day-to-day things.
405. **Mr Williamson:** Compromise happens at the level of deciding what is the best way forward and agreeing a strategy for that. There will be more such compromise at that level.
406. As to whether what we do is transportable to areas where conflict has been a bigger issue, I cannot speak beyond my experience in Ballycastle, but the majority of our pupils do not come from Ballycastle; they come from a surrounding hinterland that has, perhaps, a different political outlook from that of the local demography. We deliver a quality product, and we believe that that is overarching. Parents want their children to go to a good school, and I think that, if what we are doing ticks that box, it gets over any such hurdles. That is our experience.
407. **Mrs Ward:** We have talked a lot about guiding principles and what we believe: the core values of our partnership, our mission and what we are really trying to achieve. However, our guiding principle is that when it comes to compromising or making a change, it is not about your school or my school or who did what first; it is about what is best for these young people. If you never deviate from that, you will never go far wrong. It is completely pupil-centred, and any compromises or changes are considered on that basis. That is how we do it.
408. **Mr Williamson:** It is need-driven.
409. **Mr Sheehan:** I agree with that sentiment. I was interested in Trevor's question about extracurricular activity. I know that Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle in general have a strong tradition of producing good hurling teams. Is there a facility, for example, for a student from Ballycastle High School to play in a hurling team for Cross and Passion College or a student from Cross and Passion to play for the hockey team at Ballycastle High?
410. **Mr Williamson:** Interestingly, last week, three of our sixth form pupils were playing with hurling sticks at lunchtime on the green. I became a little apprehensive about the health and safety aspect rather than any political aspect. I said, "Look, fellas, you are not wearing any facial protection, and we need to deal with that".
411. **Mrs Ward:** That is slowly happening.
412. **Mr Williamson:** It is just nurturing. We have had pupils who played in hurling teams because it was their personal

- choice. One of my first memories of coming to work in Ballycastle High School was walking into a sixth form study and seeing a hurling stick and a hockey stick side by side in a corner. I thought that that was very symbolic of what we are doing. It is not forced. Nothing is forced.
413. **Mrs Ward:** It is not forced at all. There is a lovely, quiet, under-the-radar acceptance of each other's traditions, which is what we really want. Nothing is forced. Very often, young people are more ready to make moves than their parents, grandparents or teachers were.
414. **Mr Williamson:** They look at the sporting skills. A good hockey player will have good hurling skills and GAA skills are transferable to rugby. It is on that level that they are experiencing other avenues that are opening up to them.
415. **Mr Sheehan:** You talked about the improved educational outcomes over the past couple of years. Any experience I have gained from this Committee tells me that, usually, when schools perform well, it is as a result of good leadership. I get the impression, although perhaps both of you are being modest, that the reason for the improved educational outcomes is your sharing experiment. Has any research been done, or is there any evidence to point to improved educational outcomes being a result of sharing or the result of good leadership on your part?
416. **Mr Williamson:** I think that I mentioned that I believe that the increased sharing in meeting the entitlement framework has been a significant part of that, along with teaching and learning and a focus on robust self-evaluation in both schools. The focus and agenda driven by Every School a Good School have also been an imperative for us.
417. **Mrs Ward:** The leadership dimension is crucial. When I was preparing the paper that I sent you and looked at enablers, that was the very first thing I thought of. It is about the partnership being strong and all the mutual respect and trust etc.
418. The leadership side is crucial. People have to believe in it, be prepared to take risks and be confident enough to make mistakes and learn from them. It is challenging and we have both developed. In the overall professional challenge to me, it is the biggest aspect of my leadership role. I still learn every day, and it has certainly brought my level of thinking to a higher level. I now have to think much more widely and deeply.
419. A combination of leadership and the increased opportunities has brought about the outcomes. You have to be willing to give this a go and see the benefit of it.
420. **Mr Williamson:** Leadership at all levels in the schools — at teacher and middle-manager level — is critical. That has to be initiated with open relationships that are based on trust and mutual respect at a professional level, never mind at a religious or system level. It is about giving people the space to develop those relationships. That is critical in developing trust.
421. **Mr Rogers:** Barbara and Ian, you are very welcome. This has been so refreshing. You have talked about leadership at every level, but the enthusiasm, drive and passion that you have shown tells me that leadership at the top is key. Well done for that.
422. One line of your report that jumped out at me was that sharing goes beyond the classroom. Will you tell us a wee bit about your journey and how you brought parents along with you? That is a key factor.
423. **Mrs Ward:** Anecdotally, I met a person at a conference on sharing — I think that it was an ETI conference. He came up to me at the end of the meeting and told me that he had been a pupil at Ballycastle High School in 1966 and studied A-level Latin in Cross and Passion. That is how far back this goes. From that perspective, there was always a tacit acceptance that this was part and parcel of life in Ballycastle.
424. Curriculum 2000 was the next big step. Do you remember when applied



- and general subjects had parity? The entitlement framework was the big driver after that.
425. By and large, parents want their young people to do well, want good educational outcomes and want their children to engage in, love and be happy at school. When it comes to subject options, it is made very clear to parents that we are very proud of the sharing and that it can really enhance their children's educational experience. We present it as an opportunity and something that will enhance the experience, rather than making excuses for it or worrying about it.
426. We know that some parents could have an issue with it. Parents from both schools freely come and go. I have seen a Ballycastle High School parent meeting a teacher in my school. For parent-teacher meetings, my teachers go over to Ballycastle High School and, on other occasions, parents come and meet teachers in my school.
427. Parents have a choice. With the system we have, children from Ballycastle High School do not have to go to Cross and Passion, and my children do not have to go to Ballycastle High School. They can choose from a menu of subjects in their own school, if that is what they wish to do. Parents are very comfortable with it, but we have not taken that for granted either. That has to be managed, and there have to be people meeting and greeting. Ian comes across and makes sure that his parents are OK, and I know that, when parents from the high school are in my school, I need to make sure that they are OK and so on. When you give young people a good experience, almost all parents are happy to go along with that. We have not presented people with a new big thing and told them why we want them to buy into it. It has just happened.
428. We have done evaluations with parents. They have done questionnaires, surveys and focus group discussions with us. We get very good feedback, and, although some of it asks whether we could have done some things better, nobody has said that it should not happen.
429. **Mr Williamson:** The context of the history of the schools is also important. Barbara mentioned that it goes back a significant period. I had a strong sense of the stewardship of continuing on a process that has been developed over many years by predecessors at a senior management level, and I hold that dearly. Parents have respected the groundwork that has been done over many decades, and the Ballycastle community has benefited from that.
430. A key part of it for parents is that it is not forced and that there is a choice. It has not been my experience that parents do not want to engage —
431. **Mrs Ward:** I have never experienced it.
432. **Mr Williamson:** — but, if they did not want to engage, nobody would force them into doing so. That is critical.
433. I go back to the point that I made earlier. Parents are confident that it works and that it will lead to their children achieving whatever it is that they want to go on to do.
434. **Mr Rogers:** I am impressed by another statement that you made in your report, which is that your curriculum meets the needs of the local economy. How does it meet the needs of the farming community, for example?
435. **Mrs Ward:** We offer BTEC agriculture at GCSE and A level. On top of that, we are very mindful of the agrifood business having huge potential in the local area. We are in the midst of planning an educational visit to Harper Adams University, which will be done jointly. The local young farmers are also involved with the agricultural teachers, and so on, and that is also cross-community.
436. We are very mindful of our home economics, our food technology, our farming course and the BTEC science courses. There is a plethora of courses that those young people could do. There is agricultural mechanics, agricultural technology, agricultural marketing and all of that. We hope to open the minds of young people from the rural community to looking at the range of different

- courses and employment opportunities in farming, the allied food industries, agricultural mechanisation and all the environmental-type activity on farms.
437. **Mr Williamson:** We also offer a BTEC countryside environment course collaboratively. That has been developed over the past number of years and supports the wider context of the environment and tourism in that part of the world. We believe that that also feeds into the agricultural side of things.
438. **Mr Rogers:** My final question is about major challenges. I think that you may have mentioned it already, but is entitlement framework (EF) funding one of your major challenges?
439. **Mrs Ward:** If EF funding goes, it will be a challenge for all schools to continue partnerships and the entitlement framework. It will be extremely difficult to maintain the choice and all the work that needs to be done to provide a quality curriculum and a quality experience for young people.
440. There are hidden things. For example, the year heads of all the year groups meet to talk about children's problems, absenteeism, who has fallen out with whom and who is sick. Those things needs to happen. Another layer needs to happen to allow the partnership to work and thrive.
441. **Mr Williamson:** We have mentioned our hope to see investment in shared buildings. That is critical in practical terms, for symbolism and for investing in what we do up there.
442. I suppose that the other potential challenge at all levels of the school that we are managing and are mindful of is succession planning for staff and changes in relationships that have been nurtured and developed. You would have to start that off again, because that is a key part of the success. In my mind, it would have an impact on buildings, relationship-building and succession planning.
443. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you. Keep up the good work.
444. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Three more members have indicated that they want to ask a question. I ask for brevity. I apologise for that, but I am conscious of the time.
445. **Mr Newton:** I only want to say that I do not believe that this would have happened were it not for the enthusiasm that both of you have demonstrated today. This can only be good for Northern Ireland, for the pupils and for all our futures.
446. All my questions have been answered, Chair. I suppose that you will really have cracked it if you get to having one school formal as opposed to having two school formals.
447. **Mrs Ward:** It would mean that we did not have to go to two. *[Laughter.]*
448. **Mr Newton:** Indeed, with all the problems that they present, I imagine. Like others, I congratulate you and encourage you to keep up the good work.
449. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I know that I said to be brief, but I did not expect you to be just as brief.
450. **Mr Hazzard:** Welcome, folks. Apologies that I missed the start of your presentation. I want to ask a wee bit about the theory behind the concept of sharing. There are those who suggest that sharing in itself is a just reward and that the process of sharing is an end in itself. There are those who say that it is a staging post on the way to one school in Ballycastle, for example. How do you see it? How do you think your community sees it?
451. **Mrs Ward:** At this time, our community is ready for what we do. Were you to move faster or more deeply than your community can cope with, you could end up with one or other school or one or other community feeling very alienated, and so on. The strength of our partnership is that it offers parents the choice of a faith-based education or not. That choice seems to be very important in the community at the moment. That is out there and is working at present. We

are mindful that it could be a journey in the end. Who knows what will happen? However, to intervene and make it something else at present, you would need to neutralise the environments and all of that. When my children walk over into the high school, there is symbolism such as the roll of honour of the dead from the wars, etc. My children just accept that. There are religious symbols in my school. People just accept it. There is a real richness in that, and it would be a great pity to do anything that could damage that or end the lovely community cohesion that is growing out of it.

452. **Mr Williamson:** This is about good neighbours working together. We are educationalists and leaders of schools. We are not involved in some social engineering exercise. That is important to state. We believe that our communities, through our governors and from everything else that we hear, believe that both schools want to retain their own ethos, identity and definitely the mutual respect for each other and each other's community.
453. **Mr Hazzard:** You mentioned symbols and the problems of having to neutralise or assimilate anything. Have specific incidents come up from different classrooms or different people?
454. **Mrs Ward:** No. We are hypersensitive about it, and I continually question myself on not only how I feel about something but how others will see it and how my school community will see it if I say something. It is really challenging, and I have learnt an awful lot about myself and about working in a much wider context. With young people, I have never had an instance of any hares being raised or worries about anything that they have seen or experienced. Have you?
455. **Mr Williamson:** Obviously, we are mindful of it, and our care and consideration around it permeates what we do, and I think that pupils sense that and can see it. Pupils will know what is important to you, no matter what aspect of school life that is. Therefore, they know, you hope, not to step over a line or action will be taken. In my experience over six years, it has not been an issue. The greater issue potentially has been, if there have been any issues at all, more around the quality of teaching and the results. Are pupils getting what they need to get on elsewhere? Those are the real issues. We have moved beyond symbolism issues. They are there. Both schools have their history and traditions and their community involvement. We are good neighbours, and we respect that, but nobody is rubbing anybody's nose in anything.
456. **Mrs Ward:** Our guiding principle — again, we have talked about these things — is always that it is OK to express who you are as long as that is not done in any way that is offensive to anybody else. We and our young people have had to think about that and make decisions based on it. Those are not always easy decisions to come to in the end — you do a lot of soul-searching. However, the bottom line is what is good for children, how we can express our difference, and how we can show outward symbols of our identity that are in no way a threat or show any form of disrespect to our partners.
457. **Mr Williamson:** We have engaged previously with workshop activities and things like that as part of the Peace III funding and the North Eastern Board's partnership, inclusion, reconciliation, citizenship and history (PIRCH) project funding. Work was done around that. They came up with some very creative ideas combining school emblems and symbols to create something very energetic. It is not a real issue. We cannot ignore it, and we are mindful of it, but it is not a huge issue.
458. **Mr Hazzard:** I have one quick final question. I am always keen to stress that we need to look beyond just religion and that sharing should be about socio-economic backgrounds and especially ethnicity, where appropriate. Does your example touch on different socio-economic backgrounds in the community?

459. **Mr Williamson:** Absolutely.
460. **Mrs Ward:** Absolutely.
461. **Mr Williamson:** Both schools —
462. **Mrs Ward:** The joy of working in our context is the experience across the community divide and, probably as important, the social inclusion. We have everybody from the exceptionally advantaged to the extremely disadvantaged in both our schools. That is the joy of the job.
463. **Mr Williamson:** Increasingly, we have pupils of different nationalities coming in as well.
464. **Mr McCausland:** Thanks for your presentation. I endorse the view that we should be incremental and appropriate. A particular way that works very well in one place may not be exactly right in another. You end up with a messy situation where it is not exactly the same. It does not fit into a neat little box where it is the same everywhere. However, that is probably by far the best way forward.
465. I want to pick up on one thing that is in the core values. In the paper that you provided, which is very helpful, you say that this “Embraces the richness of difference”. Can you flesh out what you mean by that a wee bit?
466. **Mrs Ward:** Embracing the richness of difference is what I have just been talking about. Take the two sports, where you celebrate and share the difference. You see it as enriching that there are different ideas and activities, people with different views and beliefs, and a different sense of their history, their future or whatever. When I talk about embracing that, I mean that you should allow it to happen. Facilitate that and educate young people to see it as a positive as opposed to a threat. What I mean by “embracing it” is “accepting it”. View it as your life having been enriched by the fact that you engaged in something that you did not know about before as opposed to us saying that it could cause problems, and, as a result, not allow them to do this, that and the other. That is what I mean by embracing that richness.
467. **Mr Williamson:** It is exactly that. We are not trying to morph our pupils into something that they are not. Every individual is different. We are allowing for that and embracing it, and that is a key factor in what we do. It is not being diluted, but it is all done in the context of a genuinely developed relationship in which you do not go out and wilfully annoy, upset or antagonise your neighbour.
468. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you once again for your time this morning. I think that all members found it very interesting. We applaud you, and we look forward to our visit to Ballycastle.
469. **Mr Williamson:** Thank you.
470. **Mrs Ward:** You will get the most insight into it when you meet the young people and talk to them. That will be a very useful exercise.
471. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much.
472. **Mrs Ward:** Thank you very much for the opportunity.

## 15 October 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Professor Vani Borooah *University of Ulster*  
 Professor Colin Knox

473. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
 Gentlemen, I welcome you to our Committee this morning. You have had the benefit of hearing our previous witnesses. I ask you to make your opening statement, and then Committee members will ask some questions.
474. **Professor Colin Knox (University of Ulster):** Chair, thank you very much for the invitation to share some of our research on shared education and integrated education. We are going to keep this fairly brief, in the sense that we are just going to walk you through the key points in our paper, which is, we apologise, slightly longer than a briefing. I will talk a little bit about definitions, the extent of segregation or parallel systems and the demand for integrated education.
475. My colleague Vani is going to look at school performance in the integrated sector. I will then talk a little bit about the shared education model. Vani will talk a little bit about the quantification of the shared education experiment, if you will. I will finish by talking a little bit about where shared education is going. That probably sounds lengthy, but we will keep it very brief.

476. Linked to your terms of reference, particularly on definitions, it is now very clear in legislation what integrated education is. It is defined in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 as the:
- “education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.”*
477. On the back of that, there have been various attempts to define what “shared education” is. The definition that is most often quoted is the one in the ministerial advisory group context. One of the MLAs referred to that earlier. The scope of what is referred to as “shared education” is actually a lot broader than the scope of integrated education, because it refers to all section 75 categories. It talks about shared education being aimed at improving educational benefits, promoting efficiency and effectiveness of resources, promoting equality of opportunity — my colleague Vani will return to that in a moment — and promoting good relations and equality of diversity. Therefore, shared education has been given a very broad scope, and we are going to try to unpack that a little bit.
478. It is fair to say that shared education is not radically new, in that the Bain report in 2006 referred to iterations of shared education, such as federations, confederations, shared campuses and shared faith schools. However, I think that the impetus for shared education has been given a huge boost by the shared education programme run by the Fermanagh Trust, Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) and the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). One crucial point that we want to make about a definition of “shared education” — this has been picked up by the Minister — is that it involves two or more schools. That is a central principle that we might want to return to later.
479. In the most recent judgement on integrated education, Justice Treacy is

- very clear — it has been picked up in the debate in the Assembly and has some ramifications for how we define it — that integrated education cannot be delivered by schools within a:
- “predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant ethos”.*
480. In other words, it is seen as a stand-alone concept. That has created greater clarity around what integrated education is seen as by the system, and by the Department and stakeholders therein.
481. “Segregated” is a pejorative word, because it could suggest that there is statutory segregation: there is not. I will give you a few brief statistics to remind you of the extent to which we have parallel systems of education here. In our primary sector, 6.2% of Catholics attend controlled primary schools, 1% of Protestants attend maintained primary schools and 5.7% of primary-school children attend integrated schools. The same is true as you go through the system, where 2.8% of Catholics attend controlled secondary schools, 1% of Protestants attend maintained secondary schools, and 14.9% of secondary non-grammar-school children attend integrated schools. Overall, you can see that we essentially have two parallel systems of education, although it is true to say that Catholics are much more likely to attend schools in the controlled sector than Protestants are to attend maintained schools. The greatest movement by Catholics is into the controlled grammar schools.
482. I will move on quickly to integrated education. We will look at shared education a little bit later. It is true to say that the impact of integrated education tends to focus primarily on reconciliation and societal benefits. Much of the research that has been done into the impact of integrated education is about the meaningful contact that takes place between children in that one-school environment and the fact that that creates much more accommodation between those children. The sustained contact is very
- much at the core of integrated education as a product, if you will.
483. I will look quickly at the demand for integrated education. The detail is in the paper. The Education Minister said that one measure of the demand for integrated education is the extent to which parents express first preference on the application transfer form for schools in that sector. It is true to say — I echo some of the words the Minister said in response to a question on this — that, in the integrated movement overall, the number of places available in the primary and post-primary sectors slightly exceeds demand, although there is pressure in particular areas owing to parental preference. Our table shows that, overall, we have about 2,000 unfilled places in the integrated sector. In and around 21,000 pupils attend schools in the sector. To put that more specifically, in 2013-14, 3,230 parents expressed a preference for integrated schools. The actual approved numbers available in integrated schools is over 3,500 students. In the round, the sector is undersubscribed by about 9%. We have given some examples of the top three and bottom three primary and post-primary schools based on supply and demand.
484. I will hand over to my colleague, who will talk a little more widely about some of the education outcomes from the integrated sector.
485. **Professor Vani Borooh (University of Ulster):** Thank you, Chairman. I am a professor of economics at the University of Ulster. My colleague and I are honoured and privileged to be speaking to you today. Thank you very much for inviting us.
486. I will start off by talking about school achievement and performance, because that is the thing that Colin and I have been very concerned with. Our measure of school performance is five good GCSEs, including English and maths. If you look at Northern Ireland’s measure of performance, you will see that there is a hierarchy of performance that is defined essentially by three parameters:

- deprivation, gender and religion. At the top of the heap are Catholic girls from non-deprived backgrounds — 77% of whom get good GCSEs — and at the bottom of the heap are Protestant males from deprived backgrounds or free school meal children, about 20% of whom get good GCSEs. There is a gap of almost 57% between these two groups. The interesting question is this: how much is due to gender, how much is due to religion and how much is due to deprivation? We have performed that calculation. On our calculation, 10% is due to religion, 22% is due to gender and 68% is due to deprivation. Understanding why free-school-meal pupils do not do well in school is a very important aspect of our research.
487. Until now, this was all we knew. We knew results at a Northern Ireland level, but recently DENI has released data to us showing the performance of free-school-meal children in GCSEs on a school-by-school basis. I believe that this data is not widely available. We are among the first to have analysed it, and we have analysed it for different schools. If you look at figure 2 in the briefing paper, you will see some results. Free-school-meal children in the non-selective sector do best in Catholic maintained schools: 23% get good GCSEs. They do worst in controlled and controlled integrated schools, where around 12% get good GCSEs. They do slightly better in grant-maintained integrated schools, with 16%. So, generally, there is something about Catholic maintained schools that allows free-school-meal children to do well.
488. If you look at the intake of free-school-meal children, again, you will see that the Catholic sector takes the largest proportion. In the secondary non-selective sector, it is nearly 32%, whereas the other sectors weigh in with 23%, 24% or 25%, so there is a big gap in the intake of free-school-meal children between Catholic schools and other schools. Similarly, if you look at the grammar school sector, you will see a big gap between the performance of free-school-meal children in Catholic ethos grammar schools and Protestant ethos grammar schools — 88% and 80% — and also in the intake of free-school-meal children between Catholic ethos grammar schools and Protestant ethos grammar schools. Nearly 10% of pupils in Catholic grammar schools are free-school-meal children; but only around 5% in Protestant grammar schools. There is something that we need to investigate and understand there.
489. We have also done this analysis on a school-by-school basis. Contrary to popular belief, free-school-meal children do not always do worse than non-free-school-meal children. There are 22 schools in Northern Ireland in which the performance of free-school-meal children is at least as good as that of non-free-school-meal children. We list these schools in table 6. It is not necessarily the case that, simply because you come from a deprived background, you will do worse than someone from a non-deprived background. There are also 23 schools in which the gap between free-school-meal children and non-free-school-meal children is within 10%, so a gap exists but is very small. Again, we list these schools in table 7.
490. At the other end of the scale, there are 68 schools in which not a single free-school-meal pupil got good GCSEs including English and maths. There are 68 such schools. These schools cannot even report a single pupil getting this particular qualification. We do not list these schools, but let me say that 30 of them were controlled, 25 were maintained, 10 were integrated and three were Protestant grammars. This is the sort of information that we are now able to provide to the Committee, which previously was not available. It is thanks largely to DENI, which provided us with the data.
491. We have also investigated first preferences of pupils. We asked what determines first preference. Why do people put down a particular school as being their first preference? Seventy-seven per cent of the variation in first preferences is due

- to school performance. This is the thing that parents look at, and it echoes something that the people from Ballycastle were talking about at a school level. We find this also at a Northern Ireland economy level. What really motivates parents is school performance. Schools which perform well have greater demand than places, and schools which do not perform well have unfilled places. If we want to improve upon the imbalance between schools, we need to improve the performance of schools which, at the moment, are underperforming.
492. This is my first pass at these quantitative figures, and I want to make to you the point that it is very important to understand why free-school-meal-entitled children underperform, why they perform better in Catholic maintained and Catholic grammar schools than in other types; and why Catholic schools are prepared to take more free-school-meal-entitled children than schools in other sectors.
493. **Professor Knox:** Again, very quickly to allow time for questions, I suppose that our central thesis is that performance is the key imperative in the selection of schools by children, and in that sense we think that the integrated sector could do better. Look at some of the statistics: the controlled integrated sector is a very poorly performing sector, and I think that that drives parental choice in terms of those schools. We think that, whilst the reconciliation societal imperative is at the core of the integrated movement's *raison d'être*, and that is clearly a very important issue, it is not what drives parental demand in the first instance. And you heard, I think, very eloquently from the school principals that at the heart of their schools is the desire to achieve the best performance that they can for their children. Those other issues around identity are safeguarded; there is respect; and so on. And in that way, almost by osmosis, there is a softening at the edges of some of those relations.
494. That is where, very quickly, we move into shared education, which is really an attempt to do that. We could not articulate that nearly as well as the two school principals that you have just heard. However, at the core of the shared education model is this idea of creating interdependencies between schools, and at the core of that is good collaboration. All the MLAs asked good questions about what makes for a strong collaboration. Is it good leadership? Is it good direction? Do you have parental support? All those things are key to it. The research evidence in other parts of the UK, particularly in England, says that you have schools where there is a potential for mutual benefit, particularly on the education side — and I stress “mutual benefit”; the schools are benefiting from each other. By dint of the geographies of our schools here, and the fact that competition tends to happen within sectors, shared education is more likely to be beneficial where you have two or more schools of different management types and the end goal is to improve education outcomes.
495. **Professor Borooh:** If I were to highlight one characteristic of shared education, Chairman, it would be that it is nimble and agile. Muhammad Ali, the boxer, had this famous phrase:  
*“float like a butterfly, sting like a bee”.*
496. I think that that is shared education for you. To make my point, we studied four partnerships which were set up through Atlantic Philanthropies. The first was at the highest level of intellectual ability: astronomy, led by Lumen Christi College and involving Foyle College. There were not enough pupils in either school to do astronomy, so they grouped together, employed somebody and did astronomy. Again, there was the same partnership for engineering. There were not enough people in Foyle to do engineering, so they came over to Lumen Christi.
497. At a slightly lower level, there was a partnership between Belfast High School and Hazelwood College for remedial teaching of mathematics. At a different level, there was a partnership between Shimna Integrated College and



- primary schools for teaching foreign languages. Belfast Model School had a different partnership. In some ways, this illustrates the fact that there is no formulaic method of sharing. You can share depending on contingency and need, ranging from astronomy to civics, foreign languages etc.
498. We evaluated the kind of benefits that might result from shared education. The essential point that I want to make is that, at the margin, it lifts the performance of certain students. Pupils who would not have got good GCSEs get good GCSEs, people who would have got good GCSEs go on to do A-levels, and people who would have done A-levels then go on to university, so it is like a rising tide. It lifts boats and, at the margin, pupils do better with shared education than they might have done in its absence.
499. What are the benefits of this? From studies, we can tell that there are rates of return to education. How does it benefit you if you get five good GCSEs compared to only four GCSEs: what additional impact does that make to your lifetime income? We used these results over a 40-year lifetime, and we figured that, with these four very modest programmes, if you netted out the cost, you would get a total benefit of nearly £24 million for four very small programmes that lifted the performance of these pupils. If that was magnified on a larger scale with the same agility and nimbleness, the results could be enormous.
500. **Professor Knox:** Finally, Chair — I am sorry that we are taking a bit longer than I anticipated — I wanted to talk about where shared education is going conceptually. I do not think that it is a particularly useful conceptual method to set shared education alongside integrated education. We do not see them as competing. It is really about where communities are at. There are two principles that we are talking about. It is not a one-size-fits-all model. You have to be highly sensitive to the needs of communities.
501. As to your question about interface areas, perhaps there are communities that are very different places to rural schools in Ballycastle, and that is what makes it messy, to use Nelson McCausland's phrase. Having said that, I think that there is a real opportunity to take this forward now with the shared education signature project that has just been recently agreed between OFMDFM, the Department of Education and Atlantic Philanthropies. They are setting education goals at the heart of that programme. There is a great acceptance within that programme that schools are starting off at very different stages and that their incremental development will be very different.
502. At Queen's University, Dr Gavin Duffy and his colleagues have developed a very useful continuum that really says, let us see where schools are at in this continuum of sharing, if you like, from working in complete isolation right through to great interdependence between these schools. I think that it is that journey that the shared education signature project is trying to develop in an incremental way. Perhaps one of the dangers of it is that because, as the two principals said, this is hard work, we revert to type and see it as no more than a community relations programme. I do not mean that in a derogatory way, but to get the buy-in for parents — to get that huge incremental change that we want — education outcomes will hopefully be at the heart of that programme.
503. Thank you very much.
504. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. I find your paper very interesting; the analysis, along with the very clear tables. I know that you are saying that shared education and the integrated sector are not in competition, but there are very clearly defined boundaries between the two, and we have got very clear camps as well. I am not sure whether you could say that there is hostility there, but there is certainly an uneasiness there. Perhaps one would perceive that the other is

- trying to steal its clothes, but there may be an issue around definition.
505. I look at the information that you have provided, and — I know this from my own experience of school life, too — parents choose schools because of their educational outcomes and, as a result of that, an unintended consequence of that is mixing. Look at schools such as Belfast Royal Academy (BRA), Methody and so on: there is a very clearly mixed community within those schools, probably more so than some of the schools that would consider themselves to be integrated. Are we at a stage that we may perhaps need to look at redefining integration, rather than looking at a clear definition of shared education?
506. **Professor Knox:** I see on your schedule colleagues from Queen's, including Professor Joanne Hughes. She has done a very interesting piece of work. I will not pre-empt it or claim to know about it in the detail that Joanne does, but she refers to “super-mixed schools”, which is the type that you just referred to. Indeed, in our paper, right at the back, we give examples of schools where there is a broad mix of pupils, but which would not necessarily call themselves shared schools or integrated schools.
507. At the moment, integrated schools define themselves very much as Catholics, Protestants, no faith and other faith all educated in one building. Shared education is quite different to that in the sense that it is not about structural changes and having a separate integrated school. Rather, shared education can take place in existing schools, and it is about those two schools trying to learn from each other, as the two principals described earlier.
508. As the debate evolves, we may need to revisit what we mean by shared education. However, at the moment, that definition is quite clear and it is about two or more schools coming together for the purposes of improved educational, economic and reconciliation outcomes.
509. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I want to go back to the comments that you made about integrated education. You said that, in the mix, there is an overall undersubscription of around 9%. However, the IEF LucidTalk poll showed that somewhere in the region of 79% of parents would back a move to transform their children's school and 66% believe that integrated schools should be the normal model. Is that a misunderstanding of integration? Should the definition be more inclusive of the other models you have outlined?
510. **Professor Knox:** I certainly think that polls sometimes mix the terminology and, therefore, the people who are answering those questions get confused. It goes back to the point that we made earlier about what informs parental choice. Ideologically, people can say that they welcome attendance at integrated schools, but the evidence tells us that their choice is informed by educational preference, rather than whether it is an integrated school. If it is an integrated school and it is an integrated high-performing school, parents will send their children to it based on that.
511. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The point is about the type of question that is being asked. If you are asking someone on the street whether they would they would prefer their children to be in a mixed community and whether they should perhaps all be educated together, of course they will say yes. Does that necessarily mean the integrated model?
512. **Professor Borooh:** Yes, we would like our children to be educated together, conditional on good results. That is the critical point. If we are to enunciate any rule it is that if you can deliver good results, people's hearts and minds will follow. The examples that you took, BRA and Methody, are de facto integrated or mixed — call them what you will. Parents do not hesitate to send their children to those schools, simply because they get good results, and that is what they put first.

513. Good results are the horse and reconciliation and putting children together in the same classroom is the cart. It is very important to put the horse before the cart in this particular respect. If we want any sector to flourish, whether it is the integrated sector, the controlled sector etc, we have to give primacy to educational results. Once we give primacy to educational results, a lot of things will follow. However, if we ignore education and look for anything else, I think that we will miss the basic purpose of schooling, which is to deliver good education.
514. **Professor Knox:** The Ballycastle example illustrated that perfectly. In combination, those two schools have achieved educationally more than they could have done individually. That is what makes that experiment or, if you like, opportunity very important for children and parents in that area.
515. **Mr Craig:** I am not at all surprised at your outcomes. I am a parent, and we are all guilty of this. You look around and find the highest-achieving school or the one that seems to get the most out of their pupils and that is where you send your children. There is no rocket science in that.
516. The other thing that I was not at all surprised about in your report is that the maintained sector seems to be the least integrated. I am not at all surprised. It is a faith-based education system and, therefore, is singularly focused on one faith — integration is not really a big factor for it. Looking through the statistics in Northern Ireland, I was not at all surprised to find that practically no other faiths or dominations go to that sector. Does that not lead to the point that the argument should be about a more shared focus around this? The maintained sector is one of the biggest sectors in Northern Ireland. I have to be honest and say that it is probably one of the best-performing sectors as well. Lessons need to be learned from that. If that is the case, should we not focus more on the shared aspect of that than on the integrated sector? Let us face it: if the largest sector of all is a single faith-based thing, we will not get to integrated overnight.
517. **Professor Borooh:** No. We can point to several instances in which there has been sharing with the Catholic sector. There has been sharing between Lumen Christi College and Foyle College, and between Belfast High School and an integrated college in that partnership. So, in several instances, without surrendering identity, people are prepared to share if they feel that they will be a concomitant improvement in educational performance.
518. **Professor Knox:** To illustrate that, Queen's, again under Dr Duffy, has provided a very good example in Derry/Londonderry between St Mary's College, St Cecilia's College and Lisneal College. The whole basis of that partnership was mutual benefits for all three schools. Lisneal College had not performed well in some school inspections. St Mary's and St Cecilia's came into help with that, and they improved their educational outcomes. In turn, St Mary's and St Cecilia's benefited a lot from some of the pastoral work that was going on in Lisneal. That is an example of mutual respect and reciprocity in benefits.
519. I also think that it is about maintaining their own identities, and the two principals from Ballycastle made that point very clearly. There are lots of parents in our society who are still not at the point that they want to send their children to integrated schools, and you have to respect that. I do not think that there is any argument against saying that we want to share if it will provide our children with better education outcomes and, as a consequence, we can promote better reconciliation and societal benefits.
520. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks again for your presentation, both written and verbal.
521. This is the first meeting in this programme, and it is deliberately titled "shared and integrated" rather than "shared versus integrated". A lot of people keep saying "versus", but we will educate them. I will not spend the next

- six months advocating for one sector or another. You heard what I said about the Ballycastle experience — that is good stuff.
522. You seem to be saying — Colin, I think that it was you in particular — that integrated schools perhaps do not perform quite as well because they spend too much time emphasising societal benefits. That is the way that it came across. Surely that is nonsense.
523. **Professor Knox:** That is nonsense, and, of course, I did not say that. I said that they do not perform as well as other schools but not because they concentrate on reconciliation benefits. If the integrated sector is to raise its game, it has to become attractive to parents on the grounds of educational outcomes.
524. **Professor Boroogh:** This is definitely not an ideological war of this versus that. We have a common interest, which is that we want Northern Ireland to have good schools and we want children to turn out with better qualifications than they currently have. The question is how best to achieve that. We can go only by the facts, which are that some schools underperform and some schools perform better than others. Without detailed analysis, we do not know why some schools underperform. We have undertaken some analysis, but we do not know in detail. We know, however, that we could learn from the experiences of others. Can we learn something from people who do well, and do we have anything to offer? That is the heart of shared education. It is a learning process, which has a single objective: to deliver a better future for our children.
525. **Professor Knox:** Maybe we tend to describe it in a trite way, but a rising tide floats all boats. If the maintained sector is doing things well — we know that because of their results profile — why should we not share that common interest to ensure that all our children do well? The mechanism for doing that is shared education.
526. **Mr Lunn:** I will stay on the theme of poor performance. You made the point — we have crossed swords on this before in Enniskillen, I think — that integrated schools perform poorly at GCSE level; in fact, they perform as badly as the worst-performing sector, which is controlled and non-grammar schools. Figure 1 of your briefing seems to indicate that grant-maintained integrated schools perform at GCSE at the same level as Catholic maintained schools, so they outperform controlled and non-grammar schools. In every sector, there is a variation.
527. **Professor Boroogh:** Two integrated schools are very popular — Slemish and Lagan College — and they operate a selection policy. There are 15 such grant-maintained integrated schools. If you take out those two and Drumragh, 12 schools certainly perform below par. It is a highly skewed performance, with three highly performing schools and 12 schools not performing so well.
528. **Professor Knox:** The results are skewed because of the integrated schools that stream their children. That is not particularly the principles to which the integrated movement espouse. They do not support selection.
529. **Mr Lunn:** It is true to say that most of them, by a wide margin, do not operate a selection policy. In fact, there is no reason why they should not. Not exercising a selection policy is not a condition of becoming an integrated school.
530. I have just one more question, Chair — there are 100 questions in here, but time does not permit —
531. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The Chair would not permit.
532. **Mr Lunn:** You effectively said that there is limited demand for integrated education and that there are unfilled spaces. How do you contrast that with poll after poll that seem to indicate something completely different? The biggest problem is that parents who would like to send their children to an

- integrated school cannot find one that is available.
533. **Professor Knox:** That is geographically patchy. I do not think that that is the case across all the Province, otherwise we would not have 9% unfilled places in the integrated sector. So I do not think that that is a general point.
534. **Mr Lunn:** What is the percentage of unfilled places in the other sectors?
535. **Professor Knox:** I do not have those figures available.
536. **Professor Boroovah:** There are unfilled places in all the sectors. We are not singling out the integrated sector.
537. **Mr Lunn:** I speculate that it is a lot higher than the other sectors.
538. **Professor Boroovah:** I think that it varies a great deal on a school-by-school basis. It is 8.5% in the integrated sector, but if you take out the top three integrated schools, you will find a much larger proportion of unfilled places in the remaining 12, certainly in the controlled integrated sector. Similarly with the controlled and maintained sector, you will find schools for which there is a high demand depending on high performance, and schools for which there is a low demand depending on low performance. If there is a single conclusion, it is the fact that, if you lift performance, you will lift demand.
539. **Mr Lunn:** You made an interesting comment about the first preference situation. Is it true to say that a lot of parents put down as their first preference a school that they have no intention of sending their children to? It comes into the area of bus passes and the distance from a school. If you do not put down the nearest schools, you will not get a bus pass. Does that have any influence on your 79%?
540. **Professor Boroovah:** Our data is on the number of first preferences on a school-by-school basis, so it is not detailed and is not micro data; it is at a fairly broad level. Even that very broad level suggests that school performance has a very big impact on first preferences, but it is not the only factor. We do not say that it is the only factor, but we think that it is a significant and important factor.
541. **Mr Lunn:** You have given us a good grounding and context for the inquiry, so I am sure that we will come back to it again. Thank you very much.
542. **Mr Hazzard:** Thank you; it is very thought-provoking work. As I go through it and listen here today, I cannot help but think that social mix is important in a school. I do not accept the phrase “super-mixed schools”. I think their level of intake of free school meal pupils spurns that. What would be the educational benefit of putting a Protestant boy from a deprived background in a classroom beside a Catholic girl from a non-deprived background?
543. **Professor Boroovah:** Let me start by saying that it is not necessarily the case that free school meal children do worse than non-free school meal children.
544. **Mr Hazzard:** I accept that.
545. **Professor Boroovah:** There are 22 schools. What are those 22 schools doing that enables them to deliver these qualifications to free school meal children that 68 schools are not able to do? What are they doing right? What are 22 schools doing right and 68 schools doing wrong? There is an element of what we can learn from each other. There are also peer group effects. You and I may come from culturally different backgrounds, but when I see that you can solve a differential equation better than I can, I acquire a certain respect for you. When I acquire respect for you as a person, I acquire respect for your background. Similarly, if you see that I do something better than you do, and you respect me for that, you think, “Maybe his background is not that bad after all”. My view is that the key to respect is not to respect a person in the abstract but to respect the person and, through that, to respect his or her origins. By putting people together in

- shared education you learn that, if this person is good at that, and I am good at that, maybe we are alike in some ways.
546. **Mr Hazzard:** You could take a certain angle from the report, as you could with any report, but the statistics suggest that the social mix in the Catholic sector is better than the social mix in the controlled sector. Is that a determinant factor? Does that play a role in why there are better results for deprived pupils in the maintained sector?
547. **Professor Boroohah:** Catholic schools do something that makes free school meal children in maintained schools, grammar and secondary, perform better than those in other sectors. We do not know what it is. When you investigate further, you find that absenteeism in maintained schools is lower than in other sectors. Absenteeism has a major role to play in school performance. Without going into anecdotal sociology or psychology, there is something there, and I have been meaning to find out what that is.
548. **Mr Hazzard:** I have one final question. Were you able to find out what measurements parents use when they are deciding on a school, based on the outcomes? Is it A levels, GCSEs or the fact that you need a transfer test to get into that school? Is it because there is a culture of a school being a good school? You often hear parents say that a particular school is a good school, but you think, actually, it is not a good school. It may have been a good school, but it is no longer a good school and vice versa: there may be schools out there that are good schools now but are not perceived to be so.
549. **Professor Boroohah:** Those parents will be looking at first preferences and at the previous year's performance. It is contemporaneous and not based on the past. It is not reputational but is based on hard evidence. We are not saying that other factors do not matter, but performance matters.
550. **Professor Knox:** Performance matters significantly. It is a very good question about what constitutes educational performance. We tend to use the standard measures that DE uses, because we have quantification of those, but parents may take a more rounded view. It might be that there are also very good sporting activities, that it is a very good place to go, that it is local, that the parents went there etc.
551. **Mr Newton:** I thank Professor Knox and Professor Boroohah. You indicated that you are moving forward on the OFMDFM shared education signature project. The Assembly is moving forward on the Education Bill. I am not alone in being critical of how we conducted area planning in the past, which was not done as effectively as it could have been. Does your work have any relevance to the area planning that will be undertaken by the Education Authority? Have you been involved in or asked about that work?
552. **Professor Knox:** We presented to the Committee previously on area planning. At that stage, the area plans for the primary sector had not come out; the final plans came out only recently. When we examined the plans, we put it, simply or perhaps crudely, that the area planning was not composite. Essentially, CCMS and the boards did their own thing, consulting with the integrated sector and the Irish-medium sector, and they then cut and pasted the plans into something that they called a composite plan for an area. I looked at the area plans for the primary sector recently, and I do not see a significant change in that philosophy. Indeed, it has been criminal — maybe that is too strong a word — and there has been a very negative perception from those who engaged in that process as parents and as part of a community. A lot of the suggestions that came forward were, essentially, ignored by CCMS or the boards. How does that help us with shared education? The Minister advised the boards and CCMS to be creative and imaginative with area plans, and they have been neither. If they are to embrace shared education as part of the way forward, they need to be highly cognisant of that when they develop area plans. Developing area

- plans on a sectoral basis will not do that.
553. **Mr Newton:** Am I right in saying that your work will inform the strategic planning of DE and the education and library boards or the new authority?
554. **Professor Knox:** It would be too presumptuous to think that our work would inform anything, but we will certainly make our evidence available to the Department and appear before whomever it wants us to and try to disseminate our work as best we can.
555. **Professor Boroogh:** In the earlier presentation, a point was made that geographical proximity is very important for partnerships. De facto, the way in which geographical proximity works out in Northern Ireland is that it is inter-sectoral. In the area where I live, within half a mile of one another, there is Aquinas, which is the top-performing grammar school in Northern Ireland, Wellington College, which has medium-level performance, and St Joseph's, which is the worst-performing secondary school in Northern Ireland. There is enormous potential for partnerships that are waiting to be uncovered. We have simply scratched the surface: we have uncovered four partnerships from our work. You heard about Ballycastle. Hundreds of partnerships are waiting to be uncovered, but spirit and energy are needed to do that. I think that the enthusiasm is there, but it needs to be harnessed and channelled.
556. **Professor Knox:** Perhaps the signature project will provide the mechanism to do that. Support must be provided to those schools, because this is a new journey for them. As the two principals from Ballycastle will tell you — you have been to Limavady — this is a long journey. It does not happen overnight, and it is risky. They have to take decisions that they may not always like in the interests of that common good. That is a journey that the Departments are now embarking on, and it is good to see that, for the first time, the Department of Education is putting money behind it. Equally, OFMDFM is convinced that this has the potential to improve the performance of education and to reduce the performance gap between children who are entitled to free school meals and others.
557. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Lunn wanted to come in on that. Can I ask you to be brief?
558. **Mr Lunn:** You mentioned Aquinas and St Joseph's. What was the third school?
559. **Professor Boroogh:** Wellington College.
560. **Mr Lunn:** Imagine me forgetting that. You say that St Joseph's is the worst-performing secondary school in Northern Ireland.
561. **Professor Boroogh:** I think that it is.
562. **Mr Lunn:** Is the solution to that a sharing arrangement, or does the school need a good shake-up, which would have happened in the past? Surely it is down to the leadership.
563. **Professor Knox:** We do not say that sharing is the panacea for improving educational outcomes. We say that it is one factor therein. You heard the two principals talk this morning about good leadership, teaching and curriculum development. This is not a one-shot option, but we think that it is an important component in improving education outcomes.
564. **Mr Sheehan:** Trevor has stolen my thunder. I keep banging on about good leadership in schools, because you hear educationalists talking about it all the time. I am sure that everyone on the Committee knows of schools that have had a change of leadership, and performance has improved. It is not rocket science. The evidence shows that, in some schools, kids on free school meals can perform as well as those who are not, and, in other schools, they are not performing as well as them. As a start, I would look at the issue of leadership. Is there good leadership in the school? Is there quality teaching in the school? Is there good monitoring of teaching staff? I know of some terrible schools that

- have been on the point of intervention, if not in intervention. Anecdotally, we hear about poor teachers, lazy teachers and teachers out on sick leave, but, when a new principal comes in, all that can change. I know of one case in my constituency when, after a new leader came in, GCSE results improved year-on-year. When we talk about the 60-odd schools in which the kids on free school meals are underperforming —
565. **Professor Boroohah:** Not a single school got disqualification.
566. **Mr Sheehan:** Is leadership not the first port of call? I understand and believe, from the example that we were given this morning, that sharing can certainly enhance educational outcomes, but if we are going to list priorities, leadership has to be at the top.
567. **Professor Boroohah:** Yes, but if I were a departmental policymaker, I would find that leadership involves many problems: individuals, schools and micro issues. At a departmental level, I would look for easy answers, which include school numbers and financial difficulties. In fact, those things make not the blindest bit of difference to school performance, but, from a policy point of view, it is easy to find those quantifiable, macro factors, on which you can pin policy, whereas I absolutely agree that to pin policy on leadership is the right way to go. However, it requires much more effort on the part of policymakers to investigate leadership in individual schools.
568. **Professor Knox:** Anecdotally, we hear that one of the suggestions as to why Catholic or maintained schools outperform controlled schools is that CCMS has a much stronger grip on leadership in its schools. The boards are perhaps a little semi-detached in dealing with schools that are underperforming.
569. Clearly, leadership is hugely important, and, as the principals said this morning, that goes for leadership at all levels. Perhaps it takes a leader to create or cascade that downwards, but it is about leadership at middle management level, good teaching, shared education —
- there is a plethora of issues that are about raising educational performance.
570. **Mr McCausland:** I apologise for not being here for part of the presentation. I have a quick point. Your briefing has a graph that shows the figures for performance in the different sectors. You may have already answered this question when I was out of the room. We might guess that the better performance of grant-maintained integrated schools over controlled integrated schools is to do with schools that were controlled schools and then transformed into —
571. **Professor Boroohah:** Controlled integrated schools?
572. **Mr McCausland:** Yes. Is that because they were not doing particularly well previously?
573. **Professor Boroohah:** I do not know.
574. **Professor Knox:** I do not know either, but there is a very derogatory term that one could use. I do not wish to label those schools, but sometimes, when schools are at the edge of viability, they have what is sometimes referred to as a “deathbed conversion”. I have said it, and it is on record; I am sorry. That option becomes a possibility for them, and I can see why schools would choose it, so that may have implications for their performance.
575. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you. I have not heard the phrase used in that context before. That is good.
576. My second point is about the reason why the Catholic maintained sector seems to do somewhat better. There is the issue of leadership, and there are anecdotal stories and comments about that. Is any research being done on that? You said that it should be done.
577. **Professor Knox:** I am not aware of any specific, in-depth research on what is commonly referred to as the “Catholic ethos”. When you ask principals about that, they tend to say that Catholic schools do well because there is a Catholic ethos. So you then ask, “What is the Catholic ethos? What is the



- package that makes that performance, in the case of grammar schools, marginally better than in the controlled sector?”. It is more difficult for them to answer that question.
578. **Professor Boroohah:** We are among the first to have drawn attention to this fact in a systematic way, in the sense of maintained schools versus controlled schools, Catholic grammar versus Protestant grammar, and intake of FSM students in the secondary school sector and the grammar school sector. This systematic exposure of inequality in performance has been our modest contribution.
579. **Professor Knox:** The next step is maybe of greater interest. We have exposed the problem, but how do we interrogate its nature? It probably requires a lot more qualitative research than we have been able to do.
580. **Mr McCausland:** I certainly agree. I know that the role of CCMS is only a suggestion. If schools are underperforming, there is probably more support and pressure from the Church to intervene than with a controlled school. I agree with that, and I hope that research is done.
581. My final brief point is about free school meals entitlement and the correlation with educational disadvantage. Does that suggest that free school meals entitlement might not be the best possible or most accurate way to assess the need to target additional support? We put in additional financial resources on the basis of free school meals entitlement, but does this not question that?
582. **Professor Boroohah:** Free school meals entitlement may not be the perfect measure of deprivation, but, even if you had an idealised measure of deprivation, there would be a strong correlation between the free school meals entitlement and that idealised measure. One might spend an excessive amount of time defining what deprivation really is rather than trying to investigate, even on this crude measure, why children do not do so well.
583. **Professor Knox:** We know, from talking to school principals — again, this is anecdotal, and we have not researched it — that kids in one sector are perhaps a little more reluctant to classify themselves as being entitled to free school meals than kids in another sector, and that has implications for resources both into the schools and in how they are assessed for their performance band.
584. **Professor Boroohah:** I will give you one example. In London, there is hardly any gap between children who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not. The people who undertook this study found that one reason for this is that many children in London who are entitled to free school meals have immigrant parents, and, in the first generation, there is a lot of parental pressure to do well at school. That is an important aspect. It is not just about deprivation or poverty but about what is happening in a house.
585. **Mr McCausland:** It would suggest that there may be an overemphasis on financial disadvantage.
586. **Professor Boroohah:** Yes.
587. **Mr McCausland:** That is another issue that needs to be researched or looked into.
588. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation and your paper. As members mentioned, it will be a very useful tool for us as we move through our inquiry.



## 5 November 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Mrs Patricia Lewsley-Mooney *Northern Ireland  
 Commissioner for  
 Children and Young  
 People*

Dr Alison Montgomery *Office of the  
 Northern Ireland  
 Commissioner for  
 Children and Young  
 People*

589. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Good morning. You are both very welcome. I ask you to make your opening statement, and then members will follow up with some questions.
590. **Mrs Patricia Lewsley-Mooney (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People):** I thank the Committee for inviting us here today to give evidence to its inquiry into shared education and integrated education. I welcome the Committee's decision to initiate an inquiry into these two important aspects of education in Northern Ireland and to garner the views of the stakeholders.
591. As many of you will be aware, the principal aim of my office is to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of the rights and best interests of children and young people. As part of my remit, I have a mandate to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law, practice and services relating to the rights and best interests of children and young people. Furthermore, my office

bases all its work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or UNCRC, as it is broadly known.

592. My presentation this morning will highlight the key findings emerging from a consultation that my office undertook with children and young people to explore their views and experiences of shared education. The inquiry's terms of reference address the nature and definition of shared education, key barriers to and enablers of shared education, and what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing. Children and young people discussed these issues during the consultation, and I will make reference to their responses throughout this presentation.
593. As you know, the Department of Education established a ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister to advance shared education in Northern Ireland. In line with my remit, which I have just described, I offered to assist the Minister by consulting children and young people about shared education with the intention of ensuring that their views were incorporated into the ministerial advisory group's report. The focus of the consultation was on shared education; however, pupils and teachers from integrated schools participated, and, therefore, reference is also made to integrated education. Although the consultation was completed within a very short time frame, my office was eager to ensure that as many children and young people as possible were able to participate.
594. There were two strands. First, workshops were conducted with primary-school pupils aged between eight and 10 and post-primary pupils aged 14 to 17. Secondly, surveys were completed by children aged 10 to 11 and young people aged 16. The surveys were commissioned from Access Research

- Knowledge (ARK), a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster that devises the Kids' Life and Times and Young Life and Times surveys. Two modules of questions relating to pupils' attitudes and experiences of shared education were included in each of the surveys.
595. Thirty-eight workshops were conducted in 21 schools across Northern Ireland, involving more than 750 primary-, post-primary and special-school pupils. A key objective was to ensure that pupils from as many school types as possible were able to participate. Care was taken to ensure that the sample of schools recruited was as representative as possible. The workshops explored pupils' awareness, understanding and experiences of shared education and their views about how it should be taken forward.
596. I would like to give you an overview of the findings emerging from that consultation. Less than 50% of post-primary pupils indicated that the term "shared education" was familiar to them. Where they did recognise it, this was usually due to their knowledge of, or participation in, shared classes at GCSE or A level. Very few primary pupils were aware of the concept although, after it was explained, some suggested that it referred to activities, such as joint projects or trips with other schools, in which they or other pupils had been involved. This lack of awareness was not entirely unexpected, as the term may not have been widely used in schools. A significant proportion of primary pupils indicated that they had not had any experience of shared activities.
597. Post-primary pupils' experiences of shared education were, in many cases, linked to their participation in shared classes, although other shared activities were also identified, such as joint residentials, drama productions or sports events with other schools. Pupils also talked about sharing sports facilities or transport. The potential for pupils to participate in shared activities appeared to be influenced by a number of factors, including the subjects that they studied, the class or year group that they were in and their involvement in extra-curricular activities.
598. Children and young people who had taken part in shared classes or activities expressed a range of opinions with regard to their experiences. Both primary and post-primary pupils welcomed the opportunity to interact and make new friends with pupils from other schools. They also enjoyed the experience of different learning approaches and gaining insights into other schools. One post-primary pupil summarised many pupils' responses by saying:
- "I think it's a good way to mix with pupils from other schools and to make new friends with people who have a different background or religion to us."*
599. A clear benefit of shared classes for post-primary pupils was the expanded choice of subjects available at Key Stage 4 and A Level. One pupil commented that:
- "It gives people more subject options ... it's a unique opportunity."*
600. Some pupils reported having less positive experiences. These often occurred where they had limited or negative contact with pupils from other schools. They talked about feeling uncomfortable if they were in a minority or feeling "out of place" when they attended classes in another school. As one post-primary pupil said:
- "Joint classes are a bit awkward. We all sit at one table, but we don't really mix with the pupils from the other school."*
601. Another pupil said:
- "You feel like outcasts if you're going to class and walking through the school and they look at you in a different uniform."*
602. A number of logistical issues, including transport arrangements and timetabling variations between schools, also impact on pupils' experiences.
603. During the consultation, children and young people were asked to think about the kind of approaches and activities that they believe would be effective in the development of shared education. A significant majority of respondents to

- the Kids' Life and Times and Young Life and Times surveys agreed that shared projects, classes and facilities would be a good idea. Pupils in the workshops explored this question in more detail, calling for more collaborative learning approaches to be employed and for additional subjects and activities to be included. Pupils said:
- "Group work and more mixing activities — that would make it more enjoyable".*
604. They said that for subjects like:
- "Technology, Art, PE, Science and Music; You could do them with other people better".*
605. Pupils also highlighted the importance of introducing shared education at an early stage in a child's schooling, undertaking preparation in advance of shared learning activities, and providing opportunities for pupils to provide feedback on their experiences.
606. As well as highlighting opportunities for shared education, pupils were asked if they thought that there were any barriers that might dissuade young people from taking part. In response, some students, mostly at post-primary schools, acknowledged that they would be concerned about sharing their education with pupils from particular schools. Their concerns related to academic ability, cross-community issues, standards of behaviour and the increased potential for bullying. To illustrate these concerns, a grammar school pupil commenting on a non-selective school said:
- "I don't want to sound stuck-up, but they don't push you there. We get better grades".*
607. A primary-school pupil admitted:
- "I don't like the fact that if another school joins with us ... we will have bullies ... the bullies will spread when we do shared education".*
608. Logistical issues, including travel arrangements, timetabling and different school rules, were cited as significant barriers by many post-primary pupils as well as by principals and teachers.
609. A majority of pupils thought that it was important for pupils from different schools and backgrounds to have an opportunity to learn together. Indeed, in a number of the workshops, pupils contended that the aim of shared education should not be restricted to bringing pupils from the two dominant religious traditions together but, instead, involve pupils from all types of schools. However, pupils acknowledged concerns about shared education occurring between particular school types. Reservations expressed by pupils at grammar schools have been mentioned. In response, some pupils attending non-selective schools felt that grammar pupils would regard them as "less able" and, therefore, be reluctant to become learning partners.
610. Pupils attending special schools were very keen to engage with their peers in other schools, although a few did admit to being:
- "a little nervous going somewhere new".*
611. In response, pupils from mainstream schools highlighted a number of issues that they felt needed to be considered in advance of any shared activities with pupils at special schools, including the potential for bullying, accidents, logistical difficulties and the challenge for teachers to effectively teach all pupils together.
612. A special school teacher also welcomed the educational opportunities for pupils through her school's membership of an area learning community, although she noted there was also resistance on the part of some mainstream schools to engage with special schools.
613. Irish-medium school pupils reflected on the challenges they would encounter through collaborative learning with English-medium schools where there would be limited opportunities for them to speak Irish. Integrated school pupils expressed a willingness to engage with pupils from all schools, suggesting that their experiences and the modus operandi in integrated schools could support other schools to effectively participate in shared education.

614. Principals' and teachers' responses echoed some of the views expressed by pupils, particularly in the opportunities to build relationships and the logistical issues associated with arranging shared education activities. Additional challenges included funding, promoting shared education through cross-community links and, for a minority of teachers, managing staff or parents' concerns.
615. To conclude, I would like to briefly reflect on the findings. It was evident that shared education in most post-primary schools was associated with enhanced curriculum provision and the opportunity for pupils in Years 11 to 14 to participate in joint classes with other schools. In primary schools, pupils' experiences were generally through joint projects or trips with other schools. In some workshops, pupils indicated that participation in shared activities had only been available in specific year groups. Given the commitment in the Programme for Government for all children to have the opportunity to participate in shared education by 2015, significant efforts will be required to expand provision across all year groups in primary, post-primary and special schools if that is to be realised.
616. Many pupils recognised the value of shared education through the potential benefits for their learning and opportunities to develop relationships with pupils at other schools. While many recounted positive experiences, a significant minority offered less-positive feedback. Some described collaborative activities and joint classes as shared but separate, because pupils remained within their own school or friendship groups and interaction with pupils from other schools had been limited. Other young people talked about feeling uncomfortable when attending classes in another school, particularly when they were in a minority.
617. In taking shared education forward, it will be important that the objectives are very clearly communicated to all involved and that pupils are encouraged and supported by all stakeholders to be equal and effective collaborators.
- The provision of quality learning experiences must be a priority for all pupils. Appropriate mechanisms, such as school councils or buddy systems, should be put in place so that pupils' concerns can be dealt with sensitively and appropriately.
618. The attitudes of some post-primary pupils, particularly those who had less experience of shared education, were strongly influenced by their perceptions of other schools and pupils. Perceived differences in ability, social background and religion influenced their desire to engage in shared learning initiatives. In some cases, pupils' views had been influenced by their parents or teachers. If shared education is to be regarded as a positive learning opportunity, there is a need to confront and challenge such preconceptions. Evidently, one of the most effective ways to do that is to involve pupils in positive shared learning initiatives. However, it will also be important to consider other ways to address pupils' concerns prior to their participation. As one principal commented, it is:
- "important to make people comfortable and get them in a position to embrace challenges"*.
619. The consultation highlighted a range of issues relating to specific school types that should be considered by the Department of Education. Pupils and principals in Irish-medium schools were keen that the Department considers how their schools could be included in shared education as it is taken forward. It will also be important to consider how mainstream schools can collaborate most effectively with special schools and be supported to address any attitudinal or practical issues that arise. As already highlighted, pupils and teachers in grammar schools also expressed reservations about the benefits of collaborative learning with pupils who attend non-selective schools.
620. The perspectives of pupils and staff in integrated schools were quite distinctive. While many welcomed opportunities to engage in collaborative learning with other schools, they pointed

out that they were already part of an effective shared learning environment. One principal reflected:

*“Shared education is fine as a starting point, but it needs further work”.*

621. The consultation with pupils referenced the definition of shared education that was outlined in the terms of reference for the ministerial advisory group, and that is now displayed on the Department of Education’s website. That definition references the need for shared education to provide for:

*“learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status”*

622. and to promote:

*“equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.”*

623. Findings from the consultation indicated that some shared education activities fulfilled those requirements more successfully than others. In some cases, the main objective appeared to be supporting the provision of the entitlement framework in the post-14 curriculum and pupils’ access to a wide range of courses. In others, collaboration was occurring between schools of a similar management type or ethos. If pupils are to experience shared education as defined by the Department, clear aims and objectives, to which all stakeholders can subscribe, need to be outlined at the beginning of any shared initiative. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of activities that involves pupils should be undertaken to ensure that all objectives are met.

624. The 2002 and 2008 concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, recorded its concerns that education in Northern Ireland remained largely segregated. In 2002, it recommended that the Government take measures to establish more integrated schools. In 2008, it called on government to take steps to address segregated education.

625. I welcome all the efforts to address separation in the education system in

Northern Ireland and the introduction of measures that encourage greater collaboration and understanding and promote equality and respect for diversity. If shared education is to be implemented as envisaged by the Department, it will create both opportunities and challenges for schools. Therefore, it is vital that all those involved in the delivery of shared education are effectively supported in their efforts to provide positive and meaningful shared experiences that are educationally and socially valuable for all pupils.

626. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Thank you for the presentation. I am conscious that this may be the last time that you present in your current role. I do not mean my question to be a criticism. I am concerned about how we consult with young people. I know that you have carried out various consultations during your term in office, and I want to know whether there is a formalised way in which we can consult. I know that you have close links with the universities. Do you have any relationships with the education and library boards and their, maybe, more formal routes and structures?

627. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** We have engaged with the education and library boards and their previous chief executives. We have had conversations with them. Obviously, we have also had those conversations with the Minister of Education. One particular area of participation we are very keen on are school councils and the opportunity for children to have their voices heard there. We will engage with the Committee during its inquiry to ensure that you hear the voice of children. That may be one mechanism by which you could gain some of the information and, in particular, the views of young people. We have engaged with many bodies across the board, particularly during my eight years in post.

628. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I appreciate that you have reached out and have tried to get as broad a sample as possible. However, at the same time,

- you were restricted to 21 schools, which is quite a tiny part of the school estate. Is there an opportunity to formalise a relationship as we move into the era of the Education Authority to have a more representative view?
629. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** I am trying to get government in general to look at the issues of participation. Over the last four years, we have engaged with government in participation policy statements of intent. It has signed up to those, and we have gone back a year later and asked it what it has done. We have extended that to Departments' arm's-length bodies and have sent the same documents to the education and library boards. I recently met all but two of the new chief executives of the new councils. We wrote to 26 councils and 14 responded. We think that that is timely now, as some councils like Lisburn City Council signed up to the statement of intent but Castlereagh Borough Council did not. So, we need to ensure that, when they come together as a new super-council, they sign up from day one.
630. We are trying to engage so that we give some of that responsibility on to the duty bearers to ensure that they have a mechanism to engage with children and young people. That includes the education and library boards and the health trusts. There are 29 bodies, in addition to 11 of the 12 Departments, that have signed up to the participation policy statements of intent. That is the kind of ongoing work that we are doing to get government and its arm's-length bodies to think about engagement and the participation of children and young people.
631. **Dr Alison Montgomery (Office of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People):** Sorry to interrupt, but I want to add one wee point. We have discussed with the Department of Education the questions that we used and the engagement that we had with children and young people in the surveys and the workshops. It is going to take the questions that we used in the Kids' Life and Times survey and the Young Life and Times survey and administer them every two years with pupils across schools to get some sense of their engagement with shared education and their experiences of it.
632. I agree, Chair, that the sample size was small, but that was down to the time constraints that we had in order to contribute to the ministerial advisory group's work. The 21 schools represented every type of school in Northern Ireland, taking into account sectors, ethos, location and so on. So, the number of schools was small, but there was a good number of pupils involved.
633. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I am not being critical of the fact that it was small.
634. **Dr Montgomery:** Yes, but we are aware that it was a modest sample.
635. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I understand that there is a challenge with time constraints and so on, but I was just wondering whether there is some other way —
636. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** There has to be a better mechanism; I agree with you. That is why we have been doing some work on participation to try to encourage organisations and arm's-length bodies and Government to look at the issue of participation and mainstream it so that, when the Department of Education or education and library boards are looking at their policy or legislation, they include the voices of children and young people.
637. In the last couple of weeks, before I leave office, I have been going round schools, events and venues where young people have been over the eight years. I am still hearing the same message, namely, "Our voice is not being listened to." On the issue of shared education, I spoke to young people in Enniskillen who talked about the shared campus. They said, "All we hear is the talk of the adults. Nobody asked us what we think."
638. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You will be aware that the Education Bill is likely to include the provision that requires the authority to encourage,



- facilitate and promote shared education. Taking that as it is, how can that be assessed with regards to participation among schools?
639. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** It needs to be written into the detail of the guidelines that come out of any legislation around shared education that children and young people must be included. I can only go back to the work that we are doing with the Department of the Environment around its guidelines on community planning to ensure that children and young people's voices are included and are specifically mentioned. So, if you are looking at the legislation that will flow from this work on shared education, we need to ensure that children and young people are mentioned in it, are embedded in it and that their voices are heard throughout the process and in the evaluation and monitoring of it.
640. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Would you say that that is your key recommendation?
641. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** Very much so.
642. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you very much for your presentation. We seem to be have been getting mixed messages. One thing about asking children for an opinion is that they give it to you straight: they have not acquired our diplomatic skills, so they just tell you what is on their minds, and that is brilliant. So, when I saw that a grammar school pupil said that, although they did not want to be stuck-up, collaborating with the secondary schools would hold them back, I would not like to think that that is a representative view, and it makes me worry about the size of the sample. Can I take it that that was an individual comment and not a general theme in the responses that you got from grammar schools?
643. **Dr Montgomery:** We were in four grammar schools, three of which had quite extensive shared education opportunities, mostly through GCSE and A-level courses. In three of the schools, all of the young people talked about some of the concerns they had about engaging with non-selective schools. Only one of the grammar schools was unanimously positive about the engagement with non-selective schools. The other schools had some reservations. The thing to say about the sample is that we were trying to collect a diversity of opinion from young people, so we really wanted to get a range of views. In some cases, the young people had not participated in shared learning opportunities, and, in others, those were also the grammar schools speaking. There is work to be done to reassure pupils that their learning will not necessarily be threatened in any way or that it will be disadvantageous to them to engage in learning with other schools. There is a strong perception in some grammar schools, which also came from teachers and parents, around the concern that, if their child or the pupil were taking an A-level course in a non-selective school, they would not experience the same level.
644. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** The important thing is that, if someone has a misconception or a fear of something, it needs to be addressed, and that is where shared education needs to go beyond the academic strand. It is about understanding and respecting and listening to the voice of young people, and it is about, if they have a concern, how that can be dealt with and how those concerns can be met. Again, some of that may be around influence from teachers or parents, but it could also be just something that they have heard somewhere and may not be reality. It is about how a school deals with that and ensures that all the pupils who get involved in any kind of shared education are valued.
645. **Mr Lunn:** It seems to me that if you take sharing as being a process of trying to improve educational outcomes, almost the best form of sharing is probably between a successful grammar school and a slightly less successful secondary school down the road. It does worry me, and what the children say is kind of instinctive. When you get an attitude from teachers from grammar schools

- and parents with children there that they effectively do not want to be bothered and think that it might hold their children back and cannot see the virtue of giving a helping hand in particular subjects at particular levels to a school that needs that help, that is a bit disappointing.
646. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** That is assuming that their perception is right. The children who come from the non-selective school could probably be just as capable and able when they merge and do the subject together. Again, some of this is around perception.
647. **Mr Lunn:** Yes, absolutely. Finally, the other perception is about the reaction of children in integrated schools, who seem to have made the point that they are perfectly happy to collaborate with other schools but are already actually doing it in their own school. Have you any comment about that reaction?
648. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** I think that it is about looking at all the models of good practice and sharing it across the board. If integrated schools already think that they are doing some of that, then sharing with other schools will help to enhance the other schools.
649. **Dr Montgomery:** Indeed, some of the primary pupils said that they might be able to show pupils in other schools how they get on in their school. They were seeing themselves as educators, in a sense, so it was positive.
650. **Mr Lunn:** That moves you on to the societal aspect. I am sure that an integrated school and another school in the locality could collaborate perfectly well; there is no reason why they should not. However, there may be an opportunity for the other school to learn exactly that there are no bogeymen here and this is a perfectly valid way to do your education.
651. **Mr Rogers:** Apologies for having to leave in the middle, and apologies if this question has been asked already. You have given a useful insight on the whole thing from the schools' point of view. Would it be helpful if we were to have a definition of what shared education is and had, say, a five-point scale to measure a level of sharing? There seems to be such a range. For example, we discussed St Columbanus in Bangor in last night's Adjournment debate. We have integrated schools at one end of the spectrum and then we have two schools that may have an annual visit to the pantomime. Would it be helpful for schools and everybody if we were to have a five-point scale to measure the level of sharing?
652. **Dr Montgomery:** I am not sure whether you necessarily need a five-point scale, but I think that it would be helpful to provide a more detailed definition, for a start, about what shared education is actually about and to open up on what the aims and objectives are and very clearly outline that. What are the outcomes that you are looking for? How do you measure the impact? That could involve, for example, looking to the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) policy in the sense of how it is structured. It goes into a lot of detail about the aims and objectives and the values and principles; but it is also about what you are seeking to achieve at the end through meaningful interaction, pupils' full participation and involving pupils in the planning and evaluation of shared education. There are a lot of different shared experiences, and it could be about sharing resources.
653. There is a question about what benefit the sharing of resources has for children's learning and social development when they perhaps never meet the pupils from the school that they are sharing the resources with. We then go right through to pupils going to another school on a regular basis or meeting somewhere in a neutral location and engaging in a very effective and meaningful way.
654. I suppose that you could say that there is a continuum in what shared education is, what it is achieving and its impact on pupils. I am not sure about a five-point scale, but you could certainly seek to define different levels of sharing.

655. **Mr Rogers:** You talked about the barriers, and it was very interesting to listen to the views of pupils and so on. Do you find the geography of the whole thing, particularly in rural areas, a major barrier to sharing?
656. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** Some of it was down to the cost of transport, the distance between schools or other issues. It is not about one cap fits all, but how you can be flexible in a number of schools to be inclusive and for them to see the best way of doing that. Sometimes, part of that will be that the funding schools might need to be able to partake in some of those activities.
657. **Mr Newton:** I thank the commissioner and Dr Montgomery for coming along. I want to ask two questions. I think that you partially answered my first question when answering Mr Lunn's question. Is shared education generally perceived as a threat or an opportunity? In addressing some of Mr Lunn's remarks, you concentrated on the academic aspect of grammar schools. In a wider context, is it perceived as a threat or an opportunity?
658. I will ask both questions together. On page 70 of your report, under area-based planning, you stated that:
- "Many pupils and teachers were concerned about the potential implications of area-based planning proposals."*
659. Will you expand on that and tell us what those concerns were and how they were seen as? Presumably, they saw it as having a negative impact, but maybe they saw it as positive.
660. **Dr Montgomery:** I will respond to your second question first. As part of the consultation, we asked pupils for their views of area-based planning, what they knew about it, what they understood about it and what they saw as opportunities and possible threats. In a sense, younger pupils were concerned about getting together with pupils from other schools who they did not know and their schools becoming too big and deflecting the teaching and learning provisions in the school. Bullying came up a lot among primary school pupils, and there were concerns that they would be meeting or having to be educated with pupils from other schools who were nasty, unkind or who did not want to play with them. So, at that level, there were concerns about what that would mean in different groups of pupils. There were also concerns about having to travel if you had to go to another school and, if their school amalgamated with another, that they would have to wear a different uniform. It was issues like that.
661. Principals and teachers were also consulted during the consultation. They voiced concerns that the approach to area-based planning did not adopt an open approach, but was more about making changes within the existing network. They felt that it was not a blue sky type of thinking. The changes were occurring in sectors so that there was a potential restructuring in the maintained sector, the controlled sector and so on.
662. Pupils' concerns were about what it would mean for them and their schools if they were to amalgamate with another and how that would affect their friendship circles and their learning. They were also about bullying and the other types of issues that I mentioned. Those were the key issues.
663. Patricia, do you want to take the other question?
664. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** Which one was that?
665. **Dr Montgomery:** It was about opportunities.
666. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** OK —
667. **Dr Montgomery:** Sorry, Patricia. Overall, 60% to 65% of pupils were very positive about shared education and the opportunities, academic or social, that it creates. However, a significant minority also raised concerns. So, even pupils who said that it was great to meet pupils from other schools and that it had expanded their friendship circles said that they did not like the fact that they were in a minority when they went to another school to participate in classes. They found that a bit difficult.

668. At times, it was difficult to quantify their responses, because they often said something very positive and then reflected on it and said that a certain aspect was not so great. That is why it is difficult to say clearly that a certain percentage was wholly positive or wholly negative. Most pupils were very positive. They saw the opportunities, but they also recognised the challenges.
669. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** That is important; it is about how you manage those challenges and what needs to be put in to address the concerns of young people in particular.
670. **Dr Montgomery:** I remember one primary school's pupils saying that it was a good idea but that you had to be careful how you go about it. That is how he summarised it, and I thought that that was very wise. We almost called the report, "Be careful how you go about it".
671. **Mr Lunn:** He should be a politician.
672. **Mr Newton:** Whoever said that will go far.
673. **Mr Lunn:** He will end up up here.
674. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Thank you both. I want to go back to the issue of the definition. I have listened carefully to what you said about the almost levels and tiers of definition of shared education. Commissioner, if your organisation had a magic wand, would the priority of definition be about sharing resources or respect, tolerance and mutual understanding? What would the priority be?
675. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** There are a number of issues. After the researcher was done — Alison was obviously much more involved in that than I was, as she was speaking to the children — I saw that young people see the benefit of shared education and think that it is a positive opportunity. However, a lot of work needs to be done around the understanding, respect and diversity that come from all different types of schools. That has to underpin whatever legislation comes out of this. We must ensure that young people feel comfortable when they go to another school, that it works for them and that it makes a difference. They must also feel able to make a contribution and feel equal to all those who are involved in the shared education project.
676. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** I want to play devil's advocate. If it is ultimately about work on understanding and, I assume, good relations and tolerance, does that mean that educational outcomes are secondary?
677. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** I do not think that they are secondary; they can run alongside that. It is in an educational environment, and education and educational outcomes are obviously important.
678. We are asking for shared places and spaces. If young people are to be educated in those shared spaces and places, we need to ensure that there is a mutual understanding and respect for each other and that they feel equal when they are going into those places to be educated.
679. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** What I picked up from your presentation was that there is a variety in the definition of shared education, but that more clarity is needed for integrated education. Do you see integrated education as the logical conclusion of the shared education process?
680. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** Integrated education is part of the process and part of education in the wider sense. We support that. Whatever process comes out of this has to be embedded in equality, a strong ethos around education and very strong aims and objectives in how it will be delivered. As I have said from the very beginning, the most important thing is the voice of young people, how they see it working for them and what the barriers are.
681. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Finally, Chair, if I may. You have made a very clear call for definition, but there is a variety of views. What evidence do we have that shared education processes will provide

- or produce more socially, economically viable and religiously diverse schools?
682. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** That is why you need to start the process: to see how you can engage with the schools, the teachers and the children to get to a better place. When we start something, I am always worried about making it too rigid. There will be different flexibilities, from urban to rural to other places, that will be required. However, if you want to achieve the same outcome, it will sometimes take some areas longer to get there than others. It is important that the journey is at least begun.
683. **Mr McCausland:** Your use of the word “equality” was interesting. On page 6 of the report, a very good point is made:
- “pupils are encouraged and supported by all stakeholders to be equal and ‘effective’ collaborators.”*
684. That is stated as being hugely important. Your work is obviously based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Mention is made specifically of article 29. Article 29(c) states:
- “The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own”.*
685. Built into that are the concepts of social cohesion and cultural diversity.
686. In that context, if you are thinking about children coming together from different school backgrounds, if shared education is going to work they will have to be able to come together on a base of equal and effective collaborators. Pierre Trudeau said of Canada’s relationship with America that it was like being in bed with an elephant. We want a situation where children come together on the basis of equality if collaboration is going to work.
687. Was there anything to suggest that, with schools in different sectors, and even those in a particular sector, having different approaches to cultural traditions, children who are coming together may not be doing so on a base of equal collaborators. Children will come with a cultural tradition from the home, but if the school does not affirm that, it is left to the home. Some schools affirm cultural tradition much more than others.
688. Article 31(2) states:
- “States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”*
689. There is an onus on different sectors to provide equally for cultural traditions. How do you see that? Did that arise as an issue? Maybe it is something that the children are not aware of, or maybe, although they would not express it in those terms, it is something that they are conscious of. There may be a fear of “They know more than I do” or “they do more”.
690. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** I will let Alison come in on that, because, as I said, she was more involved in the process. The important part is that there is understanding, and maybe that is why single identity work needs to be done in a school before you bring two schools together. When you bring children or young people together, they must have an understanding and respect for each other’s difference, diversity, culture or whatever it is so that they are not going in with preconceptions on some of the issues that were raised in the findings.
691. If a young person feels that their voice is not being heard, that needs to be addressed. Similarly, if someone finds it difficult or uncomfortable, that needs to be addressed as well,
692. **Dr Montgomery:** In answer to your question, the issue was touched on, more in post-primary schools. First, was there an awareness on the part of some pupils that they were engaging with pupils who were from another cultural tradition? In some cases, they would say, “We got together with the school

- down the road”, but they did not seem to be aware that the children from that school were coming from a different cultural or religious background. In some cases there was not even awareness that the other children were different.
693. On the issue of concerns, some pupils identified the potential for difficulties in engaging with children from other cultural backgrounds. Sometimes, that was in advance of engaging in shared education opportunities to outline what might be an issue or a difficulty. Other pupils were very open and said:
- “We can’t tiptoe around this issue. We need to engage with pupils from different backgrounds, including those from different cultural backgrounds, and we need to talk about the issues that have been difficult for so many years.”*
694. You mentioned equality as well. That comes up when small numbers of pupils go to another school to take part in shared classes. On a number of occasions, we found that maybe only one or two pupils from one school were going to another. They found that quite difficult, because they really were in a minority.
695. **Mr McCausland:** Would it not also apply in the context of the experience, education and understanding of their cultural identity? Say you go to an Irish-medium school. There is a cultural ethos there of Irishness. That is taught and it permeates all that the school does; that is the purpose of the school. Another school may tread very lightly around cultural traditions.
696. **Dr Montgomery:** There is probably an issue around support for teachers in advance of engaging in some of the work. We did say very clearly in the report that a lot of experience, expertise and knowledge has been built up through work done through the CRED policy. We found that many teachers, particularly in primary schools, felt that they had developed a lot of understanding around that kind of work, both single-identity work and work with other schools. There is a lot of expertise out there amongst teachers; it is about sharing that and finding ways of utilising it. In integrated schools, teachers have experience of dealing with controversial issues on a daily basis. It is about harnessing some of that expertise and knowledge and sharing it as shared education goes forward. There is work to be done.
697. **Mr McCausland:** I want to make two very brief points. Under 31(2), have you, as the commission, ever looked at the equality of cultural provision in different education sectors? On reporting and monitoring the implementation of the charter, have you ever looked at that?
698. **Dr Montgomery:** I suppose that we look at it in an educational context. We certainly take it into account when considering the provision of education, whether that is looking at special educational needs or —
699. **Mr McCausland:** It is specific. It says: *“equal opportunities for cultural ... activity.”*
700. We are not talking about whether children have access to being taught maths or whatever.
701. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** It has never been raised with me, as commissioner, that a child feels that it is being denied its right to learn about its culture in school.
702. **Mr McCausland:** The child would not raise it if they do not know that they have that right. In that context, how can you report on the thing? What is the current cycle of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) reporting?
703. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** It is supposed to be every five years. The last time we reported was in 2008 and the Committee is behind in delivering some of that. It looks as if the next report will not be until 2016, although the UK Government, which are the state party that have to report, have already progressed their report, and it has been handed in to the Committee.
704. **Mr McCausland:** What consultation was there in Northern Ireland?

705. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** OFMDFM is responsible for that input.
706. **Mr McCausland:** You are not aware of that.
707. **Mrs Lewsley - Mooney:** I am aware of it, and we had conversations. However, we did not actually see it. The problem is that it goes into a UK report. Very often, it is more English-centric when it goes to the Committee. We have had that issue. The four commissioners across the UK put in their own report, and we raised specific issues with regard to our own jurisdictions in that report. We have not compiled ours yet, because we have not been given a date for when we have to have it ready. We hear that it will be around 2016, although, obviously, it should have been in 2013. We have copies and can share those with you.
708. **Mr McCausland:** That would be useful. Thank you.
709. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you for your presentation. We have had an interesting discussion about the definition of shared education and do not need to go over that again. You mentioned that some pupils of primary-school age were not even aware of the term “shared education”. I do not think that that is a bad thing, as long as they get on with it. As they get older, I suppose that they understand the academic benefits of shared education. If they have clear goals, shared education will benefit other aspects of their education.
710. Are you saying that schools should be supported in pursuing shared education? Do you think that that support should be provided via an external facilitator?
711. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** On your first point, a ministerial advisory group was set up to look at shared education. So, we were using the term “shared education” when we spoke to children. When we explained to them what it meant, we found that they felt that they had taken part in that kind of shared education experience, which was important. Whatever comes out of the debate on shared education, there is, obviously, a need for support for schools and teachers, as we are advising today. That support would be up to the Department when it decides how the shared education project should be rolled out. The Department will have to consider what kind of support teachers should have. It will have to determine whether it should be external or something that it should do through its own training units, or whatever.
712. **Mrs Overend:** I am trying to ask what your opinion is on what would be the best way of providing that support.
713. **Dr Montgomery:** There is a lot of expertise in the sector already. A lot of the schools that we worked with had already developed effective links with other schools, whether that was through area learning communities, for example, or by taking forward personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU), citizenship, the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) programme, and so on.
714. The youth sector also has a lot of expertise and knowledge in bringing young people together and in less formal learning activities, which would, I think, be very helpful in preparing young people before they engage in shared education initiatives with other schools. Our view is that you should look to teachers because they have already developed knowledge and understanding. There could also be opportunities in initial teacher education and ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) to support teachers in taking this forward. Look to the experts: they are already carrying out their work and teaching.
715. **Mrs Overend:** I am aware that certain types of school might be more willing than others to pursue shared education. You might need an external facilitator to help those that are less willing to pursue shared education and give them further guidance or support.
716. **Dr Montgomery:** I do not think that we are ruling out the employment of

external facilitators, if that would help to give schools more confidence to engage. Our feeling is that there is a lot —

717. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** The important thing is that all schools buy into this. Some schools will need more support than others. That is why I go back to flexibility: one cap does not fit all. It is about how schools are supported in how they do this. There are models of good practice that some schools may share. Others may decide that they want to go along another avenue, and they may need support in other ways. It is important that that flexibility is there.
718. **Mrs Overend:** As has been said, it is a wide definition. Schools are at different stages of shared education, and every stage is good. Thank you very much.
719. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There are no further questions, so thank you very much for your time and the presentation. Patricia, I wish you well in whatever lies ahead.
720. **Mrs Lewsley-Mooney:** Thank you very much.



## 5 November 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Ms Clare-Anne Magee      *Parenting NI*  
 Ms Nicola McKeown

721.    **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome Clare-Anne Magee and Nicola McKeown. Thank you very much for being with us this morning. You were in the Public Gallery for the previous session, so, perhaps, you will have been able to anticipate some of the questions that will come your way. If you would like to make an opening statement, that will be followed by questions.

722.    **Ms Clare-Anne Magee (Parenting NI):** Thank you for having us here today. Parenting NI is very honoured to have been working with parents for the past 35 years, and, for 15 years of that, we have been consulting parents on a wide range of issues. I am the director of the parenting forum, and, for the past 17 years, I have been working with parents, children and young people in the voluntary and community sector. My colleague Nicola McKeown is a participation worker. She is a former primary school teacher and cross-community facilitator at Corrymeela, so she has quite a lot of experience in shared and integrated education.

723.    We are here to present on two consultations that we carried out with parents on shared and integrated education. The first, in 2012, was carried out with focus groups on behalf of the ministerial advisory group, as Mrs Lewsley-Mooney said in the earlier

session. It focused specifically on shared education. The second, in September/October this year, was an online consultation with a wide range of parents.

724.    I will give you some background on Parenting NI and our forum work. We are the lead voluntary organisation providing support to parents across Northern Ireland on a wide range of parenting issues. Our four key areas of work are the helpline, our parenting programmes, parents' counselling service and our forum. The work of the forum is to work with parents to improve outcomes for children and young people, and it aims to influence policy and practice on parenting issues. We provide consultation with parents and have done so for the past 15 years. We have over 1,800 individual parents and family support organisations as members of our forum across Northern Ireland.

725.    In October 2012, we were commissioned to carry out consultations with parents on behalf of the QUB ministerial advisory group on shared education. We worked with six focus groups, made up of about 55 parents, across Northern Ireland. They included groups of parents representing the views of primary schools, post-primary schools, early years settings and alternative education programmes. The purpose of that consultation was to provide a platform for parents to air their views on shared education and on how best to move forward, and the questions were provided by the ministerial advisory group.

726.    During the consultation, most parents said that their children had had experience of shared education through, for example, extended or after-school programmes, sports teams, school twinning and joint classes for studying particular subjects. However, a lot of parents did not know what shared education was until other parents in the room started to discuss it and

- give examples. They did, however, feel that shared education was a positive experience and one that had great benefits for the children. The majority of parents to whom we spoke in the consultation were in favour of advancing shared education in any way, shape or form.
727. There is a proviso with the consultation. Some parents felt that the consultation had been disguised somewhat as a discussion on shared education; they felt that it was more of a discussion on Northern Ireland's education system, in general, and an attempt to move away from grammar schools towards a comprehensive-type system providing all-ability education in one setting. That point was raised in a lot of the focus groups. One group of parents felt that so strongly that they withdrew from the consultation process before we began, feeling that it was an attack on grammar schools. That gives you an idea that parents had a lot of viewpoints on the education system. Some focus groups went off on tangents here and there, and we had to pull them back quite a bit. However, some important feedback was gained from those who took part.
728. Based on the inquiry's terms of reference, I pulled out some points from the 2012 report. On definition, parents initially expressed confusion about "shared education", stating that it could be confused with integrated education. As I said, it became clear what it really was only when examples started to be given. In the consultation, shared education focused a lot on mixing, not only on a religious basis but on the basis of ability and gender. The consultation report highlighted the need for the definition to be a bit clearer.
729. A key barrier to advancing shared education raised by parents was the location of schools. One parent said that having a joint shared education programme with another school in the middle of a "one-sided housing estate" — as they put it — was not always a welcoming environment for children, particularly young children. They also discussed the geographical spread of schools, particularly in rural areas, and felt that this was a major barrier. They felt that the spread also made transport quite difficult, increasing the cost and travel time, which then impacted on timetabling for shared classes.
730. Parents also felt that general attitudes in Northern Irish society to cross-community work reflected a them-and-us mentality, which needed to be addressed in order to advance shared education. They felt that there was fear among some schools, some parents and some communities, and, therefore, shared education could not be reinforced outside the school environment, which is what is needed. Parents also felt that shared education would not meet the needs of all children: for example, one group had a few parents whose children have complex disabilities, and they felt that their physical and emotional needs had to supersede anything else.
731. Parents identified some alternative approaches, including good practice initiatives ranging from short-term project focus initiatives on school twinning to cluster group exercises among three or more schools in a particular area, which they felt was very beneficial. Some cluster group exercises focused particularly on working with parents, involving them in the processes of shared education and informing them about the messages and aims that shared education was trying to achieve and how they could help at home.
732. On the priorities and actions to improve sharing in education, parents identified that early intervention was needed and that it needed to start from very early years, at nursery level. Parents felt that shared education needed to have a clear definition and purpose, and they wanted more opportunities for participation, including theirs. They wanted to address the issues of symbols and religion rather than ignore them, because they felt that, if such discussions took place in a safe space with trained facilitators, they would be much more open, and people would have a better understanding of them.

733. Some parents looked at the need for changing parts of the curriculum and hoped that it could focus more on citizenship, social education, respect and difference. There was a very mixed response — my colleague will talk about our 2014 survey — to where religious education fits into in this and whether to change to a world religion or remove religious education from schools altogether. Parents also said that, in certain subjects, such as history, they should be encouraged that their children were being taught both sides of the story.
734. Another priority and action that parents identified was the need to increase funding and to monitor in order to improve accountability so that, if schools are being paid to participate in shared education initiatives, they should be quality initiatives that make a real difference. They wanted to raise awareness of shared education and promote that in schools and with teachers and parents. They encouraged parental participation at all levels in order to reinforce the key messages.
735. I will hand over to Nicola, who will talk about the 2014 report that we completed.
736. **Ms Nicola McKeown (Parenting NI):** In response to the consultation carried out in 2012, the parenting forum wanted to gain more up-to-date information and views from parents on the issues of shared education and, especially, integrated education. Our experience has been that parents welcomed having that input. We decided to go with an online survey, using a consultation tool and questions based on the Committee's terms of reference. This survey had the advantage of gaining a wider response from parents across Northern Ireland in a very short period. We had a very quick turnaround. The survey was initiated towards the end of September and closed two weeks later, in early October.
737. Publicity to promote the survey was generated by Parenting NI on social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as through our professional networks: for example, the education and library boards, our parenting forum database, which, as Clare-Anne has already mentioned, has over 1,800 individual parent and organisation members, as well as sending it out through newsletters and our parenting forum E-brief. It was distributed far and wide across Northern Ireland. In total, 1,297 parents viewed the survey, 502 parents completed some, but not all, questions, and 209 parents completed all of our questions.
738. I will highlight some of the key findings that we gleaned from the survey. In response to the Committee's question on the nature and definition of shared and integrated education, parents' responses varied again, as in 2012. Some parents had still not heard or were not familiar with the term "shared education", and a small minority commented on the fact that they did not know that there was a difference between shared and integrated education. However, the majority of parents who responded said that their understanding of shared education was about bringing pupils from Catholic and Protestant schools together to share resources, classes and facilities, with some saying that it should be about more than just sharing between Protestant and Catholic schools and that it could mean the twinning of Protestant schools. Parents seemed to have a clearer understanding that integrated education meant one school roof, under which pupils from all religious backgrounds were educated together and the words "tolerance" and "respective differences" were being promoted and taught.
739. Just out of interest, we asked parents who completed the survey how many of them had a child or children attending an integrated school or preschool, and 65% of respondents said that they had. We went on to ask whether parents would consider sending their child to an integrated school, and 61% of the parents who responded said that they would.
740. In response to the question about key barriers to shared education, parents

- identified that sharing classes did not necessarily mean that pupils were mixing or building relationships. Parents said that that needed to be nurtured by staff, although they realised that parents needed to be involved in that as well. There is an issue when parents present their views to children who are then told something else in school.
741. Some parents thought that shared education was a diversion from schools being fully integrated and that it was part of the process towards full integration, which many would prefer. They felt that practical arrangements of timetabling and transport to other schools could become problematic, as could the size of classes and appropriate facilities. Parents said that differences could be a barrier. Some wanted differences to be talked about; others thought that highlighting differences was not always a good thing, particularly if not handled or managed appropriately by staff.
742. Parents identified some key barriers to integrated education. Currently, there are a limited number of pupil places available. Existing integrated schools are not always nearby, especially for parents who live rurally. Some parents had the perception that academic standards can be or are lower in integrated schools due to their accepting pupils of all abilities, as opposed to the higher academic standards required by grammar schools. That seems to be a misconception reflected in the viewpoint of parents across Northern Ireland. However, parents felt that sharing education is a step in the right direction to living a shared future in Northern Ireland, as it encourages communities to work together. They wanted all stakeholders, including community groups, community representatives and parents, to be involved in educating children and for communities to learn to respect and learn from one another. They also liked the fact that, in shared education, the individual school ethos and identity that they had chosen for their child was retained and not merged into an integrated status in which there was one ethos.
743. Key enablers that parents identified to integrated education included children being integrated from an early age. This is how parents see Northern Ireland working its way forward, because perceived barriers are broken down much earlier, reducing the fear of the perceived “other”, as can sometimes happen. Parents mentioned that integrated schools are inclusive of children from all traditions and backgrounds, and the majority of parents highlighted the building of relationships in a shared society and learning about other cultures as very positive.
744. Sixty per cent of parents responding to the survey said that their child had taken part in cross-community programmes in their school or local community, but 19% said that they were not aware of what their children had participated in. Examples of good practice range from taking part in sporting activities to cultural events organised by local councils. Parents said that they were not always involved in these programmes but that they would like to be and that there was no consistency in the information given out by schools about what was happening.
745. Moving forward, parents considered the following as priorities and actions that would improve sharing and integration. Parental involvement is highlighted as important. Parents want to be included in some of the shared programmes, where appropriate, and want more information to be made available to them via schools. Also, parents want to be better informed to make better choices for their children, and they want to be engaged on the issues of what is happening in Northern Ireland in shared and integrated education. Again, some parents said that religious education or religious background should not be the central issue to sharing education but that providing quality education for all pupils was the key to moving forward.
746. Parents also said that the purpose and benefits of shared education need to be

- defined. They thought that there should be more agreement, more teaching and more learning for pupils on cultural identity and an agreement on flags and emblems — whether these are to be removed from schools. Some parents saw that as an opportunity to open up a discussion that would help to improve relationships. They also wanted more teaching on respect and tolerance and on how they could be promoted. They mentioned more places being available in integrated schools and better use of funding, whether in shared or integrated education. Finally, parents said that they would like an agreement and commitment from the Northern Ireland Assembly to integrating or sharing schools by a certain date.
747. **Ms Magee:** The reports in 2012 and 2014 do not claim to reflect the views of all parents in Northern Ireland. They are there as a snapshot of the views that we collected. As Nicola said, there are still some grey areas around the definition, and, in both consultations, parents quite clearly outlined the importance of parents being involved in this process.
748. I found it astounding that, in the recent consultation that Nicola carried out, 19% of parents were not sure whether their children had been involved in shared education initiatives. Where is the communication with the school? Parents really wanted us to promote better communication. Parents appreciated being involved in the consultations and are keen to hear any feedback that the inquiry will be able to provide on shared and integrated education moving forward. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to come today.
749. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. You have covered the concerns that I had when I saw the limited number of respondents. The responses are strongly weighted towards integrated, but that seems to be because many have experience of that. It comes across very clearly that there is an issue with definition. When you normally carry out this type of engagement with parents, do you find that there is a barrier around certain topics? Is it usually quite straightforward to have a conversation with parents, or is education a particularly difficult topic?
750. **Ms Magee:** We find that it is quite easy to approach parents with any subject. The difference is around the issue, how sensitive it is and whether we use a group of parents we have worked with in the past. If the parents' group is attached to a school, for example, we know that it has relationships and support. We know that once we step out of the room there will be somebody supporting it. If the issue is particularly sensitive and we open it up to parents in general, that makes it quite difficult for us to follow up with support and ensure that they are supported through the whole process.
751. We have not discovered too many issues with getting parents involved in discussions around education; they are actually really keen to do so. We are working with some voluntary and community groups at the moment, as well as representatives from the education and library boards and the Education and Training Inspectorate, to look at how parental participation in schools, and in education in general, can be moved forward. Parents want to be involved in their children's education. We know that education does not stop at the school gates. Parents want to have those messages reinforced; but there is lack of communication between schools and parents. We are trying to work with the Departments and the education and library boards on how we can push that forward.
752. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** So, there really is not a clear mechanism for you to have outreach to parents.
753. **Ms Magee:** As I said, over 1,800 members and organisations are attached to our membership forum. It depends on the issue. We can call on parents from our forum to participate in consultations. The online exercise is something that we have only recently started to explore. We have found that we are getting contact from more parents through online surveys. For example, in a recent consultation,

- we found that parents were on their laptops or smartphones at 9.00 pm filling out questionnaires, because they were interested in doing so. I would not necessarily be interested in sitting at home at 9.00 pm answering a questionnaire on my smartphone, but parents feel so passionate about education that they want to contribute to it.
754. We have a broad range of methods for encouraging parents to participate and consult, whether it be the focus group method or through an online consultation. Sometimes, we work through other community and voluntary organisations that are better placed to carry out consultations. We just bring in a facilitator, as they have a ready-made group of parents. We have connections to different community and voluntary groups that work with parents of children with disabilities, for example. We can support the consultation delivery with that group.
755. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You said that there were parents who exited the process because they felt that it was perhaps leading to the erosion of grammar schools, and so on. There were also those who participated but felt that it was a diversion from integrated education. Clearly, if we had an definition of sharing, perhaps that might break this down and dispel some of the concerns. From the work you have done, is there a recommendation you could bring to the Committee as to how we can better engage with parents?
756. **Ms McKeown:** Clare-Anne talked about schools being better engaged. We have some very good practice of schools engaging very clearly with parents and involving them. Parents are very positive, on the whole, about shared education, whether it is integrated or about sharing activities. No one said that they did not want their child to participate, although I am sure that had we asked every single parent in Northern Ireland we would maybe get a broader range of views. Information from schools is key to this. Some are very good at involving parents by building relationships with them and inviting them to showcase events or be part of shared education programmes.
757. However, some schools are still not engaging with parents and are not making that information available, and parents are saying that they want to know. No one has said that they have an objection to that, but if schools are their first port of call, then that is how they want to find out about what is going on. They may not have time to sit down, or they might not be interested in looking at the Northern Ireland Assembly website or use other ways. Certainly, schools seem to be the key to where you will get to all parents.
758. **Ms Magee:** As I said, we are trying to work on promoting parental engagement in education in a wide variety of ways. One thing we have looked into quite a lot is parent councils in schools. I know that Mrs Lewsley-Mooney talked about school councils with children from each age group, which is fantastic. However, again, it is about trying to acknowledge that parents are actually involved in their children's education. They are the primary educators of their children from when they are born; so, it is about trying to get them involved in the education system as well. We have done a lot of research on the development of parent councils for schools. We recently signed up to the European Parents Association. Its only key issue is to look at engaging parents in their children's education. So, we are just starting the process of exploring how best parents and schools can do that.
759. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** That is useful and should be explored, but there are difficulties in getting parents involved in parent-teacher associations. I know of schools that are finding it very difficult to get parent representatives on boards of governors. While this is laudable and would be useful to have, there is a challenge there. We need to look at the barriers to parents' participation.
760. **Ms McKeown:** We have looked at other models. We have been working with the Parents Council in Dublin, and it has

- had no problems getting a great number of parents on board. Again, it is about the relationships built in schools. We understand that parents are very busy people and do not always have time. However, I am a former teacher and I used to get very frustrated when I sent notes home in schoolbags and they were still there a week later. We would talk a lot about it in schools, and people would say “Oh, those hard-to-reach parents are just not interested.” It is about how schools engage with those parents and what the relationships are like. There are no parents who are hard to reach. They may be disinterested, but it is about schools seeing themselves as being part of the community and it not just being a case of them and us.
761. **Mr McCausland:** Picking up on the Chair’s point, I am trying to understand why two thirds of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending an integrated school. Obviously, that is not reflective of the wider community. Why do you think that you got such an unrepresentative response?
762. **Ms Magee:** It is interesting, because we did not target parents with children involved in integrated education. We put it through all our community and voluntary group networks and all the parents that we knew of from our database. A wide variety of schools were contacted, and they passed it on to their parents. It seems to be quite an emotive issue for parents involved in integrated or shared education initiatives. That is why they felt so passionate to get involved. It is certainly not a true reflection of the numbers in integrated education in Northern Ireland, but it is obvious that some passion has been ignited and that parents who have children involved in that sector feel very strongly about it.
763. **Mr McCausland:** There were two points that struck me. The issues they raised are perfectly legitimate and are issues that others may well raise. Their conclusions may be different, but the issues will probably be the same. I am just trying to get some understanding of
- this. How many people were reached by the survey potentially?
764. **Ms Magee:** It is hard to capture that, because we did it mainly through social media and our forum. We can guarantee that 1,800 individual parents and family organisations got it through our forum. On social media, the reach could have been anything up to 10,000. However, we do not have exact figures.
765. **Mr McCausland:** Yet the number that actually responded was hugely representative of the integrated sector.
766. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you very much for your insight. On the definition of shared education, do you believe that there should be a stronger emphasis on the whole idea of promoting good relations, tolerance, respect and mutual understanding?
767. **Ms Magee:** Yes, definitely. Parents would certainly like to see a clear definition with a purpose and set outcomes, and targets and milestones to achieve those. I suppose it comes down to the quality of shared education. What we actually mean by shared education could be a joint trip to the cinema — actually, maybe that is not the best example. We mean a high quality project. It is about building relationships and developing tolerance, respecting difference and trying to move things forward a little bit. Parents are looking for a definition that says, “This is what shared education is. These are the initiatives that your child is involved in. This is how you can help promote the message that we are trying to get across.”
768. **Ms McKeown:** Parents just want to be informed about what is going on. They have commented that, for example, a note goes home in the schoolbag saying, “Your school is joining up with a school down the road next week.” I have seen that happen, but it does not cut it for parents any more. Parents, like pupils, want to know why the school is joining with another school. Parents are not against it, largely, but they want to know what is going on, the purpose

- behind it, and the benefits of sharing in education.
769. **Mr Rogers:** You also mentioned that we need to have more schools involved in the real sharing of education. Do you believe that a shared education premium in funding would help to facilitate that?
770. **Ms Magee:** In the 2012 report, parents said that they would prefer that there were some sort of accountability and closer monitoring of schools that were receiving funding for shared education initiatives. Some schools were treating it as just a joint trip while others were doing a lot more work on it. However, parents did not comment on that specifically. They were not asked that specific question, so I cannot give an honest answer to that point.
771. **Ms McKeown:** Parents made exactly the same comments in the 2014 report.
772. **Mr Hazzard:** Apologies that I missed the very start of your presentation. I just want to know a couple of things. Did you provide a definition of shared and integrated education to the adults who were filling in the survey?
773. **Ms McKeown:** We toyed with the idea of providing that. There was a lot of discussion around whether there is a definition and whether we could find one. Once we discussed it, we decided that, for the benefit of this, we would not go with any definition. We were not clear where the definition was coming from, so we did not want to spoil it. Sometimes providing things to parents that give them ideas can spoil the results. We wanted them to come up with what they understood about those terms. That is why there was a wide variety of responses. They seemed to be clearer about integrated education. I do not know whether that is because the integrated sector has been around a lot longer and there has been more talk about it. However, they were very similar.
774. **Mr Hazzard:** You went on, though, to ask them very specific questions about the advantages and disadvantages of shared education. Do you not think that it is slightly unfair to ask a parent what the advantages and disadvantages of shared education are when they may not know what shared education is?
775. **Ms McKeown:** We wanted to see what their understanding was, first of all. As I said, we were not sure of where that shared education definition was coming from. We did not want to approach it saying, "We have pulled it from here, but it may not be correct".
776. **Ms Magee:** We have the raw data and can certainly share that with the Committee. We thought that not giving an initial definition might actually help get a definition and encourage some discussion.
777. **Mr Hazzard:** I cannot help thinking, given that you went on to ask very specific questions, that you could have even given examples of what shared education is, so that when people were asked about advantages and disadvantages they could have used those examples. That is why I am not surprised to find that there is such confusion among parents.
778. **Ms Magee:** That is one of the difficulties of doing online consultation, I have to say. In the focus groups in the 2012 work, when parents did not know what shared education was, other parents started giving examples and then the parents who had not known were saying, "Oh, yes". The benefit of having focus groups is that parents can bounce ideas off one another. The difficulty with the online consultation is that they do not have the mechanism to do that, so that is a flaw. One of the issues we had with this consultation was the number of questions allowed per consultation. It was already a detailed consultation survey. We have a bit of knowledge on the subject, and it was taking us 15 minutes to complete it. So, we are aware that a parent would take a little bit longer to read through it all.
779. **Mr Hazzard:** You mentioned that a particular parent group from the grammar sector had an issue. Can you expand on that? Was that one person



- who responded, or was it a group of parents who dropped out because they felt that shared education was about comprehensivising the education system? Again, I cannot help thinking that if a definition of shared education had been given at the outset —
780. **Ms Magee:** No, this one was in 2012, when a definition of shared education was given, based on the ministerial advisory group's definition. Even with that, they felt that we were trying to, as you say, "comprehensivise" the education system.
781. **Mr Hazzard:** OK; no problem.
782. **Ms McKeown:** In the 2014 report, there is still the perception that standards are lower in integrated schools. I think that parents just want to be informed about the benefits. In answer to the question of whether you would send your child to, say, an integrated school, some said that they would not do so because a grammar education is better.
783. **Mr Hazzard:** So, despite the fact that two thirds of the respondents were from integrated schools, there was still the perception that standards in integrated schools were not as good.
784. **Ms McKeown:** By some.
785. **Mr Hazzard:** How many?
786. **Ms McKeown:** Between 10 and 20 respondents.
787. **Mr Hazzard:** I saw the 2012 survey, which was based on 50 people. I would not read too much into that survey because of the sheer lack of numbers in it.
788. Finally, most respondents felt that religion should be catered for outside school. Again, I cannot get away from the fact that two thirds of the respondents were from integrated schools, but, again, integrated education deals with religion inside school. Not once in any of our education systems is there a voice talking about leaving religion outside schools. Where does that figure come from? How many people were surveyed?
789. **Ms Magee:** I will just pick up on that, Nicola, before you do.
790. One of the issues is whether parents are fully aware of what sending their child to an integrated school involves. I am not saying that they make that decision lightly, but do they know whether to ask that question? For some, the perception is that an integrated school is a completely neutral venue and does not do anything like that. Others have a bit more information and know a bit more about what it entails.
791. The religious education issue gained mixed responses from parents. Even some of those who sent their children to integrated schools felt that religion should not be taught in the school at all, and some felt that it should be taught. They felt that the fact that there are different religions should be addressed and should not just be ignored. I think that is where the numbers were mixed. Even though the parents sent their children to an integrated education school, their views are still different.
792. **Mr Hazzard:** For me, on the whole, the real analysis or answer out of this is the confusion around the definition of shared and integrated education. Given that the survey did not provide a definition, I do not know how much we can read into the findings other than the fact that there is no clear blue water around definitions. It is a missed opportunity.
793. **Ms Magee:** We did this just to get a bit of snapshot, to be honest with you. It was not meant to be a heavily researched social-science-type piece of work. If nothing else comes out of what we have done, it will be just to say that there needs to be a clearer definition. If that is the key finding that we can provide for you today, then that is the key finding.
794. **Ms McKeown:** Also that parents are interested.
795. **Ms Magee:** Parents want to be involved in it.

796. **Mr Hazzard:** I noticed that only six parents from the Fermanagh area responded. Perhaps that is our area of strongest shared education examples. I wonder whether we would have had different feedback from there. That is just a thought.
797. **Mr Newton:** I thank Ms McKeown and Ms Magee for coming to the Committee. Forgive me if I missed it when you were summarising the findings, but on page 4 of your 2014 report, under the area, “Ways forward to improve Shared/Integrated Education”, you refer to parents’ suggestion that all teacher training degrees should be joint. How strong was that feeling among parents?
798. **Ms McKeown:** I do not have numbers exactly, because, with a lot of the questions, it was a matter of sitting down and counting how many responses there were. However, there was a strong feeling from parents that, if we are to move forward and are encouraging children to share, that should come at all levels in society and that teachers should be modelling this as well as parents. A small grouping of parents was in favour of having a joint campus. It was not something that was specifically asked, but parents did refer to it.
799. **Ms Magee:** We can go back and have a look at that and get numbers for you if that is helpful.
800. **Ms McKeown:** We can count them and send them to you.
801. **Mr Newton:** You used the word “strong”, but the report says that it was suggested as opposed to there being any strength behind the proposal. Obviously, that is more in the area of the Department for Employment and Learning. I would be interested to know about that.
802. **Ms McKeown:** I will get back to you on that one.
803. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for your time and for the work that you have put into this. I think it has been very useful.

# 19 November 2014

## Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Colum Eastwood  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend

## Witnesses:

Ms Noreen Campbell	<i>Northern Ireland</i>
Ms Frances Donnelly	<i>Council for Integrated</i>
Dr Helen McLaughlin	<i>Education</i>

### 804. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome our witnesses. We have Noreen Campbell, who is the chief executive of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); Helen McLaughlin, the vice chairperson of NICIE; and Frances Donnelly, who is senior development officer. You are all very welcome. Thank you very much for taking the time to come this morning. I invite you to make an opening statement, and members will follow up with some questions.

### 805. **Ms Noreen Campbell (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):**

Good morning, everybody. I thank the Committee for initiating this inquiry. I think that you will agree that the volume of responses and the public debate generated confirms that it is an area of utmost interest. I thank you for giving the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education the opportunity to present to you through written submissions and this morning, and hopefully we will be able to offer some solutions that you will want to question us about. I am the chief executive of NICIE and was previously principal of Hazelwood Integrated College in north Belfast. My colleagues this morning

are Helen McLaughlin, who is a management consultant, a parent of an integrated pupil and vice chairperson of NICIE; and Frances Donnelly, who is a senior development officer in NICIE and also a parent of integrated pupils. Helen will start this morning.

### 806. **Dr Helen McLaughlin (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):**

I echo what Noreen says. Thank you for inviting us here this morning. We are here very much in the spirit of trying to help with the inquiry and to answer your questions as best we can in that spirit. As Noreen said, I am the vice chair of NICIE and am also the parent of a child who attends Rowandale Integrated Primary School. Just before we came in here this morning, we had some very good news, which is that the development proposal that Rowandale submitted some months ago has been approved today. So, just by chance, before we walked in here, we have had that really good news. I will talk to you today as a parent of Rowandale as well as vice chair of NICIE.

807. I want to say a bit about my own education first. I come from a Catholic background and went to a fantastic Catholic school with wonderful teachers and great lifelong friends. One day a group of Quakers came along to our school and created opportunities for us to get together with kids from local Protestant schools. It was a lot of fun. It was very contrived; it had to be made to happen. It did not have a lot of impact except to make me realise what was missing from my otherwise wonderful education, which was children from the other community and, indeed, other communities.

808. When I became a parent, I knew that I wanted my child to go to an integrated school. My parents, at that stage, being slightly older, Catholic parents, had some questions about what that actually

- meant. I know that, as a Committee, you are interested in definitions of integrated education. They were very interested in what that would mean for my grandson. My father asked a question that has really stuck with me, which I think is an excellent question. He said, “How will he be taught the difference between right and wrong if there is no faith-based ethos in the school?” I thought that was a great question. Although they never said it, I know that they also had questions about what would happen about sacramental education, preparation for first communion and those sorts of things.
809. I feel very proud of how Rowandale has answered their questions, not just in words but in actions. It is really in talking to you about how Rowandale dealt with those issues that I hope to get across to you what integrated education actually means — its definition in very practical terms.
810. In terms of the difference between right and wrong, before you get through Rowandale school gate, there is a sign that greets you and tells you what the school’s value base and ethos are and what its sense of right and wrong is. The first line of the sign says:
- “We are integrated — we nurture all our children in the values of their own background. Our aim is to enrich individual identity through the understanding of other beliefs.”*
811. It goes on, “We are anti-bias”, “We are all-ability”, “We are democratic” and so on. So, in answer to my father’s question about right and wrong, my child’s education is steeped in a very strong value base, based on equality, diversity, respect, and, perhaps even more importantly, parity.
812. In a faith-based school there are also strong values, of course, but alongside that there are clear messages about which faith takes precedence in the school, through the symbols, iconography and practices in the school. Even where faith schools claim to be mixed, to the children from the minority community, there can be no mistaking what the dominant tradition is. In an integrated school, your background is entirely valued, and your friend’s different background is entirely valued. No background is dominant, and no background has to be silent. That is what we mean by parity in an integrated school.
813. As regards the sacraments, I think that speaks to how integrated schools deal with identity. Sometimes there is a bit of a perception that you have to leave your identity or background at the door of an integrated school, but that is really not the case. My son was prepared for his first communion in his integrated school. In fact, I would say that his communion experience was multiplied and intensified by doing it at an integrated school. What made the day amazing and unforgettable for me, and very striking for my parents, was that, once all of the wee Catholic children had made their first communion in church and had returned to the school for a party, the party was hosted by the parents and children who had not been involved in the church ceremony. In other words, the party was hosted by the Protestant mummies, daddies and children, and, indeed, mummies, daddies and children from other backgrounds. It was pretty overwhelming for me and my family. I felt that my child’s background and culture were celebrated, not just by and with his own side but by the whole community. It was a totally enriched and enriching experience.
814. That said, you could ask why more children do not go to integrated schools. We were very lucky as parents. Before we had a school-age child, local parents wanted to choose an integrated education for their child, but they could not, because there was no integrated school in Moira. So, they did all of the hard work of setting the school up. Indeed, in the face of fierce opposition, it was quite a battle. It would have been very easy to miss the fact that there is a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. How many parents who want a state education or a faith education for their children are left to go and set it up

- themselves? How many parents have the knowledge and skills to set up a school from scratch?
815. I hope that, in this brief talk, I have defined what integrated education means to me and my family. I am not here today to say that integrated schools are better than everyone else or that other schools are not good schools or that they do not want the best for their children; of course, they do. We face challenges in the integrated movement. Sometimes we get it wrong, just like other schools. However, for me, the single thing that defines integrated education and makes it different is that we deliberately strive to educate children from different community backgrounds together all day, every day. We work deliberately and consciously with those children to celebrate all identities in a spirit of parity. My son's friendships are mixed. Without any contrivance, he is with kids from the other community and other communities all day, every day. No one has to invent or pay for a special project to make it happen. That is what integrated schools do.
816. **Ms N Campbell:** I will ask Frances to talk a little bit about the intersection between integrated and shared education.
817. **Ms Frances Donnelly (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):** Thank you, Noreen. When looking at the integrated sector's involvement in shared education in the few words that I am going to say, my reference point is the definition of shared education provided by the ministerial advisory group, which is that it involves two or more schools from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits, promoting efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. That is a slightly abbreviated version, but the three key areas are the educational, economic and societal benefits.
818. Integrated schools exist, first and foremost, to be excellent schools. Why else would any of us, as parents, send our children to a school? They also exist to have strong connections to local communities. Consequently, they immediately recognise the educational and economic benefits of sharing with, and learning from, others. This is simply a good educational approach, and it is second nature to integrated schools.
819. The societal benefits of sharing are arguably the most difficult to achieve in any shape or form. However, in an integrated school, they are realised at every level of the structure of the school itself. That does not make managing diversity any less challenging, as that is the same across all sectors. However, it does provide a platform for community relations all day, every day. Therefore, our schools are uniquely placed to promote active community cohesion.
820. The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluation report of the shared education projects funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) noted that the longer-term aim for all schools is for shared education to be so integral to the ethos and fabric of each school community that it becomes the way that we do things around here. That is the starting point for integrated schools with regard to community relations; it is not a long-term goal. That is simply where we come from. It is the way that we do things in integrated schools.
821. In terms of wider shared education, we have schools that are active participants in the area learning communities. In many cases, they have taken the lead role in working with those communities. They also provide recognisable neutral venues and safe spaces for activities and events. We have had a number of schools submit proposals for the shared education campus, namely Hazelwood, Sperrin and North Coast Integrated Colleges. We have been disappointed that none of our integrated schools has made it through the first tranche. That is a great source of disappointment and surprise. We feel that they were very strong and robust proposals. Therefore, NICIE would ask for clarification about the process for the shared education

- campus and reassurance that comments from the local education and library board cannot unduly influence the outcome of that process. Integrated schools play a full role in trying to achieve the shared education targets and will continue to do so. However, we, as full partners, are entitled to full recognition in that and, indeed, special recognition, particularly in terms of societal sharing and the contribution that integrated schools make.
822. I will just pick out a couple of specific shared education projects that NICIE has been able to contribute to and make great advances with. These were projects that were supported by IFI and Atlantic Philanthropies. One of those was hosted by NICIE. That was Sharing Classrooms, Deepening Learning. That project recognised that, in terms of the entitlement framework and shared education, the context in which a lot of post-primary teachers deliver courses is changing. There are mixed classes and more diverse environments, and that can give great uncertainty to teachers. It can make them feel very vulnerable and uncomfortable. That should not come as any surprise. It is a consequence of our segregated education system and our teacher training. It is also something that we recognised with new teachers coming into the integrated sector. Our project worked on supporting those teachers with professional development. We supported bespoke training and offered accredited training for those teachers, encouraging them to go through their own journey of exploration of diversity, which they have often never had any opportunity to do before. It is only by encouraging our teachers to go through their own journey that they can fully support young people going through the equivalent.
823. That project remains really important to us. In NICIE the funding has stopped, but the work continues and has gone into other initiatives, which Noreen will speak about in a couple of minutes. It certainly raises critical issues around our teacher training and the teachers that go out into schools that are completely different from what they were a number of years before, certainly in regard to delivering the entitlement framework.
824. The second project was the Primary Integrating/Enriching Education (PIEE) project, which was hosted by the North Eastern Education and Library Board. Some of you may already be slightly familiar with that. I believe that the North Eastern Board presented on that a while ago. That focused on small, rural primary schools, controlled and maintained, developing sustainable relationships. I think that is one of the key words in all of the debate — the sustainability of sharing; not one-off projects, but something that develops an interdependency. That was my certainly my personal experience, because I was the NICIE seconded officer to PIEE. That was over four years, with 28 schools in partnerships and really important sustainable relationships.
825. The one thing that I found in PIEE and in integrated education is that parents are much more open to sharing than I think we give them credit for. Parents want sharing wholeheartedly, and they know when they are being short-changed. I think they are open to new and innovative ideas and that we should trust our parents more in the process going ahead.
826. **Ms N Campbell:** Thank you, Frances. My colleagues have outlined the key characteristics of shared education and integrated education, but both approaches are a response to our divided system. Integrated education was developed to challenge segregation in education. Shared education operates within the segregated system. It creates connections between schools of different types that are typified by being of a dominant or single identity. In integrated schools, sharing is the daily norm.
827. You will not be surprised if this morning I concentrate on integrated education and why the duty imposed on Government to encourage and facilitate it should be respected and implemented. Doing so will allow us, as a society, to move

- beyond segregation to an integrated system of education — I emphasise, integrated with a small i — one fit for purpose for the 21st century.
828. What would such an integrated system look like? First of all, it would be made up of the schools that are integrated in law, as we have 62 such schools at the moment, as well as four additional schools looking to join that group through the process of transformation. The system would also include schools that are integrated in ethos. They may be Catholic or controlled in management type, but they would, through their daily experience of their children, have moved beyond a dominant ethos to an ethos of equality that characterises an integrated school.
829. NICIE has developed a programme, which we call Positive Partnerships for Integration, to support those schools that wish to recognise the diversity of their students and to move away from a dominant ethos to one of respect and equality for all. We consulted fully with all stakeholders when we were developing that. We consulted the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Commission for Catholic Education, the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the various political parties. We are ready to start the programme, and we have schools interested in participating in the programme, but we do not have the funding to do so.
830. Under our proposed shift from a segregated system to an integrated system, faith schools and controlled schools would continue to exist, but they would be obliged to connect their students through shared education in a meaningful way. Such a change in system would allow us to reimagine ourselves as a society that is not defined by difference.
831. Why do we need that step change, and why are we in NICIE calling for structural and systemic reform? We do so for societal reasons. If we want to move beyond division, we must address the division of our children. That division is not a result of parental choice but is a legacy of our history and divided past. That segregation replicates and perpetuates division. Until now, no one has seriously engaged with the part played by our schools in keeping children separate and normalising for our children a non-thinking acceptance of the other and of division. Our children deserve better. We can and should no longer assume that children inherit a green or orange identity at birth.
832. Moreover, we argue that the status quo is not an option. In NICIE's second submission, I included a chart that was taken from the report on monitoring the peace process. It showed the demographic shift between our two major traditions. Are we content to see Catholic schools taking an increasing share of the system as the population changes? We argue that that is not a recipe for a peaceful, inclusive society.
833. There are sound educational reasons for change. Children learn best when they feel accepted. Too many of our children are asked to leave part of their identity at the school door. I argue that there is no classroom in any school in Northern Ireland where the children are the same, whatever it says on the badge or the door. We do a disservice to our children and their emerging sense of self when we presume an identity for them.
834. There are strong economic reasons for reform. Our economic situation is dire. It has been calculated that £80 million a year could be saved by removing the duplication that characterises our system. That money would be better spent on tackling educational underachievement than on keeping children separate.
835. The underpinning principle of our system is supposed to be parental choice. In all major public opinion polls, parents tell us that they would prefer to see their children educated together. The majority of our integrated schools are oversubscribed and, in some cases, have not been allowed to grow. In a great number of areas, there is no choice of an integrated school. That situation must be rectified.

836. NICIE argues that we can no longer defer reform. The debate stimulated by this inquiry supports our conclusion. The question is; how can reform be achieved? For that reason, we have called for a Patten-style inquiry, which would be tasked with the reformation of our education system. In addition to that, there are some steps that we think could be taken immediately that would support the dismantling of the segregated system and the creation of an integrated system. The first is to do with planning. We are calling for a level playing field in planning. There is no planning authority to test and provide for parental choice in integrated education. Parents are expected to initiate transformation of their schools or to set up new schools.
837. If I am a Catholic parent and I want a Catholic school, CCMS will have provided a choice of such schools for me and similarly with the ELBs and controlled schools. If I am a parent who would like an integrated school and my local school is oversubscribed or there is no integrated school, I am expected to go to the local single-identity school. We think that that is an outrageous situation and that the time has come when the human rights of parents to have integrated education and to see their children educated together are respected. For that reason, we argue that the new ELB must accept its responsibility under the Education Order 1986 and must plan to ensure that there is sufficient integrated choice in every area. Area-based planning must be responsive to that and must test for parental demand.
838. We also think that there is an argument for looking at the issue of ownership of schools, albeit that that might be something that would be left to a Patten-style inquiry, because it would be controversial. We have a unique and complicated system of ownership, with its roots going back into the last century. Only controlled schools are owned by the state. Grammar schools, Catholic schools and grant-maintained integrated schools are owned by the trustees
- of the schools, yet all are equally in receipt of government funds. That can cause difficulties for local communities, as evidenced by the recent Clintyclay Primary School controversy. A single system of ownership would help move us to an integrated or unified system of education.
839. Equally, I think that I have counted 10 different systems of boards of governors in our schools. There is no reason for that whatsoever. If we had a uniform system of governance across our schools, it ought not to impact on the ethos of the schools, but it would at least begin the process of unifying our system of education and moving towards a cohesive system that will provide world-class education.
840. There is also the issue of teacher training. The recent international review panel on teacher training argued that maintaining the status quo of segregation at that level was not an option and proposed a range of solutions to creating an integrated system of teacher education. Unless we educate our trainee teachers together, we will not effectively deliver on shared education.
841. There is also the issue of preschool education, and that can be tackled easily. Preschool education is supposed to be non-sectoral, yet our nurseries and nursery units are often seen as denominational or single identity. DE should only fund those nursery units and schools that are genuinely and overtly open to all.
842. NICIE believes that change is necessary and possible. Nelson Mandela said:
- "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."*
843. Our schools should be places where children can learn to love, and where we can inculcate acceptance and respect of the other and cherish difference and diversity.



844. The findings of the inquiry and any recommendations are important. You have the power to remove education from the political arena. You can shift the focus on education to what is best for children and best for future society. Thank you for your attention, and we are pleased to take questions.
845. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation. It was quite surprising for Committee members, but the submissions we have received have promoted quite heated discussion in the press. Perhaps some of that has not been particularly edifying.
846. Will you maybe explain why it has become so controversial when, for us — certainly for me — shared education is a very simple concept?
847. **Ms N Campbell:** There have been different levels of controversy in the press. In NICIE, we felt that the CCMS challenge to remove article 64 was controversial. We felt that that was unhelpful in getting the benefit of the Committee, which we see as a very positive tool for people coming together to find solutions to a better system for the future.
848. Our position is that we do not see shared education here and integrated education there. It is not an “either/or”; it is an “and”. We have a model of full immersion sharing, which is integrated, and a system of major division. Shared education recognises that there is a right and a need for young people to connect, and shared education is a mechanism for doing that. We want to work with shared education to make sure that that mechanism is meaningful and strong. Equally, we need to move away from segregation and allow schools to recognise the diversity and the change in identity of their children and to become integrated in their ethos.
849. There will always be some schools that want a dominant ethos, which is faith-based or single identity, and those are the schools that would benefit most from shared education. Many schools will say that there any number of different children in their classrooms and want to explore how they can recognise that and be recognised for the work they are doing on that without changing the ownership of the school or the management structure or type.
850. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It would appear that you have been a little dismissive of the concept of shared education. Even in your comments today, you said that shared education operates in the segregated system. Do you not recognise that sharing is as much as some communities will give at this stage, and that something is better than nothing?
851. **Ms N Campbell:** We absolutely accept that something is better than nothing. As Frances outlined, we have had quite a significant input into shared education. We work within it and encourage all our schools to work within it. Our positive partnerships initiative is also based on sharing.
852. I would not want to be dismissive of shared education, but I do think that there is a critical point. Shared education is based on, and works within, the system we have. I do not think that the system we have is fit for purpose of the 21st century. I think the system has to change.
853. Shared education is, and hopefully will develop as, a very useful mechanism for connecting young people. There are big challenges with that in how you ensure that there is long-term and meaningful connection of young people across the sectors. If those can be overcome, it will definitely be of benefit, but it is not enough in itself.
854. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you feel threatened by shared education?
855. **Ms N Campbell:** No. We welcome shared education. We think it has really put a focus on what is important in education and has brought that to the public’s attention. When the public were asked about their understanding of shared education and integrated

- education, as they were in a poll in the 'Belfast Telegraph' two weeks ago, they were very clear that integrated education was children being educated together on a daily basis, and 64% of them said that that was option they preferred. They also clearly understood that shared education was children or schools sharing resources across the divide and within the system.
856. There is a critical difference, but we are not saying that that is a reason not to support shared education or shared initiatives. We encourage integrated schools to be part of those.
857. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I want to look at the comments about area planning that you made in your paper. You feel that, in some way, this has limited the progress of the integrated education sector. We had representation from Professor Knox and Professor Borooah, and they claimed that there are issues with academic attainment in integrated schools when compared to non-integrated schools. You have spoken about the surveys and said that parents would like their children to be in a shared experience. Is the priority perhaps that they want their children to be at schools where they can excel and where there is a higher level of attainment?
858. **Ms N Campbell:** I think that there are two distinct issues there, but let me begin with the latter. I expect that most people around the table are parents, and, as parents, our duty is to put our children first and ensure that they have the best education possible. No integrated school would have survived for a nanosecond if it were not able to give that assurance to parents. We have 62 schools, and there is a range across those schools. I think that the focus is generally on post-primary, because you have very hard measurements to look at there, and people can see where a school is or is not.
859. Some of our schools are doing extremely well and others are not doing as well as they should. We are totally committed to supporting schools to improve their performance for their young people. We think that that is what schools are about. They are about ensuring that young people can take their place in the world and fulfil all their objectives.
860. We did a comparison. A lot of our integrated schools have just come through inspections, and we tested the inspection reports over the last three years against the chief inspector's report. For example, in our primary schools, where teaching and learning is good or better, the Northern Ireland average is 82%, but, for our integrated primary schools, it is 96%. So, for the 25 out of 26 primary schools that were inspected, teaching and learning was deemed to be good or better. None of those primary schools were deemed to have poor management, and 96% of integrated primary schools were assessed as having pastoral care that was very good or outstanding, and the chief inspector outlined that there was a clear correlation between good achievement and high-quality pastoral care.
861. In our post-primary schools, 68% were rated as good or better for overall effectiveness against the Northern Ireland average of 63%. Some 92% were rated good or better for pastoral care. That, again, was above the Northern Ireland average. Our English and maths and five good GCSEs also compare favourably. That is a figure that you will be interested in. We would like to do a bit more work on getting the statistics in.
862. If you look at the performance of integrated schools compared to other schools, that is, controlled and Catholic schools together, the number of young people who are getting five good GCSEs, including English and maths, is 38% compared to 34.5% for the others. The more interesting one is free school meals. The whole focus of the chief inspector's report was on free school meals and underachievement and, in particular, underachievement of working-class boys. There is a very striking difference because, in integrated schools, 24.5% of our boys on free school meals are achieving five good GCSEs. That is significantly better than

- boys in either Catholic or controlled schools. So, we are getting some things right, but we are always conscious of the need to get things better, and we are committed totally to doing so. I do not know if that answers your question on the academic side.
863. You connected that with area-based planning and the lack of numbers of people choosing integrated schools. There is no central planning for integrated education. Historically, 40 of our schools were set up by parents' groups. Parents had to get together across the divide, which was not necessarily easy, and had to create those schools. In the first 10 years, they had to get the funding and the money to create those schools. They had to face enormous barriers to do so. That speaks of the success of our schools because there were such deep roots embedded in those schools by parents.
864. Another 22 schools went through the process of transformation. Again, parents and, in some cases, boards of governors, said, "We want our school to change. We want our school to become integrated". That is not an easy process, as the parents in Clintyclay have discovered because there were still obstacles. If I am a parent who wants a controlled school for my child, I can go out and look, and the ELB will have said, "We need x number of schools here" and there will be a choice of schools; similarly, for Catholic schools. So, why should parents who want an integrated education, which is, after all, the norm of the type of education across the world, be the ones who have to create that for themselves. To me, that is the absolute opposite of facilitating and encouraging integrated education.
865. We think that area-based planning has made the situation worse. Despite the Minister saying that he wants area-based planning to be for areas not sectors, individuals not institutions, and that he wants innovative solutions, the CCMS has managed and planned for the Catholic side, and the ELBs have managed and planned for the controlled side, and nobody is managing planning for the integrated side. After lobbying, we now have a place at the table, but nobody will accept responsibility for planning. We think that if the new ELB accepts that responsibility, which sits under the 1986 Act, that will make a significant difference.
866. We think it is significant that, in the review of Irish-medium, the Minister accepted the recommendations and, at the same time, said that he would support a similar type of review of strategic planning for integrated education. That review puts at the heart of it who is responsible for planning for Irish-medium education, who is responsible for testing parental demand and who is responsible for removing the barriers. We want the same for integrated education. We want a level playing field.
867. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Just to link it back to the question, you mentioned oversubscription, but your oversubscription is really limited to only a small number of successful schools.
868. **Ms N Campbell:** No. Out of 62 schools, they are all oversubscribed except seven. I might be out by one or two.
869. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have the transport advantage over the controlled and maintained sectors.
870. **Ms N Campbell:** The transport advantage works in favour of different people in different ways. My point is that there are 62 schools in 62 areas, but there are a vast number of areas where there is no integrated choice at all. That is what we should be focusing on and making sure that parents have that choice.
871. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will return to some questions, because other members have indicated that they wish to speak, but, before I do that, I welcome the pupils from Christ the Redeemer Primary School. You are very welcome to the Committee this morning. Members of the Committee will meet you after we have completed our session here. Thank you very much for attending here today.

872. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks very much for the presentation. I will just start around language. I think that, on all sides, some of it is inflammatory. I want to focus on the words “segregation” and “segregated”. I do not think that it is applicable to the situation. The definition in front of me states that it is to actively and on a predetermined basis separate. It is the physical act of separating. However, I think that our system allows for parents to choose. Even in the document that NICIE has produced, it states that there will be an integrated college

*“within a reasonable distance from your home.”*

873. If that had said, “there may not be an integrated college within a reasonable distance from your home”, there may be grounds to look at it as the choice is not there. If someone sitting at home chooses to send their child to a particular school, and you actively accuse them of being a segregationist, I think that is wrong. You need to look at the use of the words “segregate” and “segregation”. I do not think that reflects the situation. If you want to talk about duplication or replication or something else, there may be grounds to do that, but I think that segregated is a loaded term.

874. **Ms N Campbell:** I am sorry if I am hogging this now, but “segregated” is a loaded term, and it really touches to the heart of the debate. We do not like the word. But, interestingly, we talk about segregated housing, and it does not seem to have the same emotive impact on us. When we talk about segregated education, we feel really unhappy because we do not want to think that we are keeping our children divided, yet 92% of our children go to schools that are a majority of one or the other. One of the definitions of segregation is the keeping of people apart. There are historical reasons for that. We just need to say that we have had a history, and it has shaped a particular type of educational system, but now we are in a different place, let us find the means. I said this morning, “Let us create an

integrated system of education with a small ‘i.’” I am more than happy to say, “Give us a different word. Let it be a unified system of education.” That is something that the Committee could really play a part in. If we do not want a segregated or duplicated, or whatever word we use, system of education, what system of education do we need? What we do call it and how do we get there? That is where the value of this Committee comes in to help us chart our way from one point to another.

875. This Committee is leading the way in having this debate, and we do not want to feel that we are playing a negative part in it. If we have done so, I have to apologise for that. We want to be part of the solution, and we want to find a means and to model our integrated values, which are about listening, learning and understanding. If we fail, we have to learn from that, but I believe that there is something about that word and the way that it touches at our core that tells us that we need to look at it more closely. We do not want it. If we do not want it, how do we make sure that it can never be used to describe us, and how can we make sure that people looking in on us from outside do not say, “They are segregated by religion in their education”, which is what they do.

876. **Mr Hazzard:** It is positive to hear that you have taken that on board. The same question will be put to others, you can rest assured of that.

877. There was racial segregation in the United States of America. However, when schools came together, results did not necessarily improve, because the schools were not socially integrated. Very often, I find that the integrated movement here focuses solely on religious and ethnic integration. I know that it does not do so in practice, but, when you read it, the definition is always about religion. It is always Catholic and Protestant or other. We never sell the advantages of social integration and having poor kids alongside kids from affluent backgrounds.

878. I know that integrated schools do that, but they do not sell it. When it comes to the big argument, it is always about the cohesiveness of our society, with Catholics and Protestants. It is not about the other divisions in society. I feel that, when we talk about integration or shared, we need to make sure that we look at socio-economic sharing and integration as well. Do you also agree with that, and is that important?
879. **Dr H McLaughlin:** I do agree with that. Something that you said touches on something that we have thought about a lot in the last couple of years. You mentioned how we sell ourselves. The social mixing and all-ability mixing is something that we very much strive for. I often use the word “strive”, because I do not think that we ever get it perfect, but we strive, and social mixing is a huge part of that. In my son’s school, you can see that. You can see the all-ability aspect.
880. You are right. When we come into the public debate, then because this had its roots in looking at the fact that we educate Catholics and Protestants separately in this country, it has remained a real core driving force for it. It may be that, when we come into public debate, we go back to talking about that. We even have to remind ourselves always to say that our divisions are very much based on Catholic and Protestant but that, now, we have to take account of the fact that there are other communities, other language groups and other ethnic groups and all of that. Yes, that is a huge part of what we do as well.
881. **Ms Donnelly:** It is also worth noting that the status of the integrated sector as such is defined in legislation. So, if our language is about Protestant and Catholic, it is also related to the fact that, by law, an integrated school is defined in such a way: reasonable numbers of Catholic and Protestant. The other factors, of course, are important. We have had an ongoing debate with the Department of Education around the fact that people now identify themselves in many ways, whether they are active churchgoers or whether they are culturally Protestant or culturally Catholic or whether they are newcomers. This whole idea of having to have numbers and balance is part of the integrated ethos, but it also can be very confining as well and does not always reflect the changing society in which we live.
882. **Mr Hazzard:** Finally, I know that there has been great work across the board in the integrated sector on cultural awareness, certainly when it comes to those who maybe had a fear before that their Irish cultural identity was never reflected in an integrated school. We have heard before of a shared situation where some schools have come together and played Gaelic football or whatever it might be. Can you give us a flavour of how the integrated sector has looked to embrace or to promote Irish culture? I am aware that in this paper, for example, there is no Irish. To my mind, looking at the pictures, there are no pictures of Gaelic football or hurling or anything in any of this. There is plenty of rugby and soccer. Again, I know that you are working on it, but I would love to know how far you still think you have to go.
883. **Dr H McLaughlin:** I will chip in with a small example and then hand over. In my son’s school, for example, they have now started to offer Irish-language teaching, and that is new thing. That is through having a member of staff who is able to offer that, which is fantastic. It sounds like a very clichéd way to do it, but there is a good awareness of things like celebrating St Patrick’s Day and looking at what that is all about and what that means for people and so on. That leads to discussions about Irishness around the world and that sort of thing. Just on a school level, I am starting to see more of that. He is in year 5, and I am starting to see more of that in the last few years. I will hand over to my colleague for the bigger picture.
884. **Ms N Campbell:** Again, our schools were established to ensure parity of esteem and ensure that everybody felt included and accepted. That meant ensuring that as far as possible. As Helen touched on, sometimes it comes down to whether you have a teacher available who can offer a

- particular subject. Post-primary schools all have their Gaelic team and their soccer team, and, if they are big enough, they may also have a rugby team. Most post-primary schools offer Irish in some shape. It may be in taster classes, or it may be done as it is in Shimna, which is a specialist language college. In fact, I was following it on Facebook, and it was having some sort of “talkathon” in Irish. I should have been able to say that in Irish, but I cannot.
885. The commitment there is to ensure that people feel accepted and have access to their culture and can bring their culture into school. It is not just about Irish culture; it is about the culture of every child in the school, so it is really important.
886. I think that the Remembrance Day assemblies at our integrated schools are particularly poignant because you have there this recognition of something that can be controversial outside and some children and some staff wearing poppies and some not. Yet, you will have them coming together to have this really meaningful assembly where people are remembering and remembering our own local past as well as the greater wars.
887. The conversations that are held among the young people when they prepare for those are important. It is about a young person being able to say, “Yes, I do belong to the Orange lodge and my family always has. This is why it is important to me and this is what we do and how we celebrate it”.
888. I will give you an example from my experience. In my school, we had what we called a Speak Your Peace day, and we developed that in response to the situation at Holy Cross, where tensions were so high in north Belfast. We felt that we had to create a space where our young people could be themselves and understand one another. It was for the year 10 group, and they were asked to bring in a symbol that was important to them. They sat around in small groups and talked about their symbol and how it was important. It was great to sit on those groups and not see paramilitary flags on the table but national flags, harps that might have been carved in Long Kesh, guitars and skateboards, because, for a lot of children, the symbols that are important to them are immediate. Listening to those young people explain what that meant to them and their family and to hear their friends’ interpretation of their symbol was the most powerful experience because it was true learning. There was total acceptance that people are different and come from different places and that we have been a divided society, yet there was also that capacity to learn from one another and show respect to one another.
889. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much. I am sorry to have nipped out. I have loads of questions but they all really come down to one thing, which is this: what change in legislation would you like to see from an integrated point of view?
890. I ask this from two or three different points of view. In many cases, you have a preferred position, as do other schools, which leads to problems where there is a really good controlled school that is as good as an integrated school because it has large numbers in a mixture. As you are in a preferred position, one of your schools can expand at the cost of the other school when, in fact, we may already have an integrated school there, although run in a slightly different way. One angle is the conflict in some areas, because it is not always the same. The other comes down to how you teach religion and/or politics in your schools.
891. I love the story that we just heard. That is what I want to see happening everywhere, but there are different angles in different patches. In Hazelwood, when Catholic pupils are learning about the Catholic religion, what are the others doing? Is it the same all the way through? Do we need to change legislation to make things more comparative so that everyone is learning about all religions and not just the main two?

892. **Ms N Campbell:** Frances, do you want, as a parent, to talk about the religious education?
893. **Ms Donnelly:** There is an agreed curriculum for religious education in Northern Ireland. How it is delivered in primary schools and integrated schools has been agreed by the four main Churches. Some children may require sacramental preparation, and that is carried out in whatever way the school wishes to do it, whether children are pulled out for additional teaching or whether they are all taught together. There is a variety of methods but there is an agreed curriculum.
894. My children went to an integrated primary school and they both went through preparation, but their experience in religion was very much about being with children who are different and learning about different religions. That has gone over into post-primary education as well. My colleague in NICIE has more of a religious education background. We would probably like to see more of an emphasis on the world religions. We have that Christian basis of course, but there is an argument that all children should be exposed to a greater experience of different religions.
895. **Ms N Campbell:** In the past, NICIE developed a programme called Delving Deeper, which enables children from different Christian denominations to look into the common Christianity and at what they share and to deepen understanding between them. But certainly, at post-primary level, as well as the curriculum that is taught in every school with regard to religion, our integrated schools also invest time in other faiths so that children have that broad global awareness. We see that as being very important, particularly as more different faiths come into Northern Ireland.
896. Your other question is about area planning. The problem with area planning is that it is based on sectors and sectoral thinking. As such, it channels us into ways of thinking about either/or, whereas the aim of area-based planning was to say, "This is an area. How do we best meet the needs of all of the children in this area?" Shared education has a very valuable role to play in that in terms of collaboration. It is how you balance whether a parent might want a very specific single-identity type of education or an integrated education. Your very good controlled school might say, "In our school, we know we have 20% of children from a Catholic background. We know we have 10% newcomers. We know we're a diverse school, so let us represent that in our ethos. Let us have a look at how we have been in the past and whether that is equality for everyone. If not, how can we do it and how can we have it recognised?" Schools are not in competition with one another.
897. Regarding legislation, one of the big difficulties is the fact that schools have been, because of the way their funding has been set up, in competition with one another. If you are a principal in a school, your prime objective will be to your school, not to the other school, no matter how well you get on with them. There is a conflict there, which is a bigger issue. If you could have a different system of funding and a different system of area-based planning, and if you invited schools to open up and not be seen as one or the other, you could have a fairly rapid transition to a different, unified system of education.
898. **Mr McCausland:** Thanks for your presentations. When we talk about children coming together in a school from Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds etc, the terms "Protestant" and "Roman Catholic" can have a religious connotation or — you used the word "cultural" — sometimes it is another way of speaking about ethno-cultural or cultural differences. This is a question that I put to all sectors, not just yours. How do you address the right of children to learn about the culture of their community and the home from which they come, which is part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child? You gave examples of maybe introducing Gaelic games or some Irish language. How do other cultural traditions in

- Northern Ireland get accommodated?  
How is that dealt with?
899. **Ms N Campbell:** I think there is space created for all children to bring their cultural experience to the table. For example, a lot of schools use a programme called Different Drums, where children bring in the drum that represents their identity. They learn the history of it and then they drum together. That is a really powerful experience. We have remembrance assemblies where children share their experiences and the experiences of their family. Every school will take a slightly different approach to how it ensures that both of our major cultures are represented, because, after all, that is why we were established, but also our newcomer cultures. One of the fundamental principles is to find ways and means of doing that.
900. **Ms Donnelly:** I think that the integrated school provides the everyday opportunities. I am immediately thinking of the literature that is available in the library, the texts and poems that are used in English, the drama activities, art activities, music, PE, the speakers who come into the school, the charities that are supported and the community groups that are linked to the school. It is kind of within the fabric of the school, and there is almost an automatic means by which that happens. The teachers know that it is an integrated school and, as part of their process of lesson preparation and working with the young people, it is simply the way that they are, in reflecting the major cultures.
901. **Ms N Campbell:** I could maybe add something to that. NICIE received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to mark the centenary anniversaries. We used that funding to support teachers to teach controversial issues. We created a bank of resources that is available to all schools for those contentious anniversaries. We also created some super drama pieces so that, through drama, schools can explore the issues on the signing of the covenant or the 1916 rising. As children love talking to each other about
- those issues, you also get that daily interchange.
902. **Mr McCausland:** I would just make an observation. In sport, sometimes a parallel or comparison is drawn between football and Gaelic football. The difference to me is that one has a very specific cultural heritage or identity associated with it and the other is just an international game now. Finding ways to express other cultural traditions other than Gaelic ones needs to be teased out in a range of schools, not just in a particular sector.
903. I want to ask a question about another matter, which is one that I struggle with and cannot quite get to the bottom of. One of the early integrated schools — it might have been Lagan College — had a motto that said “That they all may be one”, which is a bit of Bible text. Is there a place in the integrated system for parents to send their children to those schools if they come from what I would describe as a very conservative, evangelical Protestant background? They may not want to go with a certain interpretation, which they might view as having more of an ecumenical spirit, and they might feel more comfortable with a more secular form of integrated education in which those issues are set aside. Are there different views in the integrated sector about that? That is the sense that I have, but I am not clear on it.
904. **Ms N Campbell:** We have a lot of debate internally about how best to develop our schools and their ethos and how best to engage. All our schools are committed to parental involvement and engagement. A parent with that background who feels that their child being in an integrated school would in some way impinge on that and who wants to test it will know that they can ask those questions. I think that it is about that open dialogue. As Helen said, we are a work in progress.
905. **Dr H McLaughlin:** That question interests me a lot. The integrated movement started, for good reasons, by identifying itself as an integrated movement with a Christian tradition. I understand why



- that was necessary 30-odd years ago, but I think that there is now room in the movement to discuss the extent to which we should carry that forward.
906. Just as there is a diversity of Catholic and state schools, there is a diversity of integrated schools. That is still very much there and is, I suppose, written into the integrated movement. However, development and responsiveness to need happens very much at the coalface with the schools working with parents and with parents being able to say, for example, “I was really surprised that you did that assembly in that way. It did not really fit with what I want my children to be exposed to”. There is room for that debate. In fairness, and as is the case in any movement, I would like us in this movement to continue to debate it.
907. I suppose that that was a long way of answering your question. The door is open to addressing those questions. I do not think that we would say, “No. It has to be a certain way, and if schools do not do it that way they are not in”.
908. **Mrs Overend:** It is good to meet you. Thank you for coming.
909. Integrated education is the forced equality of the two religions. What about areas such as mid-Ulster, which are predominantly of one religion? We heard someone say on the radio this morning that you cannot turn around without meeting someone from a particular religion. If an integrated school is supposed to show equality, what about the surplus? Would it not be better for a shared area partnership to receive extra support in that area to bring everyone together to promote that shared ethos rather than having an integrated school? How do you see that?
910. **Ms N Campbell:** In areas where you have a predominance of one cultural background on paper —
911. **Mrs Overend:** One religious background.
912. **Ms N Campbell:** Or cultural or religious background. You are less likely to get shared education in those areas, because you will not have the variety of schools. Therefore —
913. **Mrs Overend:** What if you do?
914. **Ms N Campbell:** That will not be the same as a city area where there is a lot of mix. Our argument is that, in an area where there is a majority population, it is more important to have an integrated school, because that gives parity of esteem to the minority. It is not about numbers. We aspire to get the best balance we can, but we also aspire and are totally committed to the ethos of equality of esteem so that, if you are the only child in the school from a particular background, you can feel proud of that background and be accepted. We think that it is really important in Northern Ireland that areas do not become monocultural. We should keep diversity in them, and we can do that through having an integrated school.
915. I also think that through the Committee we have an opportunity to move away from the idea that, because we happen to have been born into a particular area or baptised in a particular church, that is all that we are. There are many mixed marriages, and people in those marriages call it “double belonging”. I think that is a beautiful phrase.
916. If those children go to a controlled school, they are expected to leave the Catholic part of their identity at the door. If they go to a Catholic school, they are supposed to leave the Protestant part at the door. That is not fair. There are children of parents who do not have a religion and children of parents who do not necessarily see themselves as Irish or British but as Northern Irish. There is a huge fluidity amongst young people and young parents about how they see themselves. I think that that is why they want their children to be educated together. They do not want to be pigeonholed as they were in the past. It is about how we can start to move beyond that into a much more fluid view of ourselves so that we see ourselves not as a binary, polarised society but as one that is working to become unified.

917. **Mrs Overend:** There are schools that are integrated not with a big “I” but in all but name. It is very much felt that the integrated schools threaten the future of those schools that are less forced integrated, so to speak, but —
918. **Ms N Campbell:** We recognise totally that many schools are naturally integrated. That is the phrase that is used. It is quite flattering, as it recognises the importance of young children being educated together.
919. In the recent judicial review, Judge Treacy looked at mixed schools and asked whether they were the same as integrated schools. He said, “No, they are not the same as integrated schools because they have a dominant ethos that is based on a single identity”. So, no matter how welcoming they are to all children and no matter how supportive they are of all the differences in the school, unless they engage with that dominant inherited ethos and decide that they may need to make some changes, add certain books to the library or add a subject to the curriculum, they will not be integrated. It will definitely mean that they will need to train their teachers and support their teachers’ thinking in a broader way. If those schools can do that, they will become schools that are integrated in ethos.
920. Our programme is to support schools in doing that. We recognise that there are schools out there that do great work, and we also recognise that those schools would like to be recognised and to be able to say, “We do this work. We are working towards an equality of ethos, and we want to attract children from all areas”. We have a programme that is packaged and ready to go. All we need is the funding for it. I think that it will answer a lot of your questions, because it is all school-based.
921. **Dr H McLaughlin:** Could I just jump in there? That question struck a chord with me, as it was really because of that issue that we started to develop the positive partnerships for integration programme. I think that there are real questions about what a school does if first, it is in an area with a mostly single-identity population anyway, or secondly, if it feels that it is integrated because it has a bit of a mix. We wanted to develop a programme that really took those opportunities. In either of those situations, the programme would mean that we would sit down with the school and ask what it would look like if it went through a process to move towards adopting an integrated ethos. It would ask what that would look like, how it would help them and what the challenges or blockages would be. Through the programme, we would support the whole school community — the school, governors, parents and children — through a process to move towards an integrated ethos if that is what they choose to do. We see that as very much a way of working with schools where they are.
922. You will note that we have not come today and said, “We want all schools integrated overnight tonight, so do it now.” We have suggested some means and processes to get there at some point, but this programme would be about recognising that sometimes you have to meet schools where they are at, offer them something and work with them.
923. **Ms Donnelly:** If you do not mind my jumping in, I think that the programme also acknowledges where schools are at and also potentially all the good work that they are doing that they want recognised. It is adding to it rather than taking away. I think that that is a really important element of schools that are transforming and looking at integration. It is about where you are, acknowledging the good work and some of the difficulties that perhaps may exist while adding to the question of how embracing a more integrated ethos contributes to the benefit of your young people.
924. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Hazzard, did you want to make a very brief intervention?
925. **Mr Hazzard:** Yes. I have a very brief question about numbers. You sort of touched on it by saying that you do not need to have certain numbers.

- In a school of 30, how many of the minority have to be there for it to be an integrated school? Surely you are not suggesting that there does not have to be any.
926. **Ms N Campbell:** No. First of all, I am convinced that in your school of 30, they will not all be the same, no matter whether they are in a school with a particular name. I think that you have to create an environment where parents are happy to say who they are and where they come from. That is number one.
927. Number two is that we are committed to the best balance. Our statement of principles says that that balance is ideally 40:40. We are reviewing that because, as Helen said, people do not want to be pigeonholed and described like that any more. The better your balance, the easier it is to create that open dialogue that allows people to feel accepted and to shape a school. You may have a school that sees itself as Catholic or controlled. It may always have been that, but it maybe now wants to become something different. That does not happen overnight. Parents, governors, teachers and young people have to have a voice in shaping that. If you do not have the capacity for people to say, "Well, actually, this is who I am", whatever that might be, you cannot move towards that open and integrated ethos. So, yes, you absolutely need diversity in a school.
928. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you. I am conscious of time. We have three more questions.
929. **Mr Lunn:** It is good to have you here. For the record, I am delighted to hear about Rowandale and that the parents' wishes will be respected and dealt with there. I am actually more interested in listening to other people's questions today, because I could ask lots of questions to which I already know the answer, so I might be accused of prompting an answer. I will just ask you one. You touched on Drumragh Integrated College briefly. In fact, we were well into your presentation before it was even mentioned. Leaving aside the decision that is pending on Drumragh itself, how satisfied are you with the Minister's reaction to Judge Treacy's judgement, particularly on planning and the needs model?
930. **Ms N Campbell:** I think that the best way to put it is that we are keeping a watching brief. There is a total commitment on our part and in the integrated movement on a wider basis that we will not allow the findings of the judicial review to go unnoticed. We are actually doing a checklist on how it is being taken account of. I think that the Minister voted for an amendment that you had in the Assembly in support of —
931. **Mr Lunn:** I will talk to you about that in the morning. *[Laughter.]*
932. **Ms N Campbell:** We took that as a very positive sign. Whenever we hear good news of schools being allowed to increase, we take that as a positive sign. We look forward to seeing an inquiry or a grouping set up to see how we can strategically plan to support integrated education in the way that has been set up for Irish medium, and we would like to see that happen very soon. We have not come to an end-of-term report yet on the Minister and his response.
933. **Mr Lunn:** For clarity, the Minister and his party voted for the Alliance amendment to include the word "promote" in the obligation, but a couple of weeks later when it came to Further Consideration Stage, they decided to side with the DUP and vote against it. I can see Chris laughing. I think that it is funny too.
934. No, I will not pursue that.
935. Trying to be fair to the Minister, will you agree that there may have been a softening of the Minister's attitude in decisions that have been made since the Drumragh judgement has loomed on the horizon? I am thinking of Millennium and perhaps Rowandale and others. To give him credit, he is perhaps attempting to honour his obligation.
936. **Ms N Campbell:** I think that that is true because, where we have been disappointed, the Minister has expressly

said that he wants the overall provision of integrated education in the area to be looked at as well. So, where we have been disappointed, for example in Portadown or, indeed, in Clintyclay, we are disappointed for the moment and are hoping that we can get further progress. The Minister has not closed the door. I think that there is a recognition, and I suppose that the challenge is for that to permeate down. The judgement said that the Department had to be alive to the statutory obligation at all levels, including operational and strategic. If we are seeing that recognition at the strategic level, we have to see it at the operational level, particularly in planning. That, I think, is the big challenge.

937. **Mr Newton:** I welcome the members to the Committee today. My wife and I chose integrated education and were very keen to see that happen. We chose Methody as an integrated school, but obviously, by your definition, it does not meet the criteria to be an integrated school. I am a bit confused, which is not hard to do sometimes, I have to tell you. I am confused about part of your submission, where you say:

*"We acknowledge the principle of parental choice and ... acknowledge the right of parents to seek faith-based provision ... choice should be accommodated ... rather than being used as a prop to maintain a segregated system ... would include single identity and faith schools, and schools integrated both by legal status and by being recognised as having an integrated ethos ... children in single identity schools [would be] guaranteed sustained and meaningful shared learning."*

938. Is that not part of the problem, in that, where there is always going to be this choice of alternative education systems or approaches, we are never going to move to what really would be a shared education system? In moving and creating the integrated system, are you not adding to the problems in getting to a shared education system?

939. **Dr H McLaughlin:** It is an important question, and it has struck me since I joined NICIE a few years ago. People often saw integrated education as an extra sector, and, taking the long

view, our view is that we do not want integrated education to be another sector jostling amongst the sectors. Ultimately, we would like the standard to be integrated education. It is probably easy for us to talk about parental choice and the ability to still respect it, because all the indications that we have are that, ultimately, if we do the process correctly and in the ways that we described, we will be able to move to a largely integrated system with parental choice being respected. That would mean that we would not be jostling for position but that we would be helping to support the development of a different system. It may be always be that, alongside that mainstream system, there are single-faith schools and schools that have a different ethos. We do not feel that it is appropriate to say that there can never be a school that has a different ethos from ours, but we feel that, by going with parental choice and working through the correct processes, we will arrive at a system that is largely integrated anyway. We believe that that is what parents want, and all the research that we have done indicates that.

940. **Mr Newton:** Am I right to say that your ambition is to see the integrated system closed down?

941. **Dr H McLaughlin:** I do not know about Noreen, but I have often said that there should not need to be a NICIE. You talked about the idea of shared education being really simple. For me, the idea of integrated education is very simple. It is just to educate children together. Do not invent a system; just educate children together. My feeling is that, if that is where the system goes, why would we need a little body? NICIE is quite a little body that is there to support integrated schools and their development. That is what the education boards will do, and that is what the system will do. I include in that that little inkling that we have at the moment that there may well be schools, even in the Catholic sector, that are saying, "We are a small rural school, and we have a mixed community. There are cuts left, right and centre, and we are in danger of

- closure. I wonder whether the right thing for our local kids would not just be to have a shared school — an integrated school.” I am very hopeful of that and that, one day, there will not be a NICIE, because it will not be needed.
942. **Mr Newton:** We look forward, at some stage, to seeing a presentation on the strategic plan for the downturn of NICIE.
943. **Ms N Campbell:** I think that your question is very important, because it illustrates the complexity of where we are. How do we move beyond that so that we are, in fact, redundant? That is why we asked in our submission whether the time is right for a Patten-style inquiry. By that, we mean an independent-style inquiry that can get above us and all our particular interests, if you like, and ask what the best way is, taking into account where we have come from to move us on more quickly than we are moving at the moment.
944. **Mr Newton:** I will leave it there, Chair, in the interests of time.
945. **Mr Eastwood:** Thank you very much for your presentation and for answering the questions. I was glad to hear you talking about Different Drums. Like a lot of good things, they come from Derry. A lot of questions have been asked, and I know that we are short of time. You have probably answered my point already. I think that one of the fears that some people have about integrated education concerns the fact that people assume that, when kids go into the school, it is a neutral space. You said that people are changing their attitudes to things, but people are still Irish, still nationalist, still unionist or still British. I think that that is not a bad thing. You probably have given some assurances, but can you assure us that you are trying to create not a neutral but a diverse environment?
946. **Ms N Campbell:** I think that I will leave it to a parent to do that.
947. **Dr H McLaughlin:** I can speak only from my experience of my child going through school and of being a governor in an integrated school. I do not see any evidence that the children coming through the doors of the integrated schools that I am involved in somehow come in as individuals and come out as some sort of homogenous mass. I simply do not see any evidence of that. I realise that it is a fear, and we respect that it is a fear that parents have. I think that, in the integrated sector, we try very hard in our promotion and awareness raising to illustrate that, in fact, the activities and what goes on in integrated schools actually reflects the schools’ diverse nature. We acknowledge that. The intention is not to create a homogenous mass, as I said, but to allow young people to explore the identities that they have and to perhaps take on new ones. As Noreen said, we all change identity. We add to our identity as we go along, and I think that the integrated ethos and environment is really supportive of young people being able to do that.
948. **Ms N Campbell:** There has been a lot of research into integrated schools, and it shows that young people who have come through integrated education maintain a strong sense of their unique identity and very strong friendships across the divide into adulthood. They also have a more positive view of building good community relations and have the additional identity of “us”. So, they say, “I am this, but I am also us”. There is very interesting research on that.
949. **Mr Eastwood:** That is very useful. Thank you. I will not hold you up any longer.
950. **Mr Craig:** I am bit like Trevor, in that I was listening to some of the questions and replies. I want to go back to area planning, because I find it intriguing. I now understand where you are coming from, Noreen, on that one. You sort of indicated that your ambition is to replace the system that is there with your integrated model. Does that rationale mean that you do not really take on board any of the impact that the creation of a new school has on existing schools and on area plans that are already there?
951. **Ms N Campbell:** No, that is not what I am saying at all; quite the opposite. We are not saying that we want to replace

- the model with a system of integrated schools. We want to replace the model of segregation and difference with the model of schools that are all diverse and all offer an equality of ethos in the school. Those are the characteristics of an integrated school. But this is about neither a sector nor a legal status. It is about the experience of young people on a daily basis, and we think that that can be achieved through area-based planning.
952. I will give you an example. We have some fairly controversial examples of what happens at the moment. With the two “Breda” schools in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, the proposal was to close Newtownbreda and Knockbreda and open a new school. What type of new school was it opening? It was opening the same type of school. So, the parents from both were annoyed that they were losing their school, but they did not have voice in shaping what type of new school they might want. We say that parents ought to have been involved in saying, “At the moment, we have a range of types of school. What does it mean? What would those schools look like? Which would best suit new parents starting a new a school in your area to serve the needs of your area and your children?” You would then have parental involvement in the new school, not parental disapproval. Where you have parental involvement, you have better results and better outcomes, because the young people buy in and you have a school that can succeed. So, we are not looking to say, “Do this our way”. We are saying that we should put parents, children and the future needs of our society first and find a means of doing it that moves us beyond division.
953. **Mr Craig:** Noreen, I listened with interest to that, because I think that you are right. Parental choice should come first; there is no question about that. I find this intriguing, because it could be that your model is the correct model and should be used everywhere. For how many years have you been in existence now?
954. **Ms N Campbell:** About 32.
955. **Mr Craig:** In that period, how many schools have you succeeded in converting from either controlled or maintained to integrated? It strikes me that that is the way to go forward. Instead of displacing schools, we should convert them.
956. **Ms N Campbell:** Again, I could not agree with you more. To date, 22 schools have transformed, but we feel that they have transformed because the onus has been put on parents. In our model — let us take the example that we just discussed — the parents of Newtownbreda and Knockbreda might have said, “We are serving an area where there is plenty of diversity. We want an all-ability school for our children so that some are not streamed off to grammar schools, leaving the rest feeling like second-class citizens. We want a co-educational school and a school that recognises all religions”. A new school is being created, so the question is not about displaced schools but about getting the new schools right. If I am area-based planning, I might say, “Here is an area. There is no integrated choice”. Are there schools that could provide that integrated choice and, if so, what is the best path for them? Is it through transformation, which it might not be, or is it through positive partnerships, which it might be? It is about finding different ways to enable change. It sounds as though you think that we have hard-and-fast-answers. We do not think that we have; we think that we are trying to find a means of opening up our system.
957. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you have a supplementary to that?
958. **Mr Craig:** Well —
959. **Ms N Campbell:** I have not convinced you.
960. **Mr Craig:** It opens up an interesting debate, and it is somewhere where I believe the Minister and the rest of us are trying to go with shared education. The same question has to be asked every time under area planning. If you are going to build a school anywhere, all those questions now have to be asked.

961. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
I thank you for coming to the session.  
We received a copy of your financial statements and the director's report, which raise a couple of questions about your organisation and its financial future, so, if you are content, we will write to you about that. I am conscious of time and the fact that we still have to meet the primary school. Thank you for your time this morning.
962. **Ms N Campbell:** Thank you. I just want to commend these wonderful children here. Were I their principal, I would be so proud of them.
963. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
They did not make a noise at all. They were so good. If only members were as good. *[Laughter.]*





## 26 November 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Colum Eastwood  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mrs Sandra Overend

### Witnesses:

Dr Gavin Duffy	Centre for Shared Education
Professor Joanne Hughes	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Tony Gallagher	University of Oxford
Professor Miles Hewstone	

964. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome Professor Joanne Hughes, Professor Tony Gallagher, Dr Gavin Duffy and Professor Miles Hewstone. Thank you very much for being with us today. You may make an opening statement, and members will follow it with questions.

965. **Professor Joanne Hughes (Centre for Shared Education):**

I will say a few words and then invite my colleagues to introduce themselves to say a few words. I am the director of the centre for shared education at Queen's, which was established in 2012. We are an applied and interdisciplinary centre that is committed to researching and promoting evidence-based practice in all areas of education. Many of us in the centre have been involved in exploring issues relating to education and divided societies for many years.

966. The shared education approach is based on an analysis of the existing education system in Northern Ireland and efforts to promote community relations in it. It pointed to a twofold approach to community relations in Northern Ireland

and, indeed, in other divided societies. We have had short-term contact initiatives or full immersion integrated education. The shared model, which is theory-informed, plugs the gap between the short-term contact initiatives, which are known to be largely ineffective, and integrated education, which is effective but which has had limited impact or appeal. We have defined shared education as:

*"Collaborative activity between schools from different sectors that is underpinned by a commitment to reconciliation objectives and can contribute towards school improvement, access to opportunity and more positive intergroup relations in divided societies."*

967. When we talk about theory-informed, we refer to two bodies of theory. First, there is contact theory, which asserts that contact between different groups, provided that it meets certain conditions, can be effective in reducing prejudice and promoting more positive social attitudes, not just towards the individuals involved in the contact situation, but the out-group as a whole. It is not about making exceptions to the rule. The conditions for effective contact are listed in our submission, but a key point to mention is that contact should allow for the development of more intimate ties usually associated with friendship. In that respect, it should be sustained over time. Identity should also, at some level, be salient in contact encounters in order to maximise its effectiveness.

968. The second body of theory relates to networks and collaboration; it highlights characteristics of effective collaboration in school improvement.

969. The work of the centre is organised around three interrelated strands of activity: we have a substantial programme of national and international research; we have delivered a shared-education programme in Northern Ireland; and we are involved in

- developing and delivering similar programmes in other divided jurisdictions. We have developed bespoke training programmes for practitioners and policy-makers involved in the delivery of shared education, and we are developing a master's pathway.
970. Our research findings are clear that increasing contact between pupils from different divided groups, which, in the case of Northern Ireland, are Catholic and Protestant, reduces prejudice, increases trust and generally promotes a more positive response to the out-group, or the other. We have shown that that happens in a range of educational settings, such as integrated schools, separate schools that have a significant proportion of pupils from the other community, and in a shared-education context where pupils can engage in sustained curriculum-based interaction. We have also shown that the effect of sustained contact is diminished for free school meal recipients, although there is still an effect for those pupils. We also know that outcomes are different for pupils in more divided communities. For them, there is sometimes a dissonance between the values promoted by the school, which are around mutual understanding, respect for difference, and so on, and the values that are valorised in the local community or in the home environment, which are sometimes to do with suspicion or a sense of threat.
971. Our research also suggests that the current grammar/secondary divide can be a hurdle to sharing. It can be difficult for secondary-school pupils to attend the local grammar, and there have been some issues around their feeling intimidated. The intersection between faith and class in Northern Ireland may exacerbate that problem.
972. There is generally a receptiveness to shared education in Northern Ireland schools, and our research has shown that that is related to the foregrounding of other educational priorities, which means that teachers do not feel under the same pressure to engage with issues that are controversial, although many do. There are educational benefits to be accrued from participation in sharing, not least with regard to the entitlement framework, and there may be additional benefits. Separate schools are a cherished representation of community and individual identity. A value of sharing, not just in Northern Ireland, as we found, but in other divided jurisdictions, is that separate schools, which many people have a strong attachment to, are perceived not be threatened.
973. Schools have been remarkably engaged and ingenious in overcoming some of the barriers that can arise in the collaborative process. Those include practical issues such as the coordination of timetables, pastoral-care policies, transport and community relations work to minimise opposition to the initiative, communicating with parents and working with local community representatives and local community elites. Schools have also worked collaboratively with local agencies to tackle issues particular to a locality.
974. Some things that might enable shared education include a policy framework that requires schools to engage in inter-sectoral sharing, reflected in inspection criteria for schools. Shared education should be a compulsory element of initial teacher education, reflected in modules or workshops on diversity in the classroom, for example, or collaboration in practice. It should also be reflected in continuing professional development. The delivery of shared education should reflect optimal conditions for effective contact and effective collaboration. Those are outlined in our longer submission.
975. Finally, there is a potential tension between foregrounding educational outcomes over reconciliation outcomes to maximise participation by schools and the need to keep salient issues of difference in order to maximise the generalise-ability of attitudinal and behavioural change among participants.
976. That is my statement. I would like to introduce my colleagues, Dr Gavin Duffy, who is a researcher in the centre,

Professor Tony Gallagher, pro-vice-chancellor of Queen's, and Professor Miles Hewstone from Oxford University, who is director of the Oxford Centre for the Study of InterGroup Conflict. Tony, do you want to say something?

977. **Professor Tony Gallagher (Queen's University Belfast):** Thanks very much, first, for the invitation. I have two quick points. One is, as Joanne said, about some of the evidence. The nature of the challenge in different parts of Northern Ireland when schools are trying to work collaboratively is very different. A very important thing in our work with school collaborations is developing bespoke models in different places, recognising the importance of context, but giving a lot of autonomy and influence to teachers to work with us in developing the best way to do that. That is a particularly important part of our approach to shared education.
978. The second point is that the terminology of shared education has now become so ubiquitous that it has been applied to a vast range of different things. We are very clear that when we talk about shared education we are talking about very robust work with serious, sustained, long-term collaboration and engagement between schools that changes the nature of the relationship between them and leads to significant positive changes for the young people, the teachers, the parents and the wider communities. We have a very particular understanding of what shared education means, even though the term is used now as a much wider umbrella and covers stuff that we do not necessarily see as falling within our understanding of it. Those are a couple of quick points to begin.
979. **Professor Miles Hewstone (University of Oxford):** I will add to the points made so far. Thank you very much for talking to us. My colleagues in England sometimes have great difficulty getting to talk to anyone about the policy implications of their work. I have always found ears in Northern Ireland much more open, so thank you for that. I would like to add to what Professor Hughes said. One of the other things that we can share in our work is the value of contact, not just in changing attitudes to what we call primary out-groups — the most obvious out-groups that people come into contact with — but to secondary out-groups. Actually, one of the benefits of promoting positive mixing between groups such as Catholic students and Protestant students is that they also develop more tolerant attitudes towards ethnic minorities, for example.
980. Another of the things that we focused on in our work is that the benefits of contact do not just accrue from direct, face-to-face contact. I could not miss the opportunity to hear my colleague Roger Austin speak to you just before I came in. I am a great fan of the implications of what new technology can offer in the kind of work that he does. I smiled at your understanding that we have not yet got those two universities together because the links are absolutely obvious. You can see the opportunities for sequential work, where people might begin their contact in relaxed confines, with distance learning through ICT, then you organise face to-face contact, and then, as he said, the face-to-face contact is followed by a burst of online contact, so those things work together.
981. Contact is not always positive; it can be negative. One of the ironies is that, where you bring people together, you are likely to see more positive contact, but you are also likely to see more negative contact. You cannot possibly be bullied by a boy from the out-group if you do not go to school with boys from the out-group. The good news there, however, is that in our very recent work we find that, even though there may be greater evidence for negative contact in those mixed settings, positive contact has a very clear buffering effect. Prior positive contact buffers and strengthens you. It means that you do not respond to that negative contact with an increase in your own intolerance or aggression towards the other side.
982. Finally, just to show that we are optimists but not idealists, one of the things that we always have to be aware

of is that we do not create conditions for mixing, or desegregation, only to find, as they did in schools in the United States after they desegregated in 1954, that the children themselves choose to re-segregate. You go in through the front door, and you find that the black kids are all on the basketball team and the football team, and the white kids are doing the school newspaper and the tennis club. You have to be alert to that possibility. Once you have gone through the door, you have to work to promote mixing at various levels. The work that we are doing at the centre at the moment, which is completely new, is to look in detail at people's social networks. We are looking at the intimacy of people's friendship groups to see whether we can ascertain just how close relations are between members of different communities in their friendship networks.

983. **Dr Gavin Duffy (Centre for Shared Education):** Good morning, Committee. I am Gavin Duffy; I am a research fellow at the School of Education and have been attached to the shared-education programme since 2011. My research takes a different tack, as my work is essentially qualitative. It is about trying to provide contextual data and information about what actually happens in schools and the relationships between schools. So much of my work has been underpinned by the notion of collaborative effectiveness. I am particularly interested in drawing out what makes a strong and effective partnership. I hope to talk to you about that this morning.
984. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation and your detailed paper. We could ask quite a number of questions about this, but time is always limited. A lot of your work is about the education focus; that is very clear from the presentations that we received earlier about Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School. Members could not fail to be impressed by the work there on shared education. In your paper, you also discuss the limited

reach of integrated education and also the suspicion that there exists in our communities. Do you foresee a time when shared education will be mainstreamed?

985. **Professor Gallagher:** We are probably not far off that point at the moment, in many senses. Look at the programmes that have been put in place by the Department, potentially through European peace money, and the shared campuses initiative. There is a whole range of things. I think that we are on the cusp of going into a situation where the working assumption is that schools should work with other schools, not just to promote cohesion but because it is good educationally and makes more effective use of resources. We are very close to that. One of the advantages of shared education and collaboration is that it is possible to do that across much of the system without the tensions and difficulties involved with threats to identity. It squares the circle, in a way, which is part of its attraction. If we can get into that situation, it will change the nature of relationships between people and — who knows? — that opens up all sorts of possibilities for further development and evolution in the future.
986. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You talked about bespoke models and contextualising situations and that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach capable of achieving that outcome. Are there particular examples that you find have surpassed expectations when you have looked for a solution for schools in certain areas?
987. **Professor Gallagher:** Gavin will maybe say a little bit about the work in Derry/Londonderry on the Foyle Contested Spaces Programme because there is some amazing stuff happening there. One of the incredibly inspirational things about Ballycastle is that the two schools have agreed to hook their fates together through the shared-campus initiative, and each delivers a part of the curriculum that the other depends on. That speaks of a trust between the schools that I find amazing. You see something similar in Limavady, where

- there is a high level of engagement between schools. The imagination and creativity that the teachers in the schools have shown is also impressive. There have been a few situations like that, where teachers, given the space and freedom to try things, have responded in a way that is just amazing. Part of the value of the work is that, rather than imposing a particular template or model on schools and then requiring them to do it, is giving teachers space to be a part of creating the solution. We should allow them to try things that sometimes do not work. Learning from that is a very valuable part of the experience of making the models work.
988. Apart from that, one of the main general lessons that we have taken out of working with collaborative networks over the past six or seven years is that the more points of contact between schools, the better. The more intersections there are, the tighter the interweave, as it were, between the schools and the more likely it is to be sustained into the future. The work that Miles and Joanne are doing demonstrates the positive consequences that can arise from that. It creates a situation where that becomes permanent, or the way in which things just happen. It is a new pattern of reality, if you like. So rather than have small programmes or connections on particular, tightly defined, areas of activity, we should encourage as many connections possible. Gavin, would you like to say something?
989. **Dr Duffy:** The Foyle Contested Spaces education partnership, based in Derry/Londonderry, was an alternative model of collaboration. It evolved out of the first phase of the shared-education programme between 2007 and 2010. It was funded by OFMDFM Atlantic Philanthropies and was part of their Interface/Contested Space Programme. This model is unique in Northern Ireland, in that it is made up of five primary and three post-primary schools drawn from across the sectors. What is incredible about this is that it is a combination of an educational and a social approach to addressing social need areas.
990. There were five particular social need areas that schools collectively decided were issues for them, and so conversations took place prior to the formation of the partnership in which schools tried to identify common social need areas. They identified five areas: antisocial behaviour; improving community relations in a contested space; the impact of substance misuse; looking collectively at areas such as health, sexual health and sexual resilience; and appropriate and safe use of the internet and social media.
991. As a social needs-based programme, it was important for the schools to locate it in the curriculum because that is a school's core business. It ran from Key Stage 2 through to Key Stage 3, so it was a programme for pupils from age 8 to age 15. The programme was delivered on a shared basis, and it exposed young people to different cultural and religious practices along the way. It required the collaboration of teachers, principals and senior leaders in schools. With that, a partnership infrastructure was established to support the partnership. One thousand, one hundred and sixty-one pupils were involved, and 1,000-odd pupils moved between schools on a weekly basis for three years. To support that, there was an infrastructure of eight principals, three vice-principals, 35 teachers and an external primary coordinator.
992. What emerged out of that partnership? For me, it was about being able to provide contextual evidence of the practice of shared education; it was also an opportunity for us to identify effective collaboration. From a research perspective, the partnership was able to represent quite a number of perspectives, including pupils, teachers, school leaders and parents. It was also an opportunity for the primary voice to be heard. From what I understand, the primary voice in shared education is relatively quiet, so this was an opportunity to get primary schools' perspective across. The big

- thing was that it demonstrated social and educational impact. Bear with me. In terms of the social impacts, we are talking about encouraging the movement, as I said, of over 1,000 pupils and educators across contested-space settings. Research by Rosellen Roche in Queen's suggests that there is a thing called "bounded contentment".
993. It is the idea that, over generations, there is a reluctance to move between one another's communities in a contested-space setting. We are talking about communities such as Derry/Londonderry or north Belfast, which has been described as a patchwork quilt. There is a tendency, I think, for people to locate themselves in their own communities and not move. That was an important point. We had over 1,000 pupils, roughly 40 educators and hundreds of parents, moving between those spaces. It provided an opportunity for meaningful contact between participants from different cultural and religious backgrounds. We have evidence from the research that it reduced prejudices and challenged ethnic and denominational isolation. Social relationships began to form as well. Those social relationships are friendships between young people, and there are friendships, personal and professional, between teachers and school leaders. We also found evidence of that extending beyond the classroom; social media are a great way for young people to engage with one another outside the school environment. The partnership also connects schools in the community and makes stronger links between statutory and voluntary agencies.
994. As for educational impacts, the contested-space partnership established and supported a sustainable cross-sectoral partnership of schools in what is perhaps one of the most highly contested spaces in Northern Ireland. It developed a cross-sectoral teacher network, which is really important, and from that came personal development opportunities and capacity building. It also established a collaborative school leadership network. Some of our leaders described the role of principal as being quite lonely, and connecting eight principals and bringing them together was quite phenomenal. It provided regular and sustained education between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, as well as a unique opportunity to address social needs in the curriculum, between personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) and Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3.
995. Finally, the collaboration has led to school improvement.
996. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Tony, you said that the term "shared education" is now being widely used. Perhaps, we need a clear definition of shared education. You have provided a definition, but does it need to be refined? Have you had any conversations with the Department in the lead-up to it developing a policy paper on shared education?
997. **Professor Gallagher:** Joanne led the centre's work on formulating the definition, which partly reflects the international work that some of us have been involved in. Joanne might say a little about that. If you think about the definition in the ministerial advisory group (MAG), we are quite comfortable with that. The key thing is that shared education involves work between schools from different sectors focused on the curriculum, is sustained and regular, and tries to create new habits.
998. The tradition EMU approach was to have one-off projects that brought people together for a while to do something before scattering again. Some very worthy work has been done in recent years that is like that but on a more enhanced level. However, unless it works to establish sustainable and collaborative networks between people, it is very difficult to see how it can change practice in schools and classrooms. Unless you change what is happening in and between schools, there is no reason to imagine why anything else will change with attitudes, school improvement and all the rest of it.

999. Joanne, do you want to say anything about the definition in international work?
1000. **Professor Hughes:** The centre is involved in some international activity. We have been working for the last three or four years in Macedonia, for example, to help them to develop a model for shared education based on the Northern Ireland model. We have been working with the ministry of education there and senior policy officials.
1001. I do not know how much you know about Macedonia, but they have separate school systems for ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. That came out of their peace agreement: they formerly had integrated schools that have become separate. The kids in the ethnic Albanian schools are educated in Albanian, and the kids in the Macedonian schools are educated in Macedonian, so there is a language issue as well. The shared education model being developed there is looking at aspects of the curriculum where there is minimal verbal instruction and where the kids can come together. Sometimes, those separate schools work in the same building and the kids attend them in shifts.
1002. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Have you had conversations with the Department on drafting policy?
1003. **Professor Gallagher:** Yes, we are talking to members of the inspectorate who are developing a framework for evaluating and assessing the impact of the Delivering Social Change programme, which is likely to be formally announced quite soon. We talk to officials from the Department all the time, and they talk to many different people. One of the things that we been impressed by has been their willingness to talk to a wide range of voices to inform and shape the initiative.
1004. We are saying to them that there is not a one-size-fits-all model here or a fixed rigid template. They need to give teachers a degree of responsibility and autonomy to allow them to help to shape things, and they have to allow the programme, the assessment frameworks and the evaluation frameworks to be adaptable so that they recognise that we are dealing with problems for which there is no easy solution. Part of the challenge for everyone involved is to work together to find new solutions. That means having a certain tolerance of failure, because you can learn from that. That is the only way that you will create innovative solutions. We have talked to them quite a lot and continue to do so, and we are very impressed by the officials and inspectors and their preparedness and willingness to take on board the evidence that Miles, Joanne and others are feeding into the system.
1005. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you very much for your presentation. It is good to see you again.
1006. I am afraid that technology has let me down once again, so I have not read the full paper because I have only had it since 10.00 am. Your shared education project is on a roll. I cannot deny that a lot of money is being thrown at it, and hopefully a lot of benefit will come out of that. I cannot quite understand the perception of hostility or a level of hostility that is developing towards the integrated sector. I see it in your presentation, Joanne:
- “Research has shown that integrated education, whilst an effective mechanism for relationship building, has only limited appeal”.*
1007. That flies in the face of every poll I have seen for the last five years. You go on to say that, where integrated schools are an option, the overwhelming majority of parents are:
- “opting to send their children to separate schools.”*
1008. Again, that flies in the face of the expressed desire of parents, who frequently say that if there was an integrated school available they would either send their children to it or at least consider sending their children to it. Why did you make a comment like that?
1009. **Professor Hughes:** Although the surveys have been saying for many

- years that between 60% and 80% of parents favour integrated education, that is not reflected in their behaviour. Even in cases where it is an option, there are integrated schools that are undersubscribed.
1010. **Mr Lunn:** There are undersubscribed schools right across every sector and right across Northern Ireland. It was my idea to phrase the review as being about “shared and integrated”, not “shared versus integrated”. Do not think that I am on a mission of some kind, because I am not. When there are only 62 integrated schools out of a total of 1,150, clearly there are going to be a lot of situations where there is no integrated school available. That is part of the problem. It is not that parents who would like to send their children somewhere like that choose not to, they just cannot do so geographically.
1011. **Professor Hughes:** When you have 80% of respondents to a survey saying that they would send their children to an integrated school, you would expect every integrated school to be bursting, and that is not the case. We have no hostility at all towards integrated education; in fact, a lot of our research evidence has endorsed integrated education as a way of promoting better relations between Protestants and Catholics. Maybe Miles wants to say something about that.
1012. **Professor Hewstone:** In the various presentations that we have made, both in our articles to peer-reviewed journals and our presentations to teachers, we have always emphasised that integrated education is what we are trying to match. There is so much good practice there that we are also trying to achieve. You need to make sure that if you offer anything else as an alternative, you do at least as well as the existing provision. We are also always open to the idea that, however carefully we have measured and however much research we have done, there may be some measurement that we have not used yet that might just show that there is additional effectiveness of integrated schools. That is why we are doing the
- work on social networks: we thought that it was possible that the integrated education would be promoting these really mixed, integrated social networks of children — in other words, getting to some deeper level of integration that other schools have not yet reached. Our eyes are very much open.
1013. **Professor Gallagher:** We have talked often about the apparent conundrum between opinion poll evidence and the reality. My sense is that when people are responding to an opinion poll they are offering a preference in an abstract sense. I have had lots of conversations with lots of parents in lots of different situations, and whenever parents are making a choice about a school for their child, it is no longer an abstract choice: they are choosing between a number of very specific schools in their very specific area, and so the reputation of local schools becomes very important. That is why, in any particular area, they might prefer, in an abstract sense, a particular type of school. However, whenever they are choosing between three or four actual schools, one of those schools has, in and of itself, a good reputation, and that is what they choose, and that is not always an integrated school.
1014. As Joanne said — just to reinforce the point, in case it needs reinforced — I have always been a strong supporter of the integrated sector and work with it. Integrated schools, by and large, are great. However, even the most optimistic target is for 10% of the school-age population, and we are concerned about the other 90% to try to ensure that everyone in the school system has the opportunity of as strong and positive an experience as possible.
1015. **Mr Lunn:** You lead me on to my next question. However, before I get to that, what do you think about NICIE’s statement last week? If you think of the shared education programme in terms of sociological benefit, its starting point is your end point. It is starting from where you would like to be.



1016. **Professor Gallagher:** Not necessarily. We may have a range of views on this, but my personal view is that we think that the collaborative model provides an opportunity to work with schools and allows them to maximise the benefit to the young people in terms of cohesion, qualifications, standard of experience and all the rest of it. Once we talk to schools about the collaborative model, many of them are very enthusiastic about it. Virtually every school that we have worked with has found it to be a very positive experience and likes to run with it and, with only a limited level of support, is prepared to do some amazing things. At some point in the future, schools may decide that it is working so well that they will want to keep it like that, or they may decide at some point in the future that it is working so well that they want to become an integrated school. However, I do not want to prescribe any future for that; that is up to schools. From my point of view, we can do something now that they find valuable, and in future they can decide what is best for them going forward, but that is a matter for the schools. I do not want to say that this is all about getting to a particular end point.
1017. **Professor Hughes:** Just to follow on from that, our position is theory-informed and evidence-based. It is the idea that we know that sustained contact works to change attitudes and behaviours, and there are a range of opportunities in our education system to promote that — shared education being one of them. We are not, as Tony said, prescriptive as to where we see this ending up.
1018. **Mr Lunn:** Just bear with me, Chairman. Tony, you said that the most optimistic rejection for integrated education would be about 10% of the school population. However, in your paper you say that:
- “officially designated integrated schools account for only around 4% of overall provision.”*
1019. That is not right.
1020. **Professor Hughes:** The schools, not the number of pupils attending them, are 4%.
1021. **Mr Lunn:** Surely the figure you should be working on is the number of pupils — the percentage of the school population.
1022. **Professor Hughes:** That figure only applies to the schools in the report, and we checked it before we provided the information.
1023. **Mr Lunn:** It am even quickly trying to work out what 62 is as a percentage of 1,150, and I think that you will find that it is more than 4%. It is getting more like 6%. Just for the record, the correct figure of the school population in officially designed integrated schools is touching 7% of the pupils. Is your 10% schools or pupils, Tony?
1024. **Professor Gallagher:** The IEF’s target is 10% of pupils.
1025. **Mr Lunn:** Pupils, yes.
1026. If it is 7% at the moment, that does not include the naturally integrated schools — we all know where they are and who they are — that are not officially designed but are effectively very much shared schools with a healthy population that could easily qualify for integrated if they cared to apply for that status, but there is no need for them to do that. If you add those in, then you come towards the figure that we often quote, which is that about 90% of our pupils are educated solely with their own co-religionists. That means that you have already got that 10% that you are —
1027. **Professor Gallagher:** It is the IEF’s target, not mine.
1028. **Mr Lunn:** Well, I know, but you quoted it. I always end up sounding hostile to what you are trying to do, and I am not, honestly. I hope you accept that.
1029. **Professor Gallagher:** Miles can talk about the schools that are mixed without necessarily being within the integrated framework.
1030. **Professor Hewstone:** I just want to make a point about the importance of studying integrated schools and comparing them with other kinds of schools. In a situation where you have choice, there is always the risk that

- you have self-selection effects, so that certain kinds of people choose to go to certain kinds of schools and they choose to avoid certain kinds of schools. There is always the risk that you start from a lower baseline in an integrated school because the kind of parents who choose to send their children to those kinds of schools may be the people whose attitudes we are less interested in changing. I am not taking anything away from the good work that is done in integrated schools. They will always suffer from a self-selection bias that other schools will not.
1031. **Professor Hughes:** We have done some analysis of mixed schools, or those schools that have between five and 10% of children from the other religious group, and super-mixed schools, which have more than 10%. Our findings for those schools are that there are very effective outcomes in terms of contact, but I am fairly confident that those schools would not want to transfer to integrated status. They are avowedly, particularly in the Catholic sector —
1032. **Mr Lunn:** I am not advocating that they do.
1033. **Professor Hughes:** OK. I thought you said —
1034. **Mr Lunn:** That is perhaps the best form of integration: natural integration based on demographics, geography and history. That is fine. But again I cannot help thinking, Chair, that if we are sitting here in 20 years' time, we will be having much the same discussion. Hopefully there will be a much greater input from the shared education movement, but we will still have Catholic maintained, controlled, integrated, Irish-medium. Hopefully all of them will have a fair degree of sharing, and the integrated sector will be twice as big as what it is now.
1035. **Professor Gallagher:** We hope that in 20 years' time we are in the situation where the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way schools work have changed and schools no longer think that they can do all the things they need for their pupils by themselves, but work with other schools. That will be better for the schools, better for the young people and, the evidence suggests, better for the local communities as well. Hopefully it will contribute to the development of a more cohesive and shared society.
1036. **Mr Lunn:** Always interesting.
1037. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you. From a personal perspective, I went to a single-sex — probably a very much traditional single-identity — school and moved to what is now a super-mixed school. I moved to Methody. It was really for educational outcomes and also because there were boys there. That was probably — *[Laughter.]* — to be perfectly honest. It did prepare me for life afterwards. When I went to Queen's it was not quite the shock that it would have been, and also when I entered the real world — whether this is the real world or not. *[Laughter.]* Certainly, there were positives for me.
1038. The whole idea of super-mixed — it is an interesting term. It is probably quite apt, but I am not sure that I would consider it to be integrated.
1039. **Mr Craig:** I welcome you all to the Committee. I made a point of welcoming my old university earlier. There again, there was a bit of strange shared education in our household, because my wife went to Queen's and I went to the University of Ulster. I do not think either university encouraged that, but it just happened naturally.
1040. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You are dissolving your own boundaries there.
1041. **Mr Craig:** Natural sharing, Trevor. When I look at education right across Northern Ireland, I see something quite interesting. The controlled sector has examples of all types of schools from all sectors under that umbrella. Should we be using that sector as a bedrock for future sharing?
1042. **Professor Gallagher:** We are in a situation where we have a range of different sectors and management types. I think that is unlikely to change

- radically in the near future. If it does not change radically, the question is what we can do to enhance and improve the experience of young people in the schools. That is where I think the collaborative model works, because you can have schools from different sectors working together.
1043. When CCMS was here it pointed to four examples of maintained schools that have mixed enrolment. There are some controlled schools — as you say, there is an Irish-medium controlled school; there are controlled integrated schools; there are controlled schools that have a mix because of circumstances. There is a variety of different types of schools, and we will not find the single type that works. If we can get schools to work together collaboratively in the way that we have done, then we can get a very quick win for everyone. If that becomes the mainstream experience for young people, as the Chair was saying, then we can look at that sort of issue in the future and see if schools want to change their structural arrangements in any way. That will be a matter for schools, parents and teachers.
1044. **Mr Craig:** Tony, there is another thing that I can see. When you look at where all Departments are going financially in the next three to four years, sharing, and not only across sectors, is really important. To be honest with you, I do not think the sectors will be that terribly important when you look at how rural and physically isolated some of our schools actually are and their inability to deliver a wide enough curriculum. Do you see huge opportunities there for sharing of education, whether it is internally within sectors or more broadly across sectors, in the survival of those smaller units, which mean an awful lot to those local communities?
1045. **Professor Gallagher:** Absolutely. We have been working with quite a number of primary schools, in particular small rural primary schools, that in and of themselves face real challenges in trying to deliver the curriculum, but when they work with their neighbours from another sector, then collectively they can often do that. In those situations the schools very often do not want to explore an integrated option at this point. Maybe they will at some time in the future. In that situation, collaboration and sharing are a way of benefiting all the kids, helping to secure that important social institution in a rural community, and helping to keep the community together. There are many places where we know that that is a viable option, and we hope that the leaders of the sectors and the Department see that.
1046. **Dr Duffy:** Somewhere like Ballycastle is a perfect example in view of the broad curriculum that they offer together. Alone, it is an entirely different picture.
1047. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you very much for your presentation this morning. I think there is so much more sharing going on than we ever realised. As my time in this job has progressed, I have come to appreciate how small rural schools are gaining from sharing expertise. Even larger primary schools in my area are sharing expertise across the divide and gaining expertise in areas. There is more integrated or shared education than previously expected. It is integrated with a small “i”, I should say.
1048. You have said in your report that there are some groups that are less inclined to be involved in sharing. What groups are these, and are they defined by socio-economic rather than ethno-religious factors?
1049. **Professor Hughes:** I am not sure that we said that there were groups less inclined to be involved in sharing. What we were saying was that the outcomes are different for different groups depending on contextual variables. For example, some of our quantitative research has shown that in areas that are very divided, like North Belfast, there are some positive outcomes from sharing, but they are maybe not as extensive as they might be for schools in Limavady or Ballycastle or other more mixed environments. It was about outcomes in relation to context.
1050. **Dr Duffy:** We have schools at different levels of sharing, and they are engaged

- with each other in entirely different ways. It is entirely contextual. In some regards, we have schools that would be described as organic or emerging partnerships: they are at the very early stages. We also have partnerships across Northern Ireland that are heading towards some sort of symbiotic or almost interdependent relationship, as in Ballycastle. There is a spectrum of ways in which schools engage with one another.
1051. **Mrs Overend:** It goes back to your original question, which was interesting, about the definition of shared education and how it needs to encompass the wide variety, and that that is not a negative but a positive. We should encourage all levels of sharing and congratulate them. It is a work in progress, which changes over time.
1052. **Mr Lunn:** I am going to move away from my normal tack here to consider the acknowledged gap between what is produced by the best of our schools and the deficit at the bottom end of results. What potential do you think there is in sharing programmes for cooperation between the best of our grammar schools and other schools half a mile down the road producing the figure of 25% not even achieving five GCSEs? I get the impression that — I am sure that I have heard it from at least one representative of the grammar sector — they are not much interested in that. What is your experience of that so far? They should surely be able to give a helping hand to improve the overall situation.
1053. **Professor Gallagher:** Joanne has mentioned that some of the survey evidence suggests that there is a bit of tension between the possibility of grammar and secondary schools working collaboratively. I suspect that that is more related to broader policy contexts and people wanting to maintain demarcation lines and clarity. That is unfortunate, but I suspect that that is the explanation.
1054. If you look at the experience in England, where federation and collaboration have been on the agenda for quite a long time, it is largely focused on school improvement and strong schools supporting weaker schools to try to improve their practice. Indeed, there has been things in the news this week about public schools working with local authority schools as part of that process.
1055. There is plenty of evidence in many different places. That is one particular context, but there is also evidence of schools working together and teachers sharing a wider repertoire of experience and expertise as a way of helping teachers to change their classroom practice. That is what you need for school improvement to happen. Collaboration does that. It gives teachers a sustained regular network of expertise that they can dip into. That will always help.
1056. I think that you are absolutely right: there is the potential in an environment where there are fewer concerns about undesirable change. In that sort of context, schools can work together, share practice, expertise and experience, and broaden the repertoire of classroom skills that teachers are working with to improve things for everyone.
1057. **Professor Hewstone:** I make the point that, through some of our other work in another context in a particular large-scale European study that involved the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, we found positive benefits of mixing for ethnic minority immigrant children who are integrated into friendship networks with majority group children. If you can get the schools to collaborate at the right level, you can use the programme as a first step towards increasing the educational aspirations of children and then their educational performance. We intend to provide that at the end of our study. Our study will be a five-year longitudinal study and, at the appropriate point, we will be able to plug in the school grades and GCSE scores of children and see some of the hard outcomes of some of the mixing that we are involved in.
1058. **Dr Duffy:** As a practical example, we have schools across Northern Ireland that are involved in partnerships. I will

- give an example without identifying the schools. A school may have been struggling, and the inspectorate may have deemed that a certain department in that school is inadequate. As a result of the collaboration between a maintained school and a controlled school at a post-primary level, the maintained school, with its expertise in science, has been able to help another school pull its grade up from inadequate to outstanding.
1059. **Mr Lunn:** Was that a maintained grammar school?
1060. **Dr Duffy:** They are not grammar schools. I am leaving aside school type and am talking more about that idea of strong/weak. It is not so important that there is a sharing of expertise from one school that has the experience. When our schools come together, they often look for common and complementary need. Common needs are the types of need that both schools need, and complementary need is the idea of identifying where each school has skills. The idea of strong/weak is reasonably crude in that example, as the school that was struggling had an expertise in special needs and was able to help the other school in return. That is the type of relationship that we are essentially talking about.
1061. **Mr Lunn:** I cannot help thinking that the grammar schools could do a lot to help their image. They seem determined to cling to a system where they put children through these tests, which some of us despise, and the failures have to go to some other school. They could at least improve their image by trying to assist those schools. If they are not prepared to help the children, they could at least give them a helping hand. Anyway, that is my rant for today.
1062. **Mr Craig:** He used the F word.
1063. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Well done.
1064. **Mr McCausland:** I second that. Apologies, I had an appointment that I could not get out of this morning. I want to ask about the research and studies you have done on sharing and on children coming together from different backgrounds and traditions. If children come together from schools in the Catholic maintained sector and the controlled sector, they will probably come from different cultural traditions. Those who come from the maintained sector, particularly at secondary level, will come from a school at which they probably play Gaelic games, have the Irish language on the curriculum and probably have an Irish traditional music group. Therefore, there is strong cultural identity that may not be the same as in the controlled school. Do you see any issues arising from that?
1065. **Professor Gallagher:** My experience of controlled schools, particularly in rural areas, is that there is often a strong tradition of music, which is particularly centred around bands, such as pipe bands. I have been in schools in which kids practice playing the bagpipes, for example.
1066. I suspect that you are right to the extent that there is a probably a clearer or more tightly defined cultural framework in maintained schools. However, in our experience, that has not been a problem. What has tended to happen is that people have used that cultural difference as an opportunity to broaden pupils' experiences. There has been situations in which there have been discussions about remembrance in November, for example. That has broadened the experience for children from Catholic schools, who traditionally may not have been as connected to that, and has addressed some of the aspects of history and citizenship.
1067. Schools choose to use the opportunity of collaboration in different ways. They focus on different areas of the curriculum, and some of the issues are more directly related than others. That is OK, because the important thing is to bring people together in as many ways as possible. As Miles said earlier and Joanne's work demonstrates, once you have created that context, it provides an opportunity for you to start to address issues around difference. You will have

- built up a level of trust and can start to deal with some of the more challenging issues. That is when you start to get the evidence and when, I suggest, you will see a significant change to and improvement in the cohesive nature of our society.
1068. **Mr McCausland:** Do you not accept that remembrance, although hugely important, is not the counterpart to the other things?
1069. **Professor Gallagher:** Sure.
1070. **Mr McCausland:** Others whom I have spoken to about their experience of controlled schools would not have as fulsome a view of the extent of the musical and other traditions. I remember some years ago someone from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCEA) saying to me that, when it was organising an event, it was very easy to go to a Catholic maintained school to get a traditional music group. I think that there was a school up around Castledearg somewhere that had a pipe band and that there used to be a pipe band at Campbell College. Apart from the recent developmental work that has been done by the Ulster-Scots Agency to put music into schools, I do not know of any other schools, bar one, that have a band.
1071. **Professor Gallagher:** The school that I was in did not have a band, but some of the pupils played in a band and were allowed to practise in the school.
1072. **Mr McCausland:** My point is that, if a culture is excluded from schools, it is denied the validity of being part of the education system.
1073. **Professor Gallagher:** That makes an assumption that there is specific exclusion. I do not know that there is. Perhaps there is, but I do not know. I am not aware that there is.
1074. **Mr McCausland:** If a thing is not there, it has either been intentionally or unintentionally excluded.
1075. **Professor Gallagher:** It may be that there are others spaces available for it.
1076. **Mr McCausland:** I will not pursue the point, but I will just make an observation. For any cultural or linguistic expression across Europe — there are examples internationally — the two key things are to be part of the education system, which gives you validity and intergenerational passing-on, and to be part of the media.
1077. **Professor Gallagher:** In our first wave of shared education schools, a rural maintained secondary school developed a lot of activity with a network of controlled and maintained primary schools in its area. One of the unexpected benefits was not just the experience of the kids but the school starting to connect with all sorts of community organisations. The maintained school started to be used as a community resource for events, meetings and other activities. On at least one occasion, the Orange Order held something in the maintained school, because it had a good hall.
1078. I am a little bit vague because we have not come across this as a particular issue. However, that is an example of where the connections created across communities because of the collaborative relationships between schools have a community impact and help to provide opportunities for people to come together in ways that previously would not have happened at all.
1079. **Mr McCausland:** I have no objection to any of those things. That is good. However, even the fact that you say that you have not come across it as an issue is relevant. It is an issue that has been left in the “too difficult” drawer or forgotten about. I make the point that children going into a school have a basic human right to learn about the culture and the cultural expressions of the community from which they come. In many cases, as you say, the children play in a band outside school but that is not brought into the school. That almost delegitimises and marginalises it. To create a shared future and better relationships, that would be a good thing.

1080. **Dr Duffy:** Nelson, I am not exactly sure whether this is the type of thing that you want information on, but I go back to the partnership in Derry/Londonderry as a practical example. You mentioned culture and the arts. The children have a shared choir that operates both inside and outside the school. The partnership has engaged in quite a large drama piece, involving 150 children and nine schools across the city. That is an another expression of activity that happens both inside and outside the school. We have evidence of shared sports — rugby, Gaelic, and so on. The type of research that I do tends to be very focused on small groups of young people or on classroom observations. I am involved in observations where young people talk about their common identities, their accents, their language and their gender. Therefore, it is more than a conversation around culture. It is actually quite broad.
1081. **Mr McCausland:** What I am suggesting is that, if they are talking about their cultural identities, in some cases, one group of children may be coming forward with a cultural identity that they bring from the home into the school that is then reaffirmed and validated in the school, while the other children may be coming with a cultural identity that they have outside the school but that is almost left outside the school gates. That is the point. You are not getting a level playing field. There are two dimensions to it. There is the rights issue and then the relationship issue.
1082. **Professor Hughes:** I have written a paper on the issue, and I think that —
1083. **Mr McCausland:** Great. Give me the title and the details.
1084. **Mr Eastwood:** It disagrees with everything that you have said. *[Laughter.]*
1085. **Professor Hughes:** The maintained sector is the Catholic sector, and there is a strong attachment to cultural traditions, and so on, within it. The controlled sector is open to everyone and presented in that way, so it is difficult to attach it to particular traditions or a particular culture.
1086. **Mr McCausland:** Only if you approach it on a school basis rather than on a child-centred basis. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) contains commitments that children have the right to learn about the culture of the community and the home from which they come and that that has to be done on the basis of equity so as not to discriminate between children. Therefore, what is available to children in one education sector should be available to those in another sector. It is an important issue. It is a rights issue. You also get a better relationship if children come together. If you can give me the details of the paper, I will be delighted to read it.
1087. **Professor Hughes:** I will send it to you.
1088. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you. It was worth coming today.
1089. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Nelson is happy.
1090. Finally, I want to know whether you have done any research around the Youth Service.
1091. **Professor Hewstone:** Do you mean outside of school, with a particular focus? I am not quite sure what you are getting at.
1092. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There are opportunities for sharing with youth clubs, and so on, as well. I was just wondering whether any research had been done around the level of engagement and sharing in communities.
1093. **Professor Gallagher:** The closest that we have got to it may be the Contested Spaces programme work in Derry/Londonderry. One of the key things there was not just collaboration between schools but collaboration with statutory and non-statutory agencies. A focus on the particular use of a sector has not at this point been a focus of the work that I have been involved in.

1094. **Professor Hughes:** Other projects are looking at that. There is the investigating links in achievement and deprivation (ILiAD) project, which is investigating links between education and disadvantage. The research is ongoing. It is due to report to OFMDFM in March, I think.
1095. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Any research would be quite interesting. There is a focus on schools, but, once the young people leave school at 3.30 pm, what level of engagement is there after that? We might find that, in some areas, it is very high, and there are probably some very good models, whereas, in other areas, engagement could be encouraged.
1096. **Professor Gallagher:** There is a very long tradition of work in the youth sector. It is a different type of pedagogy. There is often evidence of a greater commitment to addressing issues around reconciliation and cohesion and to using more creative methodologies to do so. One thing that has always been identified as important is its voluntarist nature. Therefore, it can sometimes work a little bit better than similar work in schools, because the young people have the choice of going to such settings, whereas the engagement was compulsory for them in school. The University of Ulster did some interesting work on that. It trained youth workers and teachers together to try to create some synergy between them. That was successful to a degree, but, because they are from two different professions, there remained some degree of professional tension, and I guess that that is still the case.
1097. **Professor Hughes:** It goes back to the point about how difficult it is for our teachers, given the expectation that we have of them, to address some of those controversial issues in the context of the classroom. They do not receive training for it and are currently educated in separate teacher training colleges, so we need to think about whether they will have the capacity or will to do it.
1098. **Professor Hewstone:** Members of the Committee may or may not be aware of work on the national citizenship scheme in England. It is an idea that David Cameron is very keen on. I am not recommending it for that reason, but it is a great idea for bringing together people from different backgrounds, and not just from different ethnic and racial backgrounds but, deliberately, from different social and economic backgrounds. The scheme gets young people from school who volunteer to take part in activities outside school. They take part in a four-week programme that starts off with some outward-bound activities and they then get some real-world experience of, for example, how to market a product. People from business are involved, and there is something aimed at helping the young people find employment at the end. They also do some community charity work in a team of 12 and get to know one another. Depending on their team, they get to know people from a particular subset of other groups. We are in the middle of an evaluation of that work. I say that to give you faith in the idea. Nobody is recommending that the people of Northern Ireland take this brave step on their own as if there were no evidence ahead of them.
1099. There are lots of other examples. People mentioned collaborations. We have collaborations in South Africa and have done similar work in Malaysia and many other countries, and there is a huge evidence base that suggests that, if you bring people together and create the conditions for positive contact, the outcomes will be positive.
1100. **Dr Duffy:** Although this is not specifically about the Youth Service, we have some evidence of how schools can engage more broadly in the community and build stronger links to voluntary and statutory agencies. Some of the partnerships that I have worked with have made links with youth clubs, for example, whereby people will use youth clubs in each other's communities. We have evidence of city councils having become involved with schools, and there have been stronger links with the PSNI, voluntary agencies, agencies such as the Child



- Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, other education groups, community wardens, Churches and historical sites and settings. There is almost a community development element built into some partnerships.
1101. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Lunn wishes to come back for a very short question.
1102. **Mr Lunn:** I want to go back to Nelson's point about the cultural expression in various types of school. He started off on the musical side of it. As you will know, I have a musical interest. I also go to a lot of schools. I always ask them, "What is the extent of music interest in the school?". Without exception, nowadays — it gladdens my heart — there has been a resurgence in the teaching of music and the teaching of instruments, and schools have a band, a traditional music group or whatever. It is right across the board. I cannot but think that that is an area in which there is real scope for collaboration, because music teachers are sometimes contracted in rather than permanently employed and can teach in more than one school at a time. It is really good stuff. I do not want to cross swords with Nelson —
1103. **Mr McCausland:** Oh, go on.
1104. **Mr Lunn:** — but you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that a controlled school is for everyone and is almost the equivalent of an integrated school —
1105. **Mr Eastwood:** Not when it has British Army cadets in there.
1106. **Mr Lunn:** — and then ask why we need integrated schools, while wanting the controlled school to have a Protestant ethos to it. It may come down to the instruments. Nelson, you want them to be taught the flute and the side drum, whereas they are actually being taught orchestral instruments and proper music.
1107. **Mr McCausland:** I find that many orchestras have drums and flutes. They are musical instruments. I was not going to come back in, but I will now. *[Laughter.]*
1108. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Through the Chair, of course.
1109. **Mr McCausland:** I am grateful to Mr Lunn for opening the door. I am sure that you will be generous, Chair. One of the best examples of good sharing that I came across was when pupils were having fife and drum classes in the Boys' Model. They were able to bring their fife and drum group together with the traditional music group from Bearnageeha. They performed separately and then played certain tunes together, but they could do that only because there happened to be a group from a particular tradition in each of the schools to come together. If you have only one group, it does not work. That is the issue. Trevor raised a point about controlled schools. If it is child-focused, the cultural mix and cultural provision and accommodation in a school in one area, depending on the community that it serves, will be different from that in a controlled school in another area. It will entirely depend on the community that it serves, but the children going into the school bring the right with them. It is not something that they leave at the door. It is a human right.
1110. **Professor Gallagher:** The Boys' Model, Bearnageeha and Ashfield Boys' School were also involved in the Belfast Cuchullains and played hurling and shinty with Scottish shinty teams. It is used in interesting ways in sport as well.
1111. **Mr McCausland:** I think that the music example was a better expression of cultural sharing. I have not seen too many shinty teams around the Shankill recently.
1112. **Professor Gallagher:** There were some interesting games in Scotland with the shinty teams.
1113. **Mr McCausland:** Yes. They can stay there.
1114. **Mr Kinahan:** Sorry that I was not here for half the meeting. Have you considered having a matrix or a step-by-step continuum from no sharing to sharing to totally integrated or having sets of examples that everyone can

follow so that you are pushing sharing, all the while knowing that everyone is at different points?

1115. **Professor Gallagher:** There is a continuum, yes. The inspectors have picked up on that and are using it as part of the framework that they are organising. We are saying to the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) that a continuum is useful, because it gives you a guideline for where people might be at different stages. However, do not assume that everything moves at the same speed and do not assume that it is a simple linear model in which you cannot do the third step unless you have done the second step, because our experience is that it is much more organic than that. The inspectorate is using that as part of its framework, and that is very useful.
1116. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
I thank you for your time and for your presentation. If there is other information that you would like to send to us, we will be very willing to accept it.

## 26 November 2014

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Antoin Moran	<i>Ballyhackett Primary School</i>
Mrs Alison McConnell	<i>Carr's Glen Primary School</i>
Professor Roger Austin	<i>University of Ulster</i>

1117. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome you to the Committee; thank you very much for joining us. Professor Austin, you can begin by introducing your colleagues and making an opening statement. Members will follow that with questions.

1118. **Professor Roger Austin (University of Ulster):** Good morning. Thank you very much for the opportunity to talk to you about the research that we have been doing. I thought it was important to bring with me two teachers who have been involved in our work so that you can hear, from the chalkface, exactly how this works.

1119. You have a copy of the summary document. The Dissolving Boundaries programme has been running for 15 years and is a North/South programme. It has offered us some very interesting data about the way that you can use technology to link schools together, combined with face-to-face contact. This evidence might be particularly interesting for your Committee in the context of thinking about ways that you can develop shared education so that it reaches potentially every child,

even those in the most geographically isolated schools.

1120. I started this paper by simply noting that there is a challenge. According to even the Department of Education's figures, around 20% of schools have had no involvement in any form of shared education. The presentation is saying that this is one way we might be able to reach that group while, at the same time, offering schools that are already engaged in some face-to-face contact an additional means of strengthening and deepening the partnership.

1121. When I use the term "blended learning", I am talking about the mixture of long-term online contact over a year with face-to-face contact. I stress that not all of this is online. We think that there is a real value in using both face-to-face and online connection.

1122. The Dissolving Boundaries programme was very substantial. There was a base from special schools, primary schools and post-primary schools, over 15 years, with 50,000 young people, 2,500 teachers and 570 schools. In other words, the evidence from this work is substantial. You may know this, but I will say for the record that the Dissolving Boundaries programme was funded by Belfast and Dublin's Education Departments but managed by Ulster University and our colleagues in Maynooth.

1123. When we sat for a moment and said, "After 15 years' work and all that investment, what exactly have we learned that might be of value to the system?", it seemed that there were some key lessons. I am going to invite Alison and Antoin to add their points. I stress that whatever recommendations your Committee might come up with, I know that you will be conscious of the fact that, in the end, if the teachers are not on board and not supportive, it is not going to work. It is partly for that reason that I am pleased that my

- colleagues are from different types of schools. They will tell you more about where they are teaching. Teachers are central to the delivery of any of this. We found that there was no substitute for bringing the teachers from the two schools together and allowing them to spend time learning the technology together and then saying, "How are we going to plan a programme of work that is going to engage our respective classes?"
1124. Antoin, would you like to add to what I have said on that?
1125. **Mr Antoin Moran (Ballyhackett Primary School):** I am principal of Ballyhackett Primary School in Castlerock. I have been in post for the past 11 months. My school is presently in shared education partnership with Castleroe Primary School in Coleraine. We have been sharing education with them since 2009. We were part of the original Primary Integrating/Enriching Education (PIEE) cohort, and we are now funded through Queen's University, Belfast. My previous school was the Holy Family Primary School in Magherafelt. In my role as year 5 teacher there, I was also Dissolving Boundaries coordinator. That is where I have linked in with Roger's programme. I took part in the Dissolving Boundaries programme from 2007 to 2014, when it finished. That was seven years in total.
1126. Through completing my master's degree from the University of Ulster in 2010, I produced a research paper entitled, 'Dissolving Boundaries programme: a revised curriculum perspective'. The type of blended approach that the Dissolving Boundaries programme promoted produces key benefits. I found a significant enhancement of pupils' ICT skills over and above the pupils who were not involved in the project. Through my research, I surveyed the participating teachers. I also did two case studies. I found that the Dissolving Boundaries programme complemented perfectly the revised curriculum, as it was in 2010, especially in a cross-curricular sense. It also gave the opportunity for us as teachers to meet the requirements of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The work that we do fits in well with that and allows us to tick that box, so to speak, as regards assessment opportunities within primary education.
1127. Dissolving Boundaries also provides a strong purpose and context for the children's learning. Through my work, I have found that it improves pupils' motivation, especially that of boys and pupils who have significant barriers to their learning. ICT is of benefit in communication, specifically. For example, I taught an autistic boy who struggled to communicate verbally. His parents came to me and said that he loved videoconferencing, because he spoke into the camera rather than to a person's face. He struggled with that and could not do it. He was able to talk into the camera because he did not feel the pressure to communicate face to face. That is a simple example that shows the power of technology, if it is used correctly, in education.
1128. **Professor Austin:** Can I come back to you in a minute? Alison, on the point of the importance of teachers coming together, are you an ICT specialist?
1129. **Mrs Alison McConnell (Carr's Glen Primary School):** No, I am definitely not an ICT specialist. It pushed me and pushed my boundaries with ICT. I was so enthusiastic about the project that it made me want to come to grips with videoconferencing, and, when the children were Moodling each other, which is a bit like emailing, I tried to follow their string of thought. They were happy to go ahead with it, and it was a challenge to me at the start. Then each year, as I became comfortable, another teacher was brought in. On occasion, they would call me for advice about how to set up the videoconferencing. It required a lot of planning at the beginning with your partner or twin teacher to make sure that it went ahead.
1130. **Professor Austin:** I think that that connects to the next point, which is in paragraph 3.3. Everything that took place in Dissolving Boundaries

- was rooted in the curriculum. In other words, we did not at any time say that we expected it to be done as an extracurricular activity after school or at lunchtime. It should be enriching what people are doing already.
1131. Obviously, the curriculum in Northern Ireland is not the same as the curriculum on the other side of the border, and that presented some challenges for teachers. However, its application for shared education will be a much easier process, since we all have the same curriculum.
1132. One thing that I would like to stress about paragraph 3.3 is that, after the teachers completed their day's training, they each signed up to a learning agreement, which was, in effect, a form of contract for what they would do for the whole year. They kept a copy, their principals had a copy and the two universities had a copy. In other words, there was a process of ensuring that promises and agreements made at the time were followed through.
1133. I would also stress the huge variety of projects that schools did. For example, there were enterprise projects, with two schools running mini companies together across the border; lots of projects to do with science, with children carrying out experiments in two schools; and projects in history, geography and English. The enterprise work, of course, connects very well into numeracy. The point that I want to make is that this is not confined to citizenship or any one element of the curriculum. It is potentially any part of the curriculum that the teachers agree that they can work on that forms the core of the work that is done.
1134. Do you want to add anything to that point?
1135. **Mr Moran:** I would emphasise the point that Roger made about good planning from the start. I have experience of both sides of the perspective through participating in Dissolving Boundaries and shared education, and there is a very similar approach with both. The first critical step in shared education is good planning with your partner school or teacher. In my new school, I am using experiences that I developed in Dissolving Boundaries in my new shared education partnership and using ICT to enhance the experience. I have already done that, and we have had shared teacher training through videoconferencing and shared lessons between pupils in both schools.
1136. The benefits that I see, and that I am aiming to implement in my new partnership, will also save money. Presently, we spend approximately £2,500 transporting pupils from one side of Coleraine to the other. At the very least, I would aim to cut that by a quarter by using videoconferencing and communicating online.
1137. **Professor Austin:** We will pick up on the question of costs in a minute. Alison, unless you want to say anything about paragraph 3.3, may I go on to paragraph 3.4?
1138. **Mrs McConnell:** Yes.
1139. **Professor Austin:** You might say that it all sounds like a great plan but ask where the evidence is that it makes any difference to the children who take part. In the coloured version of the document, you will find a list of academic references, including one to a book that came out last year. The evidence is strong of the impacts on young people. Even a year after they had stopped their participation in Dissolving Boundaries, they still showed that they were more open, curious and interested in diversity than children in the same schools who had not taken part. That is an important finding for us.
1140. As Antoin said, we need to bear it in mind that, for many of these youngsters, the idea of communicating with a distant audience is enormously motivating. They are producing work not just for their teachers but that other children in another school will look at. In many instances, teachers reported that that meant that pupils took a great deal more care over what they sent and how

- much they sent. In other words, the overall quality of information improved as a result of having that connection.
1141. Alison, do you want to say anything about the impact on your children?
1142. **Mrs McConnell:** They could log on to the Dissolving Boundaries website from home, and I found that some of them wanted to do that. I found posts from 4.00 pm, 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm, so they were really motivated to keep the link going. It links so well into the ICT curriculum, in which it is difficult to create a meaningful exchange. However, this was a really meaningful exchange between children.
1143. **Professor Austin:** I am sure that you know this, but CCEA has an expectation that all schools make sure that their pupils undertake a range of assessed ICT tasks. Those are grouped under five Es — explore, exhibit, evaluate etc. One of those is E for exchange. There is an expectation that they will use ICT to exchange with somebody else. That is the one area that some schools struggled with unless they had a partnership with another school.
1144. **Mr Moran:** The beauty of this type of approach is that it relates to the key fact that ICT is now a cross-curricular skill. It is not a subject on its own, and as a teacher, you are expected to use ICT through all your other subjects. This approach is exactly how ICT is used; it is used as a vehicle to support children's learning in a cross-curricular sense.
1145. **Professor Austin:** If it is OK, Madam Chair, we will press on to what we have learned about how to manage something like this. Paragraph 3.5 deals with lessons for programme coordination.
1146. The university took the lead, but I really want to emphasise the fact that we could not have done this had it not been for a very strong partnership with C2k, which of course provides all the hardware for all the schools, and CCEA, with which we worked very closely to ensure that the work we did was appropriate for the ICT assessment tasks. We also had the real benefit of advisers in the education and library boards nominating schools to take part. We felt blessed to have such a strong partnership. That meant that we were able to have a very wide range of schools, from special schools, Irish-medium schools and primary schools. Every type of school that there is in Northern Ireland was represented in Dissolving Boundaries.
1147. I want to briefly discuss paragraph 3.6 and the practicalities from the point of view of programme management. The university employed two staff, and 15% of my time was protected to direct the programme. I want to underline the final sentence:
- “Teachers felt strongly that there was a need for ‘third party experts to train, support and encourage teachers in this specific area of education’.”*
1148. I make that point because I am aware that there has been some suggestion that money for shared education should simply go to schools and that they should be invited to do what they want to do. I think that we should reflect carefully on whether third parties should play the kind of role that the university played in supporting what happened.
1149. Paragraph 3.7 is about costs. We gave a grant of £350 to every school towards the cost of a face-to-face meeting. That was never enough to cover all the costs, and what has impressed us is the way in which the schools either covered the rest of that from their own resources or invited children and parents to contribute. Teachers who completed the agreed work programme were given a grant of £500 in the first year, which reduced to £200 for subsequent years. That was a way of ensuring that, when we had trained teachers in the first year, we kept them in play; that we sustained this, so that it was not a meteorite flashing through the sky briefly and then fizzling out. It was a way of ensuring that the expertise that was being built up in the schools was sustained. The key thing is that the average cost of taking part was £75 per annum per pupil. I am not sure what other figures you have,

- but, for us, that looked like exceptionally good value for money.
1150. The final section from us is this: what are the possible implications for shared education? We have reviewed all the research and policy work that has been done up to now, and it is fair to say that most of the energy has gone into bussing children from one site to another. Of course, there is a place for that. In our view, insufficient attention has been paid to the role of ICT. I underline the point that every school in Northern Ireland already has all the equipment that they need to work together. It is there and provided through C2k. Broadband is there, videoconferencing is there, and so is the virtual learning environment. All that it needs is a good purpose to use it. This kind of approach uses the existing ICT infrastructure in a cost-effective way, and the skills that the children are learning in working with others who are a little bit different are not just good for shared education but are very important in the context of developing the kind of skills that employers want. I think that there is a real connection to the broader employability agenda. Antoin, I think that you wanted to say something on those two points.
1151. **Mr Moran:** I agree with Roger about the employability skills that employers are looking for. Another key point about the programme is that it was specifically done in group tasks. The children were divided into groups in both schools, and a key benefit that I saw was the interaction between the groups from school to school but also in the group in the classroom situation.
1152. **Professor Austin:** Thanks, Antoin. Every school in Northern Ireland has been sent a copy of the document. This year, the University of Ulster is running a prototype of what could be developed. It is called ePartners. It will include Alison's school. It includes students from the university going into the schools to act as a mentor, and the model is using technology to connect schools, with a face-to-face encounter. I have to say that our capacity in ePartners is limited in the sense that the funding comes through widening access, and that means that we can work only with schools that meet particular criteria in terms of economic and social need. I make the point that Antoin's school would not be allowed in but Alison's would. We would very much like to be in a situation where we had the funds to broaden this approach to recruit a much larger number of schools.
1153. Colleagues, thank you very much for listening to that opening presentation from us. We are very happy to take questions.
1154. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation and also for the paper that you supplied to the Committee. The reports that we have seen are all very positive about Dissolving Boundaries. Why did the funding essentially end in 2014?
1155. **Professor Austin:** You probably need to ask the Department of Education that question. We were not really given a clear answer. They were working in partnership with Dublin. If one can believe the rumours, civil servants in Dublin decided that 15 years was quite long enough, thank you, and that it was time to review not only Dissolving Boundaries but the European Studies programme, which had been running for an even longer time. I think that they wanted to take stock — to stop these programmes and have an opportunity to stand back and reflect on and review the best way forward.
1156. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have talked about the new prototype programme that you are looking at. But has that left a vacuum where you were once able to bring schools together, particularly through the ICT project —
1157. **Professor Austin:** Yes, it has.
1158. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** — and have those schools continued any relationship since then?
1159. **Professor Austin:** To a very limited extent. We know this because we encouraged them to continue. I think that this was an instance where the

- absence of a coordinating third party made it very difficult for schools.
1160. **Mrs McConnell:** Yes, I contacted my partner school when we heard that the funding was ending, but I have not heard back. I would have been keen to continue this, but what if something goes wrong with the videoconferencing? There would not have been a safe site for the children to communicate through. That would have been the first thing. We could have done the videoconferencing with the help of C2k, and they would have supported us in any problems with that. It is so important for teachers to get together at the beginning of the academic year, plan for the project and agree, as Roger said, a contract to go forward.
1161. **Mr Moran:** From a shared education standpoint, I know that my current school was getting money from the PIEE project, which then ran out. The whole point of the project was that it would be sustainable with or without funding, but when it comes down to it, the funding helps to make that partnership strong. I made a point previously about transport to and from schools. If we did not have that significant amount of funding, which we are very lucky to have at present through Queen's University, yes, we could continue the partnership, but it would be a shadow of what it possibly could be. I return to my previous point on the role of ICT. It can help to limit the amount of money that you need to spend.
1162. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Were this approach to be mainstream in a shared education programme, which elements of what you have done through Dissolving Boundaries do you believe are successful enough to be included in that type of programme?
1163. **Professor Austin:** The key things are to bring the teachers together to plan — obviously, there is a cost to that — and to ensure that the technology is available for them to use. There is a new videoconferencing piece of software called Collaborate. That is what we are going to use in ePartners, and the virtual learning environment (VLE) is Fronter. In ePartners, we will bring the teachers together in January. They will be trained in how to use Collaborate and Fronter. Those are the two crucial tools for the children to work together. That is the absolute minimum core that you need. You have to have time to bring the teachers together; the technology has to be in place; and, thirdly, all the evidence we have suggests that even a short face-to-face meeting, if it is seen as being connected to the work and to the online work, has a real, substantial benefit.
1164. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have very clear evidence of a project that worked. Has the Department approached you in preparation for policy development for the shared education Bill?
1165. **Professor Austin:** Indirectly. The inspector responsible for shared education has been to see us and attended a symposium that we ran to launch our Dissolving Boundaries pamphlet. I understand that she is offering advice to the Department of Education on future policy development. I think that she took the point that, of all the different approaches, a blended approach that includes ICT is really essential. How else would you reach all those outlying rural primary schools that would otherwise find it exceptionally difficult or very costly to meet up with other schools?
1166. **Mr Moran:** My present school is an example of the schools that Roger is talking about. In our most recent inspection report from September 2014, the inspectors reported that our shared education partnership was an exemplar of best practice. They also noted that not only was it beneficial for a school of our size but it was essential because of our rural and isolated location. We have a beautiful school in Castlerock that overlooks the sea from the top of a mountain. We are rural and isolated, but we have this link-up with Castleroe Castle Primary School, which has been backed up by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).
1167. **Mr Craig:** As far as I am concerned, Professor Austin, you are very welcome



- to the Committee, because you are from my old university.
1168. **Professor Austin:** Thank you.
1169. **Mr Craig:** I am fascinated by this topic. I am a technical person who loves this kind of thing. However, I can already see clear implications. There are area learning communities for A levels, and a big conundrum is how to provide a wide enough range of choices for pupils. The big issue for all the schools has always been transport for the children between the secondary schools. Do you agree that this has implications for circumventing that entirely? What would the additional costs be for a school? What technology do schools need, and what are the cost implications of bringing them up to that standard? Such costs could be offset against transport costs.
1170. **Professor Austin:** Thank you very much for that question. Everything in my paper, and everything that my colleagues have spoken about, concerns Key Stages 2 and 3. You are absolutely right. It is about building up a set of ICT skills among teachers and young people, which will really come into their own when we get to the 14–16 and 16–18 age groups in the form of better access to a wider range of examination courses. That is common practice in parts of Newfoundland because of the geographical situation. Research from Newfoundland indicates that there is no diminution in the overall performance of candidates who take courses online when they are still at school, and the big advantage is that, when they go to university, they are prepared to be much more autonomous and to fit better into the kind of learning experience that they encounter at university.
1171. In answer to your specific question about area learning communities — I hope that this is not heresy — you have to look at the whole of Northern Ireland and see where there is a need for an academic or vocational subject that cannot be met easily because only one or two pupils in many schools want to take that subject. If you were to follow the Newfoundland model, the answer is to create exemplary online resources first, which can be done in Fronter. You then need local support and backup, which, in my view, would be provided by the staff in the area learning communities. So it is a combination of having excellent online materials and local support in the area learning community. The costs would be relatively small. You would probably have to second teachers or experts to create the online content and then make it available for all the schools that wish to sign up for it.
1172. **Mr Craig:** I have no disagreement with what you are saying. Is there any resistance from teachers? I am thinking of teachers who have been in education for a lot longer than others. I think that, more than anything, it is a fear of new technology. In your experience of implementing this, did you come up against that?
1173. **Professor Austin:** It was an issue when we started. I began to do this kind of work in 1986. At that time, a number of teachers were fearful of technology. That is less and less the case, partly, of course, because every student who goes through teacher training at the moment, whether in Northern Ireland or elsewhere, gets substantial online and ICT experience. There is probably still some caution when it comes to public examinations. You probably know this, but an A level in moving image arts is being partly provided online, and it is very popular. Provided there is adequate support, I cannot see any reason why other subjects should not be treated in the same way.
1174. **Mr Craig:** This obviously brings a completely new concept to the whole principle of teaching, right across the board. It strikes me that younger teachers will accept it much more quickly than those who have been used to doing things in a different way. That is what I am trying to get at.
1175. **Professor Austin:** Interestingly, in Canada, they had to create a new type of teacher called an m-teacher — a mediating teacher. These teachers might

- not necessarily be subject specialists, but their job is to ensure that the pupils who are taking online courses get to the right place at the right time if there is a videoconference and log on. There was local support for pupils to be able to do this even if the teacher was not necessarily a subject specialist.
1176. **Mr Newton:** I apologise to Professor Austin because I have to go at 11.30 am. I thank you and your colleagues because you have made the paper report come alive. Your enthusiasm is spilling over into the Committee.
1177. There are certainly factors that need to be taken into account in the very positive work that you have done on shared education. I have two points. The first is about the limited face-to-face contact, because my concept of shared education means a lot of face-to-face contact between pupils. Secondly, if the work that you have done — I think that the Chair touched on this — were to be mainstreamed, what would the implications be?
1178. **Professor Austin:** As Antoin and Alison will tell you, the face-to-face contact in Dissolving Boundaries was often no more than pupils meeting for a day. I am still astonished that even such a small amount of face-to-face contact appeared to bring about a big surge in online activity immediately afterwards, not to mention the increase in the exchange of messages before the face-to-face contact. Our evidence suggests that even limited face-to-face contact seems to be hugely motivating when it is part of this extended year-long online working together.
1179. **Mrs McConnell:** There was definitely a build-up of relationships during the videoconferencing. To begin with, it was just their names, their favourite sports or something like that. However, pupils then saw that they had so many things in common. One year group decided to start playing their musical instruments. I just left them alone, and the children were saying, “Oh, I can do this”, and, on the other side, they were doing it back. They built up a relationship themselves through videoconferencing,
- which was almost like a real face-to-face relationship. It was great.
1180. **Mr Moran:** A key decision that we had to make at the start of each year when we were planning what we were going to do was when we would have a face-to-face meeting. Partnerships normally left it until the end of the year. One year, I decided to try it at the start of the year, and I found that that worked just as well. When my pupils met pupils from the other school, they knew their names. They were able to talk through their likes and dislikes and get a feel for one another. They then went online and were able to talk more to each other about what they were learning.
1181. **Professor Austin:** The key thing is to try to make sure that the face-to-face meeting does not happen at the very end when there is no opportunity to follow through. I hope that that answers your question.
1182. **Mr Newton:** What if it were to be mainstreamed?
1183. **Professor Austin:** It could be mainstreamed in a relatively manageable way in terms of cost. It does need a third party, and the University of Ulster would be very interested in continuing to play the role that it has played in this area of work. I do not foresee any reason why this approach could not connect every single school.
1184. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Thank you for your presentation. I agree about the insufficient focus on ICT across a number of sectors. That goes without saying.
1185. Reviews were conducted on Dissolving Boundaries. Solid reviews have been done, from which there has been positive feedback. One of the issues from the ETI/Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate (DESI) joint review in 2010-11 was to do with the programme being further linked with community relations through a greater use of online tools. Has there been any thinking on that? Has the programme

- adapted, or does it have a view on community relations?
1186. **Professor Austin:** Maeve, I want to make sure that I understand your question. Most of the work was on curriculum subjects, and you are saying that this did not always lead to the development of community relations.
1187. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** To be clear: the review stated that the work of the programme should be more closely linked with community relations.
1188. **Professor Austin:** Yes. As a result of that report, I made all the research data available to those responsible for community relations in all five boards. However, of course, we had to leave it up to them to decide how best to implement it. It is probably true to say that not everybody shared my enthusiasm for the way in which ICT and face-to-face work could be done together. So there is a great opportunity now, if I can put it that way.
1189. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** This question is probably slightly linked. In your presentation, you touched on the definition of shared education. Should shared education be defined simply as educational outcomes, or should societal benefits be included?
1190. **Professor Austin:** I think that it should be both. I am saying that, when we think about shared education, there is a real benefit in children from different communities coming together. So there should be benefits in the use of technology, benefits in the curriculum work and benefits for society, with a greater acceptance, respect and tolerance for difference.
1191. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** You said that it was a cross-border project, with schools engaging with schools that are further away. In my case, a school might be 10 minutes down the road. I am thinking specifically about obstacles that you may have encountered in the development of that all-Ireland cross-border project.
1192. **Professor Austin:** It is not a secret to say that some controlled schools were apprehensive about taking part, particularly at the beginning. They feared that parents might dislike what they were doing, even though they themselves could see lots of educational benefits. However, those anxieties often turned out to be groundless, and teachers and principals became very adept at drawing parents in and involving them, even to the extent of ensuring that parents came with the children if there was a face-to-face meeting on the other side of the border. I cannot say that everybody was instantly enthusiastic; some people had reservations. However, once they began to see the benefits, particularly the added motivation that they could see in their children when they came home, even sceptical parents turned out to be persuaded that this was a good thing.
1193. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** I am thinking about education as an area of cooperation and how this work can identify some of those all-Ireland cross-border working relationships with ICT, and how that can be flushed out in your work.
1194. **Professor Austin:** We have not been asked by the North/South Ministerial Council to reflect on what we have learned from Dissolving Boundaries. If we were asked, we would be very happy to go along, and we would probably take a copy of our pamphlet with us. The ending of the funding is a pity, and it has certainly left a gap in cross-border educational links. However, I am a pragmatist, and I see an immediate and pressing need to try to draw lessons from this experience that can help us all with shared education in Northern Ireland.
1195. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Has the external agency that you talked about — the third-party influence — been costed?
1196. **Professor Austin:** It is costed in the figure of £75 for each pupil. In other words, the budget has a certain amount of money to employ staff by the

- university and to provide grants to the pupils.
1197. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you very much for your presentation. It was very interesting. In your answer to Robin Newton's question about the level of contact, you perhaps pointed a way for us. For those of us who think that the jury is still out on the whole shared education project, the main objection would be the lack of potential societal benefit in that you transport your kids to another school for half a day, a couple of periods or whatever at quite a cost, and that is all the contact there is; it does not develop from there. The idea, therefore, that the kids get to know one another, even at a long distance in this case, and start to exchange and so on, is reassuring for me and the potential for the shared education programme. I do not want to start to advocate for integrated education, but they would say that their starting point is where the shared education programme is trying to get to in societal terms. That is at least a good pointer for us.
1198. **Professor Austin:** Thank you very much for that. This is a new model. When we put this book — 'Online Learning and Community Cohesion' — together last year, it was the first time that anybody had produced research globally on how to use the Internet in a way that builds community cohesion. The book has examples from Northern Ireland, the island of Ireland and the Middle East. It is a robust model. If it has something really going for it, it is the capacity to reach out to everybody. I would hate to think that shared education was available only for a few children who happen to be in geographical proximity to a certain school.
1199. **Mr Lunn:** Has there been more emphasis on primary rather than secondary level?
1200. **Professor Austin:** In Dissolving Boundaries, it was roughly 50:50, and, of course, there were also appreciable numbers of children in special schools. We ran ePartners last year, and it was also a mixture of primary and secondary.
- In some respects, it is a little easier — I hope that you do not mind me saying so — in primary schools, simply because a teacher has a class all day long. It is a little easier to fit in videoconferencing. If you are in secondary school and have only 40 minutes for history or maths and then have to go somewhere else for a videoconference, it is a bit more complicated. So there are some logistical difficulties in the post-primary sector. They are not insuperable, but it is more of a challenge.
1201. **Mr Lunn:** There is probably more concentration on a particular subject.
1202. **Professor Austin:** Yes, and the timetable is structured into short blocks of time.
1203. **Mr Lunn:** How much time do you spend each week in your two schools formally linking with another school?
1204. **Mrs McConnell:** It is hard to break it down in the course of a week. Some weeks, a lot of work might be done on it. We videoconference at least once a month — sometimes once a fortnight — and the children will have been Moodling —
1205. **Professor Austin:** That is, using the VLE.
1206. **Mrs McConnell:** It is a bit like texting or emailing each other.
1207. **Mr Lunn:** Sorry, what is a VLE?
1208. **Professor Austin:** Virtual learning environment. It is a safe area inside the Internet.
1209. **Mr Lunn:** OK, I've got it.
1210. **Mrs McConnell:** They will probably have been doing that every week, and some of them will have been doing it at home. Our projects were about an hour a week over the year.
1211. **Mr Moran:** My experience is very similar to Alison's. It was a cross-border project, and I emphasise again Roger's point that the curriculum in the South is structured differently to ours, and there are peaks and troughs in getting the two to match at the same time. So there may have been a surge of activity one month and then less activity, because

- something else was happening in the school down South. My experience of shared education is that, because it is the same curriculum in both schools, we do the same World Around Us topics, the teachers plan together, do the same lessons and evaluate together. It is much easier.
1212. **Mr Lunn:** I guess that, at primary level, it might be a case of trying to get the kids to stop doing it by time-limiting it. It sounds like fun.
1213. **Mr Moran:** Keeping the pupils focused is a difficulty, as is keeping it focused on the learning as such, but you cannot take away from the interactive element and building that friendship and relationship online.
1214. **Mr Lunn:** You have certainly given us a lot of food for thought.
1215. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Before we move to Mr Kinahan, I welcome the A-level politics students from Lurgan College to this morning's Committee. I hope that you enjoy your short time with us.
1216. **Mr Kinahan:** Apologies for not being here at the beginning of your presentation. I found your evidence quite fascinating. I am sceptical but may be coming over to your point of view. I have heard a lot of complaints about our C2k system not working. This is not so much aimed at you, Professor Austin, but at others. Are our computer systems up to this or, when we do the next contract, do we need to get computers that are much better and more able?
1217. **Professor Austin:** No systems are perfect, but what C2k does really well is ensure that children are completely safe online. That is a real consideration for parents. If they are doing any online work, they need to know that there is no risk whatsoever of predators getting into any of the online work.
1218. In terms of reliability, what has impressed me about C2k is that they listen. We made some complaints about the quality of sound in the videoconferencing system that we were using before, which was called Elluminate. They listened and are in the process of introducing new software called Collaborate. That is an improved videoconferencing system with much better sound quality.
1219. With the virtual learning environment, I have heard different views about Fronter, which is in place in many schools. Some teachers love it, and some are not so keen on it. We should not get hung up on any particular product. It is about the process. If it is not Fronter, it is Moodle. The point is that systems are there that enable children to do two crucial things. The first is to have a forum where they can exchange fairly informal information and, secondly, a work area, which is where they create content on the topic that they are working on. We have seen some fabulous examples where one school has put its work up in one colour, and the children in the other school have come along and said, "We have got a bit to add here", and their stuff goes in in a different colour. So they are contributing to the construction of knowledge in a way that still recognises the contributions that both sides have made. We have to keep the pressure on C2k to keep delivering what we have, but, when I compare what we have here even with that in the rest of the UK, you could not do what we are proposing here in England simply because they do not have a common platform. We are in a uniquely advantaged position to take advantage of this opportunity.
1220. **Mr Kinahan:** The other angle is the teachers. The Department throws so much at teachers, who are not necessarily getting enough support from the boards. Is much time needed in your busy schedule? Will one of our biggest problems be teachers having time to do the preparation and training, given everything else that is thrown at you?
1221. **Professor Austin:** I have one quick word on that, and then I will bring in Alison and Antoin. A third party is needed to coordinate the training and to lay down the parameters of what is to be done. We have tried as hard as we can to say to teachers, "This should not be

- on top of what you already have to do. This is an enriched way to deliver the curriculum". Is that right, Alison?
1222. **Mrs McConnell:** Yes, definitely. You need training in the technology. As Roger says, it is changing again, so we will need training in the new Collaborate when we are used to Elluminate. Although Elluminate let us down on occasions, C2k was usually there to help to solve the problems. So training in collaboration with your time with your partner school is very important.
1223. **Mr Moran:** In my experience, C2k is extremely good with technical issues and the software and hardware, but I strongly support Roger's point that it is good to have a third party, which we did through Dissolving Boundaries, so that you can lift the phone to discuss training and upskilling of staff, and to motivate and inspire you to think of more creative ways to use the technology. The technology is there. Its reliability, as with any technology, can be up or down, but it is there to be used if a teacher wants to use it.
1224. **Professor Austin:** I will make one point, Danny. The two members of staff who were employed under Dissolving Boundaries had a really important role in monitoring the flow of information between the schools. Given that it was all happening in C2k, we could see all the messages that were being exchanged. It was not as though we wanted to be like Big Brother. If we noticed that one school was not contributing, somebody picked up the phone and said, "Is there a difficulty? Can we come in and help?". Sometimes, a teacher had gone off sick or their system had crashed, but we felt an obligation to make sure that the other school was aware of the difficulty. We smoothed things over. I would not underestimate the importance of that. Bringing schools together is not easy. These guys are already doing a full-time job, and the challenge of working with another school should not be underestimated. It is probably necessary to have someone there to assist. Sometimes, I think about the fact that, since 1945, the French and the Germans are still putting money into Franco-German youth exchanges, because they see that there is a long-term issue that needs to be addressed, namely the relations between the two countries.
1225. **Mr Kinahan:** We see a bit of that with the British Council. Thank you. I learned a great deal today.
1226. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Our next presentation is from the centre for shared education at Queen's. What links are there between the work that you are doing and the work that it is doing? Have you had any discussions?
1227. **Professor Austin:** Not directly. You will understand that in the world that we live in, there are, naturally, areas where we can collaborate and others where we are competitors.
1228. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** So, we have not quite dissolved the boundaries between the two universities.
1229. **Professor Austin:** The spirit is willing on our part. There is benefit to be gained from a greater understanding on the part of both universities of what each of us is doing. It is fair to say that the work that Queen's is doing is very good, but, as far as I know, Queen's has not included ICT as a significant element of that work. That is an accident of a particular trajectory. We got involved in technology very early on, and it was a natural development for us to look to technology as part of the way that we address these things.
1230. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Perhaps, the Committee might be the facilitator of that.
1231. **Professor Austin:** With pleasure.
1232. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome the presentation and the work that you have given to us. I look forward to it being in some of our recommendations. If you would like to give further information to the Committee after today, we would be very willing to receive it. Thank you very much for your time.

# 10 December 2014

## Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

## Witnesses:

Mr Mark Humphreys	<i>Methodist</i>
Mr Neill Jackson	<i>College</i>
Mr Scott Naismith	
Professor Sir Desmond Rea	
Rev Dr Janet Unsworth	

### 1233. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Thank you for hosting us today. It is a pleasure for me to be back, and I will declare an interest as a former pupil. I ask you to make your opening statement, and members will follow up with questions. Thank you.

### 1234. **Mr Scott Naismith (Methodist College):**

Thank you very much indeed. I will begin by introducing the members of the board of governors who are here with me today. On my right is Rev Dr Janet Unsworth; to my left is the chair of the board of governors, Mr Neill Jackson; beside him is Sir Desmond Rea; and, at the end, is Mr Michael Humphreys QC. I thank the Education Committee for giving us the opportunity to host its meeting and for the chance to present on the ethos of the college and the level of mixing that there is here in the school.

1235. I will start by saying a wee bit about the ethos of the college. We have a very clear statement of values and aims that we adhere to in everything that we do in and out of the classroom. In those aims and values, inclusion and diversity feature in a very significant manner. We talk about appreciating, nurturing and celebrating the diverse talents of the pupils. We talk about preparing pupils to

be responsible citizens and leaders who respect and value cultural diversity and a common humanity. We also talk about promoting social justice and countering prejudice and intolerance by encouraging mutual respect and understanding.

That is at the heart of the values-based educational experience that the pupils, staff and families who engage with the college get while they are. It is based on tolerance, respect, integrity and equality. We want and encourage our pupils to develop compassion, self-awareness, independence of thought and independence of spirit.

1236. Because that is who we are and what we are about, we attract a diverse mix of pupils into the college. At present, we have 23 religious groupings represented. We have a very diverse ethnic mix. Almost 88% of our pupil population is white, but the remaining 12% come from a range of backgrounds: European, Caribbean, African, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern. There is a fantastic cultural diversity here in the college. As well as that, there is a diverse geographical mix in Methody, with 43 postcodes represented. The majority of our pupils come from the Belfast area, but half of our pupils come from greater Belfast and beyond. We provide that mix of pupils from town and country and different social backgrounds and give them an opportunity to live with each other and learn from each other.

1237. As I have said, our aims and values are lived out on a daily basis. We talked to the student council about this when the governors were working on their inclusion and diversity report. We asked the pupils how they felt about inclusion and diversity in the school. One of the pupils said:

*“Although issues of respect and tolerance are covered in the curriculum, pupils treat each other with respect because it is just seen as the right thing to do. It is a natural thing.”*

1238. Certainly, there are opportunities in the classroom to share experiences and ideas. There is study focused on the factors that influence individual and group identity and how identity is expressed, and pupils get the chance to investigate how and why conflicts may arise, how it is managed, and how community relations and reconciliation can be promoted. That is across not just the Learning for Life and Work programme but all areas of the curriculum.
1239. We are also committed to making a difference out of the classroom through our local and global community involvement. That is all about raising pupils' understanding of different cultures, religions and backgrounds. An example of that is the Salters Sterling Outreach Project, which we have been involved with for three years now with Royal Belfast Academical Institution (RBAI), Victoria College and Blythefield, Donegall Road and Fane Street primary schools.
1240. This year, over 80 pupils from Methody are going out to those three primary schools to assist with literacy and numeracy support to help the schools in raising educational aspiration. Pupils from those primary schools visit the three post-primary schools to engage in a range of technology-, moving-image-arts- and sports-based activities to give them an understanding and experience of what education is like beyond the primary school. We are also working hard to engage with the parents in those schools to get them to encourage their children to think about coming to schools like Methody, Inst and Victoria.
1241. We have also been running the Belfast inter-schools creative writing forum for a number of years. It was set up by one of our teachers and very successful children's novelist, Sheena Wilkinson. It is a cross-community creative writing forum that promotes the creative and personal development of youngsters from across the city. It meets monthly in the college, and there is a residential in England once a year. We have pupils from St Dominic's, Sullivan, St Mary's Christian Brothers and RBAI coming here and talking about their experiences. This year, with support from the Integrated Education Fund, they have been able to publish a book of poetry, short stories and photographs about how they feel about their identity and development in emerging post-conflict Belfast.
1242. We are also the hub school for the University of Cambridge Higher Education Plus programme. This involves us working with Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to project aims to improve the chances of sixth-form pupils in each of the participating schools to receive offers from Cambridge, Oxford and other top research-intensive UK universities. This goes beyond the curriculum. We have invited schools from across Belfast — north, south, east and west — to come along and participate with our staff, their staff and academics from Corpus Christi to push their understanding beyond the curriculum. Last year, we had pupils from St Dominic's, St Malachy's, St Mary's and Wellington College here with our pupils to learn about drama, English, chemistry, maths and physics and focus on pushing their learning to the limits together.
1243. We, as a college, also have an input into the Community Relations Council, the sharing education programme and the work of OFMDFM on developing the United Youth policy. We have also contributed to the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life. We do a lot of community work. Our sixth-formers are engaged in work in Glenveagh and Fleming Fulton special schools. Again, the idea is about learning from each other. Our pupils get as much out of those experiences as the pupils of Glenveagh and Fleming Fulton do. If you are interested, on both Glenveagh's school website and our college website, there is a video that the pupils made together that encapsulates how they have benefited from that experience.
1244. For 24 years — it is coming up to the 25th anniversary — the college has been involved in School Aid Romania. Every year, a group of students and staff from Methody, St Patrick's College, Maghera and Ballyclare High School raise money together and then go out



to Romania to work in orphanages, an old people's home, a TB hospital and a school for the deaf. They not only provide money but learn about the experiences of those people, young and old, the challenges that they face, how they are addressing them, and they then share the experiences with each other and with the pupils back in their own schools. They raise a significant sum of money, and the whole of the school community is engaged in that work.

1245. The same can be said for our India Society, which, for a number of years, has been raising funds to provide opportunities for girls from the slums of Kalkaji to access second- and third-level education. Again, there is a direct benefit there. However, our pupils also benefit from the experience of finding out about what life is like in a slum and the different religious and cultural beliefs and social pressures on children their age in different communities. That learning then comes back and is shared with the community here in the college.
1246. In the curriculum and beyond the curriculum, we encourage an understanding of different cultures through language study. French, German, Spanish and Russian are offered on the curriculum, and we have now extended that to include Mandarin and Arabic. We have worked with the open learning department at Queen's University to provide an after-school course in Irish language and literature, which ran in summer term of 2013 for junior pupils. Through engagement with the Confucius Institute at the University of Ulster, we are now in our second year of running a Chinese language and cultural enrichment course. This year, we have introduced an enrichment course in Arabic. We have linked up with the Ulster Museum for third-form classes to explore Arabian art and culture. A number of senior pupils will attend an Invest NI Arabian day to hear from those who have established or are involved in businesses in the Middle East. That Arabic project is also running in collaboration with Belfast Royal Academy (BRA), Antrim Grammar School and

St Malachy's College, so, again, it is working collaboratively across the city to promote the understanding of different cultures beyond Northern Ireland.

1247. I am delighted to see representatives of the parent-teacher association (PTA) here this morning. Our PTA organised a multicultural evening, which John O'Dowd very kindly attended. It was titled 'Our World, the Methodist College'. It was a celebration that showcased the talents and cultures of a range of the ethnic groups that are represented in the college. We do a lot to expose pupils to it, but the pupils themselves bring a rich cultural heritage when they attend the school. It was best summed up a couple of open evenings previously by the head girl, Lalana, who said that, to her and her family, the school's main selling point was its open ethos and diverse student population. It was important to her and her brother, as they came from a mixed-race background. She said that her family considered Methody to be very forward-thinking indeed in this area.
1248. The governors also take it very seriously. It is something that we cherish and value. Because of that, we set up a working party on inclusion, diversity and equality to look at these issues across a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities in the school. Methody has always been diverse. It is part of the historic legacy of the college. Because we used to have a boarding department, we always had pupils coming from across Northern Ireland and beyond to the college. That is why we have such a diverse and valued religious and ethnic mix. This has been maintained.
1249. In closing, I will refer to the speech that pupil Hannah Nelson made when she introduced President Obama and the First Lady at the Waterfront Hall. She talked about how to achieve enduring peace in Northern Ireland. What she said reflected the values and experience of the college. She talked about the need to have true respect for others, to express and celebrate our diverse cultures and to have an obligation to value each other as individuals. She hit

- the nail right on the head when she said that:
- “It is not my religion that is important, but my value as a person which is significant. It is important that we all have a unique identity.”*
1250. Never a truer word was spoken. That is what Methodist College is about. We seek to and succeed in providing a naturally integrated, cosmopolitan environment where pupils from all backgrounds and faiths learn together, play together and grow together and where we, most importantly, value each other.
1251. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. As you will be aware, this is part of our inquiry into shared and integrated education. Methody seems to falls into the mix of being called a “super-mixed school”. You mentioned the fact that is has always been diverse and that it has very much become naturally mixed. I suppose that what I really want to know is what it is specifically about the ethos that has allowed it to be that?
1252. **Mr Naismith:** Again, from talking to pupils and families, I think that fundamentally it is because we value them as individuals. As the pupil on the student council said, it does not matter what your religion or background is, you are accepted at Methodist College for what you bring to the college, what you put in and what you get out of it. That is because — again, using the words of the student — we do not make a fuss about that particular aspect. It is just a naturally integrated community. Therefore, people are not seen as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Hindu or whatever, but as who they are and what they can bring.
1253. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Is the primary focus of parents the educational outcomes of their children as opposed to societal outcomes?
1254. **Mr Naismith:** Both are important to them. We carried out a significant survey of parents during the last academic year in order to prepare for the next school development plan. Over 1,000 families responded, and two of the top-scoring reasons for sending their children to the college were the diverse mix of pupils and families, and the output, or what they gain from the academic and extra-curricular experience.
1255. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You refer to Methody as an integrated school. How do you differ from the integrated model we are very familiar with?
1256. **Mr Naismith:** There is a formula for the integrated sector, which is based initially on bringing together Protestant and Catholic children. The mix is 40% Protestant and 40% Catholic and the same for staff. There is that statistic and that formula. Methody does not apply that formula. We are not looking to achieve targets in a particular background. Neither are we focused simply on two major religious groups. We are looking at the whole range of ethnic and religious backgrounds represented by our pupils.
1257. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have achieved natural integration without the formula.
1258. **Mr Naismith:** Correct.
1259. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have talked about different sharing models with primary schools. You mentioned Fane Street and Blythefield. What work do you do with non-grammar schools?
1260. **Mr Naismith:** We work together through the south Belfast area learning community. We are involved in delivering the entitlement framework with a range of both grammar and non-grammar schools. The south Belfast area learning community does a lot of work sharing good practice and bringing together middle managers, SEN coordinators and careers teachers so that they can learn from one another. We reach out and offer opportunities to pupils from grammar and non-grammar schools through the Cambridge HE project and the creative writing project. We wrote out to every post-primary school in Belfast

- inviting them to the creative writing project.
1261. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You went outside south Belfast?
1262. **Mr Naismith:** Right across the city. The same thing happens every year with the major careers convention run by the college. Over 100 universities, colleges and businesses are in the college for two days, and we invite schools from across Northern Ireland, and even as far away as Donegal, to come to the college and access workshops, talks, presentations and information seminars. Throughout the year we run careers seminars as well, and, again, we invite schools from across the whole of Belfast and beyond to share. That is the work that we do.
1263. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Have you and other schools seen a benefit from that experience?
1264. **Mr Naismith:** They are accessing information about opportunities that are available to them, about tertiary level education in and beyond Northern Ireland and about the changing business and economic landscape. All these events include workshops and discussion sessions, where pupils from the different schools that attend have the opportunity to discuss. Sitting behind me is my head of politics, John Foster. Last year he organised a politics conference. The school is very much into the Model United Nations. Schools were invited from across Belfast to engage in discussion about contemporary political issues. That is where you get pupils from different backgrounds coming together. There are different ideas, different experiences, and there is sharing and learning from each other.
1265. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you for a fantastically impressive résumé of the school. I want to follow up on what the Chair asked about the socio-economic mix. When you invite other schools, do they all respond, or are there schools that feel that you are maybe too elite or too difficult? Do you really get a good response from everybody?
1266. **Mr Naismith:** That is a very good question. It depends on the nature of the activity. We get a very wide-ranging response to the careers conventions and talks. We estimated that, for the careers convention this year, somewhere in the region of 3,000 families were through the school over the two days, plus our Methodist community. To be honest, it is hard to get schools to come to some of the other activities, whether it is because of transport issues or because they are concerned about coming to Methodist. We offered, as well, to move the creative writing project around the city to make it more accessible for others and to get our pupils out. However, the response was that it is actually easier, once it has been set up, just to come to the same place once a month.
1267. We also continue with the outreach project to the three primary schools in the Village. For the most recent activity we invited parents to come across and visit the three post-primary schools one morning. We are conscious that it is intimidating to walk up the driveway to a building that you have never been into before. There is the fear of the architecture and of the reputation. We have to get people over that hurdle, get them in and get them engaged.
1268. **Mr Kinahan:** As a Committee, when we explore shared education most people look at it through religious differences. The Borooah and Knox report encouraged us to look at it from a socio-economic angle. Do you think that this is the right way of sharing education across the divide?
1269. **Mr Naismith:** It is important to look at all aspects when sharing education if you are to be truly inclusive. You need to tackle all aspects simultaneously, not just the religious aspect, but the ethnic and socio-economic aspects too.
1270. **Mr Michael Humphreys (Methodist College):** It is interesting that shared and integrated education, taken together, are often resolved into a simple sectarian headcount. That is completely against the ethos at

- Methody. The statutory definition of integrated education speaks only to Protestants and Roman Catholics. Talking of natural integration, perhaps the most striking statistic is that 35% of our current enrolment falls into the category of neither Protestant nor Catholic. They profess to have no religion, or they profess to have up to 15 or 20 other world religions. Perhaps the defining feature of natural integration is the move away from the simple Protestant and Catholic approach and into something that is socially inclusive and does not depend on a formula to produce results.
1271. Social inclusion is the most important driver for us as a board. It is sometimes difficult for us to reach out to other areas of Belfast and encourage pupils to come here because of our status and where we are. We try hard with those three primary schools in particular, but we often meet family and social resistance. It is difficult for a child whose family have all gone to the same local school or lived in the same area for three or four generations to make that break and move to a school like this. However, it is imperative that we continue to foster those links. It may take time. We may be sitting here in 10 years' time still making very slow progress, but it is imperative that we continue to try to so.
1272. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you for having us. It is lovely to be here. It is my first time in Methodist College. That is partly the fault of your predecessors, because they would not accept me in 1958 even though I just lived up the road. *[Laughter.]* I had to go to another equally mixed grammar school, Belfast Royal Academy (BRA), which was not a problem.
1273. Before I ask you questions, I would like to mention the young lady who spoke at the Obama event. Having been there, I have to say that hers was the speech of the day. She made a better speech than the president or his wife. It was absolutely marvellous. I imagine that she has moved on now.
1274. **Mr Naismith:** She is in upper sixth.
1275. **Mr Lunn:** It was terrific. You have really answered all my questions in what was a spectacular presentation, Scott. The mix of your school would do credit to any formally integrated school. To what extent are you able to draw pupils from what I would call socially deprived backgrounds? You are located on the edge of a very affluent area on one side, and you only have to walk through the City Hospital grounds to enter a completely different circumstance. Do you have any success in drawing pupils from — let us be frank — Sandy Row and Donegall Road?
1276. **Mr Naismith:** That is part of the reasoning behind the Salters Sterling Outreach Project, which is about raising aspiration. Over the past three years, we have been working with those schools and are seeing more pupils applying to the three post-primary schools involved. It is about overcoming their — to a certain extent — fear of education and their parents' fear of education, engaging with them and getting them into the buildings to realise the opportunities that are available to their children. It is about overcoming — I am sorry to say — the, "It's not for the likes of us" attitude, which we sometimes come up against.
1277. In reaching out, not just to those particular schools, we have been working hard in our contacts with other primary schools, and at their open evenings, to say, "We want you to come here. We want you to apply here. We want you to avail of these opportunities, regardless of your background." We are seeing a rise in the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals coming into the college. In 2012, 4% of our form 1 entry was entitled to free school meals. In the 2014 intake, that had risen to 14%. The governors and former pupils have been very active in encouraging this.
1278. We have set up a discretionary fund to assist pupils who come from families that may have problems meeting the cost of uniforms. If they want assistance

- with school trips, or even if they want assistance later in their careers exploring university options, that help is there. One of our former pupils, Ian Ross, made an incredibly generous donation to the school recently so that pupils from deprived backgrounds should not be put off going to university because of the cost of fees. He is providing part funding for their fees to encourage them to go to university. So, we are working to find ways to make things financially easier but also to encourage them to come into Methody.
1279. **Mr Lunn:** I do not want to divert from the main theme here, which is shared and integrated education. Others make the point that it is not shared versus integrated. I suggested the title, I think, so I claim credit. We are not trying to play one off against the other, but I want to move you on to a slightly different tack, and I do so sensitively. Is part of the reason why you do not manage to achieve an intake of pupils from the areas that I am talking about because they cannot pass the selection test?
1280. **Mr Naismith:** Academic selection offers the opportunity for pupils and families to decide which school they would like to go to. If we moved to a postcode selection system, the school would not be as diverse as it is. We would be selecting from a much more — how do you put it — wealthy community. Pupils from a range of different backgrounds — as I said, 43 different postcodes are represented — would not have the chance to come here. So, this is actually offering them an opportunity to access Methody.
1281. **Mr Lunn:** OK. I must say, I did not realise that there were 43 postcodes in Northern Ireland, but that is a good statistic.
1282. **Mr Naismith:** There are 78, and we have one from Omagh.
1283. **Mr Lunn:** You have achieved so much in the formats of mixing and so on, but is there any other way that a grammar school like yours could produce an intake that would be satisfactory to the school and to your local hinterland without the selection test, or is that just the absolute requirement?
1284. **Mr Naismith:** Well, again, that has moved on to a different area of ethos; in terms of the value of academic selection, it is a whole different educational argument. The school and the governors are supportive of academic selection as a way within a system that is, in its entirety, comprehensive. I am not talking about a comprehensive school; I am talking about a comprehensive system that allows different pathways and different avenues for pupils — every pupil in the system — to excel and achieve their best. That is why we are still supportive of that.
1285. **Mr Lunn:** I will move back to the subject. Do you think that there is any way that the ethos of Methody differs from the ethos that you would expect to be present in a formally integrated school?
1286. **Mr Naismith:** Again, I suppose, and Michael made specific reference to it, the integrated schools are very much focused on the two major groups, Protestant and Catholic, whereas the ethos in Methody is about taking inclusion in its broadest possible sense, and that is the difference. When you talk about ethos across all schools, I will be honest and say that, with regard to tolerance and respect and trying to get the best out of pupils, I have yet to meet a principal of a school who does not hold those values very much at heart and hopes to see them replicated in his or her school.
1287. **Mr Lunn:** You have highlighted the difference between a formally integrated school and a school like this, in that the requirement for an integrated school — and it is a fault — is the fact that there has to be an initial balance between Protestant and Catholic. However, you have 35% declared as “others”, and they do not count. That is a bit like the Alliance Party votes in the Assembly. *[Laughter.]*
1288. **Mr Naismith:** I could not possibly comment. *[Laughter.]*

1289. **Mr Lunn:** I am glad that I worked my way round to that one.
1290. **Mr Newton:** I am going to quote him on that one, Chair, in the future.
1291. **Mr Lunn:** It is in Hansard.
1292. It is a fact that the basis for an integrated school — and by the sound of it, you agree with me — should be a majority and then a minority and “others” taken together.
1293. **Mr M Humphreys:** The Committee is probably aware — to put my lawyer’s hat on — of the judgement in Drumragh Integrated College and what Mr Justice Treacy said about the delivery of integrated education in that, which was that it was not possible, from a legal point of view, to deliver integrated education in a school that has a particular religious ethos.
1294. Methodist College clearly is a faith school, to use a GB term; it has a religious ethos at its core and so, by definition, it cannot fulfil the integrated notion of education. However, that, again, is to try to shoehorn educational issues into legal boxes. In fact, outcomes for children such as, mutual respect, tolerance, character building, and all the things that schools do best should not be subject to legal definition. If it happens naturally, it is all the better than having to be forced into a particular category by virtue of what is a very complex web of different types of school that we have in Northern Ireland.
1295. **Mr Lunn:** I would not want to cross swords with a barrister, but I do not think that Judge Treacy was quite as specific as that. He said that a school could not be considered integrated with what he called a partisan board, and I do not think for one minute that you have a partisan board; I would be very surprised if there is not a good mix across your board membership. Therefore, he was not actually criticising a school like this.
1296. **Mr M Humphreys:** No, it certainly was not a criticism. I think that he was just applying the legislation as he understood it to mean, and that integrated education in the Northern Ireland context has a particular legal meaning that sets it apart from schools like this one.
1297. **Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Methodist College):** I am substituting here today for Rotha Johnston, who comes from a different identity from Desmond Rea, and she is chair of our education committee. It is important that you are aware that, in recent times, we did an exercise on how effective our board of governors is with governance arrangements and the skills that governors bring to the board.
1298. We also did a report on inclusion and diversity, which has been referred to here, stimulated by our concern about the range of things that you have already alluded to, including the disadvantaged and the social class. For example, this board of governors would be concerned to question the headmaster so that any pupil who comes from circumstances where there is relative impoverishment is not disadvantaged as and when they are at this school, and that that is monitored diplomatically as they go through.
1299. The governors have recently been concerned that we should be looking at the whole question of ethos so that we are very clear that, in our understanding and the staff’s understanding, our ethos is seen to embrace everyone: pupils and families within the ambit of the school. This board of governors is very aware of its obligations in those areas.
1300. **Mr Lunn:** That does not surprise me at all. In terms of ethos, the social mix, your approach and the extent of sharing and outreach that you involve yourselves in, there is absolutely nothing to criticise. This is a marvellous school. If all our schools were on the same basis — and I do not necessarily mean based on academic selection, because we will not agree about that — as Methodist College, we would not be having this inquiry. I always say that integrated schools are where we would like to be. You are, effectively, an integrated school,

- but with no need to adopt the title.  
Thank you very much. I wish you well.
1301. **Mr Newton:** Thank you for the opportunity to be in Methody. I have visited Methody on a number of occasions. My two children went to Methody. We chose Methody, hoping that they would get into Methody. We chose Methody because of the ethos and manner in which Methody goes about shared education or integrated education. You are the epitome of that and the benchmark to be aimed at. I think that it was summed up in a couple of phrases you used: you do not make a fuss about it, and that it is a natural thing. That is what attracted my wife and me to ensure that our two children went to Methody.
1302. I do not really have a question. I was going to come from a similar angle in terms of the penetration into the less socially advantaged communities. I am meeting two people tomorrow night who come from the Village and went to Methody; one is a dentist and one is a teacher. It is good to see the exercise of the pupils in the school stretching out to primary education. That can only be a good thing.
1303. To finish where Trevor left off, we would not be having this inquiry if all schools were the same as Methody.
1304. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you for hosting us today. I look forward to having another look round afterwards.
1305. Earlier, you referred to the mix that you have here. I imagine that that would change year on year. You talked about the 35% “others”. That is an overall percentage, but the first year students coming in would make the number change year on year.
1306. **Mr Naismith:** We return annual statistics to the Department of Education. As the principal, I monitor that and report to the board on it. This is the eighth year that I have been the principal of the college. We look every year at the background. There are minor variations and very small fluctuations, so the figure I quoted to you is, fundamentally, the make-up of the school and has been for a considerable time. Part of the
- reason why we monitor it so closely is that we want to maintain it and to reach out to any community that we feel is underrepresented. Shortly after I arrived here, regrettably, we had to close the boarding department, and there was concern at the time that the closure of the department might result in Methody being a less cosmopolitan school. The reverse happened because of the experience of the overseas boarders. As people from their communities moved into Belfast, given that Belfast has changed over the past 10 years, they had already heard about the college, and Methody was often their first port of call for education for their children. We still get that, so that has enhanced the ethnic diversity in the college.
1307. **Mrs Overend:** That is interesting. The work that you do with other schools is admirable. When there was funding for private projects for shared education, I was involved with that in my area near Magherafelt. However, when the funding stops, you have to find other means to continue that sharing.
1308. In times of austerity and budget cuts, how do you decide what projects continue with other schools? How do you prioritise those? Is it in the delivery of the curriculum or the extension of your ethos? How do you balance that out, and how are you going to make those decisions?
1309. **Mr Naismith:** I am glad that you raised budgets and budget cuts. *[Laughter.]* That is the challenge that Methody and every single school in the country is going to face over the next year if the proposed budget cuts go ahead.
1310. First and foremost, we are required to deliver the curriculum, so we have to cut our resources and allocation of funding to ensure that it is delivered. Most of the outreach projects that we talked about actually cost very little because they are run by staff, who give very freely and generously of their time and ability. Parents also support it, and sometimes private donors are prepared to put money in.

1311. We seek external funding where it is available, but for some of the major projects, the pupils are raising the money that makes the projects happen. That is part of the learning process and of the ethos. We see it as our duty to give back to the community and to create young citizens who have that idea of duty to others, not to just themselves.
1312. We will have to look at what we are able to offer in the future, and we will do our utmost to try to continue with the things that we value, but the likelihood is that some of these projects will finish.
1313. **Mrs Overend:** Do you think that it might be an idea to rethink the delivery of the curriculum so that you can find ways to work with other schools to deliver it?
1314. **Mr Naismith:** Delivering the curriculum through the entitlement framework is probably one of the most expensive ways to do it. Schools that are working in collaboration are finding that the cost of transport between campuses far outweighs any cost benefit to the college in the staffing it releases, so it is not really an efficient way of delivering the entitlement framework.
1315. I suggest that, if the cuts go ahead, the entitlement framework will suffer. Schools will have to balance their budgets, and putting pupils in a taxi and sending them across town is very expensive.
1316. **Mr M Humphreys:** One reason why we have such a diverse pupil background is the amount of choice that the college is able to offer in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities. Parents are entitled to choice and to look for the best possible range of choice for their children. The budget cuts as proposed can only reduce the choice that is available in the curriculum and the extracurricular activities. There is no way to do otherwise.
1317. That is a real concern for us as a board. Whilst we will always do our minimum, which is to balance the books and deliver what has to be delivered as a matter of law, everything we do over and above that is very much the reason why this school is a success. We foresee real problems in the next two or three financial years in trying to deliver what our parents, our pupils and our staff want and we as a board want to do.
1318. **Mrs Overend:** I was trying to draw out the need for that financial capability for the shared projects. So many schools need that to be able to build on their shared education. Thank you very much for your answers.
1319. **Mr Craig:** It is good to be here today. I appreciate that I am here because, unlike others, I have no interest to declare. I was not a pupil here, and my family did not go to this school. I also welcome Sir Desmond to the Committee. Being on the Policing Board, I have heard plenty about you, but I have never met you. So, it is good to meet you today.
1320. I have been listening with great interest, because I know that the ministerial advisory group made recommendations on the social and economic mix of schools. You seem to have bought in to that ethos. You very clearly indicated that you have targeted schools that would get pupils from deprived backgrounds, and you have put a lot of work into that. I am assuming — I do not want to assume; I want you to tell me — that you have bought in to that ethos.
1321. **Mr Naismith:** I agree with that. As we have said throughout, it is about the idea of opportunity for all and the recognised benefits of having as diverse a community as possible. We want the pupils who come here to have the chance to mix with different people from all sorts of backgrounds so that, based on those interactions, they can learn and improve. Therefore, there is an opportunity for pupils from challenging socio-economic backgrounds to access education and the opportunities that it offers them. The type of education that we offer here at the college is very important to us.
1322. **Mr Craig:** I am going to play devil's advocate, because I do not know the answer to the question of your school ethos and what you count as being



- most important. Obviously, this is a grammar school, so academic selection is there and you use that tool. Is that the only criterion you use to select people? I noted with interest that you said that you get pupils from right across Northern Ireland and from all backgrounds. Has academic selection been a barrier, or has it assisted you in getting pupils from other places?
1323. **Mr Naismith:** Again, it has assisted us in getting pupils, because it is our first means of selecting pupils for the school into form 1. If you have a grade that qualifies you to get in, you will get in as long as there is a space available for you. We have no selection criteria based on income or ability to pay; those do not exist. Where families may find challenging the costs that are associated with school and the extras that schools offer, we offer support discreetly and directly where we can. I know that families who have availed themselves of the funding that former pupils have very generously provided are very appreciative of it.
1324. **Mr Craig:** Thank you for mentioning that. One of the other criticisms that those who are against academic selection always bring up is the social inclusion factor and the embarrassment of not being able to afford some of the activities. Do you proactively tackle that in the school?
1325. **Mr Naismith:** Yes. A fund is set aside, and parents are informed of it. The application for the funding comes directly to my office. As I say, it is done very discreetly, but it allows the pupils to access extracurricular activities and extramural educational activities. The idea is that no one will be excluded on the basis of ability to pay.
1326. **Professor Sir Desmond Rea:** Coincidentally, one of your colleagues mentioned the Village. One of our former pupils, who is now a senior QC and an acting judge in England, is from the Village and gave us a sum of money. It is not large, but it is a sum of money. His mother continues to live there and facilitates that funding. We are very mindful of backing the headmaster and his team so that no child is disadvantaged in any way because of economic circumstances.
1327. **Mr M Humphreys:** I think that it is fair to say that, when the current model of academic selection came into being with the two separate exams, the board was very concerned that adopting one of those exams as an entry path would reduce the inclusion and diversity of the school. Thankfully, that has not proved to be the case, and, statistically, we have maintained our levels. If academic selection is to continue, there is no doubt that one test would ensure a much wider range of choice for all children across Northern Ireland. Rather than having to sit what are now five separate papers to keep their options open, we believe that one test would preserve the best opportunity for all to enter the college.
1328. **Mr Craig:** Chair, you will certainly find me in total agreement with that. I think that that needs to be sorted out. I thank you for those very frank answers. They exploded a lot of the myths about what is being said in the debate on academic selection. Thank you very much for that. You are an example not only of shared education, but, as Trevor said, you are integrated without the title.
1329. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Rogers, if you do not mind, Trevor has indicated that he would like to come in at this point.
1330. **Mr Lunn:** On the back of that, I want to clarify something with you: are you able to take into the first year all the applicants who passed the test, or do you need to use selection criteria?
1331. **Mr Naismith:** We do. We are oversubscribed in form 1 each year, so there is always further selection for a final place in the school. Thereafter, we have a waiting list, and, because of the size and nature of the college, we go back to the families on that waiting list to see whether they still want to apply in form 2, form 3 and form 4. We also have a significant intake into lower sixth.

1332. **Mr Lunn:** You talked about the 43 postcodes. Do the criteria involve giving priority to children who live close to the school?
1333. **Mr Naismith:** We do not use geographical priority in our selection.
1334. **Mr Lunn:** None at all?
1335. **Mr Naismith:** No.
1336. **Mr Lunn:** I just wanted to make sure of that.
1337. **Mr M Humphreys:** Free school meals is our number one criteria if there is a tiebreak situation in academic selection. That is for the very reason we talked about, as the board has set a target for social inclusion.
1338. **Mr Lunn:** OK. I am glad that I asked you.
1339. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** OK. Thank you.
1340. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you. There is very little for me to ask at this stage, but I will congratulate the school and its governors on the school that you have. As you walk to the gents and so on, you see that it is your pupils who walk the talk, and they need to be congratulated.
1341. You mentioned that the school is faith-based. I suppose that the ethos has developed from the Methodist tradition. How are other faith traditions accommodated in the school?
1342. **Mr Naismith:** Fundamentally, the school has a Christian ethos and Christian values, which are universal values of tolerance and respect. When we have assemblies, we make sure that we refer not just to Christian values but to those of other religions. We bring aspects of other religions into form assemblies and assemblies in the Whitla Hall. In the classroom, it is hugely valuable when pupils have opportunities to explore different ideas through the curriculum, to see things from different perspectives and different cultures and to hear from people who represent those religions and cultures. Again, there are the extracurricular activities that I mentioned, such as the India society, which looks at the religious values and ideals there that have created a set of circumstances that our pupils have to understand and address. So, there are opportunities to hear from representatives of those groupings.
1343. **Mr Rogers:** And your Romanian trips.
1344. **Mr Naismith:** Yes.
1345. **Professor Sir Desmond Rea:** Could I just change your question, if you do not mind? It is a question that I would pose to Dr Unsworth. Are they adequate? That is the question that, as a member of the board, I ask of her, because she chairs the committee.
1346. **Rev Dr Janet Unsworth (Methodist College):** Thank you, Sir Desmond — I think. On inclusion, diversity and equality, I would not want the Committee to think that we are resting on our laurels. Although the report that we worked on over the last year came out with an extremely positive picture of inclusion and thinking through the needs of pupils who come from different backgrounds, we want to keep that under review. We are looking at the board of governors reviewing it annually. It is quite a thing to review something annually and to put in to your governance arrangements that you will do that. We hope to do that through our education and extracurricular activities committee and to look at that each year.
1347. We have a sense of making sure that each pupil is valued for the background from which they come, whether that is their social, ethnic or religious background, and we want to continue to do that. As the principal said, there is a mechanism to do that through the curriculum. We also hope that, through the range of extracurricular activities, which is phenomenal in this school, we provide opportunities for pupils to be able to experience difference.
1348. There is an issue around self-identity and the importance of each child recognising their own identity, whether that is culturally, ethnically or religiously. There is also the importance of tolerance. The values that are

associated with the school are exhibited up in different places around the school building. As pupils go about the school, they are able to see the college's values of tolerance and equality. There is a sense of valuing each other's religious experience as well as their own. I think that that is extremely important. However, as I said at the start, we do not want to rest on our laurels. Keeping a watching brief on issues of inclusion, diversity and equality is extremely important.

1349. **Mr Naismith:** I will just add a couple of concrete examples of how that manifests itself on a very day-to-day, no-fuss basis. Where students are engaged in fasting for Ramadan, we take account of that and meet their needs. When we have our form 1 intake, the PTA organises a heritage tour of the school for all the form 1 parents so that they can meet parents informally and begin that integration process. As part of that, our canteen staff meet the parents and talk to them about any dietary requirements that the pupils have that are based on health issues or cultural and religious beliefs. Therefore, we have halal food available in the canteen. Fundamentally, we have a chapel in the college, which is called the Chapel of Unity. Pupils know that it is for pupils of all faiths and is a place of contemplation. It is the spiritual heart of the school.
1350. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** In conclusion, as part of our inquiry, we and the Department are going to look at a legal definition of shared education. I wonder whether you have given any consideration to what that should look like and what should be included.
1351. **Mr M Humphreys:** Perhaps I should lead off on this one. I read some of the works from Messrs Knox and Borooah and Professor Gallagher, as well as some of the evidence that you have received already. There is a feeling in some of those papers that there should be quite a strong definition of shared education. That would involve high-level, sustained collaboration between schools from different sectors. That strikes me as something that may well

have an important role in some parts of the educational landscape, but it is a long way from the experience that we have here, which is a shared, internal experience. The word "shared" does not necessarily have to mean that people who tend to be from different backgrounds meet and use the same facility. It is better, certainly in my opinion, to have those same people under the same roof being educated in the same way by the same people and enjoying the same experiences, and that is really where the qualities of tolerance and equality come into play.

1352. I think that integrated education will always have a particular, separate legal definition. However, I think that, with shared education, the Committee might look at a much broader picture of models that can deliver it. One of them might be that high-end, sustained collaboration that we see examples of in Ballycastle and other places, but there are lots of ways of achieving it. The naturally integrated model, if one wants to call it that, might look something like what happens at Methody and how we try to preserve our inclusion and diversity internally by the models that we have and externally by reaching out to socially disadvantaged areas, to other religions and to backgrounds that might not automatically find their way here.
1353. I hope that this talk has given you some idea of how that model might work, but I will perhaps leave it to the Committee to come up with a precise definition of what that is. *[Laughter.]*
1354. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** That is very kind of you. *[Laughter.]* That was incredibly broad. Thank you very much for your time and for hosting us here today. I look forward to further discussion.



# 14 January 2015

## Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

## Witnesses:

Ms Jacqui Durkin *Department of*  
 Mrs Roisin Lilley *Education*

### 1355. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome from the Department of Education Jacqui Durkin, who is the director of area planning, and Roisin Lilley from the shared education campuses project team. Jacqui and Roisin, you are very welcome. Thank you for travelling down today. I refer Committee members to the various papers in their pack that will be useful for the briefing.

1356. I invite you to make an opening statement. Members will follow that up with some questions.

1357. **Ms Jacqui Durkin (Department of Education):** Thank you. Good morning, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Committee today on the shared education campuses programme protocol document. I am pleased to be able to do so in the Moy community, home of the two schools that were successful in the first call under the programme; namely, St John's Primary School and Moy Regional Primary School.

1358. I am aware that the Committee was briefed on the shared education campuses programme in July last year by my predecessor, Diarmuid McLean. As you know, the Minister approved revisions to the protocol document prior to the launch of the second call for applications on 1 October. The revised

version of the document was shared with you on that date. If you are content, I will provide you with a summary of the main updates and revisions made for the second call. Roisin and I are happy to take any questions on any point of detail at any stage, as required.

1359. The shared education campuses programme, as I am sure that you are aware, was established to deliver the headline action in the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy, which was announced in 2013, to commence 10 new shared education campuses in the next five years. Work to develop the new campuses naturally fell to the Department to take forward. At this point, I should clarify that the definition of "shared education" that is set out in the protocol document is that which was provided to the ministerial advisory group on advancing shared education. It is:

*"Shared education involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different 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."*

1360. The protocol document further states:

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

1361. As you are aware, both the shared education policy and the Bill are out for consultation until 6 March. The protocol document uses the definition of "shared education" as it currently stands.

1362. The Minister launched the shared education campuses programme in January 2014. There were 16 applications under the first call for expressions of interest. In July 2014, the Minister announced the first three projects to be supported under the

- programme. The Moy, Ballycastle and Limavady projects are now at the planning stage, with detailed feasibility studies and economic appraisals being developed.
1363. Naturally, as with any process, we reviewed what could be improved following the outcome of the first call. As a result, the protocol document was revised and updated before the second call was launched. The revisions took account of our experience of the first call, relevant lessons learnt from previous shared education programmes and last year's revision of the Department's capital works protocol. We identified a need for greater emphasis on the programme being about schools and shared education involving different school-management types and across similar age groups, and greater clarity for applicants on what was being assessed and why. We therefore clarified the rationale for the endorsement of the relevant managing and planning authorities and made changes to the minimum percentage for religious balance. That is now a minimum of 15%, and preferably 30%. Stronger evidence of the existing sharing taking place between the schools involved in each application is now an essential criterion. A desirable criterion of disadvantaged-pupil consideration using free school meal-entitlement data and specific gateway, essential and desirable criteria, with only the essential and desirable criteria being scored, has been introduced.
1364. Comments on the proposed changes were sought from the Department's key stakeholders through the area-planning steering group. Its views were incorporated into the updated document. The Minister then considered the proposed changes and agreed the revised protocol document for the launch of the second call. The closing date for applications to the second call is 30 January. At this stage, we expect that the Minister will be in a position to announce the next tranche of shared education campuses in June.
1365. The recent announcement as part of the Stormont House Agreement of new capital funding of up to £500 million over 10 years to support shared and integrated education is welcomed and should advance shared education campus projects. Each project is subject to Executive and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) approval. We will be working with DFP colleagues on the detail of how funding can be accessed. As with all capital building schemes, selected projects will be taken forward to the economic appraisal stage, which, once submitted, will be considered with normal business-approval processes and in line with the Northern Ireland guide to expenditure appraisal and evaluation guidelines, including value for money and affordability. Only after approval of the economic appraisal, and subject to available capital funds, will a project proceed to tender and construction.
1366. I hope that the Committee has found the overview helpful. As I said, Roisin and I are happy to take any specific questions on detail.
1367. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** OK. Thank you very much. May I ask for a progress update on the three projects that were announced? Obviously, we are in Moy today and will meet the two schools involved. We plan to visit Limavady in March and have also agreed a Committee visit to Ballycastle. It is important for us to have those conversations. For our own information, can you tell us where each of the projects sits?
1368. **Ms Durkin:** Project boards have been established for the Moy and Limavady projects. The Limavady project board is actually meeting tomorrow. The Moy project board has had its first meeting. The detail of how the projects and feasibility studies will be progressed is being taken forward through the project boards. The Department has two representatives on each. The Ballycastle project board has not been established yet, but we are working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the board on trying to ensure that

it is established as soon as possible. We are hoping for a date in the next few weeks, or in the next month or so. There has already been work done, in that the boards have been working with CCMS in the background to take things forward, but it will be when the schools, the boards of governors and the Department are established in the project board that it will gather some momentum and progress will be made on the feasibility studies and economic appraisals.

1369. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** For forward planning purposes, do you have any timescales in mind for when you hope to see ground broken on any of the projects?
1370. **Ms J Durkin:** I think that it is too early to say when they will be, to use the commonly used phrase, shovel-ready. Until we know more detail about what exactly the projects will be, it is too early to say. Sites have been located for some projects. Until we have a project timeline and timetable, it will be very difficult to estimate when you can say that they will be shovel-ready. Colleagues in investment and infrastructure are working closely with the boards and CCMS on trying to get the project board established and to make some progress.
1371. **Mrs Roisin Lilley (Department of Education):** I know that you are visiting two schools, and we had the first meeting with the Moy project board in early December. We are looking at draft schedules of accommodation, but that is all subject to negotiations between the schools and the Department and capital colleagues. You are looking for things such as a land search. Until we know where that will be, we will not know what difficulties we may encounter. Therefore, although we could have timescales for when we would like to see the economic appraisal, including the technical feasibility aspects, completed, it is only after it is complete that you get into the design and start to get part of the technical feasibility to identify any particular issues that there may be with the land. Issues could include whether there will be flooding or problems with trees. That is why we cannot give more exact details at the minute. Even though the Limavady project board is having its first official meeting tomorrow, there have been quite a few negotiations in meetings with the Department, CCMS and the Western Board. Moreover, the Limavady project board has had a working group established, so it has been trying to progress matters there. The Ballycastle project will probably be slightly more ambitious than we had originally anticipated, so I think that that is to the better. That explains why it is perhaps not progressing as quickly, but we are hoping to get the Ballycastle project board set up for it. It probably would have been set up before Christmas, but we are hoping for it definitely to be set up, as Jackie said, this month.
1372. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Although we are far from progressing those, we are now going into another stage for another tranche. Therefore, you are adding further anticipation for other schools to get involved in a project that could be quite a considerable distance down the road.
1373. **Ms Durkin:** It really depends on the nature of the projects that come forward, and we have no idea really what those will be through the second call. Of the three projects, some are for new facilities and for a shared STEM centre and sixth-form centre, while others are for a new single building on a campus. Therefore, it will depend on the complexity and scale of the project, and, obviously, it is dependent on how quickly feasibility studies and economic appraisals can be advanced. It is difficult to group all the projects together and say when they will definitely finish their economic appraisal, because each of them, so far, has been slightly different. We really do not know exactly what will come through from the second call.
1374. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** What feedback do you give to the unsuccessful projects?
1375. **Mrs Lilley:** We have given a fair wee bit of feedback, even to those projects that did not pass the essential criteria. They

- might not have got the score, but they were given feedback. All got letters sent to them and to the managing authorities — both the boards and CCMS or the boards of governors. We met all the managing authorities over the summer and gave them additional feedback. In quite a few cases, the boards and CCMS have been working with some of the projects. When the Minister made his announcement in July, he also announced at that stage that he was going to go out for a second call. He said that, if they could address some of the issues that meant that they had not made the cut in the first call, schools would be welcome to apply for the second. We know that the boards and CCMS have been working very closely with quite a few of the projects, and it is likely that those will come forward again in the second call. There has been a fair wee bit of feedback from us to the boards and, in some cases, the schools.
1376. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The scoring process is undertaken entirely by the Department.
1377. **Mrs Lilley:** Yes.
1378. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you anticipate bringing in someone from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), or even from the expert advisory committee, which has been identified in the new Delivering Social Change shared education signature project business case, to give some transparency?
1379. **Mrs Lilley:** The assessment panel is made up of a range of colleagues from across the Department. The infrastructure director sits on it, as does Jacqui. They both sit on the Department's capital project board, so there is quite a bit of input from a capital perspective. Our senior economist and the grade 5 from curriculum and education, providing an education perspective, are also on that board. The new grade 5 looking after shared education and teacher development — that wide remit — is present. We then have an Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) colleague. We are trying to cover a wide range. Shared education, education, and infrastructure and economics are all examined by that cross-directorate panel.
1380. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I appreciate that. There is always going to be criticism, I suppose. An external view on the process might help.
1381. **Ms Durkin:** As Roisin explained, educational benefits and the criteria in the protocol are paramount for a project to be approved. It is about identifying quality shared education projects as well as the campus and what is being proposed. I anticipate that, if expert advice on capital investment is required, the time to bring it in is when the feasibility study is being developed. There is certainly a lot of expertise on the boards and in CCMS. We do not anticipate that there will be anyone external on the assessment panel. If there is another call, that might be taken on board at that stage, but it will not for the second call applications.
1382. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for your briefing and for the help that you have given Duneane and Moneynick on my patch. Some £500 million is earmarked, but we have got only 17 schools. There are not that many coming forward. What are you doing to encourage applications from every area? Are you writing to all the schools or boards? We have three ideas: new facilities; enhanced facilities; and shared campuses. Is anyone expanding from that to other things that could be funded?
1383. **Ms Durkin:** The detail is being worked through, but, as I understand it, the £500 million is for shared and integrated schools. As I mentioned in my briefing, each project is subject to approval from HMT and the Executive. I know that CCMS and the boards have been engaging with schools in their area and encouraging proposals. They have been working very closely with schools. As far as marketing the programme is concerned, indications are that anyone who applied in the first call and was not successful has looked at this call to identify what further information they need to provide and how they can



- be more specific about how they meet a certain criterion. However, we have not written to individual schools to encourage applications. That has been down to the managing authorities and the planning authorities, but we have responded, as Roisin said, to calls from schools for feedback.
1384. **Mrs Lilley:** I will add to that. When we met the boards as part of the feedback process, we actively encouraged them by asking whether there were any additional schools on the ground that would consider the second call. We did that with all the boards, not just those that had unsuccessful projects. We met all board chief executives and encouraged them to look at projects. When launching a project, we sent an email to each school. Prior to that, we advised the education and library boards and CCMS that we were launching a second call on a certain date, thus giving them advance notice. They fed in comments through the area-planning steering group, as Jacqui said, but we let them know that we were launching a second call and sent an email to all schools to let them know that the call was out. We then issued a reminder to all schools. Therefore, we tried as much as possible to advertise the programme. Where I personally took calls from schools, I actively encouraged them to contact both their local board and CCMS, which would get actively involved with them, because a lot of the projects are joint ones.
1385. **Mr Kinahan:** Another angle has been pointed out to me. Those schools that are super-mixed or really well integrated fall slightly outside the system. What about those that want to enhance what they are doing in the school because they integrate well or those that want to enhance their buildings? There is that angle. Furthermore, there is a need for more community involvement. There is a great push to get the communities involved, and that is very much part of sharing and integration. Are we pushing those two angles as well?
1386. **Mrs Lilley:** Integrated schools can apply, but one of the gateway criteria, or essential criteria — yes or no criteria — is that they share with a school with a different management type. There is no debarment of integrated schools, but they need to partner with another school-management type.
1387. Another gateway criterion requires community, parent and pupil support. That is because the applications are coming from schools on the ground, and they can do so only with community support. It is a T:BUC target from OFMDFM, but, again, it is about education. One of the benefits is the community use of schools, and a lot of the projects coming through are looking for there to be community use. That is why we made specific reference in the protocol document to the Department's guidance on the community use of schools. It is a gateway criterion, and we have referenced that in our protocol document as well.
1388. **Mr Kinahan:** [*Inaudible.*] Thank you.
1389. **Mr Newton:** Thanks for coming. You have nearly answered my question. It is about the socio-economic, as opposed to the religious, or perceived religious, mix. There is no criterion for socio-economic mix. Am I right in saying that no points are awarded for that?
1390. **Ms Durkin:** One of the desirable criteria is targeting social need and the free school meal entitlement. Therefore, that will be included. It was recognised in the first call, and the socio-economic mix was one of the issues looked at. That is why the free school meal entitlement is now in there.
1391. **Mrs Lilley:** As Mr Kinahan pointed out, although community, pupil and parent support is essential — a gateway for which you have to show evidence — another essential criterion is societal benefits, and we have given some examples of what those are. There are some marks for that in the criteria, although I accept that they are not as high. Primarily, it is still schools that we are talking about, but we are trying to recognise that there will be something awarded for societal benefits. Then, as Jacqui said, we have tried to take

- account of the social mix, because it was clearly referenced in the T:BUC strategy document that one of the benefits of shared education, as well as raising standards and having that cross-community mix, was that social mix, which helps raise standards. That is why we introduced that as a desirable criterion.
1392. **Mr Newton:** It encourages upward mobility through the education system, but it must cut across bodies, rather than take place within bodies. Socio-economic mix does not receive the priority that it might. I think of young Protestant males, who move within the same board or controlled situation, as opposed to moving outside it.
1393. **Mrs Lilley:** Look at the way in which we have deliberately phrased the gateway check this time: numbers at the school; management type; and phase of the school. We wanted to make sure that cross-community mix was at the heart of it.
1394. The disadvantaged pupil is a desirable criterion. We do not disbar a school if it does not meet that criterion, but the aim is to try to get that social mix, so it is primarily cross-community. We have also said this time that, if an application comes in with schools at different phases — say post-primary as well as primary schools under one application — there has to be a cross-community mix at both phases, because you want shared education to occur across both age ranges. That is to try to take account, hopefully, of the point that you are making.
1395. **Mr Rogers:** Ladies, you are very welcome. Roisin, you mentioned earlier that an integrated school, for example, would have to join up with a school from a different management type in order to avail itself of this. Do you believe that the necessity to join up with a school of another management type inhibits the development of shared education? I am thinking not only of integrated schools but of some place like St Columbanus's College in Bangor or Strabane Academy, where a significant part of the school population comes from the other community. Those schools cannot really avail themselves of this on their own.
1396. **Mrs Lilley:** No, because this is about expanding shared education. If you have a school that is one type of school in name but that has a mixed population, it will still need to join with another school of a different management type as part of the application process. When we are looking at the religious balance, we look at the total school population of both schools. In the examples that you gave, there is already sharing in those schools, so you are not increasing the amount of sharing. This is about sharing with another school and more pupils coming together to share.
1397. **Mr Rogers:** If St Columbanus's College, which is a Catholic maintained school, were to join with a Catholic voluntary grammar school, together they would tick that box.
1398. **Mrs Lilley:** They may not meet the religious balance, though; it depends. They are two different school-management types, but they may not necessarily meet the cross-community test, because there has to be a minimum of 15%, and preferably 30%.
1399. **Mr Rogers:** Let us say that St Columbanus's has 700 pupils and the other school has 700 pupils. Is it 15% of 1,400 pupils?
1400. **Mrs Lilley:** Yes.
1401. **Mr Rogers:** Well, St Columbanus's, with over 300 pupils from the other community, meets that criterion even before the schools are put together.
1402. **Mrs Lilley:** We are trying to get schools of a cross-community mix. I accept what you are saying. We had the religious mix as 30%, and we then deliberately reduced it. The reason for that was not so much because of the example that you have given; rather, it was because of rural schools. In a rural area, it may not be demographically possible for two small schools to come together to have a bigger mix, yet they are still having that mix. That scenario could happen. I imagine that they would then need to

- look at the rest of the test. Therefore, it could be possible, but that is not the intention. The intention is to try to have a cross-community mix. However, you could say that the pupils in the other non-selective Catholic school could then be mixing with some of the pupils of St Columbanus's who are not Catholic. It is possible. However, we are looking for a cross-community mix. I am not saying how your example would be assessed by the panel, but the two schools could probably achieve the cross-community mix based on religious balance.
1403. **Ms Durkin:** It is an interesting point, but the programme is specifically targeted at supporting schools that have a history of sharing and that have almost been like pathfinder schools in reaching across to the other community and establishing shared education experiences for pupils. It is a capital investment programme specifically for that. If St Columbanus's were to partner with another school from another management type, that would not disbar it from applying for the programme either. However, as a single, stand-alone school, it would not be supported.
1404. **Mr Newton:** Methody is the same position.
1405. **Ms Durkin:** However, it is a shared school in itself, because there are pupils from both communities and a good mix of pupils in that school building.
1406. **Mr Rogers:** My point is that such schools cannot avail themselves of this and, as such, are inhibited in developing, promoting and taking this on.
1407. **Ms Durkin:** They would fall into the Department's capital programme. If there was capital investment needed in those schools, they would come under the criteria for capital investment.
1408. **Mrs Lilley:** There is nothing to prevent the likes of St Columbanus's College joining with another Catholic maintained school and a controlled post-primary. You could have three schools involved. It does not have to be just two schools in partnership.
1409. **Mr Rogers:** The other point is a general one. Suppose, for example, that a proposal is endorsed by the two management authorities and the planning authority. Can the Department challenge that endorsement and decide to drop it out of the next stage of assessment?
1410. **Ms Durkin:** No. If it is approved by the Minister, it would go through to feasibility study and economic appraisal. If a project board were established and it became apparent that how the two schools were working together was not as positive as was indicated in the application process, the departmental officials on the project board could raise that, in the first instance, with the chair or chairs of the project board and say that the indication in the proposal is that this project is about whatever it happens to be about. You could raise concerns at that level. However, once it is approved, it will progress to economic appraisal and feasibility study.
1411. **Mrs Lilley:** Can I take you back a step even before that? It may have management authority endorsement and planning endorsement. As long as it meets the rest of the gateway criteria, it then has to be assessed by the panel. So, whether it gets to the stage where it is recommended to the Minister will depend on how it scores on all the rest of the criteria.
1412. **Mr Rogers:** But, if it ticks the boxes of the strategic plan in both schools, that would be a very strong factor in what the project board would look at.
1413. **Mrs Lilley:** No. Are you talking about the assessment panel here?
1414. **Mr Rogers:** Yes.
1415. **Mrs Lilley:** There are four gateway checks that they have to meet. The management endorsement and the planning authority endorsement are two separate checks. We have explained the reason for that, and it was important that that was part of the feedback. If we explained to schools why they needed to have those endorsements, they could understand it. So, they need to meet all

- those gateway checks. They are simple yes/no answers. If they score a no on any of those gateway checks, they will still be given feedback, and the rest will be looked at but will not get scored. So, they may meet those four gateway checks, but they still have to be scored against all the essential criteria and the two desirable criteria. They will then get a score.
1416. **Mr Rogers:** And the other gateway checks are?
1417. **Mrs Lilley:** The number, management type and phase of school and the evidence of community, parent and pupil support. They are just yes/ no answers; either you have them or you do not. There are then the essential criteria. The primary one of those is the educational benefits, because these are schools and it is about raising educational standards. So, the four essential criteria are educational benefits, evidence of existing sharing, the societal benefits, which Mr Kinahan referred to, and the religious balance. They are awarded marks on the essential criteria. If you score zero on any of the essential, we will still score you, but we will have to say that we could not recommend it. If it is an essential criterion, you have to pass it. There are then two desirable criteria. There is one about location, and there is the disadvantaged pupil consideration.
1418. **Ms Durkin:** Schools need to provide evidence. It is not just ticking a box and saying that they have that. They have to provide actual evidence of how they are meeting that criterion.
1419. **Mr Rogers:** How is evidence of sharing measured?
1420. **Mrs Lilley:** When you are looking at evidence of sharing, you are looking for schools to giving examples such as, “Here is where we have been sharing for x number of years. We have so many classes that we share and so many pupils cross over.” It could also be, “We have joint board of governors meetings”, or, “We have joint pastoral policies.” They have to show evidence that they have a history of sharing. This is perhaps more relevant to post-primary, but some schools even have examples such as, “We synchronise some of our timetables so that our pupils can share.”.
1421. You could have a primary school where one teacher [*Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.*] share a class between two pupils and somebody else takes a class and they share our computers. It is them saying, “Here is how much sharing we’ve done”. Some of the teachers may have done joint training. So, they provide evidence to us of what sharing they have done.
1422. **Mr Rogers:** It would really be a shared class rather than a shared teacher?
1423. **Mrs Lilley:** A shared teacher is an element, but we are looking more for shared classes, where the pupils are sharing and have a history of sharing. That is so important because we know that there are likely to be issues as we move through the process. It is one thing to have a history of sharing when you have joint classes moving back and forward and another to physically have a building that you are jointly responsible for. Issues will arise from that, and if we have two schools that already have a history of dealing with difficult issues as they arise, the chances are that they will be better placed to deal with them. So, sharing a teacher is an example, but we would be looking for something more than that as a strong basis for scoring highly in that category.
1424. **Mr Rogers:** Take two rural primary schools that share a teacher. That is a big step, but it is something that is practical and can be done, whereas sharing pupils and the cost associated with doing so is just [*Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.*]
1425. **Mrs Lilley:** I am not going to try to preclude it, and I am not trying to prejudge anything that may come in. One of our desirable criteria is location, so this is all about a shared community and bringing communities together. It is about bringing the children together

- and the sharing of education. So, the question that you would pose then is, “What shared facility are you going to create?”. You are going to have to bring the pupils together in a shared facility. If it is only about sharing teachers, there are other programmes that the schools can avail themselves of, such as the Delivering Social Change shared signature programmes.
1426. This is about, as Jacqui said, us putting capital infrastructure in place specifically for sharing. Whether that is a mobile, a STEM centre or a new school, you are going to have to put pupils in it. So, if the schools feel that the way they are currently working precludes that, I am not sure how a shared facility would enhance what they are doing, because a shared facility would presumably have to be used by the pupils .
1427. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Newton, you wanted to come in on a small point.
1428. **Mr Newton:** I have just a very short question. In terms of the schools that you are in communication with about a shared campus, the list — our list, anyway — starts with Belfast Royal Academy (BRA) and finishes with St Mary’s in Brookeborough. What would be a rough timescale for a decision?
1429. **Mrs Lilley:** Sorry, the schools that we are in communication with about the shared campuses are the six schools that have come through from the first call. The application for the second phase does not close until 30 January. The boards and CCMS are the ones who have been working with schools who are bringing forward projects. Some schools may contact us directly if they are looking for a bit of clarification, but we have generally tried to steer them towards working with the boards and CCMS because they need their endorsement. The likes of BRA, which you mentioned, have their own managing authority. However, if it is going to be sharing with another school, it will need that endorsement. So, we are not in direct contact with schools that are thinking of putting applications in for the second call.
1430. **Mr Newton:** OK.
1431. **Mrs Lilley:** Other than to provide clarification that they have a particular question and feedback from the first call.
1432. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks for your presentation. The sharing agenda predates T:BUC by many years, as we know, and the original aim was to improve educational outcomes and deliver the curriculum. What is the priority now? It is societal or is it educational?
1433. **Mrs Lilley:** It is still primarily educational, and that is said in the T:BUC strategy. T:BUC refers to the fact that shared education can raise educational standards. It will help to break down intergenerational educational disadvantage and community disadvantage. So, education is still the key. It is about education but on a cross-community basis. Education is still the primary objective.
1434. **Mr Lunn:** Is it fair to ask you about the £500 million that has been announced. Presumably, that is £50 million a year, but I wonder whether it has to be £50 million a year for a start. Could it be front-loaded?
1435. **Ms Durkin:** Our finance colleagues are discussing with DFP exactly what the detail of that is. We do not have that detail other than the headline announcement. However, how that will actually break down into what is for shared education and what is for integrated education, how it is phased and what it is used for is not clear. As I mentioned earlier, it is about Executive and HM Treasury approval for individual projects. So, we need to work with colleagues on how that will work and what it will look like.
1436. **Mr Lunn:** If it is a bit vague at the moment, it will fit quite nicely with the rest of T:BUC in my opinion, but we will see where it goes. The £500 million is specified as being for shared and integrated education. You are going to be putting out calls for shared education

- projects. Will you put out calls for schools that might want to transform to integrated status or for parents to think about establishing a new integrated school?
1437. **Ms Durkin:** As I understand it, as far as I am aware, we will not be doing that, because this programme is specifically about the shared education campuses programme. So, I do not envisage that happening. Although colleagues who are working in that area may be better able to advise the Committee on that point. What you are concerned about is the T:BUC commitment and the shared education campus. As you know, we have a second call out for projects. The aim is to have 10 projects commence within the next five years. That is the priority for the programme at the minute.
1438. **Mr Lunn:** The Department now has the same obligation to facilitate and encourage shared and integrated education. The word “promote” has been slipped in there about shared projects, but not shared advances, whether that will make much difference to the situation. So, it seems odd that, on the face of it, we have a pool of £500 million to be spent over the next 10 years. The good folk in the integrated sector would be concerned that the main emphasis and the whole thrust of how that money is going to be spent is on shared education projects not integrated.
1439. **Ms Durkin:** We are alive to our statutory obligations. As I said earlier, the shared education policy and Bill are out for consultation and, if agreed, would put on the statute book equal parity to facilitate and encourage shared education. This particular programme is focused on shared education campus projects. It is not clear yet how that £500 million will be divided between shared and integrated education and how it will be applied to specific projects.
1440. **Mr Lunn:** In five or 10 years, when the reviews are done, it will be interesting to see how it all pans out. I am not trying to be particularly critical. Can you tell me about two of the projects that you are working on in Ballycastle and Limavady? What is the actual proposal in Ballycastle?
1441. **Mrs Lilley:** I am just flicking through the papers because I want to make sure that I get it right. As Jacqui said earlier, we have three of them, and they are quite different. I know that you are going to visit the two primary schools later today. St Mary’s High School, Limavady and Limavady High School are two post-primary schools that are located fairly close to each other. They have a long history of sharing already as part of the delivery of the entitlement framework. Even prior to that, they had a history of sharing. The project is to provide two new shared facilities: a shared sixth-form centre and careers centre on the St Mary’s school site; and a shared STEM centre on the Limavady High School site, which would be used by both schools. There is a walkway between the two schools that is council property. You asked earlier about local community and council involvement. One of their proposals is that there would be a peace/harmony bridge over the walkway between the two schools and, as we understand it, funding has been approved by the council. That is the St Mary’s project.
1442. I understand that there have been a few working group meetings between both schools, the Western Board and CCMS. As Jacqui said earlier, because the projects are new pathfinder projects, the project boards are slightly different from the normal project boards for capital, in that there are joint SROs and joint chairs. So, it is jointly chaired by CCMS and the local education and library board, in recognition of the fact that it is those three projects anyway. So, they are having their first project board meeting tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully, if the weather is clement enough, we will all go up there.
1443. The Ballycastle project involves Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College. Again, they are two post-primary schools that are physically quite close to each other. They have a long history of sharing over a large number of years. Their proposal is for

- two new core schools and two shared centres, one for STEM and one for the performance and creative arts at Key Stages 4 and 5. The actual sharing in the two shared centres will be very extensive.
1444. **Mr Lunn:** Will there be one on each site?
1445. **Mrs Lilley:** That is under negotiation. It is part of the discussion on how the actual layout would look; whether it would be one building or a building on each of the two sites. That is where we get into the issues of the site and the actual physicality. Colleagues who know these things, our architects, tell me that you have to look at whether there is hilly or damp ground. I would never have thought of things like this. We do not know the detail of how that will look. That is a significant project, and we need to get into the detail of how it is taken forward, but that is their proposal.
1446. **Mr Lunn:** OK. Thank you.
1447. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you. It has been an interesting discussion this morning. I wondered about the criteria. Are they the same as before or are they weighted differently?
1448. **Mrs Lilley:** We have revised the criteria. We took account of the lessons that we had learnt earlier and we have revised them slightly. The gateway criteria are not marked any more. That is a specific yes or no: you either have it or you do not have it. You will excuse me if, this morning, I do not actually say what the allocation of marks will be for each of the criteria. This is a public meeting. It is still an open competition; it does not close until 30 January. We are happy to give that information to the Committee for Education. We did that for the last assessment. Sharing has moved from being desirable to being essential. We have changed the balance for the religious aspect. We have put greater emphasis on this being about schools and schools sharing. We have introduced that new desirable criterion for disadvantaged pupils. We have emphasised in the protocol document and the criteria exactly the type of thing that we are looking for as evidence. We thought that that made it easier for schools. Certainly, the feedback that we have had so far — even from some of those who had applied in the first call — said that schools welcomed the revised criteria because they think it makes it clearer to them exactly what it is we are looking for.
1449. **Mrs Overend:** Are you doing anything differently to try to encourage more rural schools to participate? You talked about Limavady. The two schools are side by side. That makes it much easier for them to share. A lot of rural schools in my constituency, for instance, are five miles apart. It is a big effort for them to share. A lot of schools do that. Are you looking for value for money?
1450. **Ms Durkin:** Roisin made the point earlier that it is important that there is history of sharing. Some rural schools already have a track record of successful sharing. They have worked around the logistics, depending on how far apart they are and how they get pupils together for shared education experiences. Through the area planning steering group and working with CCMS, the boards and others, we have tried to say, “Be aware”, to give as much notice as we can about the launch of the second call and remind them about the timescale for submission. They are really working on the ground with individual schools where they know that there is already that pattern and history of sharing between partner schools to try to encourage them to say whether they are candidate schools for this programme.
1451. **Mrs Lilley:** Location is a desirable criterion, and I appreciate the comments about rurality. Where the schools are not side by side, and if there is a distance between them, we have tried to ask how the school will try to minimise disruption for the pupils. It is primarily about the educational benefits. That is the key thing. We are not trying to say, “You cannot be a distance apart.”. If they are a distance apart, we are asking, “How will you minimise the disruption for the education of the children?”.

- Rural schools may be used to thinking about that anyway. We have tried to take account of it as much as we can. The majority of the schools — the ones that we are aware of anyway so far, but there could be others coming in that we are not yet aware of — are working with their local planning and managing authorities, and, because we have had quite a lot of engagement with them through the three projects that have come through the first call and in feedback that we have given to other projects, I would like to think that the boards and CCMS would have a good idea of the sort of evidence that we are looking for and how they will encourage the schools to present that evidence.
1452. **Mrs Overend:** Saying that, even schools within a town have distances between them as well. That is evident. Does the sharing have to be as part of the 9.00 am to 3.00 pm day? Could it be for extra-curricular activities? That might minimise the disruption to the school day, but it could be something like a choir club or a STEM club. Is that sort of thing acceptable?
1453. **Mrs Lilley:** It is an example of sharing.
1454. **Ms Durkin:** It is about educational benefits. Primarily, there should be good examples of the educational benefits of the sharing experience, but I expect that schools will provide evidence of all the types of sharing that they are doing, whether it is curriculum-based or extra-curricular activity or, as was mentioned earlier, is about community use in that, if the facility was available, how it would encourage cross-community activity in a particular community. The focus is very much on educational benefits and quality education experience, but it is also about as much evidence as schools can provide — [*Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.*]
1455. **Mrs Lilley:** A lot of the schools have that extra-curricular element to their sharing, but, if they are putting in a bid for a capital infrastructure, they need to say what they plan to use it for.
1456. **Mr Lunn:** I will follow up on John's point, if you do not mind. If it is primarily about educational benefits, why is there such an emphasis on the requirement for a cross-sectoral approach? Let me develop that a wee bit. For example, what if BRA and Methody both needed a state-of-the-art STEM facility, but it was not economically viable to provide two, and so they wanted to share one? Bear in mind that BRA has about a 40% Catholic intake and Methody has a 40% Protestant intake. So, in all other respects, except that they both come from the voluntary grammar sector, they would fit the criteria, but they would not be allowed to apply under this scheme. Is that correct?
1457. **Mrs Lilley:** Under the current criteria, yes, because we are looking for two different management types.
1458. **Mr Lunn:** That is my query. If you say that you are looking for two different management types, that would make most people think that you are emphasising the societal benefit of all this. But, in fact, you have told us several times that it is really the educational benefit that is important.
1459. **Mrs Lilley:** I apologise if I have caused confusion. It goes back to Jacqui's point; this is an OFMDFM strategy. It is from Together: Building a United Community. So, it is looking to build a united community. That was one of its headline actions, and, because it is about education, the Department of Education is implementing it. We are looking for it to provide quality education, but it is under the auspices of Together: Building a United Community. You then have to show that there are good educational benefits, too.
1460. **Mr Lunn:** I could make the same case for two integrated schools. It is not very likely because of the distances involved, but they could find themselves in the same position.
1461. **Ms Durkin:** If they are both the same management type, at the minute, under the criteria, yes. Or if you have a controlled and a GMI —



1462. **Mr Lunn:** What about a controlled integrated and a grant-maintained integrated that wanted to put a project forward?
1463. **Ms Durkin:** Again, it would be about that quality educational experience and about whether they had a history of sharing. I expect that it would be very difficult for schools to come forward and bid for this programme if they did not have a previous history of being involved in shared education activity.
1464. **Mr Lunn:** We will see how it goes.
1465. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** From the essential criteria, it appears that small schools are not really encouraged to come forward. You say:
- “That consideration of the Bain report recommendations of not more than 2 composite year groups in a class and a school of a minimum of 4 teachers will be met.”*
1466. Is that as an individual school or is that as two schools combined?
1467. **Mrs Lilley:** That is from the Bain recommendations on finance for education. Under the gateway criteria, we said that the planning authority approval is that they meet the criteria in the sustainable schools policy or, where that is not the case, the CCMS, if it a Catholic maintained school, and the education and library board, if it is a controlled school, have to say why they feel that it meets part of their sustainable schools policy going forward. That is why it is so important that you get planning authority approval. We are saying that that is what the normal criteria are, the same as for other schools. However, if they are putting forward a proposal where the schools do not meet some of or one of the sustainable schools criteria, the planning authority then has to state why they still are endorsing it — that is that it is part of their overall strategic vision for that area and the managing authorities say that it fits with their strategic views for their schools.
1468. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** So, small schools should not necessarily be discouraged by reading those criteria?
1469. **Ms Durkin:** No, but they should be engaging with their managing authorities and their planning authorities to ask whether they have any intention or plans in relation to that school. That is why it is really important at an early stage. As I said earlier, a lot of these projects have arisen from a long history of sharing in individual schools, and this programme is potentially providing access to capital funding to build on that — no pun intended. So, it is important that they engage with their planning authority and ask what the area plan is and what the intention for these schools is going forward. They are certainly not precluded from participating where they have that endorsement from their planning authority.
1470. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No one else has indicated any further questions. Obviously, we look forward to speaking to those involved in the projects that have been selected, and we look forward again to hearing from you, as time goes on, with an update on various projects. Thank you very much.



## 21 January 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Andrew Bell	<i>Department of</i>
Mrs Faustina Graham	<i>Education</i>
Dr Suzanne Kingon	
Dr John Hunter	<i>Education</i>
	<i>and Training</i>
	<i>Inspectorate</i>

#### 1471. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Good morning. With us are Faustina Graham, director of collaborative education and practice; Andrew Bell, head of the shared education and community relations team, Suzanne Kingon, who is also from that team; and Dr John Hunter from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). You are all very welcome to the Committee. Please make an opening statement, and members will follow up with questions.

1472. **Mrs Faustina Graham (Department of Education):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to brief you on the shared education policy and Bill and on the community relations, equality and diversity in education policy, which is probably better known as CRED. I will refer to it as that in the briefing.

1473. Turning first to shared education, I am pleased to report that the work has advanced considerably since I briefed the Committee on the topic in July 2014. Obviously, there is a high level of interest in shared education, and

the Committee will therefore be aware that the Minister recently launched an eight-week consultation on his proposed shared education policy and the accompanying Bill.

1474. I emphasise at the outset that the Department is keen to listen to the views of all interested parties and to have an informed and meaningful discussion on the plans to move forward. The policy sets out a comprehensive framework for the development of shared education, and it builds on the research, consultation and recommendations of the ministerial advisory group. It aims to ensure that schools and youth settings receive the resources, support and encouragement that they need to start, or to continue to develop, high-quality shared opportunities for their children and young people. It is very much a blueprint that seeks to build on our existing educational structures.

1475. While in no way attempting to compromise parental preference, the policy offers the opportunity to create a more cohesive education system in which increasing numbers of children and young people from different community backgrounds will be educated together.

1476. The policy contains 14 overarching actions that will support the advancement of shared education. It sets out plans to define, encourage and facilitate shared education through the legislation and, furthermore, to support structures to fund, develop and embed sharing throughout the education system.

1477. Practical progress has already been made on key ministerial commitments. The Delivering Social Change shared education signature project was launched in September, and the first call for applications was issued in November. The response has been very encouraging, and it is clear that there is a significant appetite in our schools for

- shared education. Successful applicants will be informed shortly. A second call is planned in the spring for projects that will commence in the autumn term of 2015.
1478. Inspection findings and the accompanying research tell us that educational settings are at different stages in their readiness for sharing. Therefore, the application process for the DSC signature programme was accompanied and supported by a new self-evaluation framework, which the Education and Training Inspectorate, under Dr John Hunter's leadership, has developed for shared education.
1479. The self-evaluation framework is a tool designed to assist practitioners in carrying out initial self-reflection to identify their baseline, set effective goals and then measure their progress, both throughout the programme and at the end. The process of self-evaluation leading to improvement is fundamental to the further development of not just our entire education system but, in this specific instance, the development of shared education. Our intention across the whole programme is that all elements of it will seek to explore, evaluate and incorporate key learning across the four years of the programme. So, it really will be an ongoing learning journey across the four years to the end of the programme, looking at the lessons we can learn and how we can modify the programme across the period rather than waiting to the end to accrue all of the learning.
1480. Importantly, all of the work in schools will be contextualised in the Northern Ireland curriculum. A key aim is to ensure that shared education becomes integral to and infused with school development planning and improvement.
1481. The education and library boards are nearing the end of a recruitment phase for a team of dedicated officers to support schools in advancing shared education. They will provide local, on-the-ground assistance, working with the partnerships to promote, plan and implement shared activity.
- In addition, 16 associate assessors, who are practising senior managers in schools, have been appointed by ETI to support them in the evaluation process. Obviously, capacity building will be developed across the four years for those working as associate assessors. Additionally, DE officials are working on proposals for a strategic approach to additional capacity building for teachers that will build on existing expertise.
1482. A proposed shared education Bill accompanies the policy. It provides a legislative definition of shared education, placing a power on the Department and associated arm's-length bodies to encourage and facilitate shared education. Members will be aware that the Education Act places a similar duty on the Education Authority. As I have outlined, shared education is very much a developing area, and, given its wide scope, a power will provide the necessary flexibility as we seek to further explore, develop and ultimately embed the benefits of shared education. Enshrining the concept in legislation sends a very clear message that it is now a permanent feature of our education landscape.
1483. Of course, there has been considerable debate about what constitutes shared education. Therefore, the Bill takes a very common-sense, practical approach. Essentially, shared education is about two or more schools, youth groups or early years settings coming together and educating children of different religious beliefs and from different socio-economic backgrounds together. The Bill is supported by the more detailed description in section 4 of the policy on how shared education will work in practice.
1484. The aim of the CRED policy is to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others. The policy was designed to underpin and support existing curricular requirements to develop young people as contributors to society, that being contributors one of the three key objectives of the Northern Ireland curriculum. It aims to provide

- young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours that enable them to value and respect difference and to engage positively with it.
1485. Since the introduction of the policy in 2011, considerable work has been taken forward. Dedicated CRED support officers have provided advice and help to schools and youth work settings to assess needs and deliver appropriate interventions. Almost 800 schools and youth work settings availed themselves of that support within the last two financial years. Guidance is available for all organisations, and it maps the policy across curricular subjects, links to teacher and youth work competencies and provides a self-assessment framework used to identify gaps and plan suitable interventions. A dedicated website provides a one-stop shop for practitioners and includes case studies, resources and support materials.
1486. A survey undertaken across schools and youth work settings identified training needs, and a training strategy was put in place. Over 2,000 school leaders, boards of governors, Youth Service management, teachers and youth workers attended awareness sessions. In excess of 4,000 teachers and youth workers availed themselves of training to improve their CRED-related knowledge and skills. One in four principals engaged in training on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. Over the last two financial years, 500 education settings availed themselves of CRED enhancement funding to reinforce learning. That involved in excess of 25,000 children and young people.
1487. Since the policy's introduction in 2011, a series of measures to assess its effectiveness has been undertaken. The measures included a series of focus groups with practitioners as well as young people and the commissioning of a module in the young life and times survey. Both concluded that the majority of young people experienced CRED activities and that, where provision is good or better, these are effective in changing attitudes. The focus groups provided evidence of a more collective, whole-school responsibility for CRED work rather than relying on one or two teachers, with connections being made across subject areas and clear learning outcomes.
1488. To inform future policy, the Department then commissioned the Education and Training Inspectorate to undertake a formal review of the CRED policy and its impact on children and young people. Work was undertaken over the autumn term of 2014, and it is expected that the ETI report will be published in the next few weeks. Early feedback from the report has been very positive. Most of the schools and youth organisations visited demonstrated effective CRED practice. Indeed, the majority of the sessions observed were very good or better. The report will include a number of recommendations for further embedding CRED in the education system.
1489. The Committee will, of course, be aware that, as part of the action to address pressures on the extremely challenging 2015-16 education budget, the Minister has proposed ending earmarked funding for CRED. The public consultation on the budget proposals closed on 29 December, and the Minister is reviewing the responses prior to finalising the budget. A full equality impact assessment is planned over the coming weeks.
1490. These are still early days, and there is much work to be done in the weeks ahead to plan how best to move forward within a challenging financial context and in a manner that reflects the Minister's key priorities of raising standards for all and closing the achievement gap. In this context, we are looking at how best to support the further embedding and mainstreaming of the CRED policy, and to explore the synergies with shared education so that the good work observed by inspectors is built on and continues to make a significant difference.
1491. I trust that this has provided the Committee with an overview of the work to date, including the difficult decisions for the Minister in balancing the budget. We welcome the opportunity to

- answer any questions from Committee members.
1492. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much, Faustina. I refer to your final comments on CRED. We have a draft shared education policy and a draft Bill. One would think that, because there might be a certain element of duplication, there might be an attempt to phase out CRED. You said, however, that you may be mainstreaming or embedding it. Will they run as separate pieces of work or together?
1493. **Mrs Graham:** The CRED policy, which was in place before we came to shared education, is designed to support the curriculum, particularly with regard to young people as contributors to society. It is almost like an umbrella policy, of which shared education forms a part. Equally, and alongside that, there are the other elements to do with equality and diversity, such as special educational needs, anti-bullying and the pastoral elements — all those things that will enable our young people to be active citizens of the 21st century.
1494. The important thing for us is, as I said about shared education, to aim for the integration of all this work into the curriculum. Earmarked funding for CRED was designed to allow schools the opportunity to take something within the revised curriculum, as it then was, and think about how to make it an integral part of what they did, giving time and space to both schools and youth workers to look at how it was different, how it fitted in and how it made sense. We have now progressed that work. There is still plenty of work to do, and the report, I am sure, will indicate that to us.
1495. For me, the two policies are complementary, and shared education forms part of the CRED policy, as do other supporting policies in the Department. CRED will not be phased out; rather, it will be phased into the curriculum, as I see it. The same is true of shared education. It is an opportunity for schools, in particular, to look at something that they have to think their way through. In truth, we have to think our way through, too. It is a learning experience for all of us. The ultimate aim is for that to become integral to the work of every school and to be part of the ethos and DNA of every school, but we have to accept where we are now and the fact that we are on a journey to that point. The same is true for both policies.
1496. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** In some ways, then, the draft policies on shared education that we are looking at enhance and support CRED.
1497. **Mrs Graham:** Absolutely.
1498. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I know we will come back to that again and spend a great deal of time on it. We will move to the Bill. You mentioned that the shared education policy and the Bill are going to “encourage and facilitate”, but the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 states, “encourage, facilitate and promote”. Why are they not complementary?
1499. **Mrs Graham:** I think they are. To me, “encourage and facilitate” are stronger terms than “promote”. The term “promote” is used when you are not in a position and you want to highlight it but cannot actually effect change. It is about trying to encourage that change. “Encourage and facilitate”, however, are stronger words. Would you like to add anything, Suzanne?
1500. **Dr Suzanne Kingon (Department of Education):** There is no inherent contradiction between “encourage, facilitate and promote” and “encourage and facilitate”. In preparing the Bill, the Minister decided that he would go for the latter, which is in line with the Department’s duty to the integrated and Irish-medium sectors. Those are the words that went in. There is no inherent contradiction.
1501. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It is a power rather than a duty.
1502. **Dr Kingon:** Yes, it is a power. The reason for that is that shared education is not a sector; it is not neatly wrapped and packed. It will, hopefully, involve a

- majority of our schools, and we felt that a power provided more flexibility. Also, some activities — curricular collaboration or teacher development, for example — may require more development at a certain time. It encompasses such a broad remit that a power gave greater flexibility than a duty, which is more suitable for a tightly wrapped and packed sector, if you follow me.
1503. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I anticipate there will be quite a bit of discussion about the definition of “religious belief or political affiliation”. How do you determine the political affiliation of a child or young person?
1504. **Dr Kingon:** The crucial reason for putting in political opinion is that not all young people would subscribe to a religious belief, and it was designed to reflect that. The crucial thing in the definition is that it must bring together children from different community backgrounds, different religious and political beliefs, and children who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not. They are the two crucial elements.
1505. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will look forward to the responses and to discussing that again.
1506. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation, although I would disagree about “encourage, facilitate and promote”. I think “promote” is stronger than the other two, but I will leave it at that.
1507. I wonder what the impact will be upon integrated education. Critics of shared education will say that this may be the death knell for the demand for integrated and that it will slow down the whole process of schools becoming integrated. I am looking for your views on that.
1508. **Mrs Graham:** Again, I think it is a case of accepting where we are now. It is entirely possible for schools to be developed that are integrated and also for schools to transform to integrated status. That has not happened in substantial numbers over the last period; nevertheless, we cannot stand still on improving good relations and the education system for our young people in a range of ways. We have worked, certainly, with the integrated sector on the previous shared education programmes, and there is nothing contradictory about integrated schools being involved in shared education. Obviously, if in the course of that journey a school decides to transform to integrated status, that is something the Department would be content to happen. It has to be a case of bringing people with us. Saying to people, “We are going to tell you what is good for you, and you should be doing this” is not the way to win hearts and minds in sensitive areas such as this. It is about ensuring that we look at the stage people are at and allow them to integrate what they do into their current school. If they should then choose to transform to integrated status, that option is there at every point in the journey.
1509. **Dr Kingon:** They are complementary. For some schools, shared education will be the right approach. Other schools may want to look at the option of transforming. Shared education can lead to schools wanting to go down the transformation route. For others, it will not lead that way, but the two are complementary.
1510. **Mr Andrew Bell (Department of Education):** The integrated sector is at the upper end of the continuum for shared education, so the two are complementary. We found through the work on the shared education projects funded by the International Fund for Ireland that the integrated sector has already addressed a number of issues that it can share. Shared education is about sharing good experience across schools and between teachers and educators. So, for that reason, we see the integrated sector as part of this. It will share that experience with other schools and, equally, may benefit in other areas from other schools’ experiences.
1511. **Mr Hazzard:** Undoubtedly, some people will see the integrated sector as, as you say, the upper end of the continuum, but there is another view that — I would like your view on it — there is a contradiction in that the Department

- is now setting out to encourage and facilitate shared education when it already had a duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. Some people will see it as a contradiction and think that it will negatively affect the original duty and so they should not be doing that. I want your take on that.
1512. **Mrs Graham:** Ultimately, the Department's vision is to ensure that all young people get the best possible education. That is the overriding vision for the Department and that has to inform everything else that happens subsequent to that. So, to me, there is no inherent contradiction there in the sense that, given the range of schools that we have in Northern Ireland, the duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education will not be hampered in any way by something that is slightly different but complementary. If you want to probe the concept a wee bit further, I am happy to —
1513. **Mr Hazzard:** There will probably be plenty of conversation today around it.
1514. **Mrs Graham:** I am just not sure if I am answering exactly what you are asking.
1515. **Mr A Bell:** The other key point is that the Minister has, on a number of occasions, when he has talked about shared education, mentioned the statutory duty and stated that he remains firmly committed to that. I do not think that there is any contradiction.
1516. **Mr Hazzard:** No problem. I have one final point around the definition. How broad can schools take it? Can it include ethnicity? Can it include urban/rural? What about coed? An awful lot of our schools are still single sex. Will we see a move around the coed? Finally, will there be a penalty in place for schools that remain in isolation and do not look towards sharing?
1517. **Mrs Graham:** I will ask Suzanne to answer that.
1518. **Dr Kingon:** There is a definition in the Bill but, when you go into the policy, you will see that there is a detailed description of how shared education will work in practice. It is broadened out and makes it very clear that a key element of shared education is bringing all the section 75 groups together. That will obviously include ethnicity, children with disabilities and a different gender. You asked about a penalty, but, no, this is about encouragement. This is not about penalties for schools that are not involved in it, and we hope that, with a positive approach, a lot of schools will want to get involved in the programmes.
1519. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks for your presentation. I would also cross swords with you over the word "promote". I am quite happy that it is not there because, according to the dictionary, Wikipedia and all the rest of it, it is stronger than "encourage and facilitate". But that is by the way. Just leave it out; it is OK.
1520. From what I am reading, it seems the end product of the shared education programme is to promote more integration, if that is not a contradiction. The end result of the programme is where the integrated sector is at the present time. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) said to us only a few weeks ago that where we are is where the shared education promotion people would like to be. If you look at it the other way, what do you say to people who say that, in a lot of cases, shared education may well just be a cop-out that will give parents, groups and schools the opportunity to not integrate when that is the end goal that we are all looking for? I do not mean integrated per se as in a formula. I mean schools coming together. I want to talk about the Moy in a moment, but what do you say to people who see it as a cop-out?
1521. **Mrs Graham:** As I said, this is contextualised in the Northern Ireland curriculum, first and foremost. It is not about different views in the sense of saying, "This is about all schools becoming integrated", so you are quite right in what you say there. This is about how our schools fulfil the objectives of the Northern Ireland curriculum, which include educating young people, first of all, as



- individuals, as contributors to society and contributors to the economy —
1522. **Mr Lunn:** Before you finish that, I just want to slow you down. The opportunity for schools to partner each other requires cross-sectoral input.
1523. **Mrs Graham:** Yes.
1524. **Mr Lunn:** So, how can you say it is purely educational? I wish it was purely educational, but it is societal as well. There is a big emphasis on the societal benefit; it is written all over this document, with the end result perhaps being that children are being educated together.
1525. **Mrs Graham:** I would argue that the societal element is educational in that way, because it is a fundamental part of our curriculum. Our young people need to be able to survive and thrive in a global economy in the 21st century, and they need to be active citizens. So, all of education is geared to ensuring that our young people have all the skills and attributes that they need to survive in a global economy.
1526. For all of our schools, when we look at the elements of the curriculum, particularly around personal development and mutual understanding, we look at the statutory requirements of the curriculum around active citizenship and learning for life and work, all of which schools are required to pursue in order to deliver those elements of the curriculum meaningfully and to a high quality. It would be very difficult to do that without dealing with all the challenging issues that are going to come to light through the interaction with another school.
1527. When I was working in ETI, the evidence that we accrued through the evaluation of all the sharing and education programmes demonstrated very forcefully that it would be very difficult for young people in those situations to fulfil the aims of the Northern Ireland curriculum without engaging with partner schools. That is something that we will look at as this programme develops, because it would be very difficult to do all the things that are required in the curriculum meaningfully — looking, as I said, at the curricular elements and but also at thinking skills and personal capability, attitudes and dispositions — without challenging people's beliefs, attitudes, understanding and tolerating difference and respect for difference.
1528. In that way, rather than finding ourselves in a situation that has been criticised in the past, where community relations and education for mutual understanding, for example, were viewed as extra or additional to the curriculum, we seek, through the ongoing work on shared education, to ensure that it is integral to every aspect of education and in particular the ethos of a school.
1529. For that reason, it would be very difficult for a school to engage in this in a way that would be, as you described, a cop-out. Obviously, John Hunter is here this morning with us. As this programme progresses, the expectation is that that work will be integral to the individual inspection of schools. Therefore, if a school is not delivering the curriculum in that way, ultimately that will come to light through that work. That said, that is not something that is going to happen right now; it will be built up over time and experience across the four years, because we want the Education and Training Inspectorate in particular to work collaboratively with the schools to accrue the learning across the four years.
1530. **Dr Kingon:** It might be also useful to reference the ETI continuum and the fact that is it built into the Delivering Social Change programme that schools must progress at least one level along the continuum in three areas. Funding is contingent on progression, and progression and evaluation are built in, so there is no possibility of schools engaging in this in a half-hearted manner or not progressing along that continuum. That is a key element, and schools have been asked from the outset to self-evaluate against the continuum. John and his colleagues will be evaluating the progress.
1531. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks for that lecture. The criteria for cooperating between sectors and schools appear to allow for a

situation where a controlled grammar and a voluntary grammar could apply for shared funding. Technically, they are different sectors, but, in terms of societal division and so on, perhaps they are not. You can contrast that with a situation around an integrated school which is already operating on the cross-sectoral, for want of a better phrase, basis, but which cannot, on its own, apply for shared funding.

1532. **Mrs Graham:** The important thing is that, as Suzanne said, we are trying to ensure that there is flexibility in how schools will apply for this work, and we are trying to ensure that they are looked at on a case-by-case basis. However, it would never exclusively be the case that we would look at which two schools are working together, because there are so many variations of how schools can be described in Northern Ireland. One of my colleagues described it as the eccentricities of the number of school categories that we have. For example, we will have a controlled school that may comprise almost entirely of Catholic pupils. So, we have to look at the range of factors that any group of schools applying for funding is bringing into the proposal. Ultimately, it will be on the total quality of the proposal. I am not saying that we would exclude any partnership, but something that looks as if it is not going to challenge the school in some way to further its thinking — as you have indicated — will be picked up in the range of evidence in the proposal that the school presents.

1533. **Mr Lunn:** But an integrated school which, as you say, Andrew, is at the top end of the continuum as we speak, cannot of itself apply for shared education funding under this, unless they partner with somebody else. They cannot do it in-house. They are where you want to be.

1534. **Mr A Bell:** One of the key issues of the programme is that it should be mutually beneficial to schools in the partnership. Integrated schools can bring to other schools their experience of how they deal with some of the issues around educating Catholic and Protestant young

people and, indeed, people from other communities. There should be benefit to both sides, because it is about learning for the young people but, it is also, ultimately, about improving educational standards and learning for teachers in schools. Through the evidence in the pilot project, we learned that when schools — including integrated schools — work together on that basis, schools within that partnership benefit in totality. To leave an integrated school on its own means that it would not benefit from some of the wider issues that, potentially, it could do.

1535. **Mr Lunn:** Can I ask about the Moy, very briefly?

1536. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will bring you back in. Mr Hazzard wants to comment on the previous point.

1537. **Mr Hazzard:** Can two integrated schools be in the process?

1538. **Dr Kingon:** We look at everything on a case-by-case basis. There is no definite, “You can” or “You cannot”. Everything is going to be looked at in terms of the quality of the application. We do not want to rule out anything at the outset. Take a controlled integrated school, for instance. Is it controlled or integrated? Or, a controlled Irish-medium school; is it controlled or Irish-medium? Schools can have a multiplicity of identities, and it is important that, at the outset, we do not say what will or will not qualify without looking at the details of the proposal. We need to look at whether it is bringing a good community balance and a good social balance together. That is our plan.

1539. **Mrs Graham:** One of the issues for the integrated sector is that we have a number of schools in which there is not a balance insofar as even the expected levels. So, if there is an advantage there for schools that are close to each other, for example, and which are integrated but have a different balance, and those schools could benefit from working together, we would look sympathetically at that type of submission.

1540. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for your presentation. I share almost all

- of your goals in trying to get everything integral. When I look at the definition in the Bill that is coming up, I am concerned that it is going to force people to have to choose to be of a certain religious or political belief. Is there not a better route of including cross-community, because there are so many other little different forms of communities in an area? One of the questions I have been pushed to ask is this: should we not be including communities in their schools, particularly mixed communities, because everything is not just Catholic, Protestant, rich, poor and everything else? Is there not room there for a little bit more flexibility by making it mixed community rather than trying to divide us into different groups?
1541. **Dr Kingon:** Obviously, it is possible to put certain things into legislation. We collate the religious background of children through the school census, just as the socio-economic background is done. It is quite easy to read at school level. It does not involve an individual child self-identifying for the purpose of a programme. It is information that is readily available and, therefore, it is easy to make a rough-and-ready assessment of the school: what religious background the children come from and the social mix in the school. From that perspective, the legislation allows us to do that. Shared education simply must bring together children from different religious or community backgrounds. The definition does that. It also says that it is about achieving a good social mix. We know that systems in which there is a good social mix tend to be higher achieving. This is about tackling the long tail of underachievement that has pervaded our system. So this is a common-sense approach. It does what it is possible to do in terms of a legal definition.
1542. **Mr A Bell:** I think that, if you look at the policy, as Suzanne said earlier, you see that it refers to all the section 75 groups, so it includes all those. That builds and adds to the legislative definition.
1543. **Mr Kinahan:** It is my aim and we are also pushing for community use of schools. So, if you add in football, rugby, cricket, Gaelic or whatever, there are a whole lot of different groupings in there.
1544. **Mrs Graham:** I think that, in trying to keep the definition simple, as Suzanne said, it is also taking account of the fact that every school is required to interact with its community. That is a key element of Every School a Good School; it is one of its four tenets. Therefore, that expectation is there. Within this particular programme, our expectation is also that schools will demonstrate links, not just with external stakeholders, but around how they are going to improve interactions with community. Interactions with community form a key part of the framework that ETI has developed. So, for us, one of the benefits will be that schools will look much more systematically at how they are interacting on that community level. So, it is not that it has been ignored in any way. As Suzanne said, it is about keeping the definition as practical as possible and in a common-sense way while being very aware that there are other requirements that will support exactly what you are talking about.
1545. **Mr Kinahan:** Good. On a slightly different note, we have this conflict at the moment between schools that are integrated and those that have a super mix and are in different groupings. Do you see that, in the long term, leading to a change in how we define integrated schools? Will it make things more flexible? Part of our difficulties at the moment is that we are stuck to our definition of what integrated is, and that means that everything else is seen as not being integrated. Do you see it leading to change, so that schools that might be controlled but are really well mixed are allowed to be relabelled without it causing —
1546. **Mrs Graham:** There is the issue that it is almost like discussing a label, as opposed to us discussing what the important elements of any school are. The Department's duty is to encourage and facilitate integrated education not to

encourage and facilitate the integrated schools or a sector as it exists at the minute. We have a definition of what constitutes an integrated school from the Treacy judgement, but, if we can move to a world where there is a broader understanding of what integrated education means, that would obviously be something to be welcomed. As Suzanne said, there is a debate about what shared education means, and the same debate exists around what integrated education means. What we are attempting to do with the definition in the legislation is to give something straightforward on which we can build over time and begin to get a clearer consensus around what that definition is.

1547. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Just on that point, do you see shared education as reconciliation or as achieving educational outcomes?

1548. **Mrs Graham:** Both. This is something that we are debating and discussing at the moment as well. I see reconciliation outcomes as an element of educational outcomes, because all those things are intertwined. I think that everything that we do in the education system will lead to an educational outcome. We do not have sufficient clarity in talking about what the curricular, reconciliation and examination outcomes are. Truthfully, the language around all of that is quite confusing at the minute. We struggle with it ourselves. Part of the learning process for all this will be to get a sharper understanding of the various elements and how they all fit together. That is the honest answer.

1549. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome. In terms of listening to other people's questions and what is coming out, is this about schools working together or children working together? There is a certain amount of confusion out there. Look at examples of really good practice and sharing, be it integrated, such as Shimna Integrated College in my constituency, a controlled school like Down High School or a maintained school like St Columbanus' in Bangor, where there are excellent cases of

sharing going on. Those schools are being disadvantaged because they cannot apply for that funding. If our priority is bringing children together, surely there should be a lot more flexibility. It is nice to join up with a school of a different management type, but if the priority is our children working together, the Department should be creating more flexibility to encourage and facilitate shared education in the schools that are doing a really good job, be they integrated, maintained or controlled.

1550. **Dr Kingon:** They can apply for the funding; all schools are eligible to apply for the funding. Quite rightly, as you say, there is really good practice in a lot of our schools, but we want to share that practice; we do not want to keep it pocketed in a few schools. Those schools are very well placed to participate in shared education programmes and bring the expertise that they have developed through dealing with children from different religious backgrounds. They are really well placed to bring that to a wider reconciliation programme in dealing with schools from different community backgrounds. That is what the programmes are about.

1551. **Mr Rogers:** Yes, but surely they are knocked out immediately because of one of the essential criteria: they have not joined with a school from a different sector.

1552. **Dr Kingon:** It is about two or more schools coming together to share. They can partner up with another school and apply for the programme and share their good practice.

1553. **Mr Rogers:** I go back to my original point: it seems to be more about the politics of bringing schools together than celebrating children working together.

1554. **Mr A Bell:** The policy is very much learner-centred. Indeed, the continuum model makes it absolutely clear that it is learner-centred and for the benefit of the pupils, children and young people. From that point of view, you need to ensure that the education workforce has the capacity and skills to address those

- issues as well. It is very much focused around the whole broad spectrum of being beneficial to schools and to the pupils. Ultimately, if it is beneficial to the schools, the pupils will benefit as a result. It is very much learner-centred.
1555. **Mr Rogers:** I am delighted, John, to hear about the self-evaluation framework for sharing. There is a lot of confusion out there about what sharing actually is. Unless we have that framework, how can you even set a baseline? Will you tell me a wee bit more about that?
1556. **Mr John Hunter (Education and Training Inspectorate):** We recognise very clearly that schools are at different starting points in this and that some do not wish to be at the starting point. Therefore, the concept of the continuum is to cater for the projects or partnerships that can get under way and those that need further time and training. The idea behind the continuum was to allow partnerships to have a set of indicators or criteria as a baseline to measure themselves against. Our view was that the partnerships set their baseline, and that our job, particularly in year 1, is to be very supportive by quality-assuring in working partnership with them. It is to throw out the old concept that we are policing a system; we are working alongside. We are in going to be in a learning mode as well.
1557. The continuum deliberately did not call its pillar level 1, level 2 and level 3. We were very deliberate about giving the notion of defining, expanding and embedding. Schools in partnership will find that they may not be in just one section but a variety of sections. Therefore, they can draw on what targets they wish to set for the partnership. We were very clear and honest that schools out there are not entirely sure about the concept. There are those who have experience of having gone through the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) projects, and they will probably be the mentors and leaders in the first outworking of the programme. We felt that the continuum was the beginning of allowing them to give themselves a self-evaluation and almost a mirror of their current practice that could be used individually within the school, but, more particularly, as part of partnership working. It was designed for that reason.
1558. We consulted quite widely, and it was built on the concepts in Every School a Good School. Schools are also very used to Together Towards Improvement and the methodology and approach within that. So far, it has been well received by the schools that have shown an interest in shared education.
1559. **Mr Rogers:** Chair, I have one last one. If this is about all our children, why has it not been extended to special schools?
1560. **Mr A Bell:** It has. Special schools are also involved in it. Indeed, our experience with the IFI-funded projects was that special schools were involved in those. Where they were involved, it brought a completely new dimension to the partnership, and more learning was derived from it. Special schools are involved.
1561. **Mr Rogers:** If a special school was to look for funding, it would have to join up with a school from a different background and a different management authority.
1562. **Mr A Bell:** They would join —
1563. **Dr Kingon:** It would not need to be a different management authority; it just could not be another special school. It could be the same sector — a controlled special school and a controlled school. There would be no issue with that. It is always done on a case-by-case basis, but special schools are very much included in the programme.
1564. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you.
1565. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Newton.
1566. **Mr Newton:** I am content, Chair.
1567. **Mr McCausland:** I want to ask a quick question before my main point. You mentioned that, under Every School a Good School, there are four areas and that there is something about interaction with the community. Is there some documentation that you could direct me

- to, to give some more indication of what that is expected to mean in practice?
1568. **Mrs Graham:** The policy itself will give you the four elements that are required from schools. As Andrew said, those would be a need for it to be learner-centred; the quality of learning and teaching; the quality of leadership; and the school and its community. You will find all the various indicators that demonstrate that within the Every School a Good School policy.
1569. **Mr McCausland:** OK. Thanks.
1570. I was interested in Suzanne's point that a school could have a multiplicity of identities. That is true of us all, as well as schools. As the Chair said earlier, you touched on the issue of political and religious identity. However, running through all the documentation is the word "cultural", and we all have a cultural identity as well as a political and religious identity. If you bring schools and children together to share, however that is done — I am sure that those are some of the areas that they would want to look at in the course of that sharing — is there anything to ensure that there is something done on the issue of equality? That was a point that was raised by Professor Hughes when she was before the Committee. Is anything done to allow them to come together with a similar understanding and appreciation of the home and community from which they come?
1571. Some schools have a very strong focus on cultural traditions. Obviously, if a school is an Irish-medium school, it will have a focus on the Irish culture, and that is largely the same in schools that are overseen by the CCMS. However, that may not be as clear in controlled schools. How is that issue dealt with?
1572. **Mr A Bell:** Having a culturally diverse learning experience is already part of the curriculum. That is a requirement of the curriculum and what it is built on. That is a key element in both primary and post-primary education and, in Key Stage 3 and above, cultural understanding features in every subject area under developing young people as contributors to society. It is an area in which, as you have rightly said, some schools are more advanced than others in addressing those issues.
1573. There is an opportunity for improvement in that area, and shared education brings that opportunity to explore identities and cultural backgrounds. Indeed, when Professor Hughes and her colleagues were here, they spoke about cultural differences and said that shared classes broaden and deepen pupils' experiences. That was certainly the experience that we had with the IFI shared education programmes, which allowed for that.
1574. We have touched on the CRED policy, and one of the issues with that is developing self-respect and respect for others. Part of that policy and the work that has helped schools to move forward in that area is about allowing pupils to fully explore and understand their own cultural background, either before they engage or as well as engaging with others. It is a core element, but shared education will help in that process.
1575. **Mr McCausland:** Educationally, it is good that children are aware of the culture of the home and community from which they come. It is also a human rights issue, as we know. However, the issue is how it is actually implemented. From my understanding, it is not properly monitored across sectors and nobody has done any work on it. I have asked all the different groups — it is the same question that I ask all the time. It is an area in which there has been a lack of investigation, research and the establishment of good practice so that some sectors can learn from others. I make the point to you — I am sure that we will come back to it in the future — that there is a vast difference between the nature of cultural traditions work in controlled, maintained and Irish-medium schools, even though a controlled school may be in a community that is essentially monocultural, serving a particular community which, by nature, will quite often be that way. I was in a maintained school when they were

- announcing the school play, and it was about the life of the Irish rebel Robert Emmet. I do not think that I will ever go into a controlled school and find that they are doing a play about the siege of Derry.
1576. **Dr Kingon:** You also have to be aware of the differences in the legislation that constitute the schools. Controlled schools are constituted under legislation that means that they must provide non-denominational religious instruction. That is obviously different and feeds through to cultural identity. Building on what Andrew said —
1577. **Mr McCausland:** Sorry, what did you mean by cultural identity in controlled schools?
1578. **Dr Kingon:** There is a difference in the legislation, and, you know —
1579. **Mr McCausland:** The legislation does not specify that a Catholic maintained school has to do only Irish culture or give an Irish perspective on life.
1580. **Dr Kingon:** I appreciate that.
1581. **Mr McCausland:** Likewise, I would suggest that is nothing about what is being indicated about controlled schools —
1582. **Dr Kingon:** I think the —
1583. **Mr McCausland:** Controlled schools should surely reflect the culture. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, schools must reflect the culture of the homes and community from which the children come. If it is a school in the Catholic maintained sector, it will, for example, probably have an Irish traditional music group. What is the equivalent of a traditional music group in a controlled school in a largely Protestant or unionist area?
1584. **Mrs Graham:** The important thing, as you have pointed out, is our lack of monitoring, specifically —
1585. **Mr McCausland:** Would you concede research as well?
1586. **Mrs Graham:** I am sure that there probably has also been a lack of that.
- However, I think that we have to be careful about constituting particular sectors as lacking in some way in cultural identity. You have talked about plays and for me, as an English specialist, my first choice would be the quality of the literature. I would then look at what other cultural elements they might explore.
1587. **Mr McCausland:** I do not know whether the play about Robert Emmet the Irish rebel was good literature. I do not even know who wrote it.
1588. **Mrs Graham:** It may not be. In all honesty, I am not familiar with that, nor am I familiar with plays about the siege of Derry. It is about the educational benefits that would accrue from that and whether there are opportunities to explore cultural identity, first in your school and ultimately in a programme like this one. If the vehicle was literature or drama, it would be about looking at what benefits could accrue for both schools from that. Importantly, in trying to address your concerns — because I think they are genuine, and it is an indication of where we are at in our curriculum development — the continuum that John talked about and the framework for development there challenge schools to have the important conversations that you are talking about. It is hugely important that we begin to have those conversations.
1589. In allowing two or more schools to come together, there is that then questioning of their work in all those areas and what their school is about, in order to begin to develop the partnership. In the work that I did with John prior to that, we discovered that even we in the inspectorate evaluating programmes did not have the language to explain and articulate our thinking in a way that allowed us to communicate that effectively with other people. That has been part of the learning process. Your question is well asked and is one that we hope to answer.
1590. **Mr McCausland:** The monitoring and research that has not been taking place — how does that get started?

1591. **Mr Hunter:** In the CRED survey, on the direct connection and observation of practice in schools, schools set out to meet the needs of their school population. One school may have a prayer room so that Muslims can have the time and space to explore, develop and meet their own religious needs, while in others there could be a common room where each denomination is allowed to practise distinctly or learn from one another. All that is building an understanding of difference and diversity, which is contributing to those who are developing and understanding fully their own identity vis-à-vis the identity of others. Add into that a school's focus entirely on special educational needs and you will find that that becomes a strong focus within the cultural aspect of the school.
1592. When we are looking at the continuum, it is helpful to think that in one of the areas that schools find more difficult to face the challenging issues that are the elephants in the room in this situation, the best practice has actually brought within the PDMU programmes the more controversial issues. The pupils can use that platform to understand where their opinion sits vis-à-vis their cultural thinking and experiences. When you get to the embedding stage, it should be seen as the way we do things about here — that it is open, natural and transparent, that you think about others and reflect that in your own thinking, therefore it should give dispositions that engage better the learner and lead to better outcomes.
1593. **Mr McCausland:** The issue that I have raised is an issue in itself, but it is given an added importance and significance once you move into the area of shared education. Whilst school A is doing what it does and school B is doing what it does, and they are miles apart, once you bring them together there is an additional focus on this. This issue about the cultural identity of controlled schools, based on the United Kingdom Government's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is fundamental. I have asked the Inspectorate about it and the academics who have come in from various universities. I will keep on about it, because it has been the elephant in the room and nobody has talked about it.
1594. **Mr A Bell:** It is a key element of the CRED policy, which is founded on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have always said that the CRED policy was there to support and underpin what was already in the curriculum and to help schools to deliver the curriculum. Through the implementation of the CRED policy, I understand that one finding the inspectorate report is likely to reflect is that the learning of young people is experiential. When you bring young people together on a cross-community basis, it offers more opportunities to explore those issues. If young people do not feel that they know sufficient about their own background, that generates the interest, and they go and seek that. The CRED policy is a starter around that and has moved the work forward and enabled schools to better address that issue. As Faustina has said, there is more work that can be done in this area.
1595. **Mr Hunter:** Much of the literature suggests that success through shared education is clearly linked to a balanced partnership in which the partners have common goals and common outcomes identified. In that sense, they really need to be focusing on the issues that provide division and difference, so that the understanding and the respect does grow with that. The other aspect of it is that shared education should highlight identity but not threaten it. I think that, in the best practice that we have looked at, pupils, young children and young people are very happy and content to engage in conversation with that. In fact, in our discussions with young people, they are becoming more articulate about their understanding and how they can express their identity and also explain the commonality of it with other youngsters.
1596. I think that culture is a mindset and an ethos, but there will be those schools that have to move from the link being an



event or a subject across the school's event to it becoming a way of thinking and planning, not just at leadership level but across departments. That takes time to embed, and I think that partnerships will need that time. Very few schools, if any, are at the embedding stage, and quite a number are at the first two stages, that of asking what shared education is and that it has to be something that has benefit to all of the participating schools. It is when we get to the expanding stage that we will begin to see that there is a culture or ethos of thinking, shared-education-wise. It is then that we will see the recognition. The programme that we are looking to evaluate is a four-year programme, so evaluation will take four years. We expect that, after consultation, support and interim reporting, we will be able only in the final report to say what have been the positive outcomes of the experience of the shared education for all of the partnerships.

1597. **Mrs Overend:** The discussion has been very interesting this morning. There are a few area learning partnerships in existence already, and they are very successful. I presume that you have been engaging with them. What have you learned from them? Sometimes partnerships have been very successful, but with other education policies such as the entitlement framework, which really forces schools to step back and to deliver the whole range of subjects themselves. That means that they step back from the area partnership and it is not as successful as it was. There is that variation of policy and going in opposing directions. How do you see that being solved?

1598. **Mrs Graham:** I think that all of it is a learning process. Back at the beginning of area learning communities, that was something that of itself did not grow organically. Schools were really grouped together into area learning communities, and we found that, over a period of time, some of those have really taken off, as you have indicated, and have become stronger and stronger. Others still struggle. From our perspective,

we can look at the successes of area learning communities and allow some of this work to take place in those communities. Everything is staged in some ways. As John has indicated, there is a progressive journey there to be accrued. In the first instance, the entitlement framework was looking broadly at expanding choices in the curriculum and schools partnering for that reason. We have seen some very good work that has accrued over time. Where those partnerships are helping and where additional breadth has been offered to the curriculum, those area learning communities are in a really strong place to ensure that they can now integrate all the more challenging aspects of shared education into the work that they do. They have much more mature relationships built up now. The original focus was on curriculum, but it is now on integrating and on benefiting from all the other elements that they may or may not have addressed, because there are area learning communities that have looked very much at shared education. It is about taking those steps.

1599. **Mrs Overend:** Can you explain that a bit more? What are the steps?

1600. **Mrs Graham:** Looking at the broader elements of the curriculum. For example, if I were working in a school at the moment as an English specialist and teaching a GCSE or A-level class, I would select particular texts to teach. I can choose texts that do not appear to have any controversial issues in them or, as we talked about earlier, something that is related to any kind of cultural identity related to this society. In choosing the text initially, I decide what I want to focus on. I can develop empathy for all the young people, which is part and parcel of our requirements here on equality, diversity and community relations. I can do that with a group of young people yet never deal with anything that might challenge their thinking on how they view others, how they view difference, how they show tolerance and how they are resilient in the work that they do. Equally, I can teach a certain text

- and ensure that, alongside its literary elements, I am tackling explicitly, as opposed to implicitly, all the elements that we are talking about that challenge their thinking, that challenge them to look at the other young people in the class with them and that make them think about how all the elements of their experience work to fulfil the examination requirements, obviously, as well as the broader aims of the school in which I am teaching.
1601. **Mr A Bell:** If I have understood your question correctly, you are asking whether schools will step back from doing that at a later stage.
1602. **Mrs Overend:** No, what I am trying to say is that some area learning partnerships have been successful in working together to deliver subjects, but the entitlement framework has perhaps meant that some schools say, “We need to deliver all the subjects ourselves and not work with the other schools”. As such, the children will lose out on that sharing experience because of a policy that every school needs to deliver the entitlement framework. How can you overcome that to encourage sharing to continue?
1603. **Mr A Bell:** The simple answer to the question is this: through the experience of the schools involved, because, when they start sharing, schools start to realise the benefits of doing so. For example, a couple of small rural schools may come together. A teacher may be teaching a year group and is the only teacher in the school doing that. Suddenly the school has a partner school and somebody else whom the teacher can bounce ideas off and share materials with. The two schools can do joint development events. We found that the schools funded through the IFI programme — do not forget that that funding has finished — start to realise the benefits that can come from the partnership, and that is what drives them forward to move to a more embedded stage. Once the schools start to realise that, they tend not to step back from it. They want to explore the benefits further.
1604. **Mrs Overend:** I appreciate what you are saying, but a new principal may come in with a totally different idea, and the whole thing may fall apart. In the event of that happening, can you step in and provide guidance? Can anything be done to save the partnership?
1605. **Mr A Bell:** One of the key things with shared education and the CRED policy is that a whole-school approach needs to be taken, because, if the school suddenly changes principal, there are sufficient others in the school who know the benefits and who can explain them to the new principal. It is they who become the driving force. Particularly around the CRED policy, one of the findings of the ETI report was that it was left up to one teacher, or one person, in a school who really wanted to drive community relations schemes, and what happened if that person suddenly stops working there? When a whole-school approach is taken, that culture spreads throughout the school, and, as John said, it becomes “what we do around here”. That avoids the sort of issue that you raised.
1606. **Mr Hunter:** I will give you an example from viewpoint of special schools. When special schools were invited to join area-learning communities at the beginning, for the first year and a half, they were coming to people like me and saying, “We’ve absolutely no idea why we’re in this partnership. What use is it to us? What are we getting from it?” A year down the line, however, they had found their niche, and the other schools involved had recognised that there was something to be learned from the special schools being in the sector. At this stage, a sizeable number, if not more than 50%, of the learning communities have established subgroups for special educational needs support across the learning communities. The subgroups are being driven by the special schools. In some ways, area learning communities, and shared education in those communities, will be successful, but there are people who are willing to drive and sustain that, and all feel that they will get something

- out of it. In that sense, the better area learning communities are those that have been very active around how they can help their pupils and learners, irrespective of their school, and that accept their shared responsibility for pupils across the area-learning community. That is where we wish to end up. We want to move schools from the position of thinking of just their pupils to thinking of all pupils. That will contribute to improvement.
1607. **Dr Kingon:** A very positive thing that we have seen in the applications for the Delivering Social Change project is a significant number of schools that originally came together as partners in an area learning community wanting to build on that work and come into the shared education programme. There were a notable number of schools and partnerships like that. That is very positive and encouraging.
1608. **Mrs Overend:** I have one final question. Everything that you talk about is carrot. Is there any stick in your thinking, or is it all carrot?
1609. **Mrs Graham:** Ultimately, the evidence that we have accrued to date in the evaluation process around all the work previously done has indicated quite clearly that it would be very difficult to deliver the Northern Ireland curriculum meaningfully without engaging in some form of shared education. That is partially hypothesis at the moment and partially evidence-based. We do not have all the evidence to be very firm in saying that, but, really and truly, that is where we will find ourselves, because the more that we look at and explore shared education, the more that it seems to be indicative of what will constitute a good school. If you were to deliver the curriculum in its entirety and, subsequently, look at inspection outcomes after a four-year period, it would be very difficult to justify how you were doing that without engaging in partnership with other schools. That is the answer at this stage. I would like to think that we will get more information on that as we move through the programme.
1610. **Mr Hunter:** It is important to say that, alongside the shared education projects, we took a decision that, in all inspections from last September, we would report on shared education where we found evidence that it was good practice. The carrot is at work. Our view is that, because it is an option, the schools willing to move in that direction will find it recognised and celebrated through their own internal evaluation or the inspection process.
1611. **Mr Craig:** Apologies for being late. I picked up on what you said about the learning experience in the whole shared scenario, especially around the area-learning communities. Mrs Overend raises a good point. I speak from experience: the school of which I am chair of the board of governors linked up with the local maintained school on the A-level curriculum. It has been a good experience for both schools, because resources have been shared. I have listened to the debate since I came in, and we have been talking about the shared experience. The shared experience is almost a by-product of what drove all of this, which was shared resources. Are we going to lose sight of that aspect? Ultimately, for the Minister to get around any sorts of financial difficulties that are coming down the road, for not only the Department of Education but every other Department, that aspect needs to be central to what is driving this forward. In some respects, lack of finances will bring some form of integration into the whole sector. Is that still the main driving force and goal in all of this or are we now starting to change the emphasis?
1612. **Mr A Bell:** You say the “main” driving force. The case for shared education is based on three main areas. The first is the educational case, while the second is the social case. The third, which is equally applicable, is the economic case. There are benefits to be accrued from schools sharing resources in the way in which you say. Part of the policy is around the shared campuses programme, in which there are opportunities. I know that you had

witnesses here from the Department last week talking about that. At the school level, yes, schools do find that there are opportunities for them to save resources. If they do joint development days, that halves the cost of bringing in a facilitator. They can share materials and resources. That is still a key element of shared education moving forward. The focus has not shifted from that, but it is not primarily on the economic case and the need to save money. Shared education is driven not by that alone but by the educational case, the social case and the economic case together.

1613. **Mr Hunter:** It might be helpful to add that our view as a result of the inspection process is that the last year of the evaluation has to focus not on the progress that has been made but on the capacity of partners to develop and sustain the provision. It is particularly about having to think of that as having been built into your system rather than thinking that there will be ongoing resource, which there may not be. We think therefore that our last year has to focus very strongly on how partners will sustain the provision beyond the current funding.
1614. **Mr Lunn:** My question concerns the Moy experience. We were there last week and visited the two schools. They are two good schools, with very committed boards of governors, principals and teachers. We formed a good impression of both. We now have this proposal, which is one of your projects, to bring them together on one site under one roof but with different identities, classes and uniforms — you know the argument. What soundings do you take before making a decision to support such a scheme, which is, so far, unique? What is the extent of parental involvement and choice in your making such a decision?
1615. **Mr A Bell:** That is the remit of the team here last week. What I can tell you, because we have been doing work on the CRED policy, and so on, is that those schools have worked quite closely over a number of years. They have built up quite an experience of working together,
- as I am sure you found when you visited them. One of the things that we have said, particularly on that whole area, is that communities ultimately need to be comfortable with what is proposed. Therefore, schools need to engage with the communities. I know that they held a number of sessions in those schools, where they brought in communities, local politicians, councillors, and so on. They did a lot of work with the communities. The expectation is that, by the time they come forward with a proposal, whether it be for a campus or shared education, schools will be engaging with their school communities — the teachers, the pupils, the parents and the wider communities that they serve.
1616. **Dr Kingon:** In the protocol document for the campus programme, one thing that schools have to demonstrate is that they have the support of the individual managing authority. They have to provide clear evidence, as Andrew says, that they have engaged with the community and have its support for their proposal.
1617. **Mr Lunn:** That was my point. The school did a community survey. There were 85 responses in favour of the solution that is on the table, 70 in favour of an integrated model and five that did not want anything to do with either.
1618. The Department has the same obligation to promote shared and integrated education, more or less, although you can forget about the word “promote”. Why would the Department therefore run with such an unusual solution as bringing schools together under one roof while maintaining different identities? I am well aware that the CCMS opposed this thing at the start but has now come around to accepting what is on the table. However, it would have opposed, implacably, any further move towards integration. Where does the Department’s obligation in all of this begin and end? It seems to me that this was an ideal opportunity for a groundbreaking solution — the sort of solution that we need to see in Northern Ireland. It was an opportunity to have a maintained school and a controlled school come together. Use the word

- “integrated” or otherwise, but the opportunity for an amalgamation of two schools from different sectors was there for the taking, yet we have gone down this route.
1619. **Dr Kingon:** The Department does not superimpose solutions on to communities. That was the proposal that came forward from the community and the managing authorities. The Department’s role is to look at proposals as they come forward from communities. It is not the Department’s role to superimpose a preferred solution on to individual communities. That is the proposal that the community came up with together.
1620. Another point that I want to make is this: nothing in education is permanent for any amount of time. It may be that the schools develop and evolve as they go forward in their new building. There is plenty of scope for that to happen.
1621. **Mr Lunn:** I get the impression from both schools that that is their ultimate wish. Therefore, encourage and facilitate the same obligation on either solution from the Department. Surely the Department must have an opinion on what is the best way forward.
1622. **Mr A Bell:** We know from experience that, if you try to drive ahead of what communities are prepared to do, you will run into difficulties. Therefore, from the Department’s point of view, what a community is comfortable with is where the starting point is. We do not want to discourage communities from moving forward. Those schools have done a lot of sharing in the past, so the opportunities for sharing that their model will give increases the number of those opportunities. Thus, the work in that area moves forward. As Suzanne said, over time, it will continue to move forward. I think that we need to move at the pace at which communities are comfortable to move. In this case, the community said that this was its preferred option and what it was comfortable with.
1623. **Mr Hazzard:** I was delighted to hear that a Northern Catholic school is doing a play about a Southern affluent Protestant. It shows that even our single-identity schools can branch out and be diverse, even within themselves.
1624. There is a cross-border dynamic to all of this. There is a lot of shared education going on in Fermanagh, for example, particularly around cross-border areas. We had a teacher exchange, where teachers from Church of Ireland schools in the South came North and taught various things. Where do the cross-border dynamics come into play?
1625. **Dr Kingon:** Peace IV is very much a cross-border programme. There is going to be shared education programme funding for the Irish Government and the Executive. We see that very much being taken forward on a cross-border basis.
1626. **Mr A Bell:** It is complementary to the work of the Delivering Social Change signature project. That project is being developed for those schools that are already doing a lot of sharing, and sharing in a meaningful way. It is being developed to embed further that sharing, because we know that, by further embedding it, more of the benefits are realised. We are working with the Special EU Programmes Body on the Peace funding. You are probably aware that an element of that funding is specifically for shared education. The aim of doing that is to have a programme that will tackle schools that are not doing sharing at the moment, or that are doing very superficial sharing. From the experience of the IFI projects, we know that schools at that level need a different level of support and a different type of support. They need to do more work with their communities, and they need to address such things as timetabling issues. All of that can be overcome, and there is experience of how to address it.
1627. Additionally, the Peace funding will involve the schools in the South. We are working with the relevant Department in the South on how that can be implemented. Shared education is not

a concept that the South has, per se, but the projects that you mentioned were IFI-funded projects, and the schools in Fermanagh were working on a cross-border basis. We will bring that experience through the Peace funding. In totality, the Peace funding and the Delivering Social Change signature project allow us to deliver all the policy areas in the programme.

1628. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Thank you. You will be glad to know that no one else has indicated to ask a question. Thank you for your time. We will see you again when you come back to brief us on the Bill.

## 4 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Ms Dympna McGlade	<i>Community</i>
Mr Peter Osborne	<i>Relations Council</i>
Mr Darren McKinstry	<i>Equality</i>
Dr Michael Wardlow	<i>Commission for Northern Ireland</i>

1629. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome all our witnesses this morning. I invite you to introduce yourselves. I understand that both organisations will give a short statement, after which we will follow up with questions.

1630. **Dr Michael Wardlow (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland):** Thank you. I am the chief commissioner of the Equality Commission, and it is great to be here to add some discourse to what you have already had. I take it for granted that you have had the opportunity to read through both submissions. Peter will speak for five or six minutes on the strategic background to the Community Relations Council's (CRC) submission. I will do exactly the same for the Equality Commission submission, which means that it will probably take around 10 minutes. We then thought that the most opportune thing to do would be to enter into some discussion. It is a great honour to be here to talk about this issue.

1631. **Mr Darren McKinstry (Equality Commission for Northern Ireland):** I

am the director of policy at the Equality Commission.

1632. **Mr Peter Osborne (Community Relations Council):** I am chair of the Community Relations Council.

1633. **Ms Dympna McGlade (Community Relations Council):** I am the director of policy at the Community Relations Council.

1634. **Mr Osborne:** I want to mirror Michael's thanks for the opportunity to be here today. This is an important inquiry and, from what I have read so far, a very thorough one, and it is vital to consider the issues. I will make a couple of brief comments from a broader perspective. I will look at the inquiry into shared and integrated education in the context of peace building and of the reconciliation work that has been done over many years in Northern Ireland and that remains to be done in the years and decades ahead. I also want to put on record how positive many of the achievements in this society have been over the last 10 or 20 years or so, including achievements by all the political parties that have contributed to the process and by members of civil society. I sometimes think that we do not recognise how far we have come, or the contribution that everyone has made, including politicians from all political parties and backgrounds. This is a long-term process, mind you. The building of peace and reconciliation may take another 20, 30, 40 or 50 years. In such a "pacted" process, as many would call it, there are considerable challenges and risks. There are risks if we do not keep moving forward; we need to keep moving forward, no matter how incrementally. There are risks that past battles will be fought today in different terms but over some of the same issues. There are risks that some things that were considered very necessary in a past decade are considered less necessary now.

1635. When it comes to education and children and young people, we need to keep moving forward for this generation of young people, because they will be the leaders of the future. It is important that we do not let them be shaped by what has shaped us and the factors that shape us in society today. Our focus is on outcomes for children. Our focus is on educational outcomes, and it is about the needs of young people and the needs of this society and not particular systems, structures or forms. We want an optimum model for children and young people to learn and develop together. Remodelling will take courage, as it will take support to sustain the change that is needed. If we want to achieve the aims of the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy, we need to tackle seriously the needs involved in facilitating more and more of our young children to learn and develop together. Let me quote from T:BUC. It states that we want:

*“to continue to improve attitudes amongst our young people and to build a community where they can play a full and active role in building good relations.”*

1636. T:BUC also talks about the need to take down interface barriers, for more shared housing and for things like cross-community urban villages. If we are to be successful in any of those endeavours or in any of the targets and aims that T:BUC sets out, we need a united community in which children and young people learn and develop together now and increasingly in the future. That brings big challenges to relationships: relationships between those children and young people, between parents of those children and young people and between teachers. That is a challenge for everybody, because, in all those contexts, separation is not a sustainable option. An important challenge is to understand the economic benefits of children and young people learning and developing together, of ending or breaking down a system of virtual benign educational apartheid into something that allows sharing to take place much more vigorously. It has been estimated that, if some village schools

came together, it would save £100,000. That is a saving to the education system of £100,000, which can be invested in different ways: £100,000 for critical services and , indeed, £100,000 that can be added to reducing the costs of division more generally. We need to understand what that means and really grasp the opportunities involved.

1637. The challenge is also about building a cohesive community. If we are to do that, we need an education system that tackles underachievement and involves communities more vibrantly and representatively in the management of schools. Look down the road to Dundonald High School, and you will recently have seen local communities getting more involved in its management, which did huge credit to the school and was extremely positive.

1638. We also need to face the challenge of not avoiding the hard questions and issues about what sharing is, what criteria will be applied in sharing and integration, what milestones there are in the continuum of change and the courage that is needed to make sure that that change happens.

1639. I also want to reinforce two or three things. This is about children and young people. It is not about structures, systems or forms; it is about the needs of those children and young people and the needs of this society. It is about the best education possible. It is about not letting down those from the most disadvantaged communities who are being failed by the education system, and it is about supporting the peace building and reconciliation needs in this society to try to help to create and build a more united community in the future.

1640. **Dr Wardlow:** Thanks, Peter. Before I make a couple of specific points, I will pick up on that. We are on a journey that has been about how we make our educational system more porous. However, I think that, if we stick to systems, we miss the point. This is focused on young people; they are at the centre of this. It is about how we make a shared opportunity for those



- young people. On the one hand, we have had experiments for some years now, including integrated schools, shared education, Atlantic Philanthropies, the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and people funding opportunities. Having moved through a shared future, cohesion, sharing and integration (CSI) and now Together: Building a United Community, I think that, with a little moral imagination, we can make a significant difference. However, I do not want you to be under any doubt: we cannot put young people where adults are afraid to go. Education will not solve the underlying fault lines of the problem in this place that we call home. It will certainly go some way towards that, but, if we are really committed, this needs to be resourced. We need to address all sorts of other things in the educational system, so we should not be under any misapprehension that shared education will deal with all the underlying educational inequalities. I am with Peter on that. This is about function and not form; form should follow function.
1641. As a commission, we believe that societal mixing and cohesion are limited by, among other things, the fact that we do not have enough shared schools, whether they be integrated, shared or in partnership. However that works through, separation in education is one of the barriers to social cohesion and mixing in this society. We are recommending a move to a system of education that routinely allows young people to mix from as early as possible right through until they leave school. It should not be the norm that young people do not meet somebody who is different until they go to further or higher education or step into the workplace or an apprenticeship for the first time. Sadly, that remains a fact for a significant number of young people.
1642. It is not that it is anybody's fault, and shared schools will not, as I said, be the only thing to try to bring about a more cohesive and shared society, but it will have a substantial role. Day to day, over 300,000 young people interface, sometimes with others. This sharing has to be deep and meaningful; it cannot simply be moving together in the same classroom. I shop in Marks and Spencer with people of other traditions, but that does not make me love them more. I have had contact with them, but, unless contact is sustained, meaningful and resourced — unless teachers are comfortable working with it, and it is supported back in the communities of origin of those young people — it will simply remain, in some cases, only that — like meeting somebody on holiday. Those things are important in and of themselves, but, if not handled properly, they can reinforce difference.
1643. We also believe that there needs to be clarity in definitions. Obviously, we have not put forward our response to the Bill, and we note that there is a proposed definition of “sharing”. Whatever the definition is, it needs to be clear and concise and to show what sharing is as opposed to integrated education. In our view, it should complement and not replace the duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education.
1644. We believe that sharing in education can do a number of things. It can create an equality of opportunity that does not exist, does not depend on a postcode or where you live, is not urban versus rural, and whether young people have an opportunity to have that engagement with the other. We know that that is also gender specific. One school in six is single sex here, and we know that boys tend to perform better in coed schools whereas young women tend to perform better in single-sex schools.
1645. A whole range of things are going on when we talk about sharing. It also has a hugely important role to play in good relations. Peter touched on that, and, hopefully, we will be able to tease that out a little. It is not for us on the commission to go over all the research that states that, when young people learn to work together and respect difference, it does not mean that difference disappears but that it is put in a context of tolerance and understanding. When that happens, people's friendship patterns develop.

- They are more likely to have a more positive attitude to the other so that people, instead of living parallel lives, live much more integrated lives. There are also sustainability and cost arguments. We would argue that cost should not drive this, but there are economic, social and educational benefits to sharing.
1646. We also know that there are lots of experiences to be had from other jurisdictions and places. I have often said that, if a problem exists, it has been solved somewhere else and that we are not looking hard enough for a solution. So we should not think that what we are doing here is reinventing the wheel. There is huge experience in the shared education programme, in integrated schools, in some of the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) programmes and in other jurisdictions, so we should not be afraid to ask for help from outside, but we should also cross-fertilise from within the system.
1647. There is a huge need for us to engage with all stakeholders, not only parents, pupils and educational providers but bodies such as the Youth Service and those community relations and good relations workers who have often done this type of work. There is sometimes a fault line between the informal Youth Service and the formal education service. There is a lot of benefit to be had from the interface between those two.
1648. I started by saying that this on its own will not solve the inequalities of the educational system. Huge inequalities remain. Whether you accept our view on, for example, the retention of academic selection or the removal of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order's exemption for teachers and teacher training, there is a whole raft of things.
1649. Look at the underperformance of looked-after, disabled and black and minority ethnic (BME) children; boys versus girls; and underachievement not only in loyalist working-class communities but in some Catholic rural areas. Do not believe that this will solve everything,
- but it will be a start. As we said on the commission, this needs to be systemic, real and measured. More importantly, it is not about programmes.
1650. This needs to be measured by outcomes. No matter what we put in the system, people will just behave that way because the law is there. We need to address hearts, minds and attitudes. Success will be measured by outcomes. Do young people, as a result, learn how to live better together in citizenship?
1651. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. Peter, the CRC's submission calls for a statutory duty on schools to promote good relations. How would that work?
1652. **Mr Osborne:** There are two or three underlying issues. We are saying that the statutory duty is needed because there is a real need to focus people's effort, and a statutory duty is the best way to do that. If something is legislated for in that way, I suppose that it focuses minds on what is required in particular schools. It would also make people focus on the means of delivery across schools. It would look at what that content might be across the bodies and agencies that contribute positively to that type of delivery.
1653. **Ms McGlade:** Section 75(2) fits neatly with the promotion of good relations and sharing across schools. It is about finding ways to support schools to be able to do that and fit within this programme and the support programmes to help schools to deliver shared education. Some schools have been engaged for some time in sharing education, and others have not, some of them because of competing priorities in delivering the education system. Other schools, perhaps, have some resistance. We feel that this is not optional; we are in this peace process together.
1654. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Have you done a study on how good relations are being applied in schools? Is there evidence of bad practice?
1655. **Mr Osborne:** Sorry, Chair, I did not catch the first part of the question.

1656. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
You raised this as an issue, so have you done sufficient research to qualify this request? Are there examples of bad practice in schools? You mentioned that there is a certain reluctance because of competing pressures. What type of evidence do you have to support that?
1657. **Ms McGlade:** I suppose that the evidence is on the other end of the argument, which is that those who have engaged in good relations programmes have done so very successfully, the results have been very good, the contact has been good, and the impact on young people, their communities and schools has been very good. It is to try to ensure that those who are not responding automatically to it are engaged through some encouragement.
1658. **Mr Osborne:** From what I have seen in the schools that I have been to and the teachers to whom I have spoken, I would want to put a lot more emphasis on the positive work that goes on, because there is a huge amount of that across all schools from all sectors, and I would not want to suggest that the CRC is saying anything other than that. The organisation is about positively supporting that and encouraging more of it.
1659. I also picked up from some teachers and others involved in the education system that there is a wariness about doing that work and a real view that one has to be very careful about it. There is a concern about putting one's foot in it in different ways. There is a lot of capacity already, but I think that there is a need to focus the work to help teachers to develop that capacity further to be able to deliver the work. A while ago, someone said to me that they thought that, in some cases, children were much more ready to do that than teachers, because teachers did not have that background or teacher-to-teacher training together with people from different traditions or have that contact and know how to work it as effectively as possible. The statutory duty will bring a greater focus and will put a greater obligation on schools to do it, but it also needs to be in a certain context whereby — you are absolutely right — it is about supporting good practice and trying to push that further and deeper down into schools.
1660. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
You also referred to the level of funding that is being invested in shared and integrated education. You equated that to the limited number of young people who have benefited from it. Do you have a concern about value for money? Do you think that money could be spent differently to benefit a greater number of young people?
1661. **Mr Osborne:** Value for money in terms of —
1662. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
You focused on the money that is being spent on shared and integrated education in your paper and highlighted the limited number of young people who have benefited. Is there an issue with value for money? Do you think that it could be spent better?
1663. **Mr Osborne:** No. I think that the paper is suggesting — this is backed up by a lot of research — that children and young people benefit from learning and developing together. Research shows that, when that genuinely takes place with children from all backgrounds, they benefit, become much more rounded individuals and experience positive change in their ability to learn and not only to get a better academic qualification but to learn in much broader ways in personality, attitudes and so on. They then make that positive contribution back to society. The paper suggests that we want more children and young people to learn and develop together in that way. It is absolutely right that a relatively small proportion of children benefit from shared and integrated models as they currently exist, and the paper highlights that. The challenge for all of us is to get to that optimum model in which more children and young people learn and develop together. They will benefit from it, their education will benefit from it and our society will benefit from it.

1664. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Michael, your submission mentions article 64 and the obligation on integrated education. You say that shared education would benefit from being clearly defined and that the relationship with the shared model needs to be made much clearer, but you said that it should not replace article 64. Why not?

1665. **Dr Wardlow:** It is important to say that there are two areas of the education system where there is a duty to encourage and facilitate — those are Irish-medium education, through the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, and the 1989 Order, which encourages and facilitates integrated education. When you bring in this third non-sector, as such, this is a type of education that a school can arguably work through a system to get kite-marked, say, to be a shared school. It is important for us, first, that that definition is clear. What is a shared school? If you are, for example, two schools sharing a campus, is that enough to be a shared school? We say, first, that there should be clarity of definition.

1666. If you are, then, putting that into a Bill in which there is either a duty or a power — we have not responded yet as to whether there should or should not be — we are clear that there are parents who want a formally integrated school. There is a duty on the Department to encourage and facilitate that at the moment. Were a comparable duty to come in, we would see those as complementary and would not want to see shared education as some substitute or replacement for formally integrated schools. We are saying that there is room for both and, of course, for Irish-language schools, for which there is also a duty to encourage and facilitate.

1667. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Does the duty that relates to integrated and Irish-medium education not create a hierarchy of sectors?

1668. **Dr Wardlow:** The Equality Commission does not have a view on whether it creates a hierarchy. However, when we respond to the Bill, we will consider

whether there should be a duty or whether it should be a power. That will allow us to look at the other duties and powers that there are at the moment. Were I to say something now, it would be my personal view, and I do not want to do that, because as a commission we do not have a considered view. Our view at the moment is that if you are bringing in shared education and there becomes a duty or a power to do that, it should not be at the cost of the formally integrated sector which the Department of Education, at the moment, has a duty to encourage and facilitate.

1669. Do you want to add anything, Darren?

1670. **Mr McKinstry:** No. The commission's view was that that should not be at the cost of the formally integrated sector and that parental choice should be facilitated to access integrated education if it is so wished. If we wanted to move further into shared education, that could be an addition to that provision. The focus of sharing between sectors that has been discussed would allow the sharing between the integrated and other sectors as well.

1671. **Dr Wardlow:** The important thing is that the duty to encourage and facilitate is to bring together in roughly equal proportions Protestants and Catholics and out of that comes the formally integrated school. However, transformed schools, of course, have also carried out the same duty. This is not about a structure but a type of education. Shared education seems to be similarly saying that there is a product that we are going to call shared education, but we are saying that that needs to be clearly defined. However, it is not the same thing as integrated education, and, therefore, there needs to be a clear delineation between the two.

1672. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** With regard to barriers, you mentioned teacher training in order to advance shared education. Would you, perhaps, develop that?

1673. **Dr Wardlow:** What we are saying is that there is a number of areas — fault lines,

if you like — in education at the moment that we do not believe contribute to the best possible sharing that we can have. We are agnostic about what the teacher training looks like at the moment, but if you remember when Queen's University and Stranmillis University College were moving towards a merger, we said that it would be unfortunate if that became the case because there would be St Mary's University College on one hand and on the other — I am using shorthand here — a larger, so-called Protestant training college. We are saying that you should be looking at the opportunities to maximise sharing when teachers are being formally trained, and, alongside that, we have asked for the removal of the exemption of teachers from the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. Those two things together act, in that sense, as barriers, so we are saying that we should optimise the potential for teachers to be trained together.

1674. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It is outside the Committee's remit, but you will, obviously, be aware that there are ongoing discussions in relation to finance and the impact that that is going to have on the futures of St Mary's and Stranmillis, but there are opportunities, if we are serious about shared education, to look at sharing with other —
1675. **Dr Wardlow:** Absolutely. There are other things that are happening, where teachers are being trained together in continuing professional development (CPD). With the early professional development and the ongoing professional development, it is quite common in the education and library boards that teachers are trained together. It is not as if this is a new thing; very often you will have teachers from a so-called Protestant background doing teacher training in so-called Catholic schools. This does happen; it is not the norm. As I said earlier, this is happening in places. It is about asking how we make that happen. Is it incentivisation? The way in which the system is set up must follow the

function. We would like more sharing, and we would like there to be fewer fault lines. What would the system look like to be able to best facilitate that?

1676. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for your presentation, Peter, it was great to hear. A lot of us forget the positive work that you say is going on all the time. The divisions are more often here than anywhere else. I have two or three questions. You talk about having clearly defined goals for where you are going, yet if you look at the definition in the shared education Bill, it calls for people to be defined as Catholic or Protestant or in a socio-economic group. Do we not need it more blurred so that we can get the mixed communities involved in it? If you have set definitions of what one is, people are going to have to fit into one or the other to be able to avail themselves of the funding that allows them to have the shared schooling.
1677. **Dr Wardlow:** We will be responding specifically to what the Bill is putting forward. I cannot say what the commission's view will be, but let me give you some of the background to it. As it sits in the education system already, schools are asked to respond in a pupil census under five headings, so this is already captured. The integrated sector is asked from day one to ask parents to designate a child Protestant, Catholic or other, and if it does not do that, you cannot prove that there is a minority tradition of 30%. In the same way, when we track fair participation in the workforce, we have been asking the workforce since the 1970s to capture its figures on those broad terms as well. This is part of what we do.
1678. In the future, would it be something that we would like not to have? It would be great, in an ideal world, that that is not there. However, if we are trying to say that there needs to be mixing, we need some evidence of how we know that that is happening. We know that, in one measure, up to 20% of people say that they are neither. Quite what that is saying about denominations we are not sure, but in addition to that, we have an issue about the use of the

word “and” in the Bill. You have religious and political “and”, and then, basically, socio-economic status, how do you measure that? For example, since the new measure of social benefit has come in, free school meals (FSM) has jumped from 7% to 12%. There is something about how we measure disadvantage; is it by FSM or by the receipt of some type of welfare or is it geographic location?

1679. There are some indeterminates for us, but if we are saying that this system is meant to say that sharing is not just Protestant/Catholic, to use the old headlines, but about what we will call “class”, it is about how you would measure that and what that is saying about your endgame. Does that mean that grammar schools have to go with non-grammars, or a rural school with an urban school? When I looked at the Bill, I found it difficult to find out what it was actually saying.
1680. Your question, Danny, begs a question about what it is that we are trying to measure. If we are trying to measure x, then you need to have a way of data collecting x. This is not about numbers, however; it is about whether relationships are built that are sustainable and whether, at the end of it, the young people’s attitudes are in some way developed so that they are more at ease with difference.
1681. **Mr McKinstry:** As Michael said, the commission has not formed a view on the policy or the Bill, but within those documents, questions arise about whether we are looking to share between sectors or between the individual backgrounds of pupils. There is an issue there to be resolved. You talked about it being wider, and, obviously, the policy talks about the importance of sharing between mainstream schools and special schools and, obviously, that would fall outwith the definition. There are clearly some things to be worked through as to what the Bill is looking at and what the policy looks at.
1682. **Mr Osborne:** May I add a little bit to that? Like the Equality Commission, the Community Relations Council will

be considering its formal response over the next number of weeks, so we do not have a formal stated position on that. It seems to me, though, that the Bill identifies two of the big issues that we need to tackle around education. That is a positive thing. The Community Relations Council produced its peace monitoring report earlier this year, which highlighted really significant educational underachievement linked to disadvantage, particularly among working-class Protestant boys but also among working-class Catholic boys. It is across the community divide in different areas. If we do not tackle that, we will be storing up issues related to community cohesion in this society for many years to come. It is a big issue, and the fact that it is there in the Bill is important.

1683. It is important also that, in the Bill, there is a recognition of the dual system of educating our young people here. The need to move to an optimum model where children and young people learn and develop together is critical. I think that the issue for you, as well for everybody else in civil society, is to ensure that what happens next is sufficiently robust to ensure sufficient movement on all of those issues. I think that, when it comes to disadvantage, that is quite clear, and part of that is linked to investment in those areas where that disadvantage is clear. It is linked to investment in schools in those areas. Across the water, a pupil premium is paid for schools that have kids who are entitled to free school meals. That is the sort of thing that we might need to consider here even more vigorously than we currently do. That is an investment on both sides of the community, and the CRC’s report earlier last year demonstrated that.
1684. On the issue of Protestant/Catholic and people from different community backgrounds, I think that it is important to acknowledge that, and the focus needs to be to have the courage to change the systems that we have to ensure that there is that optimum model of people learning and sharing and developing together. That is about the milestones and the targets. It is not

about buildings, structures, forms or which system we support; this is about what is best for children and young people and this society. That is what needs to drive us as the primary focus of anything that we do.

1685. **Dr Wardlow:** One point is important, and Peter picked it up. As I read the Bill, it reads almost as if this is about integrating and joining up systems. A lot of the measures seem to be about numbers and about projects. You need to search far to find out about attitudinal change in young people. If we are saying that shared education is a system as opposed to a product, I think that there is an important difference. Integrated education is both a set of schools and a type of education that I would argue could take place in other places if the same conditions were to apply. So, if shared education is saying that it is maximising mixing between socio-economic groups, Protestant, Catholic and other, but we are saying that that is limited simply to a Protestant and a Catholic school coming together, I think that we sell this short. I think that this is about optimising the opportunities that there are for this interaction to take place. Shared education, therefore, is a system and a way, but it is more than that; it is a way of doing it. It is the relationship building, and that, I think, is the brand rather than the type of system that supports it.
1686. **Mr Kinahan:** What I was really looking for was some form of flexibility. We talk all the way through about how we measure the outcomes. That is the hardest thing of the lot. How do you see us measuring the outcomes in the way that you spoke about at the beginning?
1687. **Dr Wardlow:** Very simply, there is a huge amount of experience out there from integrated schools, youth work, programmes funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) and self-inspecting schools to show how you develop attitudinal change. You can see it in race and in disability. It is possible to measure the attitudinal development of a young person or an older person from point a to point b. You simply need to capture the start point and look at how it develops. Young people can write portfolios and take photographs. There are all sorts of creative ways. It has been done, so I do not think that we need to worry about reinventing the wheel. Schools are now much more self-examining. They know where their benchmarks are, and they know how to demonstrate success. But the most important people are the young people themselves; they can tell you and give you examples of how they have changed as a result of that engagement. I do not think that it is something to be frightened of, but I think that teachers need to learn how it happens. We need to look for where it is and bring it in. So, I am less concerned about that because I do think that it is there. In youth work, it has been there for about 25 years.
1688. **Ms McGlade:** With the overall project peace, we are looking at Together: Building a United Community, bringing down barriers at interfaces, shared education and shared housing etc. Some of the measures will have to go into the good relations indicators for future generations. If we are working with our young people, they are the next generations who will be living in shared housing. They will have to help us to prepare to live in a society without barriers. Attitudinal change is one thing, but looking at how we progress and dismantle, if you like, the whole structure of segregation and work towards integration and a more normalised society in our peace process is also critical.
1689. So, I suggest that, when we are looking at shared education, we also link into the other programmes and priority areas and key headline actions within T:BUC to see how it all fits in. We are also talking about young people not in isolation. Many of them go back into communities where they will need support to be able to be the peace-builders that we want them to be, because their communities sometimes inhibit that. It is about the whole joined-upness that you can measure young people and their schools

- and teacher training, but it is how our society and young people in it move forward collectively as well.
1690. **Mr Craig:** I suppose I should welcome into the room the “Trojan Horse”, as others described the equality agenda. That is tongue in cheek, by the way.
1691. I read here that the commission is arguing that the rights of parents to select faith-based schools should not be allowed to overshadow the importance of education in maximising good relations. I would like to understand exactly what is meant by that. Hopefully, this will not be seen as another attack on a person’s faith. I have a number of reasons for asking that. Not all faith-based schools are not mixed. A number of weeks ago, we were at Methodist College, which is almost 50:50 Catholic and Protestant. In my constituency, Friends School in Lisburn is about 40:60. So, a being a faith-based school does not necessarily mean not mixed. What exactly is the commission getting at there?
1692. **Dr Wardlow:** We have predicated this on two things. The first is that the child has to be at the centre of this; and, secondly, we still accept parental choice. Because of the way that demography and money work, parental choice in accessing what are seen as good schools, in some areas, is about postcode. I am just stating what happens. So, parental choice is not absolute, and it does not work in that way, but it is at the core of our educational system, and we do not want to diminish that. Nor would we want to diminish the fact that there are systems in place, and we are not arguing for one system and doing away with faith-based education.
1693. This is not to say that faith-based is any less than non-faith based or a secular system, which, as you know, we do not have. We have church-related schools in the controlled sector, where transferors’ representatives are still on boards of governors. You probably have more of a faith-related system in the Catholic sector. The integrated sector is, essentially, Christian in character. We do not have what in other places might be regarded as non-faith or secular schools. You should not read into this that there is any sense in which the commission wants to diminish the rights of parents to choose a form of education, whether in faith-based or other sectors.
1694. Do you want to amplify the specific point?
1695. **Mr McKinstry:** Yes. You have covered most of it. Certainly, the commission absolutely recognises parental choice over whatever school the parent is interested in. However, the point behind it is that it should not impact on the system, as a whole, being focused on sharing. The commitments within things like T:BUC that talk about sharing becoming a central part of the system and impacting on every child’s educational experience, are key and similar to the commission’s interests and concerns. It is really just to make the point that we wanted to ensure that sharing is central to the system as a whole.
1696. **Dr Wardlow:** Take, for example, Jonathan, Catholic maintained schools: fewer than 1% of children attending would be designated non-Catholic, and about half of those-Protestant. It would be totally wrong to say that Catholic schools do not support and promote good relations. Some Catholic schools have 50% or 40% Protestants at them — granted, though, they are very small in number. However, the mix of children attending is not the only parameter by which you can measure someone’s intention to mix. Simply because they are designated “Catholic” and attended mostly by Catholics does not preclude them from any form of mixing. You should not read anything into this, and, should there be an ambiguity, we will correct that.
1697. This is saying that parental choice lies at the core but is limited by geographic location and by money. We are saying that systems are there, but if we are looking at sharing in education, that should be the core, as T:BUC states. Systems getting in the way of that, as an excuse, need to be challenged. However, it is not saying that someone in a faith-based school is any less capable or



- able to share: absolutely not. In fact, the contrary is true in many cases, and you cited some of them.
1698. **Mr Craig:** Is the underlying thought behind this that there should be some form of, almost, forced integration? I have seen bitter experiences of that in communities, where trying to force integration backfires. Integration comes about through a natural process almost, where parents and pupils make up their own minds on that issue.
1699. **Dr Wardlow:** I think, Jonathan, the important thing is that “sharing” is the term and not “integration”. That is why we say that there needs to be a difference. We have always argued that voluntarism lies at the centre of this. The problem is that you can only choose something if it is there. So, lots of people want to live in mixed housing, but they are still living separately because there is not an opportunity. Therefore, there is something about demand and supply. There needs to be a match to people’s desire to volunteer and want to be in a shared system — a shared education. At the minute, that is not there. There needs to be something, and that may be in the systems, and it may be a systemic answer as well. However, we are not saying that people should be forced to integrate; we are saying that children should have the opportunity to share, and that that should be core to the educational system.
1700. **Mr Osborne:** Chair, may I add one or two things as well, and it goes back to something that we touched on earlier in the discussion. There is a huge amount of positive and brave work going on in schools across the community divide, and I know that because I have seen some of it directly, as I am sure members have as well. We want to highlight and commend the schools for doing that rather than anything else; we need to recognise that when it happens. Jonathan, you mentioned a few schools. On the Catholic maintained side, the same thing happens. The children do an awful lot of learning and developing together.
1701. At the same time, there is an awful lot of education going on where children and young people are not learning and developing together, and I think that that issue goes to the heart of where we need to progress as a society. We have not talked about a particular model; it is about optimising a model for that learning and developing for children and young people together. We have to face certain questions. For example, I think that the T:BUC strategy is very ambitious in saying that we should take down interface barriers and peace walls. However, there are a number of factors that are important in taking those interface barriers down. If we genuinely want to achieve that, we need to look at the safety and security that people feel on either side; we need to look at an inclusive process where there are not gatekeepers; and we need to look at the regeneration of those areas. Paramount, however, is the fact that we need to look at relationship-building across those peace walls. If we are perpetuating a system — this is not about some of the schools that you mentioned — in north, west and east Belfast, in Portadown, and in Derry/Londonderry where kids from one side of that interface never meet the kids from the other side of the interface, do not do any genuine learning and developing together and the depth of their contact is pretty shallow, then I know what we will get in 20, 30, 40 or 50 years’ time. We will get the same attitudes, because they will be parents of children in 20 and 30 years’ time, and the interface barriers will still be there.
1702. If we really aspire as a society, and OFMDFM’s T:BUC strategy says that we do, to take down those barriers, and if we really aspire to shared housing, then we need to have the courage to change how the system operates. I am not saying that it is one system or another, because this is not about systems or structures or forms; it is about how we approach the issue in our heart and in our head, knowing that change is needed in how we get children to learn and develop together. If we do that, and we approach it on that basis, which I think that we all know is the right basis on how to

approach this, then we will develop a greater continuum of change within the education sector that we have.

1703. **Mr Craig:** I do not think that anybody is arguing about the concept. I think that sometimes the practicalities do not work out on the ground. You are almost into the mindset of the people in an area itself and whether they are ready for that change. Some areas are and some areas are not. I have had that bitter experience myself locally when you talk about shared housing. With regard to where we are going with shared education, resources — or the lack of resources, if we are being honest about it — will drive us down that route no matter what. If there is not enough finance there to provide two separate schools and there is only enough finance to provide one single building, and you have a maintained school and a controlled school, the answer is staring us in the face. That is where shared education is driving this. The resources may well bring about the shared educational experience that we are talking about. I have seen an example of that in my own constituency when it came to the area-learning community network around A levels. That is precisely what has occurred because of a lack of resources.
1704. **Dr Wardlow:** The danger is that people will see that they will be forced into sharing or integration. If you look at the integrated sector, you see that there has been an argument for a long time that schools choose to transform because they are failing schools. Tests were put in to ensure that that did not take place. It would be a terrible thing if people felt that sharing was only an option for closing down a school. We argued that communities should be involved in this. There was one example in Omagh a number of years ago where a deliberative poll was taking place. Parents were actually polled before, during and after a process of more sharing in the Omagh area. What actually happened in that area was that parents were not aware of what opportunities they had. To envisage

something different and to have that moral imagination, you actually need to know what you can do. Sometimes, we actually think that maybe communities are not ready. The Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) did a piece of research in north Belfast looking at the potential for sharing. What it discovered was that parents choose a school because of its geography; because of conflict; because of its location to a wall; and because it is a good school. When you talked to them about sharing, they were actually up for it, but those were the barriers in their minds as well as being the big barriers. There are ways of actually ameliorating that and mitigating it. They are out there. There are schools that are actually working this through. This is not, Jonathan, something parachuting down — and heaven help us if parents think that they are being somehow manipulated into this. This is why community planning is core and key to this. It is not just in the education service; it is about how we have shared opportunities. That permeates everything, not just education.

1705. **Mr Osborne:** Briefly, if I can, I would like to make two other points on that. Jonathan, I think that you are right about attitudes in local areas. I agree with Michael as well. When I talk to people in those areas, I think that there is more of a willingness to change than we maybe appreciate. I have to say that I think that can be encouraged when other people in public life — all of us, whether we be elected representatives or other members of civil society — find the courage to say what they really think on some of these issues and encourage that change in people's minds at a local level. It is important that that message is actually vocalised and then heard because that makes change easier.
1706. With regard to the shared-education side of things, there may be many pressures that lead down a particular road. There is research in other areas which shows that, where you have one building and that building is used in a segregated way, it actually makes the situation worse. I have heard of some buildings

where one particular community goes in one entrance and the other community goes in another entrance. I have heard of where a sports pitch is used by one community in the morning and the other community in the afternoon. That reinforces segregation. It reinforces mindsets and attitudes. That is why I think that the issue here is not about structures, systems, forms or buildings; it is about the needs of children and young people and society. It is where the continuum, milestones and targets are really important here as we push this into a better place around learning and developing together.

1707. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation so far. It has been really interesting. Just to pick up on a couple of the later points and to play devil's advocate, I suppose, a bit; should we not force parents a wee bit more? Even around parental choice, if parents still decide to choose a faith-based education, how far will we actually get? I take on board what you are saying about attitudes in society, but should we not say to them, "Look, it is 2015. This is the best way forward." The Donaldson report into health is telling us that we need to take some hard decisions. Peter, you said yourself that we should not avoid asking the hard questions. Yet, in education — I am playing devil's advocate here to a certain extent — parties and people always fall back on parental choice. Would you agree with that to a certain extent? Is parental choice the get-out clause for people to say, "Well, the Minister cannot go ahead unless it is what communities want". Is there an argument that, if we always say that, we are not actually going to advance?
1708. **Ms McGlade:** That is an interesting point. Our experience of working in lots of different areas with regard to breaking down barriers and all sorts of segregation has been that the important part of the work is creating the conditions. On the parental choice part, sometimes the word "choice" is key here. Quite often, we could ask whether there is a choice for people living in single-identity areas to do that and take that step. We need to create

the conditions. I take Michael's point about giving people enough information. People live in certain conditions and are used to them. They are not thinking beyond that because they are not being inspired, if you like, or the conditions are not being created for them to consider whether there could be better ways or a better future for their child or a different way forward and what they are. They may come to the same conclusion, which is that they do not want that, or, when they get the right information, they may consider different options. However, there is often a lack of information on the ground and a lack of engagement with parents on making those decisions. We need to work harder at that as well.

1709. **Mr Hazzard:** We need to get our head around this. We are sending mixed messages to parents. Parents sitting at home value the choice that they have, yet, when they make that choice, they hear that they are institutionalising benign apartheid or segregation. They are saying, "Hold on. I've made a choice, and the system cherishes choice". We need to tackle the issue of choice. I myself am not sure about it. Is the choice right? Do we need to start pushing communities down a particular path? Is it the default position that the system is right for offering choice, or is it the case that our system reflects tensions in society? Is it that the system itself is broken? If so, how do we start to put it together?
1710. If we start to talk about choice, parents will always choose faith-based education; they will always choose integrated education; or they will always choose Irish-medium education. We are always going to have what some people describe as segregation or benign apartheid, and we will always end up back to square one. I cannot help but think that various sectors here are on different roads. Some see the end as being shared education between the various sectors, while others see it as being an entirely integrated sector. I think there is confusion among parents. At the minute, when they are choosing schools, the vast majority of parents will

- not choose an integrated school. That does not mean that they do not support societies coming together. I do not know whether there is a question in there or it was just rambling.
1711. **Mr Osborne:** I do not think that it was a rambling question, but I will give a rambling response.
1712. There are a lot of factors involved in why parents choose a school for their children. I am not sure that you can ever get away from parental choice in that sense. I am a parent myself, and a number of factors will go into our choice of school when our son gets to that age. Some of those factors are reflected in the Bill. Some of it is about the personal development of children as they mix with people from different backgrounds and of a different gender. All sorts of factors will go into the choice made, so I think that it is important to have.
1713. The Life and Times survey repeatedly shows that the vast majority of people want more sharing in schools, with young people and children learning and developing together. If memory serves me, that survey states that 80%-plus feel that way. I am not sure that the principle reason for the choice made by any parent will be around whether a child goes to school with people from one side of the community or another. The statistics do not necessarily reflect that. There are multiple reasons that parents make a particular choice about what school their child goes to. There is an obligation on people in leadership positions, in places such as this, and in such organisations as the Equality Commission, CRC and others to shape what that model is — I do not want to get into systems — in order to benefit the child and young person, and therefore society as a whole. In trying to shape that, I do not think that you can get away from the underlying core principle of the child and the young person sharing, learning and developing together. If that drives what that model is, it is going to be a model that almost all parents will buy into.
1714. **Mr McKinstry:** It is also important to add that you can separate out the difference between parental choice regarding an individual school and a sector that has sharing at its core, which would want to encourage sharing between schools or within schools. That could be done through joint management or being integrated. Therefore, I think that you can have those two separate things. I go back to the commitment in T:BUC where sharing becomes a central part of every child's commitment. That is really saying that if it is every child, it is every school, and that goes back to the earlier question about how you incentivise, how you recognise that there is a continuum and how you move to being the norm in the system, thus allowing the choice while still having a pro-sharing system.
1715. **Dr Wardlow:** We need to address the fact that the system is not set in concrete. The system leaks. It is porous in nature, and we should maximise that. For example, other jurisdictions have federations. They bring schools together under one head teacher, and there are multiple ways of doing that. They have joined together faith schools, joined together Church schools and have sixth-form colleges attached to two other colleges. There are system models that work towards an end. The system is fixed to create the outcome.
1716. We have 1,200 schools. By some estimates, we probably have 300 too many. We have 500 schools with 100 or fewer children. That partly reflects how we have been in this place. We have separate systems. The nature of the state and how we have come to be here is another issue. We cannot simply delete 1,200 schools, but we can ask ourselves how we work within that system to make it leak more. How do we enable all parents, wherever they are, to have access to an integrated, Irish-language or faith-based school? More importantly, when they buy into that, how can we ensure that at the system's core DNA is sharing? That is the test. It is not about the systems but about ensuring that there is no postcode lottery in this

- and that parents have the access and young people the opportunity that T:BUC promises.
1717. **Mr Hazzard:** I have two final points to make, one of which is linked to that. Do we leave it to the communities to lead the way, or should the Department perhaps enforce more change from the top down? For me, the three big issues that come out of this are academic selection, teacher training and — what we are talking about here — the integrated or shared model of education. Do you feel that there perhaps needs to be more top-down control of those issues and more political agreement to drive them forward?
1718. The second point concerns academic selection and its effect on community cohesion. You referred to Dundonald High School. Talk to Ken Perry down there, and he will say that the effect of academic selection on the east Belfast community caused the greatest harm to that school. I would like your thoughts on that.
1719. **Mr Osborne:** I will give you a personal reflection and move on to my general thoughts.
1720. I failed the 11-plus. I had a brother — he is no longer with us — who went to Dundonald High School. He also failed the 11-plus. I failed because I think that I was too young when I took it. Had I been six months older, I might have passed. Therefore, passing or failing the 11-plus does not necessarily direct the rest of your life, but it certainly has a big impact. I am not sure that that is the best way in which to treat children when they are 10 or 11. Again, I think that goes back to the point about whether some kids are being failed by the system. I am not necessarily a fan of the 11-plus, but I also understand the need to give children and young people the best education possible. I also think that we need to try to get an agreed way forward around this, because children and young people are at the core, and some of the things that they have to go through at the minute are not reasonable. They are why policy should be made around that issue.
1721. The other thing about Dundonald High School is that, when the community got much more involved in the board, that significantly helped the school. There is a vibrancy around getting more people involved in boards. How communities really engage with schools through the boards is important for schools. We need to reflect on how that happens between schools and communities. That is an example of how positive that sort of change can be when communities get involved in the management of their schools.
1722. On the issue of teacher training, I am not sure that we can expect our children and young people to do something if, as adults and teachers, we do not do it ourselves. I am aware of situations in which children and young people are willing to get involved in some significant, hard issues, questions and dialogue with one another, and many teachers facilitate that. However, I am also aware of situations in which teachers are reluctant to facilitate it. I suspect that that is because the teachers themselves have not gone through the training and capacity-building that is needed to engage in such sessions. I think that that goes back to relationships and our courage to make change happen, in a way that we know is needed in this society and for our children and young people, around teacher training and the general relationships between kids across the community divide.
1723. **Dr Wardlow:** The commission has made its points on academic selection, but fixing that will not fix the system. You divide the education system seven ways here: Protestant and Catholic; boys and girls; those who pass and those who do not; Irish language; integrated; hospital schools; special schools. In fact, it is probably divided about 10 ways, and in a jurisdiction of 1.8 million people.
1724. We would not start from here, but we are here, so how do we do what we can do, if you think of young Protestant males

- in a non-grammar school and young Catholic females at a girls' grammar school.
1725. There is something wrong if, when we look consistently at outcomes for looked-after children, black and minority ethnic (BME) students, disabled students, and boys and girls, we see that the system does not come out with equal outcomes. Either something is going wrong with the method of teaching, which I do not believe, or we need to look at the system not just to provide more equality of opportunity and sharing but to enable those young people to fulfil their potential.
1726. If they go to a non-grammar school, there is sometimes an expectation on young people that they will not perform. It is a poverty of aspiration. Some then have to over-perform to get there. We should not simply be saying that one type are bad schools and one good.
1727. Every child should be able to get a good-quality education. If that means changing the systems at the end of it, absolutely, but we are talking today specifically about sharing, and I guess that we are saying there is also the socio-economic thing about sharing in this, which you have identified in the Bill.
1728. **Mr Lunn:** It is good to see you all. Peter, you mentioned the community situation of some hall that has separate entrances for different traditions. On the basis of that, what is your view about one of the Department's shared education programmes, which is in the Moy? The proposal there is to set up one school to replace two — one from each tradition — but effectively keep the pupils separate?
1729. **Mr Osborne:** You go back to why something is being done and to the benefits of children and young people learning and developing together. I would not necessarily say that the proposals for the Moy — I am probably not as aware of the detail as you, although I know a bit about it — are a bad thing, depending on what happens over the next five, 10, 15 or 20 years as that facility develops.
1730. This is not about buildings. It is about the needs of the children and young people, and of society at large. Therefore, if there are milestones and is a real focus on the continuum of change in that community, you may have a successful intervention there. However, if it is just about two separate schools and one building, and everything is separate going forward, and in 10 years' time the kids still have no contact through learning and developing together, you have to wonder whether, although there may have been an economic benefit to having one facility, we are really optimising the benefit to that local community of the children developing better relationships with each other?
1731. **Dr Wardlow:** We obviously do not have a view on whether it is good, bad or indifferent, but let me say what our principles are. On the face of it, it seems to be one community saying to the other community, "Your school could go, but if saving it means that you can share a campus with us, that is what we will do", that seems to be a reasonable act of generosity.
1732. I have worked in single-identity communities that really want and are thirsty to work with the other, but this is a journey, not a destination. If you are saying that that is the endgame, I am saying that it cannot be the end game. Sharing has to be systemic and go to the core, but the alternative to that is that one tradition loses its school. You know what happens in communities if they lose the railway station, post office and, eventually, the school — those communities leak.
1733. One of the arguments for setting up the integrated school in the Cutts in Derriaghly was that the Protestant community was feeling that there was a loss, and, rather than lose a school, it was happy to have a transformed school there.
1734. Therefore, this is about more than simply having a school. If the school is saying an act of generosity took place,

that is a good starting point. We said at the start that there is no one-size-fits-all here. There are buddy schemes and shared campuses, but it cannot simply be left there. The research in Scotland seems to state that shared campuses can reinforce division rather than promote sharing, if teachers go in separate doors and have different timetables. However, if it is a place in which to start formal sharing, I think that it should be welcomed for the generous act that it is. That is my personal view, drawn from what we say in the commission around the nature of sharing. Would that be fair?

1735. **Mr McKinstry:** For us, we can separate the sharing of facilities from the sharing of curriculum and the sharing of classes, and the commission is very clear that it wants sharing in mainstream education for every pupil — a shared curriculum and shared classes.

1736. **Ms McGlade:** In conclusion to that from a Community Relations Council perspective, our interest is in the quality of the sharing and the impact of the sharing — the learning from it, how it is rolled out and where it is working, and, indeed, how we can improve on it where it is not working.

1737. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you all for that. The situation in the Moy is that the community survey was done. Out of that, 85 responses were in favour of what is now proposed, 70 were in favour of an integrated solution and five did not want anything to do with any of it. It seems to me that the influence of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) came into play very heavily there, because CCMS has set its face very firmly — in front of the Committee — against any attempt to integrate a maintained school and another sector. It is absolutely adamant about that. If you compare that with the situation that is developing in the Republic — obviously, it does not have CCMS, but it does have a structure — you will see that it has become obvious that the Catholic Church, which runs most of the schools down there, has now realised that its position is not sustainable. Educate

Together, which you have probably heard of, is now coming into play in a big way. I know that I am inviting controversy, but do you think that CCMS's attitude is sustainable or realistic?

1738. **Dr Wardlow:** First, I do not want to comment on CCMS's attitude, because, for 15 years, I was the director of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), so I understand its situation. It has made it very clear that if a Catholic school becomes an integrated school, it can no longer be a Catholic school. If that is its working premise, I understand why the outworking of that is what it says. What we are saying here is that we are asking a community how we actually have a shared education system. When we go through an equality impact assessment (EQIA) and get a community response, we are always clear that the numbers are not the only thing that determines the outcome. The numbers are one measurement in the toolkit. Therefore, there is something about the full involvement of communities, and we have said that in our response. If you are looking at sharing in a community, it should not simply be a vote on something. It should be much more around community engagement and outcomes involving the young people, and we know how to do that in this place. I do not know the background to the Moy. I am simply saying that we know that, in other places, the communities perhaps do not get the voice. One of the things that we have said on our inequalities is that, too often, that civic voice is lost. Too often we hear so-called gatekeepers saying things. Community planning allows us a way in there, but it has to be a long-term solution, whereby we say what is best for that community. I do not know enough about the case, and I am not denying anything that Trevor said, Chair. I am simply saying that this should move beyond systems, CCMS and the controlled sector. This should be about how we best make a shared establishment for the young people in that area. If that is in two schools sharing or in one school sharing, that is for the community to decide.

1739. **Mr Lunn:** I will tell you something about the case. Originally, CCMS opposed this adamantly. The first instruction that it gave to the maintained school down there was to withdraw from all discussions and have nothing whatsoever to do with it. It has at least moved in some direction. However, it has come up with a solution that, frankly, could happen only in Northern Ireland. It is going to be a school with two boards of governors under one roof, separate classes, one entrance and separate uniforms. The only hope for it, in my view, would be that it actually led somewhere, which is the point that you made, Peter. Twenty years down the line, good sense may prevail.
1740. To me, however, it was a golden opportunity. Chris mentioned the possibility of a wee bit of pressure being applied in some situations. Almost half the parents canvassed agreed that integration was the obvious solution. To some of us it is the obvious solution. That is not to say that I do not agree with faith schools, believe me. It comes back to parental choice. Parents are free to continue to use faith schools, although with levels of faith perhaps diminishing in this country, that may have to change, as has happened in the Republic.
1741. I will just take issue with something that Jonathan said. I always correct him on Methody. In Methody, 45% of pupils are Protestant, 25% are Catholic and 30% — a telling figure — are unattached, if I may use that term. Methody is a terrific school, and a very good example of how things can develop.
1742. **Dr Wardlow:** It will be interesting to see, leaving aside the nature of the structure, whether the definition of “shared education” could be applied to the school if the Bill becomes law. This is about outcomes, and if that type of educational establishment were able to deliver over time what we define as “shared education”, which is wide, deep, intense and intentional, the judgment is, if you like, taken by the outcomes or measurement.
1743. I understand what Trevor is saying. It is not for me to comment on what the community has done there, because I am not quite sure where that is going at the minute. I have heard only what has been said in public discourse. What we would say again, though, is that at the core of this has to be the outcome for the young person. This is about shared outcomes, where young people really get to learn about one another, and facilitating that well, rather than the systems.
1744. **Mr Osborne:** I would like to say two things in response. Again, I do not know the detail as well as Trevor.
1745. **Mr Lunn:** I just explained it to you.
1746. **Mr Osborne:** There is a real need for the benefits of the outcomes that we are talking about. The focus needs to be not on structures or systems reform but on the needs of the children and young people. It seems to me that there is a significant debate needed on why learning and developing together is good for those children and young people. I have not met a parent yet who does not want the best for his or her child. That debate might inform a lot of communities going forward about what is in the best interests of their children and young people.
1747. One other thing occurred to me when you mentioned Methody, although I think that this is true of many schools. We are not dealing with a monoculture, in a sense, of Protestants and Catholics. That is not the only issue here. We are living in a very multicultural society. Methody and many other schools are examples of people being schooled from all sorts of different faiths and backgrounds, which, again, reinforces the benefits of everyone across this community learning and developing together, learning about others and learning the importance of living in this sort of multicultural society.
1748. **Mr Lunn:** Just one more question, if you do not mind. I have got about 10 more, but one will do. The departmental drivers of the shared education programme were with us a few weeks ago. They were absolutely clear in their own mind that,



as far as they were concerned, the aim of shared education is educational. If there are societal benefits, they are a spin-off or a bonus, frankly. I hope that it is a big bonus, but let us wait and see. What is your view on that? I would have thought that you would be more interested in the societal side.

1749. **Dr Wardlow:** I read the submission. The issue for me has always been this: what is the purpose of education? Is it simply to create young people for university or to create jobs? Absolutely not. The Latin verb “educare” means “to draw out”. The purpose of education is to draw out, not just to put in. It is both. When that best education takes place, there are societal benefits. The departmental officials say — I read it in their submission — that education is an academic process; that is, education is a synonym for academic learning. I would not say that that is the purpose of education or, indeed, what education is. Education is about how you learn to fulfil your potential in a pluralist world and how you relate: it is all those things. Otherwise, why are some subjects taught in school? There is a limit to the extent to which sharing is simply about education, because then it is about priorities and looking at how you do systems. This is about societal benefit, which I see as the key purpose. Lifelong learning is at the core of what we do. It is not just what happens between the ages of four and 18. Of course, there should be societal benefits. Sharing for me is academic or, in that sense, intellectual, but, equally as importantly, it is about learning to live together.
1750. **Mr Osborne:** The Community Relations Council highlights in its response some research showing that sharing and learning together increases academic achievement for those who partake in that type of schooling. That is partly what I mean when I say that I do not know any parent who does not want the best for his or her child. Well, academically parents will get the best for their child when their child learns and develops together with other communities from different

backgrounds. Separate schooling contributes to an own-group bias, which has societal implications, while learning and developing together benefits society hugely. In addition, however, it benefits the individuals who take part through raising their academic achievement.

1751. **Ms McGlade:** A huge amount of money has been invested in sharing in education, not least in the shared campuses, so the purpose is sharing, but not only educational sharing. It is sharing as it relates to the T:BUC commitments. The Atlantic Philanthropies is investing a substantial amount of money through Delivering Social Change in shared education, for which Peace IV has also proposed a huge chunk. There is therefore a responsibility to ensure that the money is not wasted but targeted, built on and supported.
1752. **Mr Lunn:** Certainly, the buzz at the moment is for shared education. Some of us are slightly worried that there is too much emphasis on it, which is why I keep hammering on about these things. Frankly, I wonder where we would be now if the same emphasis had been put on integrated education over the past 40 years. What difference do you think that the words “facilitate and encourage” have made to the integrated sector over the past 40 years? Now it is going to be cancelled out by the fact that shared education will have the same emphasis.
1753. You do not have to answer that.
1754. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome. I want to carry on from Trevor’s points. I was a bit alarmed, Peter, when you said that some of the projects reinforce segregation. Have you, for example, spoken to the two communities in Moy?
1755. **Mr Osborne:** When I made that comment, I was not dealing with a specific example. I do not know the details of the Moy project, although I have heard about it in the news. The answer is no, I have not talked directly with the various communities in the Moy.
1756. **Mr Rogers:** It would certainly be worthwhile. I go back to an earlier point

- about societal benefits, and so on. Queen's University's Centre for Shared Education believes that there has been greater penetration when the outcomes have been educational rather than societal. Where do you stand on that?
1757. **Dr Wardlow:** I declare an interest, as I served on the advisory panel for shared education at Queen's, because I am a senator there. I saw the early stuff, and then I worked for 15 years in integrated schools, so it is hard for me to set that aside and talk in my current role, which has a much more restricted brief.
1758. I have a problem when people talk about hard outcomes and soft outcomes. I challenge anybody who teaches STEM subjects — the hard outcome being A levels — and says that those are harder to teach than a soft subject about the other, race or homophobia, or that the outcome is more easily attainable. I would love to lose those two words. The idea that educational outcomes are only measured in A levels and GCSEs at Key Stages 1 and 2 needs to be lost. It says that we measure numbers. Are we valuing what we measure or measuring what we value? I think that we do much of the former and that we should start measuring what we value instead. If we really value educational outcomes, measure them — absolutely — but measure and value how societal difference is impacted on by young people who learn to live with difference, who learn not just to tolerate but to deal with difference and say that, "I can still say who I am, and you can be who you are. I hear your narrative. I grow up with you. I learn to live alongside you, but I can disagree with you and still remain your friend or colleague". Sharing that is real, deep, penetrative and intentional can both deliver the educational outcome and reduce the impact of some of the prejudicial attitudes that we see. We see homophobia, we see racism and we see all sorts of attitudes, even sexism, in schools. Almost one in five kids say that they have seen a racial attack or heard racial comments in school, despite all the bullying policies. The level of homophobic bullying is still high, yet we know that there are good policies. Of course, educational outcomes are important, but they should not determine someone's future or be the only measure of their life. If we are really serious about sharing, it is not simply about getting 24 or 27 GCSEs and A levels; it is about how we can learn to live together in this place that we call home.
1759. **Mr Rogers:** You mentioned difference. It does not mean that the difference disappears.
1760. **Dr Wardlow:** Absolutely not. Personally, I have some concerns about celebrating difference, because I do not want to celebrate all differences. We are almost being told, "You have to welcome what I do". Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a very simple example. No one here would say that we should celebrate that difference. I am being pejorative here because we need to be careful. This is not social engineering, bringing up children to say that we are all the same. This is about bringing up a society in which we can understand difference and realise that it is not a threat but something that enriches. Proper sharing can do that. We have well-formed young people, and you see that when you go to some of the shared schools. These young people are not clones; they live with and accept multiple identities. They are not born with a barcode stating who they are. Not all identity is fixed. I often say that, at one time, I was not a father, a parent or a brother, but I am all of those now. Identity moves through life. At schools in which sharing takes place, young people realise that their identity is not the only thing that forms them and that, in fact, they may have more than one. When that is facilitated well, it can only augur well for the future.
1761. **Mr Rogers:** Do you see a place for religious or even political imagery?
1762. **Dr Wardlow:** It is already in the curriculum. My colleague Darren put it well. Think of an axis: a single identity school in a single identity neighbourhood can enhance that part of an axis by having a shared curriculum. Its

- governance can be shared; it can bring in teachers from the other tradition; and it can have outside groups coming in for extracurricular activities. In so doing, it develops that axis. However, if it moves to sharing with other schools, it moves up to the point at which it impacts on what we see as good shared education. We should not diminish the fact that people can start from where they are. In fact, we should encourage and incentivise that, but it should be real sharing. We should not simply say, “You can’t do it, so you’re not in the game.” Trevor’s idea that we are somehow being shepherded into a shared education future against our will should not be something that people fear. However, if we are saying that it is a shared society, surely one element of that is how we can maximise sharing in the education system. We should not be afraid to say that.
1763. **Mr Osborne:** The critical aspect of that is whether children and young people are learning and developing together. It is about the kids and the people; it is not about the buildings and structures. It is not about the — *[Inaudible due to mobile phone interference.]*
1764. **Mr Rogers:** Is there a place for religious instruction in schools?
1765. **Dr Wardlow:** I have my own views on that. I have not heard that discussed or debated in my three years on the commission, so I have to defer to Darren. I do not think that we have formed a view on that.
1766. **Mr McKinstry:** I am not aware of the view.
1767. **Dr Wardlow:** Let me go back to see whether there has been one. I would be very surprised if the commission had a view that it should not be there. It was formed by the main Churches. People have asked whether other faiths should be represented in the primary-school curriculum. That is not for us to say. As you know, there is an opt-out, meaning that children do not have to take part. Some schools do not necessarily tell parents that, but it seems to me that the RE that is being taught is a great opportunity to maximise sharing.
1768. **Mr Osborne:** I am not sure whether the CRC has a formal view on that either, but it seems natural to me that, if you want to understand other communities, you need to have some understanding of the religious side of things. Therefore, that should be part of the curriculum. The debate, I think, is how and where.
1769. **Mr McKinstry:** In answer to a question on parental choice at the start of the session, we talked about the ability to attend faith-based schools, which would allow for that.
1770. I want to talk about the Queen’s research and the educational advantages. Obviously, the commission is very keen on educational advantage. We want every child to maximise their potential, irrespective of their background. Lessons on advancing the social side that came out of the Queen’s research on shared education were the importance of sustained and meaningful contact and the fact that it had to be about more than isolated incidents or projects. There had to be the opportunity to build relationships between the pupils and build the idea of mutual understanding. That was key to advancing the social side.
1771. **Dr Wardlow:** Interestingly, a few years ago, longitudinal research found that there is a domino effect. So, for example, Darren is a Catholic and I am a Protestant, and we become friends through a shared project. His friendship circle will have a reduced antagonism towards the out-group — in this case, me— through his friendship with me. We have all this research that states that shared education works, but it should not diminish the fact that it should be good shared education — in other words, as Darren said, the educational outcomes should be good. So we should be addressing underachievement. One should not be played off against the other.
1772. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you, that was helpful.
1773. **Mr Newton:** I welcome the witnesses.

1774. A couple of important things have come out of the discussion. I am surprised that you have not made any effort to try to understand the Moy situation. Producing your paper without having looked at what will be a significant development, led by the principals and parents for the pupils and the entire Moy community, is a huge weakness. I say that as someone who, like others at the table, believes in integrated education. My wife and I tried to encourage our children to embrace integrated education via the Methody model, which is, I believe, a paragon. When we eventually arrive at shared education, I hope that it will be similar to that. I accept that we do not have a definition of shared education, but I believe that it will have many of the Methody features, which I know that people will embrace when they see it. That is, I believe, the way that things are going.
1775. With your not having looked at the Moy situation, and based on what has been said, I find some difficulty with the ethos of the response, Michael. I am concerned about, and have a difficulty with, placing a statutory duty on principals and teachers. In response to the Chair's point about a hierarchy of sectors, you said that — I hope that I got this right — you do not have an opinion on that. Surely the Equality Commission should have an opinion when one sector is disadvantaged against another in the educational process. What you said gives me some concern.
1776. It is certainly not coming through to me that either the CRC or the Equality Commission embraces shared education with any enthusiasm. Is it not true that shared education is, perhaps, a logical step on the way, finally, to integrated education? However, it is totally focused; it is not forced. It is just a natural educational process that parents, schools and bodies will embrace for their betterment. Whether it is societal or educational, I believe that society and the educational process will work it out and gain advantage from it.
1777. **Dr Wardlow:** Let me respond to the simplest point first. We have not asked for a statutory duty to be put on schools; in fact, the opposite is true. We have been arguing that the section 75 duties should not be put on schools, and that is our current position. Schools already sit under bodies that have a section 75 duty, and, therefore, for anything that a school does, there is a subvention under that. The various anti-discrimination laws, with the exception of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order, apply to young people and teachers in schools. Transgender children are not covered by equality legislation in a school, and there is an exemption in the curriculum as a result of the discussions on sexual orientation. So, Robin, I am not sure where you read that.
1778. **Mr Newton:** I may have picked it up wrongly. I am sure that I will not find it again.
1779. **Dr Wardlow:** That is the easiest one for us. We do not believe that, at the minute, there is enough evidence for us to say that we should put that duty on the 1,200 schools. The Minister is minded to look at that, and we are quite happy to respond to it, if and when it comes. However, our current position is that there are enough protections without it.
1780. Secondly, on the Moy, this may come down to us trying to explain to people the role of the Equality Commission. It is what I tried to say at the start. The Equality Commission is a creature of statute that has certain responsibilities placed on it. Looking at what is happening in shared education, shared villages or shared housing is not one of those responsibilities. Our role is to look at government policy or the policy of public bodies and at the implementation of their statutory duties and whether they comply. If, in doing this, we felt, or it was reported, that one of the statutory bodies in the controlled or maintained sector was in dereliction of their duty, we could have a view on it. So, it is probably a misunderstanding of our role, Robin. That is not trying to dodge anything. We do not have a view on the Moy, but I am very happy to bring your concerns back

- to the commission before we take our view on the Bill. I undertake to do that.
1781. Thirdly, you mentioned the hierarchy. This is also about the Equality Commission taking a view on current legislation, the carrying out of policy, and whether the current 1989 Education Reform Order breaches any equality duties. It does not, to the best of my knowledge. No case has ever been raised. There has never been an issue on which the Equality Commission has said that something gives a higher level to the integrated or Irish language sector than to other sectors, which have the education and library boards and CCMS to promote them.
1782. Finally, on the question of our embracing shared education, it can be hard to put passion into a written response. There was unanimity on our board when we were signing this off. We welcomed it, and we have said that. However, as we do not yet have the full response to the Bill, we have not talked about what sharing should be defined as. Let me make it clear that this is absolutely a very good step. If it is systemic and sustained and has all the outcomes and parameters that we outlined, we absolutely embrace it. As to whether this is the road to formally integrated schools, there are those who believe that to be the case. Our view, at the minute, is that some parents will want formally integrated schools and they should continue to be supported; other parents will want a shared educational system, which may or may not end up in a formally integrated school, and they should also be supported. If that did not come through in the response, I am sorry.
1783. **Mr McKinstry:** The commission has been very clear in a number of responses that it feels that sharing should be central to the system, it should be meaningful and it should impact on every pupil. I will clarify the first point: we have said that we feel that shared education is likely to benefit from a statutory obligation on the Department. However, we last looked at the issue seven years ago. We have not said that we think that schools would benefit from having a statutory obligation placed on them. There seem to be various models being proposed in the sector, whether it is a variant of section 75, enhanced or light; a policy directive from DE; or mainstreaming through the curriculum. If the Department is going to look at that, we look forward to seeing the outcome.
1784. **Dr Wardlow:** The issue is how you ensure that a school fulfils a duty of the Department, which has a policy aim of sharing. That is why, as we talked about, you have to value what you measure.
1785. **Mr Osborne:** I agree with the tenor of what was said in a couple of those responses. The CRC is probably in the same place. For us, the critical issue is children and young people learning and developing together. If shared education helped to bring that about, we would warmly welcome it. You will be aware, Robin, that there are many different views on all of these issues. We, as an organisation, will want to embrace and understand all those views. If it leads to children and young people learning and developing together — hopefully, it will — it is, potentially, a very positive move. I think that it is about the continuum and what happens over the next number of years.
1786. Personally, I have not been down to the Moy, but I am very happy to do that. I am not sure whether the organisation did so as part of formulating its response. I will find out. We should be learning more actively from that.
1787. **Mr Newton:** I think that shared education will share many features of that brand. The important thing is that all those who have the best interests of children as their priority — the parents and principals — can buy into it.
1788. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you for your presentations and the papers that we were given. I will start with a couple of questions to the Community Relations Council. In fact, I have a statement first. I welcome the fact that your paper states:
- “Ethos and identity issues should be dealt with using the UNCRC framework”.*

1789. We have had a number of references this morning to religious diversity, but we also heard the term “multicultural”, and Michael reminded us that identity is multilayered or multifaceted. I welcome your endorsement of that importance by the UNCRC. In particular, you draw our attention to article 29(1)(c), which states:

*“States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: ...*

*The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living”.*

1790. So the CRC recognises the importance of the right of the child to be educated in relation to the culture of the community from which they come. That is good.

1791. You also reference the Human Rights Commission report on education reform in Northern Ireland, which says that it is important:

*“To ensure that in the context of an increased move towards cross-community collaboration, that children’s and young people’s rights to their own cultural identity and freedom of religion are protected in shared arrangements.”*

1792. I took that up with other folk who were here making presentations because, before you even get to the shared arrangement, it is important that children come together on the basis of equality. That point was highlighted to the Committee by a number of academics and by others who have written about it but have not yet been to see us. I welcome that.

1793. Has the CRC carried out any investigation of or inquiry into how the cultural rights of children are being realised or implemented across the different sectors in Northern Ireland? Are you aware of any research on that? We are bringing together different sectors here. Clearly, an Irish-medium education sector will have a strong Irish cultural ethos, with the Irish language, Irish traditional music, Gaelic games etc. The same is largely true, although to a lesser degree in language, in the

Catholic maintained sector. Have you any views on the controlled sector or done any work on that?

1794. **Ms McGlade:** Do you mean training?

1795. **Mr McCausland:** I would like to know how well the rights of the children are being realised or implemented in the controlled sector. Are there differences of approach to culture in the classroom between the Irish-medium, the Catholic-maintained and the controlled sectors? We have heard views from others on this.

1796. **Ms McGlade:** Our interest is in bringing the diversity together, rather than exploring how the curriculum is delivered. Is that what you mean, Nelson?

1797. **Mr McCausland:** No. You mentioned that children have the right to learn about their culture in school. One of the purposes of education should be a child learning about his or her cultural identity, language and values, because what is taught in a school is affirmed by the system to be of value, worthwhile and something to be affirmed, so it is seen as a positive; whereas, if something is kept out of a school, it is seen, largely, in a negative way. Quite clearly, there is a strong cultural ethos in certain sectors. Have you any thoughts on how that is working out in the controlled sector?

1798. **Ms McGlade:** Key to that is teacher training, sharing, understanding and diversity. We have engaged with our groups on the ground and supported them in engaging with the schools to explore cultural identity and others’ identities. Of course, there is the commemoration aspect of the work: understanding how people view history and reflect on it. Through engaging with schools, we are doing a lot of work on that.

1799. **Mr McCausland:** I am encouraged by your mention of that in the presentation. I am disappointed that, across the presentations — I will come to the Equality Commission in a moment — there has not yet been an acknowledgement of the different approaches to culture and traditions across the different sectors. If you bring together children from different sectors

- and cultural backgrounds — one group's background is that its cultural identity is affirmed, validated, esteemed and embraced in the school, but another group comes from a community in which cultural activities and so on are, in some cases, locked out of the school or given limited access without being mainstreamed in the curriculum — you do so on an unequal basis. Previously, I have used the Pierre Trudeau metaphor of Canada being in bed with the elephant of America. How do you work on bringing groups of children together so that both come with the same cultural confidence to engage with and embrace each other?
1800. **Ms McGlade:** Are you suggesting that a section of the community is being disadvantaged in accessing its culture in school?
1801. **Mr McCausland:** It is an issue that has been around for quite a number of years. I remember going to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) about it in the mid-1990s. A very senior person in CCEA at the time, who has since moved on to even better things, made this point: a Catholic school is part of the parish, which has its GAA club and all its cultural identity, so it is rooted and grounded; the controlled sector deals with culture differently. So, should the CCEA want to organise an event, it could go to a large number of Catholic maintained schools to get an Irish traditional music group to perform. He said that when CCEA went to a controlled school — he mentioned one somewhere near Castlederg, I think, that had a pipe band — the choice was very limited. That is just a small illustration of a fundamental difference. Has CRC looked at that?
1802. **Ms McGlade:** It has not been raised with us as an issue that anyone said that they wanted to explore further. Nelson, our interest is in bringing together children to share and explore together their diverse backgrounds. In relation to the sector —
1803. **Mr McCausland:** So CRC has no interest in —
1804. **Ms McGlade:** We certainly have. You have raised it, and, if it is an issue, I am happy to speak to you about it. The specific issue of children in a school being disadvantaged when it comes to accessing their identity or traditions has not been raised with us.
1805. **Mr McCausland:** At the moment, the Ulster-Scots Agency, for example, has to fund directly from its core budget programmes in schools and certain cultural activities. So, it may facilitate the school in providing additional teaching in Scottish country dancing or whatever the activity is. It is not necessarily automatically embraced.
1806. **Ms McGlade:** I see. The programmes that we are engaged in with schools to bring them together to look at culture and identity include Corrymeela's Facing History and Ourselves. It explores with young people from different backgrounds their culture and identity, and the aim is, perhaps, to tease out some of their —
1807. **Mr McCausland:** My point is about coming together on the basis of equality, whereby children have equal strength and affirmation in a school. Not so long ago, I picked up on a comment by an American academic, Professor Elshstain from the University of Chicago:
- “Education always reflects a society's views of what is excellent, worthy, necessary.”*
1808. She said that in a different context, but, if the curriculum in the school system does not embrace the culture, it is not affirming it and saying that it is excellent, worthy and necessary. However, if another school reflects culture in a, b and c activity, that is seen as excellent, worthy and necessary because it is in the classroom. The former's culture is not because it is kept outside the school.
1809. **Mr Osborne:** The CRC acknowledges daily cultural expression across the community in all sorts of ways. We support a huge amount of work in the Protestant/unionist side of the

- community, the Catholic/nationalist/republican side of the community, the black and minority ethnic (BME) sector and many other sectors.
1810. The CRC, in its funding role, for example, would not get into the youth or school side of things. Nevertheless, the principle of approaching things on the basis of equality and making sure that we support good cultural expression is part of the future for this society because we need to value all sorts of cultural expression from all sides of the community.
1811. The issue from the schools perspective, if I am taking you up right, Nelson, is not about disadvantaging one side of the community. In other words, if you are saying that there is a very positive expression of culture on the Catholic-maintained side, that is fine. What you are asking is whether that is reflected on the other side of the community divide in its schooling system.
1812. **Mr McCausland:** It should be right for all sectors.
1813. **Mr Osborne:** Sure, and we do not disagree with that principle. That is absolutely right. It may be that the conversation needed on the Protestant/unionist side of the community divide on culture and how that is reflected in schools is something that we want to engage in. If that is not being done adequately or is not reflected in that side of the community's learning about its cultural identity, we need to engage with that. Our view is that cultural expression needs to be part of the learning. Therefore, the school sector needs to reflect on that, as do the organisations outside it,
1814. **Mr McCausland:** I will certainly pass that on. I am sure that there are folks who will take up that offer.
1815. I will turn to the Equality Commission for a moment. I read through the document, and there was no mention of equality in accessing the cultural rights of the child. Maybe there is a crossover between you and the Human Rights Commission on that. Maybe the commission is meant to look after that as part of its human rights remit and implement it equally. Maybe there is no discrimination. Is there a crossover?
1816. **Dr Wardlow:** Our response was on the nature of sharing and shared education, and how that is maximised. We talked about the deep sharing and so on. I do not think that we touched on Catholic culture as opposed to Protestant culture in this sense.
1817. If you are asking me in broad terms, I am old enough to remember single identity work when Brian Mawhinney introduced it. The idea was that you prepare your community to understand itself before engaging with the other. Then, you went into some cross-community contact and, eventually, sharing. There was a sort of virtuous circle, and that was how you did it.
1818. We now know that there are lots of different ways to do it, but research shows that people need to be reasonably aware of who and what they are before they engage with the other — absolutely. As we said at the outset, we are not pointing out all the areas of research; we are simply saying that, within our gift, we will talk about what we feel is important.
1819. There is a huge amount of work out there. It seems to me that most important is this flimsy word “ethos”, which I have researched. The closest that I found to a definition is “It is the way we do things round here”.
1820. In a school or a joint school and talking about shared schools, the person who develops and controls the ethos — research on ethos shows that it is not fixed — is the head teacher. Head teachers come and go, so the ethos of a school can change. Those in charge of a school have a trickle-down effect on the ethos. The research is clear on that. How, then, do kids engage with culture in school? It is in the curriculum and the extracurricular activities. More important, it is in what we in research call the hidden curriculum. It is what people say and do — it is how we do stuff around here. Now, you cannot write



- that down, but there is a huge amount of research around how people feel that generous gestures are being made towards them. I think that teachers need learning in that. They tell us that constantly, saying, “I do not know how Catholics/Protestants think”. Protestant teachers will often say that the Catholic culture is very visible. In the integrated system, when a school was transforming, it was seen as a lot of Catholic imagery coming in, and there is almost a Protestant deficit created.
1821. The research says that, when schools address that and ask what it is that defines Protestantism, there is huge amount of curricular material around. It is everything from engaging with the war to going to graveyards and bringing people in from the outside. For me, it is out there, and it is extremely important, whether or not it is directly an equality matter. I do not see that it falls under our gamut, but that does not mean that we are avoiding it. I think that it would be wrong if there was some imbalance in sharing and it was seen to be all one side. Therefore, we are saying that the training and resources need to be there. Youth work and the NGOs from the outside can give a huge amount of help on that, and young people can actually be allowed to experiment and understand what it is. As a four-year-old, do I really know my culture? As a 16-year-old, I begin to develop that. So, absolutely, Nelson, it is an important thing.
1822. **Mr McCausland:** In deference to and respect for the Chair, I will stop there. I do think that it is quite often the elephant in the room, and the fact that it did not appear significantly or has not been looked into yet causes concern, but we will follow it up and come back to you on that.
1823. **Dr Wardlow:** Likewise, if I undertake anything, I will be back in touch with you, Nelson, and will make sure that that goes back to our commission as well.
1824. **Mr Osborne:** From our perspective, we want to understand better the point that is being made. If we can engage in any positive way, that is what we will do.
1825. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mrs Overend for a final question.
1826. **Mrs Overend:** I have cut my questions right down to one. My apologies for not being here at the beginning, but I will be sure to read the Hansard report for all the information. Have you had a chance, or do you propose, to examine the independent review of home-to-school transport? I am sure that you will find that interesting. What is your view on achieving more integration if children are forced to go their nearest school? It could mean that we would have more single-identity schools rather than fewer.
1827. **Dr Wardlow:** It is a very simple answer. It is something that we will look at and respond to, because there are issues about equality of access and equality of opportunity, inevitably. At the minute, you can choose to go beyond two or three miles and pay for the transport, unless there is no school of your type within that area. We know that and we know that there are restrictions, but does that have the law of unintended consequence somewhere down the line? Those are the things that we need to look at.
1828. **Mr Osborne:** I think that we would mirror that answer. It probably will be part of the response [*Inaudible.*]
1829. **Ms McGlade:** We are also interested in sharing across schools, and the issue of transport has to be accommodated if we are genuine about enabling that to happen.
1830. **Dr Wardlow:** There were some issues in the learning partnerships when they were set up. Young people who moved for a day to school B were showing their bus pass and the driver was saying that they were not coming from that school, or things ran beyond 4.00 pm and the bus driver said that it was only valid until then. So, there is also an issue about whether schools should have the budget in their own hands. There are other ways of looking at it that need to be examined, but we will certainly look at whether there is any equality impact in terms of the public sector duties that fall on the boards and whoever provides

the transport. Would it have that law of unintended consequences? Indeed, it may have a very direct consequence, particularly if you think of rurality and some of the urban areas.

1831. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Thank you very much. That was a very long session. Thank you for your contributions. I am quite confident that we will meet again. Thank you very much.

## 4 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Mr Sam Fitzsimmons	<i>Integrated</i>
Mrs Tina Merron	<i>Education Fund</i>
Professor Brandon Hamber	<i>Ulster University</i>
Professor Alan Smith	

#### 1832. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome Tina Merron, the chief executive of the Integrated Education Fund (IEF); Sam Fitzsimmons, the communications director of the IEF; Professor Brandon Hamber from the University of Ulster; and Professor Alan Smith from the University of Ulster. I apologise for the delay. You were here for at least part of the previous session, so you understand the engagement that there is with members. I did not want to curtail that conversation too much, but I want to extend my apologies to you.

1833. Would you like to make your opening statements? I assume that you have spoken among yourselves about how you wish to organise that part of the session. We will follow with questions.

1834. **Mrs Tina Merron (Integrated Education Fund):** Thanks very much for inviting us. The Integrated Education Fund will go first, so it will be me followed by Sam, and then it will be Professor Brandon Hamber and finally Professor Alan Smith. The IEF's presentation is very brief, which might help with the timing.

1835. Let me introduce myself, first. I am the chair executive of the Integrated

Education Fund, and, as I said, I would like to thank you for inviting us. I want to give you a brief background on the fund and outline some of our plans and some of the points in our submission. It will be brief.

1836. The Integrated Education Fund is an independent charitable trust that is dependent entirely on fundraising. The trust is needed because the Government does not adequately plan for the development of integrated education in Northern Ireland. The dual purpose of the fund is to increase places across Northern Ireland to meet parental demand and to support the meaningful reform of our education system into a single system.

1837. Without educational reform, the vast majority of our children will continue to be educated separately according to their religious or community background. The cost of inaction will mean another generation growing up with limited contact with one another. Northern Ireland has reached a point where most people agree that educating our children together is the way forward. That is evidenced by regular independent surveys and polling as well as community support.

1838. The task ahead is to encourage and challenge everyone to imagine what it could be like if our children were educated together, rather than apart, and to bring about the changes needed to make that a reality. We recognise that reforming a well-established education system will not happen overnight, but we have already come a long way and some major steps have been taken.

1839. Further change is needed in planning and the Integrated Education Fund wants communities to be put at the heart of that educational planning. Any future decisions for our education system must include the views of the community. Educational planning that does not take account of parental

- demand or aspiration is neither sufficient nor acceptable. It cannot be left solely to the existing education providers or sectors to determine the future of schools in any area.
1840. The Department of Education must seek a method to find out what parents want in the types of schools in their local area. To do that, it needs a process of engaging and involving communities in the area-based planning process. The IEF asks the Education Committee to be supportive in helping to find an independent mechanism to assess parental demand. We should not assume that the types of schools that we have are what parents want. Putting communities at the heart of education should threaten no one.
1841. I will now pass over to Sam.
1842. **Mr Sam Fitzsimmons (Integrated Education Fund):** Again, I would like to thank the Chair for inviting us to give evidence. My presentation will be quite brief as well, but I will expand a little bit on what Tina said.
1843. In 2014, the fund published an alternative manifesto for education, in which we advocate a move away from the current divisive nature of our education system. Education is central and vital to creating an inclusive society, and that can only be achieved by establishing a unified and coherent education system. The IEF alternative manifesto sets out our shared vision for an inclusive and equal society in Northern Ireland, which is free from social and cultural barriers. It is a road map that indicates opportunities to deliver sustainable change and alternative approaches to six key areas of Northern Ireland's education system.
1844. The first of those is area-based planning that is shaped by the community and which reflects parental choice, community needs and the desire for a shared future in physical localities. The second is a single authority for the administration for education. The third is a single teacher-training system. The fourth is a single model of governance for all schools. The fifth is the extension of fair employment legislation to the recruitment of teachers, and the sixth is the application of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act to all schools.
1845. The Integrated Education Fund challenges the Committee to recommend that a comprehensive independent review of the economic impact of both shared and integrated education is carried out, with the principal aim of better informing policy decisions. We also encourage the Committee to recommend establishing an accessible evidence base on shared and integrated education that would be used to underpin policy decisions on strategic investment and the reform of our education system.
1846. I thank the Committee again for taking the time to hear us.
1847. **Professor Brandon Hamber (Ulster University):** Thank you very much for inviting me to address the Committee. I appreciate the invitation. I am here in my capacity as a practitioner and a researcher who has been working on peace-building and reconciliation issues in a range of societies over nearly two decades. I am also the director of the International Conflict Research Institute at Ulster University.
1848. Given the limited time, I will be very brief in my opening comments. I will speak for about three to four minutes and will focus on the challenges that education here faces from an international perspective. Incidentally, that is not something that you can do in three or four minutes, but I will give it my best shot. Before I do that, I want to acknowledge the substantial progress that has been made towards peace. All those involved should be commended, and that is recognised internationally. That said, Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society that is emerging from conflict.
1849. As you all know, 90% of children are educated in schools that are predominantly Protestant or predominantly Catholic. DE figures show that almost half of Northern Ireland schoolchildren are still being taught in

- schools in which 95% or more pupils are of the same religion. When I share that fact with politicians, practitioners and peace builders around the world, they are astounded, as integrated education is internationally considered to be a fundamental building block of sustainable peace. That is not to say that schools that are dominated by one tradition or another are inherently bad, and many serve their children very well with very sound academic education. However, I think that it is questionable whether they are able to fully supply the core skills that children need in today's society.
1850. The consultation document on a shared education policy, which was launched in January 2015, raises that very issue. It asserts that:
- "Society is changing rapidly and we must respond to that change to best meet the needs of our children and young people."*
1851. In addition, there is growing international research that shows that diversity increases productivity on a number of levels. In Northern Ireland, research has also convincingly confirmed that separate schooling on grounds of religion can create negative social attitudes of those who are perceived as the other. I can share all that research with you and will not quote it all.
1852. The United States Institute of Peace, which is one of the largest state-funded peace-building organisations in the world, funded by the United States Government, concludes that:
- "integration of schools also is an important structural aspect of education."*
1853. It goes on to state:
- "When ... ethnic groups are educated separately within the national education system ... important overt or hidden messages to students"*
- are inevitably conveyed about other groups in society. That is from a report from 2006.
1854. It is interesting to note that several high-level documents and local policies specifically recognise the importance of integrated education too. As you know, the 1998 agreement sees integrated education as an:
- "essential aspect of the reconciliation process",*
- and key to:
- "the promotion of a culture of tolerance."*
1855. The Consultative Group on the Past says:
- "reconciliation may never be achieved if our children continue to attend separated schools."*
1856. The consultation document on a shared education policy notes:
- "Our education system mirrors historical divisions in society here."*
1857. It states that:
- "the benefits of educating children and young people together are increasingly recognised."*
1858. As Tina mentioned, social surveys also show that the vast majority of the general public routinely see integrated education as key to the future. In fact, the consultative document that I quoted before notes:
- "Public and political attitudes have evolved to the degree where moving to a more inclusive educational system is a distinct possibility."*
1859. Yet the provision and, therefore, the choice are simply not available to many parents. Indeed, there is an inequality in provision. Comprehensive research on the subject has concluded that the main reason for preferences for integrated education not being met is insufficient numbers of shared spaces to accommodate demand.
1860. Other divided societies continue to learn from the work of the integrated education movement in Northern Ireland, yet, within Northern Ireland, there appears to be little political will to support that ground-breaking and internationally recognised movement. Instead, the learning from what has been achieved by the integrated education movement seems to have

- shifted into the direction of shared education.
1861. At face value, sharing and contact between groups is, of course, positive. The research in that area is promising and shows, among other benefits, that the type of inter-group contact that shared education offers can lead to more positive relationships and perceptions of others and can build into school collaboration. In many senses, however, the move to shared education merely proves the obvious. International social psychological research has shown for decades now that, under certain conditions, contact between groups can promote positive views of others. Of course, any increased contact between school-age children of different traditions is to be welcomed, but, as recent research on shared education notes, an environment that seemingly reinforces a monoculture order can limit the potential of such programmes. In other words, contact programmes taking place within an overall segregated social context, despite their positive indicators, are not necessarily conducive to creating positive attitudes between groups over the long term. It is, from a policy perspective, counter-intuitive to set up a new large-scale community relations programme to bring children into meaningful contact in schools with one another through various collaborative ventures at great expense financially and in terms of resources when the context itself will continually undermine any potential achievements unless this is part of a wider strategy to fundamentally change the context.
1862. Of course, there are many reasons why the context cannot be changed instantly, and we must foster contact where we can, but to lose sight of the fact that, logically and economically, the most viable place to foster contact is in an integrated classroom on a day-to-day basis is missing the most obvious long-term sustainable solution. Shared education should not become a policy end in itself. I therefore urge the Committee to be bold in its recommendations and set a staged long-term timetable for integration. This will truly offer the children the best opportunity for the future locally and globally and give Northern Ireland its rightful place as an exemplary peace process.
1863. **Professor Alan Smith (Ulster University):** Good morning. I am also grateful for the opportunity to meet the Committee. I provided a written submission. I hold the UNESCO chair at the University of Ulster. I have worked in this area for most of my professional career, from the early 1980s, both as a teacher and then as a development worker in promoting, what has now come to be known as, shared education in communities such as Strabane, Enniskillen and Limavady — interestingly, the same sort of areas that seem to be promoted and still engaged in shared education today.
1864. My interest here is in trying to give some kind of independent critique, really, on what I see as where shared education is being introduced into legislation and its policy aspirations, but maybe trying to ground that a little bit by looking at the realities of what is represented in the actual operational plans that are proposed by the Department of Education. I think that the inconsistencies there are often the things that should be of most concern for us.
1865. There is a more detailed submission, which has highlighted some significant limitations in the Department's operational plan for this policy, particularly in terms of the impact; the numbers of pupils who are currently affected — I think that my academic colleagues at Queen's estimate that about 10,000 pupils are currently involved, which is actually less than are involved in integrated schooling at the minute; the additional financial costs of what is already an expensive separate school system, particularly around sustainability after the philanthropic input over the initial four-year period is no longer there, and how those costs are likely to be absorbable by schools given other competing priorities; the added logistical and bureaucratic burden

if this is actually scaled up to the level that is proposed in the Department's operational plan, which, I think, is hugely ambitious; and evidence from other international contexts, which you are familiar with from other inputs. Shared campuses may seem like a well-intentioned, perhaps, stepping stone in some people's eyes towards greater integration in the education system, but evidence from other contexts suggests that it might actually increase animosity.

1866. I am willing to respond on the detail behind any of those. I would just like to conclude with three comments about how things have moved on since my making that written submission and, now, the Minister's statement and the Shared Education Bill, which is, in some sense, overtaking your deliberations on this. We are now in the situation where the Bill commits to the promotion of shared education as yet not defined. I am not quite sure if it is very common in the legislative process of many jurisdictions to actually create legislation to commit to something that has not been defined, but that is the situation that we are in. There would be concerns around the definition of shared education. It is not clear what problem it is actually designed to address. Is it about creating better community relations? Is this another iteration of a community relations programme? Is it about trying to address intolerance amongst children and young people? Is it about addressing socio-economic deprivation? Is it about economic inefficiencies? Is it to improve learning outcomes? It is not clear from the definition provided here. It is very minimalist. It includes a reference, surprisingly, to children's political opinion. I am not quite sure how primary schools will ascertain that in their engagement and involvement in this programme. I imagine that most schools would look on that as a huge challenge.
1867. In operational terms, it is significant that the statutory duty is on the Department to encourage and facilitate integrated education, which, as some of the members have already indicated,

has been quite a passive approach. It has been in the statute book for 25 years. We still have the same level of segregation in our education system. It is also significant that this is not about integrated schools: the statutory duty is about integrated education and the Department's responsibility to do something about increasing integrated education, not simply consolidating an integrated school sector. However, the shared education power through the Education Authority rather than in the Department actually goes further than that statutory duty on integrated education. The consultative documents talked about encouraging facilitation. I see in the draft that it is about actively promoting shared education, which I think will bring a tension between the statutory duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate integration and the statutory power of the Education Authority to not only encourage and facilitate but actively promote shared education. So, you are already introducing some kind of differential here in the priority that you are giving to these two policies. I think that will lead to trouble further down the track.

1868. Another point is that there is a main limitation in that most of the evidence that I have heard so far is that shared education seems to concentrate on attitudinal change between children; nowhere in the Department's plan are there targets or indicators to suggest that this is a stepping stone towards anything other than more sharing between children and young people at a cost every year. For example, there are no targets for increasing diversity of staffing in schools that are sharing or indeed for recognising diversity at the level of school governors.
1869. Finally, my biggest concern is that this policy may actually deepen inequalities. After the initial four years, the Department's own plan suggests that only 65% of schools will actually be eligible to receive funding from this because the rest are too culturally isolated. One of the criteria to access funding is that you are already involved

- in some sharing. Of course, we know that the most culturally isolated schools are also mapped very strongly onto the most socially disadvantaged areas. So, we will have a programme for four years that gives those who are already sharing the opportunity for more sharing, and we will not allow access to those who are possibly the most important target group; children who are in schools where no diversity of learning environment is already in place.
1870. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. I will be very brief because members have indicated. If we were starting from a blank sheet, I think that we would have a very different schooling system. Given where we are, in some ways, we have to work with what we have. I am not entirely sure whether there is hostility to shared education or whether you just have genuine concerns as to the route of travel. I have read your submissions, and I find them very interesting, particularly Alan's comments in relation to where we are going with the investment of money. In your paper, you have given us alternative proposals for discussion. I am interested in how you see voluntary amalgamations working across the traditional school sectors and whether you see that as a viable option.
1871. **Professor Smith:** I think that the question has not been asked. The decision already seems to have been made to put the financial investment in inviting schools to put forward proposals to share. No one has suggested that there is an equivalent amount of funding available to school governors or parents in communities who would like to come together in processes to explore the possibility for rationalisation of the educational facilities in their area. All I am saying is that it is not a very aspirational goal. You are already foreclosing those in communities who would be willing to engage in discussions about how there could be integration of schooling. You are only making the funding available to those who want to share.
1872. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I have been on this Committee, with the exception of a short time, since 2007. I have been through three variations of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and, as it became, the Education Authority. I became very aware of how entrenched people are within their systems and the challenges that there are to get over sectoral interests. If you were to go down that route — I think that it is something that should certainly be explored — I have that experience of how difficult it is to get people together, and to cross that barrier of sectoral interests is a huge challenge.
1873. **Professor Smith:** But there is not the opportunity in the fund. You have a £25 million fund and it is only open to invitations for proposals to share. None of it is open to groups that would like to investigate the possibility of voluntary amalgamation.
1874. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I am not sure that it has been closed down, but the Committee may want to explore that with the Department.
1875. **Professor Smith:** I have read the business plan and looked at the criteria.
1876. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** As a Committee, we will certainly explore that.
1877. **Professor Smith:** It would be fantastic if it were to be broadened to be inclusive of that, because that would be responding to parental demand and community interest, not simply through sectoral bodies.
1878. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There are certainly challenges in all of that. All of you referred to section 75 in your submissions and said that it should be applied to schools. Obviously, you heard the previous presentations, and neither organisation was promoting that. Will you expand on that point?
1879. **Mrs Merron:** Sorry, I did not hear the beginning bit of the other presentations.
1880. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It is in relation to section 75.



1881. **Mrs Merron:** Sorry, we were not there. We only came in in the middle of it, so we did not hear what the Community Relations Council (CRC) or the Equality Commission said on section 75.
1882. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Neither of them promoted what you have been suggesting — that it should be applied to schools. Where have you come from in order to have that conclusion?
1883. **Mrs Merron:** We are looking forward to common features across all schools, whether a common form of governance, administration, in terms of section 75 or the fair employment legislation, so it is standardised across all schools and they start off on the same platform. That is what we are trying to work towards — a single system.
1884. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation. On a point of clarity on the money, I was at the briefing when the Department was here. They clarified that all moneys available were available for both shared and integrated projects. I may be wrong on that, but that is certainly what I took from it. I look forward to getting clarity on that.
1885. What should take primacy here — parental choice or the concept that integration is best in theory for going forward? Tina, you talked about ascertaining what parents really think. If parents come back and say that they want choice in the system, is the Integrated Education Fund content with that, or would you still think that that would be a segregated system and that we need to get rid of that system? What should take primacy?
1886. **Mrs Merron:** Integrated education is always about parental choice; it is about what parents want. We surmise, however, that a lot of parents are not actually asked. There are integrated schools in so many areas, but a lot of areas do not have them. By asking parents, I mean asking through an independent process like a community audit, where someone goes out into the community, talks to people over time, has polls, ensures that they get all the information from the different sectors and that they understand the difference, and then asks the community as a whole what it would like. It is not about sectors deciding what everybody should have; it is what the parents want. I am not aware of any full community engagement or audit the Department has had across all the different sectors. It should go into one area, especially an area where there is going to be major change. You should ask the parents what they want — not what they have got, but what they would like to see in the future.
1887. **Mr Hazzard:** The opposing argument is that a parent in Belfast has that choice available at every single level. There is that good choice there, for every system, yet the vast majority of parents still do not pick integrated. It suggests that they are being asked, but that you, perhaps, do not like the answers that are coming back. Again, I am playing devil's advocate here.
1888. **Mrs Merron:** Let us put it this way: are they being asked? Two integrated schools in the Belfast corridor have just had their enrolment numbers increased because of demand. I would say that they are not being asked. What you have got is the current system. No one has actually asked them through an independent mechanism — not just polls, but going into an area and asking parents what they want. If the parents want what they have got, that is fine. It is not about making all schools integrated schools, but asking the community. We did a lot of community engagement work about two or three years ago, mostly in rural areas, and it is amazing how pragmatic parents are. They want a local school for their child, fairly close — they do not have to travel miles and miles — and they are quite happy for it to be a community or integrated school. They are less worried about the type of school as long as it is close to them.
1889. **Mr Hazzard:** So that variety of choice is fine. I find it difficult to match that with the language used, like “segregation”

- or “benign apartheid”. The integration movement itself says that choice is fine if that is what parents want, but is it really fine if you are describing it as segregated?
1890. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** The Integrated Education Fund does not describe it as segregation. OFMDFM’s T:BUC document says that we have a segregated education system. Also, the 2008 United Nations rapporteur report said that we had segregated education and that we should take steps to address that. Chris, maybe it is a higher authority —
1891. **Mr Hazzard:** That is why I was talking about parental choice earlier. Maybe we keep falling back on parental choice when we should not.
1892. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** I will take up what Tina said on community audits. Michael Wardlow from the Equality Commission referred to a deliberative poll that took place in Omagh in 2007 or 2008, I think. Parents were informed about the options for education provision that they could have, and they opted for either greater sharing or more integrated education. That is probably where we, and the Department, need to move to. We need to inform parents of the options that they have, rather than allowing institutions to dictate rationalisation within their area. To date there has been a deficit in engagement with communities and parents.
1893. **Professor Hamber:** The way I hear the recommendation is that it is really about truly understanding the issue of choice. It seems to me, from the comments you and others have made and from listening in before, that there are a lot of different understandings of what choice is. Parents actually make quite complicated choices when choosing a school. Sometimes it is purely pragmatic; sometimes it might be about culture and other backgrounds. We do not really know that landscape of choice exactly. When there is only a 7% opportunity within a certain type of schooling, there is not an equal choice. It cannot by definition be an equal choice, in the same way that it cannot be an equal choice if one school is ten miles from your house and another is one mile away; that is not an equal choice. That does not mean that we need to be pie in the sky and say that we can simply change that, but we need to understand what we mean by choice in a much more detailed way.
1894. There are all sorts of dimensions to choice. Take my personal situation: if I want to take my son to an integrated school after he turns 11, that school is much further from our house than another type of school. I happen to have a good job at the university, so I have that choice, because I can get into my car and drive him there, but if I did not have that job, I would not have that choice. I therefore understand a more complicated sense of understanding what we really mean by choice, which also tries to help square the circle — if that is the right terminology — and explain the fact that we have all these high-level surveys that clearly show that people are in favour of integrated education and greater levels of sharing, when that is not really happening. There is something there that needs to be explored. I would understand a much more detailed analysis of all of that.
1895. You made a point about segregation and its challenges. My position would be that you can look at a range of international research which suggests that an education system that is divided in different ways has a much greater potential to lead into different types of narrow perceptions of the other. That is quite well established by research. The point was raised whether we were presenting hostility to shared education or a genuine concern. For me, it is a genuine concern that we need to outline the road map. When I read these documents, I have no sense of what this will look like in 25 years. It seems like a series of initiatives that are being outlined. When I say “a long-term vision”, I am thinking that that is where you as politicians have to provide direction. Yes, that might bump up

against choice at different moments in time, but that is what leadership is.

1896. **Professor Smith:** While you may not agree with all the terms, the common feature in many of these situations — whether you call it separate schooling or a segregated system — is that the state is systematically funding separation of our children based on identity factors. The system is being funded systematically by the state. The missing piece in our situation is a choice which has been able to secure the confidence of sufficient parents from across the whole of the community as a legitimate choice. Societies that have made the transformation from highly sectorised education systems have not done it through voluntary integration. Desegregation in the United States would not have happened if it had been left to parents to integrate voluntarily. The ANC took a decision not to continue with separate schooling in South Africa. There had to be elements of leadership, legislation and state governance in order to provide an option that parents would have confidence in across the many different identity groups in society. There is a missing piece in our jigsaw, and that is a missing choice that the state has not yet provided. There was an aspiration at the foundation, and there is a history.
1897. **Mr Hazzard:** I go back to issues related to South Africa and America. You were talking about race relations. Here, of course, a lot of fears are about national identity, and there is a contest over constitutional issues that may not have existed there. This is another issue in America. The Coleman report concluded that educational outcomes stayed exactly the same after desegregation. So do we need to look at —
1898. **Professor Smith:** Except in areas where there was socio-economic mixing. This is where there is confusion — sorry for interrupting you.
1899. **Mr Hazzard:** That is another part of it, and I think it is very important. There is some confusion. Is it the case that we want to get to the point where there is entire equality of choice, so that every single parent has the choice of an integrated solution? If that is the case, then, of course, public funding will have to be used differently. Or is it the case that we want a single system, because anything else simply will not do? That brings me to some of the criticism of shared education, which I do not understand. We say we want equality of choice across the board: well, shared education brings different sectors together in different ways, and surely that can only be a good thing. I am confused.
1900. **Professor Smith:** That would be fine if that was not taking that option. The political leadership, if you like, is challenged to say, “Which direction are we going in this society?” There is not an open chequebook. We have got to be realistic, and we have got to make that choice. All these diverse groups have their own schools and their own options. It is the most expensive option.
1901. **Mr Craig:** I have listened with interest to what you are saying. In some respects, I have no argument with what you are saying about schools being segregated, because if you have a faith-based education system of any description there has to be a level of segregation. Parents have chosen that option. Are you saying that under no circumstances should government fund faith-based education?
1902. **Professor Smith:** There is a difference between faith-based education and faith-based schooling. In most societies that have resolved this issue, there has been an ability to provide faith-based education in the context of more plural schools and learning environments. I think that that is the resolution of it. It is similar to the question about religious education. Of course that can be provided within the context. It happens in many schools, and it happens in faith-based schools.
1903. **Mr Craig:** I am listening carefully to what you are saying. I get the idea that you are saying there should be no Catholic maintained sector in Northern Ireland. I cannot take anything else out of what you are saying. Is that impression right or wrong?

1904. **Professor Smith:** No, I am not saying there should not be. I am saying that part of the dilemma we have found ourselves in is that we have a highly sectorised and, therefore, politicised education system in terms of governance, in terms of those employed within it and in terms of the enrolment of children in those separate schools. The shared education that you presumably support is trying to find a way out of that. I am raising critical questions about whether that is going to be the way that we will find out of that. There will need to be some kind of more structural, systematic change, and there may well be a place for people who want faith-based schools, as well as faith-based education. I think you need to distinguish between faith-based schooling and faith-based education. It is possible to provide faith-based education within a plural school system.
1905. **Mr Craig:** We can play about with words all we want. We all know what we are hinting at here.
1906. **Professor Smith:** Sorry, I am not clear on what you mean by that.
1907. **Mr Craig:** Faith-based education and faith-based teaching seem to go together in the Catholic maintained sector. It is either right or wrong; I do not know. I do not send my child to a Catholic maintained school, so I have no idea. It is a choice that thousands of parents across Northern Ireland make every year. I am not going to sit here and question that choice that they make; I think they have every right to make it.
1908. **Professor Smith:** Of course, if they want a faith-based education for their children, they have a right to have it. I am saying that, within the structural arrangements we have at the minute, that does not necessitate the governance, employment and enrolment also being determined by faith within their education institutions.
1909. **Mr Craig:** Another thing that has always puzzled me about the integrated sector is the high-level indicators that tell us that everybody is on for the integrated sector. It puzzles me, because, after 30-odd years, 7% of children are being educated in the integrated sector. There is another thing that absolutely baffles me around this. I watched with interest one of our local primary schools transform into the integrated sector. It was heavily pushed by the senior management in the school, but it was a process which literally took 10 years. There were several parental meetings around it, and several times the parents rejected that option. On the last occasion, it was passed by three votes at a parents' meeting. That does not tell me that there is a huge, huge sway of people out there really interested in integrated education. Does that not indicate that some of those high-level indicators that you are talking about just cannot be right?
1910. **Professor Smith:** I think that that is a question for the representatives of the integrated education movement.
1911. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** The attitudinal polls that reflect the community's aspiration that their children be taught side by side cannot be ignored. The fact that —
1912. **Mr Craig:** But are they right?
1913. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** Are they ready?
1914. **Mr Craig:** Are they correct?
1915. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** Well, they are scientifically conducted polls which are approved by the British Polling Council, and I think that the methodology cannot be questioned. The actual results are pretty consistent with successive polls over the last 20 years. The challenge that you put down that 79% would support their school transforming to integrated status, whilst only 7% actually send their children to schools, was dealt with when Professor Brandon Hamber suggested that there is a whole host of reasons for that, including the geographical locations of integrated schools. Many parents just cannot access an integrated school. Integrated schools are not planned by the Government or the Department; they are set up by parents. No other school sector or education sector has those

challenges or barriers put in front of it. That is one of the reasons why we have only 7% of children going to integrated schools. I think that Trevor referred to the fact that the Community Relations Council and the Equality Commission thought that if the same incentives were put for integrated education as have been put in front of shared education, perhaps we would have more children going to integrated schools.

1916. **Mrs Merron:** One of the things that has helped unblock the growth of integrated education recently has been the Drumragh judicial review. Since then, about 10 development proposals have gone through for integrated schools to increase, and the majority of those — seven or eight — have gone through. They were all for increased numbers. The majority of them are for primary schools to go for double enrolment and for post-primary schools to increase numbers as well. Therefore, that has opened the door, and the Department now recognises that it has that duty, and those proposals have gone through. As I said, seven or eight of those have gone through, and there are more in the system. You will see more of those coming through, and there will be an increasing number of integrated places available through that. However, that is mainly through the existing schools growing.
1917. **Professor Hamber:** To look at the growth of integrated education outside the context of an extreme political conflict would not do justice to its development. To expect that people would have been able to come together and create all those integrated spaces in the midst of a conflict over the last 30 years, when the conflict itself was driving those things apart — you could turn it around and say that 7% is quite a remarkable figure in that context. To just assume that it could grow at the same rate, notwithstanding the information from my colleagues here, does not take into account the context in which it was developed.
1918. In relation to your other comments, I do not envy the challenge that you have to deal with. All that I can do from my perspective is read the information,

integrate it, have a look at it and feed some of that back. In that context, it is very hard to see how maintaining a multiple form of choices over a long period of time is a financially sustainable way of going ahead with the education system. I think that the type of comments that have been made by IEF — that one needs a much more detailed sense of the cost-benefit analysis over a long-term period with some sort of a vision — is a much safer way to go than to simply say, “Yes, we understand the context, we understand why there are all those multiple choices; everyone has that option, and we are just going to stick with that.” When I analyse the documents, I cannot see that that is a sustainable form of a future. If you add shared education on top of that, as much as I am in favour of it, you might just be investing in another ongoing and very expensive community relations project, when actually there might be another way of restructuring. That is notwithstanding your point. You are absolutely right: it will take 10, 20 or 30 years — of course it will. However, that is the challenge that we face.

1919. **Mr Craig:** This is my last question, Chair. You seem to be saying that there should be almost some sort of forced movement towards it. That is what I am getting at: that there should be some sort of legislative rationale behind forcing people down that route. You quoted two big examples — South Africa and the United States. I have researched both of those countries with some interest, because I have family there. What I found fascinating about the figures that I have seen is that, when you down the route of forced integration, you may force the integration from a racist point of view, if you know what I mean — you mix the races — but, ironically, from a social point of view, you seem to separate the haves from the have-nots. The haves will choose to send their children to private, almost elitist, education, which is out of the Government system altogether. Would that not be the inevitable consequence of doing the same thing here?

1920. **Professor Smith:** That question was also asked in the context of the inquiry into academic selection. The conclusion was that we do not have an economy that could sustain a private schooling system here. We are a very small system — 1,000 schools or something like that. Parents who wish to have private education are very well served by grammar schools in this system, so there is no real incentive for them to send their children to private schools. I do not think that would be viable.
1921. **Professor Hamber:** I did not use the word “forced”, but what I would say is that your first step is to decide on your vision and, when you read the policy documents, the vision is quite confusing. I quoted a number of those policy documents, because, in a number of them, it is stated that the lack of integration in schools is a problem and that we need to fix it. There are numerous documents coming out of government in different places that make that sort of statement, but there is no real policy to match that to trying to find a way of answering that question.
1922. So, before we say that we are going down the route of forcing people in a certain direction, I would ask the Committee what its vision is of the education system that it would like to see. That might be something like, as we saw in the T:BUC strategy, “by 2025 we want peace walls down.” It might be by 2040 or 2050. How are we going to get there, and how will we get there so that we do not repeat the mistakes that others have made, and take that information and do it better? That is more of a legacy that is linked to the hard work that people have done on the peace process than not posing that vision.
1923. For me, the vision and what you want to get to is step one. There might be cajoling, forcing and different types of incentives in that process, but that will be a long-term and complicated process. You cannot say that we will force something down x, y and z tomorrow.
1924. **Mr Lunn:** I would normally say, “Thank you for your presentation,” but that would really not do justice today. That was the biggest dose of realism and common sense that I have listened to in seven years of sitting here. If I start with you, Professor Smith, you have laid bare the deficiencies and the contradictions in the Government’s proposals and so have you, Brandon. I do not need to comment on the work of the IEF, because you know that I support it absolutely.
1925. I only have one question, Chair. It is pretty simple, and I will address it to you, Brandon. You talked about the international context and perhaps the international perplexity at the way in which we have continued to do things here. What is the international view of something like the Moy solution? Are you familiar with that?
1926. **Professor Hamber:** Broadly; I cannot say intimately.
1927. I cannot speak for the entire international community, but, broadly speaking, people think that the idea of trying to move schools under the same type of roof and build a system around that type of structure seems quite antithetical to a lot of what is in the international literature. That is not to say that there would not be support for areas of integration, transformation and connection. I do not think that anyone is naive enough to say that one should not have some of that as well. I think that people would be quite perplexed. The most well-known case — Alan can speak about it — is the Bosnian case. That attracted a lot of international attention.
1928. **Mr Lunn:** I am not too sure about learning from Bosnia. Alan, do you have any thoughts about this?
1929. **Professor Smith:** The figures that you quoted on the parental views in Moy tell the story. There is a fairly equal group of parents who would prefer to see one school, and there is another group. Both those groups have contacted me since that ‘Spotlight’ programme. There are already differences of opinions among the parents. It will be an expensive experiment, and we will see how it

- unfolds. I hope that it will be a positive experience.
1930. **Mr Lunn:** I sincerely hope that it is a one-off. It is one of the three programmes that the Government has selected and is going to support, and it just seems unreal to me that they could come up with a solution like that and not go the whole hog. Through a wee bit of cajoling, encouragement or incentivising, they could do the obvious thing, which they will probably come to in 10 or 20 years anyway.
1931. **Professor Smith:** Those solutions tend to avoid the two other big structural issues that I referred to in my opening remarks, which relate to institutional change. What are the arrangements for the shared governance of those schools or the schools on the Omagh site? What are the arrangements for shared staffing and the employment of teachers, so that all the pupils in all those schools on the same site, or under the same roof or whatever, have their learning opportunities enriched by being taught by educators from different backgrounds? If we keep focusing on children and changing their attitudes and their perceived intolerance or whatever else, we are just avoiding those other key issues.
1932. **Mr McCausland:** I have two quick points. Alan, you referred to the issue of areas of particular disadvantage, where there may not be the same extent of sharing. I was not clear on that. In north Belfast, there are very high levels of disadvantage and more interfaces — violent and troubled interfaces — than anywhere else in Northern Ireland. There are schools there — I will not name them, but I can think of two that are a couple of hundred yards apart on either side of a very difficult peace line — which are involved in a number of programmes. So there is as a high level of disadvantage and a high level of division, yet they are doing that. Is there some documentary evidence for the point that you made?
1933. **Professor Smith:** I drew on the statements from the Department's business plan, which made the statement that only 65% schools — I am not sure of the exact number; 762 or something — would access that funding, because the other areas are too culturally isolated. It would be interesting if the Department would tell us how those culturally isolated groups map to social deprivation.
1934. **Mr McCausland:** Is that not more to do with rural areas where huge swathes of the country are either overwhelmingly Catholic or overwhelmingly —
1935. **Professor Smith:** We do not know; the Department has not clarified that. I am saying that the possible consequence of mapping social disadvantage to cultural isolation will be that we only fund those who are not culturally isolated and will, therefore, widen the inequalities gap.
1936. **Mr McCausland:** A bit of clarity is needed around where the lack of sharing occurs at the moment and how that correlates with economic disadvantage.
1937. **Professor Smith:** It would have been good to have thought of that in advance.
1938. **Mr McCausland:** I will pass that on to the Department.
1939. The other point is that there are two sectors with different positions insofar as integrated and Irish medium are concerned. You talked about Catholic schooling and Catholic education; presumably the same thing could apply to Irish-medium schooling and Irish-medium education. In a shared situation, how do you see Irish medium fitting in?
1940. **Professor Smith:** I cannot speak for Irish medium; I can give only an opinion and interpretation of it. In a sense, I see Irish-medium education kind of caught in the same dilemma as integrated education, in that it did not intend to be a sector. The intention of the early integrated schools was to demonstrate that theirs was a viable option and another way that the system could be organised with more inclusive schools. Equally, my impression, based on the contact that I had in the 1980s

- with those advocating Irish-medium education, was that they did not intend to become a sector; it was to have available throughout our system an entitlement to Irish language education. In a sense, integrated and Irish language or Irish-medium education are, in a sense, collateral damage of our highly sectorised system.
1941. **Mr McCausland:** Looking to the future, how would it fit in?
1942. **Professor Smith:** Irish medium? Well, I think that all pupils in Northern Ireland should be entitled to have access to a mother tongue language instruction. That presents a huge challenge. Whether in a state school, a Catholic maintained school or whatever, there should be the opportunity for mother tongue language instruction. That is a kind of universal right. The implementation of it is difficult, and it would be the same, I assume, for Ulster Scots.
1943. **Mr McCausland:** There is no desire there for schools, I can assure you.
1944. **Professor Smith:** Sorry.
1945. **Mr McCausland:** There is no desire there for schools, even though, technically, it would be an entitlement, there is no desire for it yet. I think that their cultural rights can be met within the controlled sector or whatever sector. OK, that is fine.
1946. **Professor Smith:** Basically, I am saying what my position would be on this entitlement or —
1947. **Mr Hazzard:** I am interested in a couple of points to finish, perhaps. What do you think the Department should do straight away? What is the most important thing that we could get on with to fulfil the ambitions that you talked about? Equally, in your opinion, what is the most important thing that the Committee inquiry needs to be addressing or saying? Lastly, do you feel that there is a duty on the Department to provide secular education to those who want it? I often feel that that is the white elephant in this whole debate, in that, to me, integrated is still ecumenical, still faith-based to a certain extent, because we are still talking about religion and not about the entirely secular separation of church and state. Do you feel that there is an onus on the Department to provide that?
1948. **Mrs Merron:** The integrated movement would certainly like to see an analysis of the benefits and costs of shared and integrated education, going forward. I would also like to see the vision that is missing, which Brandon talked about. As well as that, one of the key things for us is to have community engagement to really find out what communities want, and not assume that what is there is what they want. Do you want to add anything to that, Sam?
1949. **Mr Fitzsimmons:** I just reiterate the need for community engagement and community audits. I would like to see some accessible evidence base that would help policymakers in their decision-making around strategy and the fiscal element, in particular. I suppose that the independent review of shared and integrated education and its impact would feed into that.
1950. **Mrs Merron:** In terms of secular education, the integrated movement has always struggled with that scenario. The aim was to have multiple faiths in one school, with the option for parents to opt out. However, we thought it easier to put everything in and let parents decide later whether they want to withdraw their child from religious education. It has always been a case of putting everything in and get everybody to agree that, and then, if people want to withdraw, they can.
1951. **Professor Hamber:** It is a difficult question. From my side, I would probably cite some of the things that IEF just outlined in terms of the cost-benefit type of analysis. I would like to see us moving away from trying to assess what strategies are being proposed in quite a narrow way, for example, by saying that, if we start getting greater sharing, this might improve relationships. We should maybe step back from that and ask in what context we are trying to improve relationships and how is what we are doing impacting on this wider



- context. I alluded to it at the beginning of my submission. In the international context, others around the world are focusing very much on trying to educate their children with as much diversity and cross-cultural input as possible to make them as competitive in the world as possible. Here, every time we raise issues such as integration and other things, there seems to be a rolling back from that. There is a massive opportunity right now to do this differently, and I would like to see some vision in people grasping that and taking it forward. The simple thing would be — I know it is almost impossible — for there to be some way of getting round the table saying, “This is where we want the system to be”, and asking, “How do we get there?” There might be multiple avenues to get there and it is going to be complicated, but, for me, that would be the single thing.
1952. You asked a question about secularism. I am an educator; I work in a university and would say that, for me, the primary role of education is to teach people to think critically. What I would like to see — some integrated schools achieve it but not all, and other schools achieve it — is an environment in which people can learn about whatever religion they want and can express whatever sense of secularism they want or they can express their atheism in whatever way they want, and we teach young people to have a critical engagement with that and move away from the idea that this is embedded in this type of sectoral learning. Granted, I accept the comments about whether that means the end of the Catholic-based education system; I do not know what that looks like in the long term. My advice, simply from looking at international lessons, would be that, if we can bring that all into one place and let people engage with their religions and their secularism in different ways, we have much better hope for the future.
1953. **Professor Smith:** On secular provision, personally, I would encourage my children and engage with them on whether they wanted to participate in religious education or, indeed, religious instruction in some of our schools. However, my position is that any school that is in receipt of state funding from the taxpayer should have a responsibility to provide education for all faiths and none. I do not think that the opt-out is sufficient. If my child was opted out of any faith provision, I would expect his or her time to be used constructively and that he or she would not simply be left to twiddle their thumbs or be supervised in some room. Quite a lot of research has been done in the Republic of Ireland on that, where many parents who did not want their children to be involved in religious education provision were complaining that their children were being neglected and not adequately provided with educational alternatives. The responsibility should be on all schools.
1954. What should the Department do? Well, it seems that the way the legislation is stacking up, this power to facilitate, encourage and promote will be devolved through the Education Authority, however it ends up being defined. It might be defined as Irish-medium education; I am sure that would do in this retrospective definition. So, in a sense, that is a role for the Education Authority with a statutory authority. I would say to the Department that, after 25 years, maybe it is time that as well as the statutory responsibility on the Department to encourage and facilitate integrated education — I am not talking simply about a sector but about finding out how our system could be more integrated — it should have a statutory responsibility to promote it.
1955. The state should start to take responsibility for this, rather than, for 25 years, discharging its responsibility by giving about half a million pounds a year to a voluntary, semi-governmental body to try to change a whole system. That is not good enough. We should have the sort of governance now that can take on these challenges and give leadership on them. Give the Department a statutory responsibility, which is extended to promote as well as encourage and facilitate.

1956. **Mr Lunn:** I have only a one-line comment to make. The Assembly voted in favour of doing exactly that about three years ago, but the Department did not take a blind bit of notice. It was a private Member's motion; it happened to be mine.
1957. **Mrs Overend:** Thanks very much for your presentation. It cannot all be done at once, and you recognise that. In going forward from where we are now, would you suggest that there should be more integration at primary level or at post-primary level? If we cannot do it all at once, where would it be more beneficial to begin?
1958. **Mrs Merron:** I think that wherever the parental demand is now is forcing integrated education. A majority of the integrated primary schools have put in proposals to increase their numbers because the demand is there. That then feeds into the post-primary schools. You may not be aware that a lot of post-primary schools will also this year be submitting development proposals to increase their numbers. A lot more development proposals will be coming through where the parental demand already exists.
1959. Sam alluded earlier to the fact that it is not the Department of Education that plans for integrated education; it is parents who are expected to plan for a new integrated school. To ask parents to do that is to ask them to take on a massive task. The Department, along with the Education Authority, should take that responsibility on, plan for it and look to see where there are potential changes in an area. It should ask parents what they want and, if it is integrated education, it should provide an integrated school.
1960. **Mrs Overend:** You mentioned asking parents previously. Sometimes, when surveys are done, you find that parents are in favour of integrated education, but when it comes to choosing it, they are not doing so. How can finding out about parental choice be done more effectively?
1961. **Mrs Merron:** So far, we have been involved in a lot of polling. We have asked an independent polling company to do that, but it has to be more than that. It has to be about community engagement. You need to go into the area and get to the right stakeholders. You need to find out who they are, bring them together and let them be aware of the different types of system. You need to let them know what will happen, what the changes are, where their local schools are, where the surplus places are and what the vision is for the area. You then need to establish focus groups, which takes time. It is not about having a quick poll and that would be the end of it. It can take two to three months to get all that information and feed it back to the parents. Then you can have a final poll or ballot at the end to see what parents want. There has not been anything like this; I am not aware of it except for the deliberative poll that you mentioned in the Omagh area. There has just been a one-off poll; this has not been done before. The Department has said that it is looking for an independent mechanism. It is about helping the Department to find that mechanism and doing this in areas.
1962. **Professor Hamber:** From a research perspective, we have quantitative data from many years of surveys but we need qualitative data. We need to ask people what they really think and engage with them at a much more detailed community level to understand whether people know what the choices are and how they are making them. What we might find could be quite interesting compared with what we think about how people go about making that decision.
1963. **Professor Smith:** I will make a quick practical response. Where do we start? Well, it is already in the plan for the Department: appoint 20 people who will go out and be the development workers to try to work with people and find out what the appetite is for integration and how that would take place. These are investments that are now going into our education system that have never been invested in facilitating

the exploration of people's appetite for integration. There are 15 development officers – £36,000 a year. Do the same and promote integrated education in the same way in the spirit of equality.

1964. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Thank you all for your submissions and for taking the time to come to the Committee today. I apologise again for the delay, but I appreciate your time. Thank you very much.



## 11 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Paul Lawther	<i>Belfast Education and Library Board</i>
Mr Ray Gilbert	<i>North Eastern Education and Library Board</i>
Mr Nicky McBride	<i>South Eastern Education and Library Board</i>
Mr John Unsworth	<i>Southern Education and Library Board</i>
Ms June Neill	<i>Western Education and Library Board</i>

1965. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
 We have a representative from each of the five boards here today: Paul Lawther, assistant senior education officer at Belfast Education and Library Board; Ray Gilbert, senior education officer at the North Eastern Education and Library Board; John Unsworth, assistant senior education officer at the Southern Education and Library Board; June Neill, deputy head of curriculum advisory support services at the Western Education and Library Board; and Nicky McBride, the chief administrative officer at the South Eastern Education and Library Board. Thank you very much for coming; you are all very welcome. I ask you to make an opening statement. I am not sure whether each of you wants to make one in turn; I assume you have agreed the process outside.

1966. **Mr Ray Gilbert (North Eastern Education and Library Board):** Thank you, Chair and members, for the opportunity to meet in relation to the inquiry into shared and integrated education. I am delighted to be here. John Unsworth and I will both say a few words by way of opening statement.

1967. I will start off by setting a little bit of context. We represent the five education and library boards, which since 1973 have had a wide range of educational functions, including education for young people, support for teachers and schools and a range of other services. Over the years many of those services have been provided, as they are still, across the community divide. For example, professional development for teachers is a fully integrated process. There is, therefore, quite a lot of background and experience of working in an intercommunity group through that. We appreciate that we are here today as representatives of the education and library boards, but we are some eight weeks away from moving into the Education Authority, and we understand that context. We also set what we say today in the broader context: education is currently, and has been in the past, important in our society to developing community in a post-conflict society, so that we move into a position where we try to build those cross-community relationships. We hope to build on a lot of practice that has gone on for a long time.

1968. Obviously, the education and library boards have, and, in a number of weeks' time, the Education Authority will have, significant responsibility for educational provision in Northern Ireland across all educational sectors to ensure that there are a suitable number of educational places available, including in the integrated sector.

1969. We set our presentation today in the context of recognising that there is a continuum in the whole area of sharing. At one end, there might have been, in the past, occasional cross-community contact between young people from different religious backgrounds; at the other end of the spectrum, there is fully integrated, immersed education; in between, there are things like controlled integrated provision and, obviously, the shared education concept. The boards have in recent years been involved significantly with external partners such as the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the sharing education programme (SEP) and Atlantic Philanthropies in a range of shared education projects. We hope that we bring a reasonable amount of experience of working with schools on this kind of cross-community work.
1970. We are also significantly involved currently with the OFMDFM shared education signature project. The education and library boards have members on the project board, including some of us here this morning. We have been significantly involved in the development of that project, particularly at the present, and June Neill, to my right, from the Western Board is leading operationally on putting together the first tranche of schools to be involved in the first phase of the project. Getting the signature project up and running is a very important role. Beyond that we in the Education Authority will have a significant role in providing support through the development officers we are in the process of appointing. They will support schools as they bring forward their shared education projects and, more importantly, in the whole area of capacity-building, because we want this to be mainstreamed into the normal life of our schools.
1971. By way of summary of where the five education and library boards are on shared education, I can say without equivocation that there is a very supportive attitude to shared education right across the five education and library boards. We as officers reflect the views of our members and of the commissioners of the South Eastern Board. That has been reflected in the very significant involvement of boards in shared education projects over time and particularly in recent times.
1972. The benefits of shared education are not only what we have observed through our work with schools. There has been significant research done by the University of Ulster, Queen's University and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) on the projects that boards have been involved in through school partnerships. There is a full range of projects, and we see real benefits. There is emerging research that shared education activity can raise standards. I know that you have had presentations from Professor Colin Knox of the University of Ulster, who has done work on this. There certainly is emerging research evidence that would tie in with educational evidence which we have had for quite some time that, where young people, for example, write for an external audience, the standard of writing is often higher than when writing for their own teachers whom they see every day. Certainly, in the curriculum-based projects we have been involved in, we see the impact on the learning of young people working together and working with teachers from other schools.
1973. Obviously, there are significant wider benefits. A significant ambition for shared education is to build cross-community confidence and trust, recognising that we are all human beings and are very similar in many ways, but also learning to respect our differences. These are benefits that broaden out to the community. Significantly, we have seen in some of the shared education projects that boards have been involved in an impact on the community through governors and also parents. I quote an example from the North Eastern Board, which we presented to the Committee before in the progress in English (PiE) project, which specifically targeted rural areas, where there was quite often a significant community divide. When the schools, the governors and the parents came

- together, it had a significant impact at a very simple level. People were meeting colleagues from other schools on the streets and were able to engage in conversation because they knew them, where, perhaps, previously they would have seen one another as part of a separate community.
1974. We recognise that there are opportunities for potential economic benefits in these very stringent times. We are involved in the shared campus programme. The Western Board is involved in the Lisanelly project. My colleague from the Southern Board is involved in the project in the Moy. I am involved directly in the Cross and Passion/Ballycastle High School project. These are the three projects that were approved in the first round of shared campus provision. Certainly, the early work recognises that that kind of provision affords significant opportunities for efficiencies: you can perhaps have a single block for STEM or a single set of playing fields, as opposed to replicating these for each school.
1975. We also recognise, and, again, the evidence of recent shared education projects shows, that when teachers work together, it creates a professional development network. Teachers from different management types learn together and work together. We have had projects that shared teachers from schools of different management types, which, as with all continuous professional development (CPD), are on a totally cross-community basis. School partnerships have had significant benefits, particularly for smaller schools, whose teachers are often quite isolated, in the form of working with colleagues from other schools and sharing ideas and best practice.
1976. Obviously, the clear and significant benefit is to our children and young people as they develop their attitudes and experiences. They recognise their own and one another's culture and learn to respect and trust one other. That, we feel, is very significant. I will hand over to John at this point.
1977. **Mr John Unsworth (Southern Education and Library Board):** I will follow on from what Ray has said. I know that the Committee is particularly interested in the key enablers that support and facilitate the development of shared education. We are focusing in on shared education, but much of what we say will apply to integrated education as well. As Ray said, we are speaking from our experience as boards in supporting and facilitating a lot of the research and development work in the projects, which has led us to the point that we are now in this whole process of developing and implementing shared education. I am sure these have been brought to your attention by other contributors, and in many senses they are obvious, but there are things that we can say directly from our own experience enable and facilitate the effective and successful development of shared education.
1978. The first enabler is clearly visionary and determined leadership. In all the projects that we have been involved in and all the communities that we are working with now in our boards to develop shared education in response to local requests and local desire, it is clear that where it works it is because of visionary and determined leadership. That is leadership from the appointed staff at the school — the principal and other teachers — as well as, very importantly, from the governors. Our experience has been that it takes that vision, even if there is only one in a school to say that this is something would be worth doing for the sake of our school and our wider community. That leadership and vision need to be built, encouraged and sustained, but, from our experience, if they are not there, they cannot be imposed. Nor would we, through any of our work, seek to impose them on schools or communities. That leadership and vision among staff and governors have to be present, nurtured, supported and developed, if shared education is to be truly effective.
1979. Another key enabler is effective communication and engagement with the local community: with parents, the

wider community and other schools, obviously. In most situations we are talking about a direct partnership between two, three or, in some cases, four schools. There is a need to build those relationships, that understanding, that trust in the wider community, and, in our experience, to proceed carefully and with attentiveness to the issues and concerns that communities may have. Effective engagement with governors and parents and the wider community is therefore a key enabler.

1980. Another key enabler is the provision of support, time and resources. There is, we believe, clear evidence of the need for pump-priming at the start when school communities say, "This is something we feel is the right thing to do for our community, by coming together to develop shared approaches." There is the need for an injection of time, energy, resources and very focused professional support at the early stages. What we have been able to do, through a number of the projects, is give that support in a way that the process does not become dependent on it, but in a way in which the balance of input and support externally, if you like, decreases over time. One of the key issues that we find in our work on shared education is the need to develop approaches which are sustainable and which do not depend, in the longer or even the medium term, on additional funding and input of external support. Our observation and experience is that it is certainly needed in the early stages. We have been fortunate to have had access to resources through IFI, Atlantic Philanthropies and other sources, such as OFMDFM and the Department of Education through the signature project, to enable that sort of injection of support and professional expertise. Again, our experience is that, if that is not present, and it is not put in the early stages, the success of any programme or project will be seriously hindered.
1981. Another observation of what we see makes for successful shared education is that it has to become part of the way we do things around here, in the

school community. It is not an add-on, an initiative or the latest bright idea to come out of wherever that we have to do. It is most effective where there is ownership within the school communities and also when it just becomes part of the way we do things — this is the way we provide our history, or this is the way we do Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) between our schools. Those are examples of some of the areas of collaboration, but it could be much broader than that. It has to become part of the way that the schools provide their educational experience for their pupils, rather than an add-on or an additional initiative. Again, we have experience in the work we have been doing of seeing how that can be done so that it becomes embedded in the day-to-day life and operation of the schools.

1982. We see those as some of the key enablers which, from our experience, will help to make shared education effective. The boards have been privileged to have had access to resources to take forward some of that work. As Ray has mentioned, we have now been charged with taking forward a signature project on behalf of OFMDFM, DE and Atlantic Philanthropies, and that is a very exciting opportunity for us. We look forward to bringing the lessons that we have learnt across the boards in this work into that project, which, we hope and believe, will help to pave the way forward for the further development of shared education across our system.
1983. Clearly, there are a number of issues still around. Obviously, you will be aware of the consultation on the policy and the definitions of shared education. From our experience, those are very important issues, which certainly need to be discussed and explored across our society to arrive at a shared understanding because there are a variety of understandings in the system at present. That is our experience. We think that that process, that consultation, will ultimately be a very helpful one in terms of our system arriving at an understanding



- and definition, or definitions, of shared education.
1984. There are a range of other issues which, no doubt, you have been exploring or will explore. For now, that is sufficient for us to bring to your attention.
1985. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much, and thank you for your presentation. Thank you for your written briefings as well. Ray, you mentioned this morning and in your written briefing, the educational, societal and economic benefits of shared education. How would you prioritise those?
1986. **Mr Gilbert:** I think, obviously, the societal benefits are extremely important because we are moving through the process in a post-conflict society. We all want to see the development of our society in Northern Ireland. Our experience, and the evidence from the research that has been done around some of the projects that we have all been involved in, is around making that core change to people's attitudes and how they approach colleagues and that sense of trust, understanding and recognition. I suppose that, at a very simple and basic level, it is an understanding that, as I said earlier, we are all simply human beings. We are very similar, and yet we have differences but respecting individual cultures in that and learning to live together, even though we come from very different cultural backgrounds. So I think that, in terms of a broader impact, those societal issues are extremely important.
1987. The economic issues are very pressing and, certainly, I think that we should be exploring where there is potential emerging from shared education. Again, I will use an example which I am very familiar with, of the work in Ballycastle. I know that you have had a presentation from colleagues in Cross and Passion and Ballycastle High School. Certainly, we are working through a process at the moment to look at how those schools can benefit from capital investment made more efficiently, rather than providing the particular requirements for them as two individual schools.
1988. This is an important point as well. I talked earlier about the continuum. Communities in Northern Ireland are all in very different places because they all have had very different experiences. Some are ready for the full process of integration, some for sharing and some are not yet ready. We have to set everything in that context. However, in the example that I refer to where, hopefully, there will be a significant economic benefit, there is a situation where there are two schools: one of 600-plus pupils and one of 430, in a relatively rural area. If you look at the basic sustainability figures, you might raise a question around the 430-pupil school. However — I know that Barbara Ward and Ian will have shared this with you — the fact is that, in Ballycastle, the planning is done for 1,000 children, to get the best educational pathways and opportunities for those children. There is over 25 years of shared-class experience there. The economic benefits that will come out of investment that takes account of that, as opposed to providing perhaps duplicated facilities when there is a significant pressure on capital, means that, hopefully, others can benefit from making the capital more readily available to a broader range of schools.
1989. So, in summary, I think that the societal benefits are likely to be more far reaching, but we cannot lose sight of the potential for learning together as well when we do shared facilities.
1990. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Are we not in the business of educating young people? Educational outcomes are clearly very important in all this.
1991. **Mr Gilbert:** Absolutely, and we recognise the emerging evidence that, where young people learn together, it can have a major impact on their performance in their educational output, not just in GCSEs or A levels but that broader issue around the wider educational benefits. I am not sure whether my colleagues want to add anything to that.

1992. **Mr Unsworth:** Let me just pick up on the educational benefits. We know that, through shared education and collaboration between schools, the range of courses and so on available to pupils is wider than it would otherwise be if there were not that collaboration and partnership. Certainly, through some of the projects — June may be able to speak more about this as well — we have evidence that, where pupils from different schools are coming together to learn together in a subject, for example, A-level history and politics done in a shared class is going to be very different. The way those children learn and the depth of learning that they will have, in a sense, because they are learning in a shared classroom rather than in separate ones, is different. Does it lead to a better grade in their A level? We believe that it does, and that it leads to deeper and richer learning because it is being done in a shared manner.
1993. **Ms June Neill (Western Education and Library Board):** I think that it is important not have a narrow view of what the outcomes of shared education are. Some of those broader outcomes are in terms of what our aspirations are for the kind of young people we want in this society and what skills we want them to have. It is important for them to be able to dialogue effectively with a range of communities, both in the community, the workplace and so on. I think that shared education fits very well into the current Northern Ireland curriculum in terms of those wider skills that we are looking to impart to young people. Shared education is an ideal vehicle for the delivery of some of those wider skills. Therefore, I think that we need to be careful not to interpret outcomes just in terms of literacy and numeracy. Of course, those are terribly important, and we take that for granted, but there is an additionality that will come from the kinds of experiences that young people will have through interacting with another school and young people of a different community. That is terribly important.
1994. We have a lovely example of that, which John raised, of two schools in Londonderry/Derry, where pupils from what is predominantly a grammar school serving the Protestant population go to the Catholic boys' grammar school to study government and politics at A level. The level of discussions that must go on in that classroom, to me, must enrich their experience of that A level, not only in what grade they might get but in the kind of young people who will come out of that experience, having had an opportunity to engage with diverse and differing views. We need to think about all the potential in shared education for those wider outcomes that we can get from it.
1995. **Mr Gilbert:** I just want to make a short comment. Picking up on the example that June has given, I was very struck in recent months by the fact that two young people from schools in Derry/Londonderry swapped uniforms and went down the town to see how they were perceived wearing the uniform of the other person. We could talk at length about that, but for those young people to have reached the level of maturity to say, "We need to see things from another perspective" was a lovely example of mature thinking and development.
1996. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I was interested in the Western Board's paper. You highlighted the concern that by promoting shared and integrated education, you believe that the controlled sector would be disadvantaged.
1997. **Ms Neill:** It is a particular issue, and I cannot comment on other education and library boards, but we have a significant number — we quoted figures and gave you that information in the paper that we submitted — of schools that are designated in the controlled sector where the population is ostensibly mixed. In fact, in Derry, we have two controlled schools that are predominantly serving the Catholic population, so, sometimes, we need to be aware of the issues. We can generalise about controlled schools

working with maintained schools or whatever that this is what it is about. I am not saying that they are not designated as integrated schools. We have only one primary school in the city that is designated as a controlled integrated school, but there is a level of integration in those schools. What can we do to try to nurture those schools to be able to lift the experiences of those schools in working with others? In my experience of the conversations that we have had with the principals in some of those schools, they do not necessarily feel that shared education is something that they are going to engage in, because the definition of shared education is that there are two schools from differing communities but there is a level of sharing. I think that that challenges our definition of shared education. We have to be careful that we do not get something that is terribly prescriptive and that schools that are slightly different fall outside those circumstances. You could argue the same for integrated schools. We would be keen, particularly in the signature project, to ensure that the programme is open to all schools, whether integrated, maintained, controlled or whatever, and that the mix exists in those schools. We need to be careful not to see it in that very narrow way, of maintained and controlled, and to look more about the population in those schools so that appropriate partnerships are developed.

1998. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Something that is not necessarily missed by this Committee but may be missed externally, and, I would like to think, is not missed by you, given the fact that you are the advocates for the controlled sector, is that it is non-denominational and there is natural sharing in that sector anyway. That came out very strongly in the Western Board paper.
1999. **Mr Gilbert:** Also, in a recent discussion at the North Eastern Board, there was a significant discussion around that issue and a recognition that controlled schools are non-denominational schools and recognising that, depending on the

community that they serve, there is quite a significant mix of our traditional population in what would be termed by some people as a school representing only one side of the community. I know that is something that my members feel very strongly about.

2000. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There is just one more question from me at this stage. Again, in the Western Board paper — I am not going to show bias towards that paper in any way — you mentioned that the legal definition of integrated education is becoming difficult to define in its own right. Could you perhaps expand on that?
2001. **Ms Neill:** The notion of integrated as a designated sector and then the whole notion of integration as something that has happened naturally in schools begins to dilute — “dilute” is probably not the right word — to challenge that notion of designated integrated schools. That is fine, but there is already a level of sharing and integration in certain schools. It happens mainly in the controlled sector, although there are some examples of it in the maintained sector. We need to think about how we work with all the differences that exist. In the years since the integrated sector was established, I am not sure of the extent to which integration in the other sectors has increased. To follow on from Ray’s idea for a continuum, for some schools that come together to share, further steps may be shared campuses while maintaining two schools and two identities. For some, further steps may mean going the whole way to integration.
2002. Depending on community support, parental support and all the other things, we have a sort of continuum. We need to look at that continuum more carefully and see how it develops.
2003. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** A number of you were present at our area-planning event last Wednesday evening, so you will be aware of some of the comments made, including one that not all sectors are being treated fairly and that there are sacred cows. Is there a hierarchy of sectors?

2004. **Mr Nicky McBride (South Eastern Education and Library Board):** That is not something that we recognise. It is certainly not how the education and library boards treat the sectors.
2005. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You believe that all are being treated equally.
2006. **Mr McBride:** That is how we would like to provide our services.
2007. **Mr Paul Lawther (Belfast Education and Library Board):** We certainly provide our services to all sectors on an equal basis. We would not single out one for special treatment above another. Our role is to provide services to teachers, which we do on an equal basis. They are all schools, they are all teachers and they are all pupils. That is what we do.
2008. **Mr Gilbert:** There is a contextual piece here. As the person who leads area planning in my board, I can say that we continually struggle with the board's overarching responsibility to ensure there is effective provision, and of the right type. However, we are not the managing authority for all that provision.
2009. I concur with my colleagues' comments that, despite what has sometimes been portrayed in the media, there has been very close working-together between different sectors as area plans have been developed. We recognise that that can always improve, and we seek to do that.
2010. **I also concur with what Nicky said:** boards work with all schools. Even though we are the managing authority for the controlled sector, we have other responsibilities across the full range of schools. I used the example earlier of us having a statutory duty to secure support for teachers across all sectors. One of the interesting things over the years has been that teachers working together on professional development, and so on, are completely integrated. It is cross-community and everything else. Networks grow from that because, for example, maths teachers work together and history teachers work together.
2011. **Mr Kinahan:** I have hundreds of questions, but the Chair raised three questions that I want to focus on. The definition in the draft Shared Education Bill indicates that everyone is going to have to be in one form of education or the other. Should we be changing that to give us some form of flexibility so that either the Department or the Education Authority can choose where there is to be a different flavour of sharing that must happen? That way, we will not just be tied to the maintained and controlled labels. If so, who should have that power?
2012. **Ms Neill:** The point that you make is a very important one. There needs to be a bit of flexibility. That follows on from the point that I made about being very rigid about sectors. A more useful way might be to look at it in the context of the particular community and ask whether, as you say, there is a level of sharing and what the mix of population is in a school. We may be excluding schools and certain contexts by being very rigid about what does and does not apply. We need to be aware of the diversity that exists through the sectors that our education system has, and even the diversity that exists within each of those sectors. We need to be very careful that any legislation does not exclude particular contexts and communities, and is therefore fair and equitable to everybody. The willingness of people to come together and share is the key thing.
2013. **Mr Lawther:** We have many examples of where principals, senior management teams (SMTs) and other groups in schools share, but we do not define it as "shared education". They come together and work together. They share what they do. That is disseminated in schools. The benefit that we are looking for by doing that is the raising of academic achievement in all schools, which, in turn, will produce economic benefits for Northern Ireland. We do not define that as "shared education", but a lot of it has gone on, and has done for a very long time. Perhaps that is something that we should do. It is probably very

- effective. As I said, it has been in existence. Those networks of principals, other groupings and coordinators in schools and in areas of Belfast have worked together. We are probably not really defining it for them as “shared education”, but that is what they do. It probably has a very big impact.
2014. **Mr Kinahan:** It seems to be coming down to to whom we give the role. Do we need a different body to drive sharing, or do you just do it through the new Education Authority?
2015. **Mr Unsworth:** One of our concerns is the further division of our system. You have the shared sector. You have the controlled sector. In our experience, that would not be a positive step forward. As I said, some of the projects that we have been doing with the existing sectors and groups have involved integrated, grant-maintained integrated, controlled, maintained — the whole wide range. Our hope is that it will become part of the way in which things are done rather than a completely separate approach to education that needs some sort of separate body.
2016. Language and definitions are clearly very important. The current consultation provides an opportunity for the whole education community and beyond to engage and to contribute thinking. That is a process that is going on in our boards. Obviously, we are not in a position to give you our boards’ position on the definitions, other than to say that it is an ongoing process of consultation and discussion. Ultimately, we feel that the definitions will be helpful.
2017. **Mr Kinahan:** To follow on from the Chair, we have different sectoral bodies, if we call them that, with different strengths and powers in legislation. Is the way forward to try to have bodies that represent everyone, with the same powers and control, or is it to have none at all and to leave it all to the Education Authority?
2018. **Mr Gilbert:** We have to accept that, in Northern Ireland, there are many education bodies. It is often interesting trying to explain it to someone from outside. The key thing is the very close working relationship between those bodies. As John indicated, in the shared education projects that we have been involved with, it has been a joint effort. Although we work for different organisations, we have a significant and long track record of working together. In many ways, that is an example of sharing. We are respectful of the management position of each of the different authorities, yet we find common ground to work together to the benefit of children and young people. That is not always apparent. There is perhaps a perception that different management types and sectors are paddling their own canoe, but that is not our experience.
2019. **Mr Kinahan:** Therefore, it works all right.
2020. **Mr Gilbert:** Yes.
2021. **Mr Kinahan:** I cannot remember who talked about having an audit, or a baseline, on sharing. From looking at the amount of sharing that is going on in all our schools, my gut feeling is that we are at about 25%. Are any of you brave enough to say how much sharing you think goes on?
2022. **Ms Neill:** I do not know, but I think that that percentage might be low. The issue is what you mean by sharing.
2023. **Mr Lawther:** It is about how you define it.
2024. **Ms Neill:** That is the problem. When we are talking about shared education in the context of the shared education policy, the Bill, or whatever, we are talking about sharing that has a particular purpose to build reconciliation, and so on. A lot of sharing is going on in the system. Although you can say, for example, that all the collaboration that is going on between schools on the entitlement framework is a type of sharing, the question is whether that is an example of sharing with that particular purpose in mind and whether it leads to that particular purpose’s outcome. In our system, we could encourage lots of sharing and collaboration. We have worked

for years with teachers, and lots of various collaborative efforts have gone on. However, this is what we need to distinguish: is shared education about any type of collaboration, or is it about a very specific type of collaboration that has a very clear outcome in mind? That is the challenge.

2025. **Mr Unsworth:** As part of the shared education signature project that we have been referring to, the Education and Training Inspectorate has developed, in a very collaborative way with us and schools, a framework for shared education that contains a continuum and progression. It is still at the formative stage, but it provides some sort of a way for a school, a school in partnership, an employing body or any member of the public to see where the school or partnership sits in that continuum. We found that to be very helpful. As I said, it is a work in progress. I am sure that the ETI may have already shared, or may wish to share, it with you. It helps put some flesh on the bones when it comes to understanding what we mean. It also helps in our work with schools for schools and partnerships to see how we might deepen and widen the extent of sharing that we are engaged in so that it is not just a narrow thing.
2026. **Mr Gilbert:** As part of the process of application for the shared education signature project, we have asked schools to evaluate their current sharing against that framework, and, in presenting their proposals, to identify clearly how they will move through the continuum to broaden and deepen the sharing. As I said earlier, when you look at it in a broad sense, it could be everything from once-in-a-while contact through to complete and total immersion. The tool is very useful. It fits in very well with what we are encouraging schools to do, which they are doing it very well at the moment, and that is the whole process of self-evaluation and self-improvement. All of that is part of what a number of us referred to, which is the building capacity strategy. External support

and funding is great while it is there, but how many projects have we seen that were great until the money or support dried up? Sometimes, the two are aligned, because the money pays for the support. This is about building capacity. The tool is extremely important in helping schools to get a real sense of what it means to broaden and deepen the sharing between them.

2027. **Mr Craig:** I have listened with interest to what you are saying about the definition of “shared education” and how it needs to be quite broad. You will hear absolutely no disagreement from me on that. Shared education goes way beyond what some people think about education in the traditional integrated sector. It has huge potential for you, as administrators, and not only in sharing educational experience between communities but in improving how our resources are being used, because there are resource implications.
2028. We need to think outside the box when it comes to shared education. Prior to Christmas, a transport situation arose in my local community in Derriaghy, to which the Ulsterbus manager in the area came up with a solution. There was a bus route that was transporting children to one of the local maintained schools. He was on the verge of having to shut down the service because the numbers were so poor. By varying the route, he was able to transport not only the children to the maintained school but other children who had lost their transport to the local controlled school. I suppose that this goes to show how sad I am: on Christmas Eve, I was sitting in a public meeting with parents in Derriaghy explaining the proposed solution to them. The thing that fascinated me was that they bought into it immediately. They had no difficulty with the concept of the children sharing the bus route. It struck me how naturally a shared resource led to a shared experience and, in some respects, shared education out of nowhere. It was a lack of resources, however, that drove the solution and the shared experience. Such has been my experience of sharing

developing naturally. Do you see shared education going down a more natural route? As school finances get tighter, we will naturally have to share resources, not only within but across sectors. To me, what happened in Derriaghy was a prime example. If it happens more naturally, there are fewer difficulties with implementation, because the school communities buy into the solution.

2029. **Mr Gilbert:** I will comment briefly, although not on the specifics. Nicky may wish to pick up on those. The strategic point that emerges out of that — we have found this in our experience, and it is confirmed by the research — is that there has to be a purpose. You have described a very pragmatic purpose. We have had huge success with the work that we have done, much of which has been embedded in the normal learning of the curriculum. I suppose that things have developed, but that is very different from where we were perhaps 10 years ago, when the ambition was simply to get pupils together to meet someone from the other community. That was at the shallow end of the continuum. Strategically, one of the big enablers, which John referred to earlier, is having a meaningful purpose. I am sure that colleagues can cite experiences from their own shared education projects. The North Eastern Board's two recent major projects — the PiE project in rural primary schools, and the partnership, inclusion, reconciliation, citizenship and history (PIRCH) project, which is for post-primary — are both firmly embedded in the curriculum. I recall attending an event at a school in the Magherafelt area that Sandra will be aware of. Schools had gone on a joint visit to the Normandy battlefields as a contextual part of working together in history rather than as a trip away on the same bus. The outworkings of that were fantastic. The strategic issue at the top end is to have a meaningful purpose, whatever it may be, to bring people forward. I take the point that you make about thinking outside the box. Other colleagues may wish to comment.
2030. **Ms Neill:** I agree with the point about it happening naturally. The key thing to keep in mind is that we have to start from where people are at. I have been involved in community relations all my professional life, and I can think of an example from many years ago, in which a difficulty with transport forced schools to begin to interact in a more collaborative way. The children were fighting on a shared bus on the way to school, which indicated to the principals that they needed to do something a bit more proactive. As a result of that very negative experience, the schools engaged in a positive experience of bringing those primary-school children together for meaningful work, and they could demonstrate evidence of better interaction. There is something to be said for people working outside of their own experience. We need to be very clear in the system about what we want the purpose to be, and so on, but the starting point for different people has to arise out of their own context and issues. I caution that you cannot drive people to share if they are not ready. That is what capacity-building is for. We need to build the capacity of the system to share. In the past, mistakes may have been made, where people came together when there was still a level of hostility and a lack of trust, things that do not necessarily lead to a good experience. We need to be mindful of the range of contexts in different communities. It is a continuum, from those who are very willing and have been working at sharing for many years to those communities in which there is still a lack of trust and suspicion about what sharing could lead to.
2031. **Mr Craig:** Another prime example of where sharing tends to occur naturally is in area-learning communities, especially through A-level provision. I am chair of the board of governors at my own school, which now shares with the local maintained secondary school. To be honest, we all had fears and concerns initially for the safety of the pupils, and so on, but the experience was completely different from the fears. Sometimes, practicalities override the

- fear factor, and, ultimately, the solutions come. It is up to all of us to encourage that. Have you any other experiences of that occurring?
2032. **Mr Gilbert:** I will make one observation. When I talk to young people, I am struck, as I am sure you are in your day-to-day work, by the fact that they did not grow up in the conflict. I remember watching an interview one evening with a group of young people from a secondary school in Belfast who were asked to comment on their community and politics. Their attitude was almost this: “Why are you asking us this?” We have to remember that the climate among the young people is not the climate that we grew up in. It is very different, and that is great, as it creates potential.
2033. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you for your presentations. This one is for you, June, I think. The Western Board has made the point that there is increasing natural mixing in its area and that, in a way, the sectoral definitions are no longer accurate. I am glad to hear that, but do you have statistics for that, or is it just an impression? Is it led by the increasing number who define themselves as “other” rather than as “Protestant” or “Catholic”?
2034. **Ms Neill:** Our paper identified schools and what the numbers were in each of them. However, if you want more detail, we are very happy to provide it. It is in the statistics. From memory, I think that the number of controlled schools in which there is significant mix in the population is about 12.
2035. **Mr Lunn:** What do you mean by “significant”? I know that I should have read the paper —
2036. **Ms Neill:** In some cases, we are talking about a quarter and more, while some of them are half-and-half. I mentioned previously two controlled schools in Derry on the city side. A population change has occurred in the city over time.
2037. We have a number of them, they are scattered all over the board area. You will be aware, for example, of Sion Mills Primary School, which is integrated in nature, although not by designation. It is the only school in the village. You have to know the history of that. Herdman’s Mill set up one school in the village for the working population. That school is in the controlled sector, but it has a long history of serving both communities. There are a number of examples in Limavady and Strabane. There are perhaps not so many in Fermanagh, where there are a larger number of smaller schools, but in Derry, Limavady and Strabane, there are certainly degrees of mixing in both primary and post-primary schools.
2038. **Mr Lunn:** I ask you because we tend to rely on the figure of 90% of our school population being educated purely with their co-religionists. That percentage is probably out of date now. Do the rest of you disagree with that percentage now? Is it redundant? It sounds as though it is in the Western Board.
2039. **Mr Lawther:** It depends on the phase that the school is in. In Belfast, some of our grammar schools are certainly very mixed. They are not termed “integrated schools”, but they have pupils from both sides of the community, in some cases a significant number, which would not have been the case perhaps 10 or 15 years ago. Things have moved, and maybe 90% is not totally accurate now. It may be at primary, but probably not at post-primary and certainly not in the grammar sector.
2040. **Mr Gilbert:** I will make a comment wearing my other hat as the person responsible for the inclusion and diversity service in Northern Ireland. It is about recognising the significant number of what we call “newcomer” young people. Some of them will fall naturally on either side of the traditional religious divide, but many do not. Significant work is being done on building the understanding of different cultures and so on. That is taking place with significant intensity in John’s board, the Southern Board. The point about the flexibility of sharing has been made a number of times. It is not just about the traditional



- “orange and green” sharing, as we characterise it in Northern Ireland; it is much broader. We have to be mindful of the fact that new communities and significant numbers of young people from newcomer backgrounds are coming into Northern Ireland. Increasingly, other types of cultural diversity are part of our society. As I said, there is very intense community work in the Dungannon/Portadown direction.
2041. **Mr Unsworth:** I could not say definitively that the figure is 90%. My impression from working in Southern Board schools is that it would be lower than that. The intake of a number of schools, such as the one to which June referred, has become much more mixed over time. Those from the newcomer population in our board area do not necessarily gravitate towards a school from their own religious tradition. They go to the nearest school or to one that makes them feel welcome and included. That may be a maintained or a controlled school.
2042. **Mr Lunn:** I get the impression — June may have mentioned this — that the proportions at primary level are still pretty much what they were, but, because of the desire of people in this country to send their children to a grammar school, the grammar schools are mixing. We were at Methody a couple of months ago, which is, I think, 45:25 in favour of Protestants. That leaves 30%, and I do not think that they were all newcomer families. There were clearly people who chose not to designate, which is fine with me.
2043. You all talk up the societal and economic benefits of sharing, which I acknowledge, although their extent has yet to be proven. We will find out in a few years’ time. June, you mentioned reconciliation as a big factor. I liked the anecdote about swapping uniforms. The departmental officials who were here recently saw this project as very much educational, with societal benefits as a possible bonus. You seem to think that the societal element is vital. I agree. Is that your impression?
2044. **Mr Gilbert:** My initial reaction to that is this: as educationalists, we have a very particular view of education, and I do not wish in any way to comment on the views of departmental officials on education. We recognise the pressures of the Programme for Government targets and other economic targets in Northern Ireland. Our perspective is across the full range of domains on which education impacts. We recognise absolutely — it has been said a number of times — that it is critical that young people get the best outcomes in literacy, numeracy and so on, but I was struck by something said a number of years ago by, I think, a director general of the CBI. He said that we employ 80% of people because of their qualifications, only for 40% of that 80% to lose their job because they do not have the skills required to do the job in the modern world. The skills needed to operate in the modern world, where probably the only predictable thing is change, include good interpersonal skills: the ability to work with different people and break down barriers. From an educational perspective, we recognise that education is a broad spectrum. We understand fully, and we work very hard at, the raising standards agenda for literacy, numeracy, GCSEs and A levels. We also believe, however, that education is a process of rounding young people before they go off into society.
2045. **Mr Lunn:** June, you are definitely the revolutionary on the panel. You advocate that, as the balance of a school changes, perhaps you should move away from partisan boards. I do not like that term, but I know what it means. How would you do that?
2046. **Ms Neill:** I did not quite pick up your point. Will you repeat your question?
2047. **Mr Lunn:** I am sorry; I have a cold.
2048. **Ms Neill:** I have, too.
2049. **Mr Lunn:** We share that as well. Your paper makes the point that, as the balance of Protestant, Catholic and others changes in some of your schools, the boards should be less partisan. That

- picks up on the Drumragh judgement. Will you expand on that? You are talking about controlled schools.
2050. **Ms Neill:** I am not sure that I am the best person to comment on the implications of that.
2051. **Mr Gilbert:** Perhaps it goes back to the earlier point. We do not see boards as partisan in any way; we work with all sectors.
2052. **Mr Unsworth:** The responsibility is to provide support to all sectors, and we do that. There is the added dimension of our also being an employing authority for the controlled sector, but, as we said, that sector is not homogenous in any sense.
2053. **Mr Lunn:** This is my last question, Chair: who is responsible for the Moy?  
*[Laughter.]*
2054. **Mr Unsworth:** I will not claim responsibility for it, but I have the privilege of serving schools in that community.
2055. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You are prepared to put your hand up.
2056. **Mr Unsworth:** I have no problem. I know the Moy and the schools there very well.
2057. **Mr Lunn:** We were there recently.
2058. **Mr Unsworth:** So I believe.
2059. **Mr Lunn:** I do not want you to be political; I am sure that you cannot be. Was the proposed outcome of that situation your preferred outcome when the process started?
2060. **Mr Unsworth:** What outcome do you mean?
2061. **Mr Lunn:** I mean that the Moy is moving from two schools with one in each sector to two schools with one in each sector but under the same roof. Some of us find that idea strange. The population there was surveyed by the school, and the figures are imprinted on my memory: 85 contributors said that they wanted the solution now proposed; 70 said that they would go for full integration; and five did not want anything to do with it. It was pretty close. Did you have an advocacy role in that?
2062. **Mr Unsworth:** No, the board does not have an advocacy role in that sense at all. The board has responsibilities for planning, development and provision. The situation in the Moy came about very much because the community and the leadership in the local schools and more widely wanted it to happen. As a board, we supported and encouraged that once the enthusiasm from the two schools and the communities that they serve became clear. The two schools were part of one of the shared education projects that we managed with funding from IFI. The board and I, as an officer, do not have a personal view or preference, other than to say that this is clearly what the communities, the leadership of the two schools, their governors and the community that they serve wanted. How will that develop in practice? You spoke to the folks there, and I hope that you were encouraged, as I was when I spoke to them, by their vision and their integrity in wanting to do something new, meaningful and sustainable for their community. I admire that integrity and commitment hugely, and how it will eventually work out in practice is in their hands. As a board, we are there to support and encourage, and they have continued to work to develop sharing between the two schools.
2063. **Mr Lunn:** When the community expresses a preference like that, does the board make a recommendation to the Minister?
2064. **Mr Unsworth:** No. The development proposal, as you know, goes through the board and up to the Minister. Ultimately, he will make a decision.
2065. **Mr Lunn:** Do you express any opinion or preference?
2066. **Mr Gilbert:** From a procedural perspective — I am not commenting on the Moy, which is, for the next eight weeks, outside my area — we have a development proposal procedure. That proposal has to come from a managing authority; in the case of a

- grant-maintained, integrated or voluntary grammar school, a board of governors; or another maintained school. In the controlled sector, members of the education and library boards have a role to play in agreeing to put forward a proposal. In other sectors, the board, under the 1986 Order, simply notes and publishes “on behalf of”. Other than that technical role, it has no advocacy or other role.
2067. **Ms Neill:** We have to learn lessons from the range of shared campus models. There is the type at Ballycastle; we have one in Limavady; the huge one at Lisanelly; and an interesting one coming forward from Derry. There, they want a shared facility, not on any of the school premises but on the development at the Ebrington site. That is at an early stage.
2068. We need to be mindful of the range of campus proposals. There is a job to be done in monitoring how the various models develop and what impact they have. In many ways, we cannot predict exactly how they will all work out in practice. Like anything, some may work better than others. We should not make judgements in advance of trialling some of the models, but we need to be mindful of what happens as a result of the various types of shared campus.
2069. **Mr Gilbert:** I will use an example from my area of another necessary consideration. Two small schools in the environs of Toome — Moneynick and Duneane — have a significant history and are seeking to apply for a shared campus project. Sometimes, it makes a nice story to characterise children walking in a door and turning in two different directions. When a shared campus is built on a history of working together in shared classes — as it is in the Moy and in my example — schools in that context feel that they want to move forward together but maintain their ethos. There has, I think, been an over-characterisation of children going into separate parts of the one building. It is about sharing and learning together but respecting each other’s ethos. Who knows where that takes you years down
- the road, but it is about starting from where the community is at.
2070. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation. On the point that Trevor raised, I take on board that you do not have a duty to advocate. You do, however, have a duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. To what extent did the board action that duty at the Moy?
2071. **Mr Unsworth:** The issue of whether the board has or does not have that duty has been under discussion and debate.
2072. **Mr Hazzard:** How is that?
2073. **Mr Unsworth:** The Drumragh case.
2074. **Mr Hazzard:** OK.
2075. **Mr Unsworth:** The board, in the context of the Moy, fulfilled its obligations, as I understand it. There was not a demand or request from either school or the local community for integrated provision in the Moy.
2076. **Mr Hazzard:** That is good to have on the record.
2077. In June, we visited County Fermanagh and saw a lot of good work in sharing. We heard that about 38 schools and 14 partnerships were involved. When you talk to the people there, and we have talked to them since, they are frustrated that, apart from the Brookeborough proposal, nothing is being done to the level that they think is needed to take them further along the continuum of sharing. Do you agree with that analysis of the situation? What has been done in the 14 partnerships to advance the sharing proposals?
2078. **My next question is to all of you:** how many officers in each area are working on shared education proposals? John, you said that we can get better grades out of this. Is there not a danger that we over-egg the pudding? Some of our single identity schools produce the best grades. I cannot imagine that we would get better grades just by putting people from different backgrounds into a classroom. Good teachers should be able to pull out different opinions in a

- classroom anyway, so is there a danger that we are over-egging the pudding by saying that shared education will somehow improve the grades in our system?
2079. **Ms Neill:** There are a lot of questions there. I will start with Fermanagh, as it is in my patch. As you know, the Fermanagh programme was run with the Fermanagh Trust, so we were not directly responsible for that, although we are aware of it and had some fairly tentative involvement. In many ways, I am quite surprised by what you said. We are well aware of the Brookeborough proposal. As said earlier, proposals do not come from the boards. Staff in the development section in the Western Board deal with the business of proposals from boards of governors, so I would have to go back to them. At this time, I am not aware of the specific proposals from Fermanagh to bring about shared campuses and so on. I am well aware of the Brookeborough proposal because it is at a further stage of development. We, as a board, would be interested to know what discussions there may have been with individual schools or pairs of schools in various communities, and I can find out. I, personally, am not aware, but others in the Western Board may be aware of what has been happening.
2080. **Mr Hazzard:** I am surprised at that because the Western Board's area plan specifically names the 14 partnerships and says that they will advance shared plans.
2081. **Ms Neill:** Yes, but they are probably at an early stage. I am not the person dealing with it, so I do not want to comment in any detail in case I misrepresent anything.
2082. **Mr Hazzard:** Do two specific sections of the board look at area planning and sharing respectively, or does the same section look at both?
2083. **Ms Neill:** Area planning and shared education are being looked at together in the same way, but, increasingly, the board has been working to bring together those dealing with the campuses and estate issues and those dealing with the other aspects of sharing, such as the signature project. There is a clear link between the shared campuses and the level of sharing and engagement that has already happened in schools. For shared campuses to be successful, it seems that a significant amount of that has been needed, and we are increasingly recognising that people have to come on that journey through the experience of sharing and developing trust and understanding to the point at which they realise that this may be an issue.
2084. Fermanagh is a unique community for schooling in Northern Ireland. As you know, it is a very rural community. It has a significant number of very small schools, some of which will always be there because of the very rural community and the isolation that would be caused if children had to travel long distances, particularly in the primary sector. A significant number of post-primary schools are in Enniskillen, and the children all travel there. The Fermanagh Trust had significant involvement with primary schools in rural areas on the project that you mentioned. Sharing is particularly challenging in the area because, for example, a maintained school could be 10 miles away from the nearest controlled school. I am aware that some of those schools have come together themselves, almost in mini-area learning communities.
2085. **Mr Hazzard:** It does not always have to be capital builds; it can be federations or confederations, and it perhaps provides the best breeding ground for what is possible elsewhere.
2086. **Mr Gilbert:** I will pick up the second question, wearing my area planning hat. We have made the point continuously that area planning is organic, changing and moving. It does not simply happen, and then we all implement the plan. It is very much an ongoing process that has to be reviewed in the context of development. We are seeing things coming through. I cited the example of schools near Toome coming forward, and

- we have other examples. Quite a number of small schools in the North Eastern Board have looked at their provision and said that there may be different ways of working, and they are engaging with us on that. I just wanted to make that point that area planning is an organic process. Hopefully, the impact of previous projects and the current shared education signature project will influence how that moves forward. You asked about the number of officers. Over the years, each of the boards had dedicated officers working on related issues such as community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) projects and so on. Some of those officers are sitting in front of you. One of the benefits coming out of the OFMDFM project is that we are in the process of appointing dedicated development officers. There will be up to 10 in the first instance, and we are going through the recruitment process. They will become very much involved in supporting the first cohort of the signature project and helping schools potentially seeking to apply for the second cohort.
2087. Another angle on this is that we understand that further funding may come through the Peace IV initiative, which is specifically targeted at schools with little or no history of sharing. As I understand it, there is capacity within that four-year funding package to add further development officers as and when required to meet that demand. We stress a point made on a number of occasions: it is not about providing external prop-ups; it is about building capacity and growing from the bottom up. John will pick up on the last point.
2088. **Mr Unsworth:** I will pick up on your point about the risk of over-egging the pudding. Our experience of working in shared education is that important educational benefits can come about when there is sharing. Based on our experience, we firmly believe that a breadth and depth of learning is possible when a wider diversity of backgrounds and views is available. I totally agree that that is not beyond the skill and capability of a very good teacher in a single identity school. Of course, that happens, and you are right that some of the most effective, successful schools are perceived as single identity. We do not want to overplay it, but our experience is that when sharing happens, there is more opportunity than might otherwise be available.
2089. You picked up a very important issue, which is that there is a risk of elitism: schools not involved in shared education might think that somehow they are not as good. In all our board areas, we recognise that it would be very difficult for some schools to engage in shared education because they do not have any schools geographically near to them to share with. We are very attentive to and aware of that. We do not want the kind of elitism to develop whereby, if you are not engaged in shared education, somehow you are a worse type of school — absolutely not. Where the opportunity is there, and where it can work and make sense in a local context, our experience is that it adds to the learning or it has the potential to.
2090. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks.
2091. Ray, I accept your last comment about the organic nature of area planning. Sometimes, the public and various members of the Committee would like a bit more cajoling to be done to help to drag organisations or individuals along. I think that the public would like to see a bit more of that.
2092. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you very much. The discussion has been really interesting this morning. A lot of my questions have been asked. Our stakeholder event last week reaffirmed the belief that a lot of our controlled schools are not single identity by any means, and your paper shows that, June. In my constituency, I am learning more and more that there is a wide variety of people in that sector. Do you believe that the end goal of shared education should be integrated schools, whether that is with a capital “I” or a small “i”? Should that be the end goal of the education system in Northern Ireland?

2093. **Ms Neill:** For some schools, that may be the end point, but, as we have said before, this is on a continuum. Some will naturally come to the point at which they say that integration is what makes sense to them. We need, however, to be respectful and make sure that what comes from sharing is right for people. At this point, in Northern Ireland, we have to accept that we have a range of schools in different sectors and diversity within them, and it is not about driving a particular school. To me, what is most important is that we all want to see that shared education, in whatever school, contributes to promoting a more cohesive society with mutual respect, respect for difference and all the things that we want to move forward with. So, regardless of the kind of school — integrated, mixed, controlled, Irish medium or whatever — we must ensure that the end point is mutual understanding and that young people walk out of school fit for a diverse society. That is probably more important than starting to tinker and asking whether we want more integrated schools. If we have more integrated schools and that is what people want, that is fine, but we should not tie ourselves to it being about changing sectors.
2094. **Mrs Overend:** Looking at the sectors, we now understand that a lot of them are more diverse than we previously thought. It seems that the non-Catholic population is more likely to be in sharing mode. Therefore, the Catholic-maintained sector might need more encouragement to share because it is not happening in its schools. Will those schools need more encouragement?
2095. **Mr Gilbert:** It is a very complex issue. We are very conscious that none of us represents the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools, and we certainly would not want to speak for it.
2096. I have experience of very mixed schools in all sectors. The point that keeps coming through is that there is no single characterisation; it very much depends on the community context. In my board area, and other colleagues will relate to this, I have a very high number of rural primary schools and quite a significant number of rural villages in which there are two types of primary school, both of which, in sustainability terms, may well be struggling. Lots of examples of working together are emerging.
2097. Sandra, you made a point about the end point. That, too, is very community driven. Some communities whose schools are into sharing may, a number of years down the line, have developed and moved on so that people question whether there is really any point in having two schools, each with a distinctive ethos. They may ask whether the ethos of both schools can be accommodated in a single approach, whether that is fully integrated or shared. There is some work being done in the Department on another management type, which is a shared church school approach. We have had some involvement in that project, and Danny will be aware of that.
2098. So, it is about getting it right for the communities. Looking at my board area, the legacy of the conflict is much starker in some communities than in others. Therefore, we keep making the point about growing it from the community, and the really good success that we have seen has been a consequence of that. John made the point earlier that it can never be top-down. We cannot have an ambition for everybody to look a certain way in 10 years' time. What we are really saying is that from a societal and educational benefit perspective, we hope that people will become better at understanding each other and better at working together, regardless of where they come from in the community, and our society will benefit from that. We are already seeing a very different society from the one of 10, 15 and 20 years ago.
2099. **Ms Neill:** An unwillingness to share is not the only reason why people do not share; sometimes it is just the geography and how the population is divided. The classic example for us is Derry, because it is predominantly nationalist and has a large number

of schools that serve mainly the Catholic community. All are very willing to share, there are very good relationships between the schools and the area learning community there is very well regarded across Northern Ireland. However, the ability to share is determined by the capacity of the schools. When the number of schools in a particular sector is small and everybody wants to share, those schools have only so much capacity to share with others. It is not that people are unwilling; sometimes, it is just not appropriate or there may be challenges that come from schools being very far apart. People may be willing to share, but other things prevent it.

2100. **Mrs Overend:** That is great. Thanks very much. I appreciate your perspective on that and agree with you. In regard to resources and resourcing the sharing of education, the current resources are on the capital side. How could it be resourced better on a day-to-day basis?
2101. **Mr Gilbert:** There are three elements to that. We have significant evidence of schools investing their own resources, where it is of benefit to the school and there is a history. The second layer of that is the recurrent resourcing that is becoming available through the signature project. Again, that is a significant resource, and the Peace IV initiative, which will come after that for the schools new to sharing, will be another significant resource. We recognise that, as this thing develops, there may be increased capital demand. In light of the Stormont House Agreement and other things, I suppose there is a question in the system around whether we are ready for the level of shared campus investment that might be available and what the impact of that will be on other schools that are waiting for development in other sectors. Again, I am probably wearing my area planning hat in that regard.
2102. **Mrs Overend:** We would need more resource funding, rather than capital funding, to help support the sharing.
2103. **Mr Gilbert:** There always has to be a balance, but the important thing, which we referred to earlier, is that we cannot become dependent on resources. We have to build the capacity to sustain it, because the resources are not always likely to be there. We have seen over the years, across our community, too many projects collapsing because the resource has gone. Generally, when the resource goes, the support goes. One of the encouraging things we have seen, post projects that we have been involved in, is how schools have used their own resources. Maybe not to the same degree, but they have amended and adjusted their practice. They have cut their cloth. The willingness to do that is important. John made the point earlier about initial support and pump-priming being needed to get things up and running, but that must not be done in a way that cannot be sustained. In fact, it should be a decreasing recurrent resource situation.
2104. **Mr McCausland:** The paper from the Western Board is quite interesting, because I had never really read that section of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 before; you just tend to hear it quoted. It is interesting to see it put down. It is noticeable that there is not capital “I” or capital “E”, and there is no reference in that extract to the governance of the school. It simply states that there should be Protestant and Roman Catholic children educated together. That seems quite a broad and inclusive definition of integrated education. The paper states:
- “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.”*
2105. That is really, really interesting, and it is something that we may need to get clear advice on because obviously we have no legal expertise. There are judges who comment on these things, so it will be interesting to see what comes of that.

2106. **In our papers, there is a reference to the T:**BUC shared education campuses and the second call for expressions of interest. Those go through the boards first; they have to get the endorsement of the boards. One of the gateway criteria is evidence of community, parent and pupil support. How do you judge whether there is community support?
2107. **Mr Gilbert:** In terms of the process that has been set up there, the education and library boards, as the overall responsible bodies for area planning and provision, are required to endorse any applications, but we do not evaluate them. We take a look to see that, in broad terms, they meet the requirements and that there is support from the governors and the community and so on. The actual judgement is made by the Department.
2108. **Mr McCausland:** Yes, but you say that you look at whether there is community support or not. How do you judge whether there is or not?
2109. **Mr Gilbert:** In the submissions that we have received to date, there is, for example, evidence that the board of governors has discussed it with parents and so on. They provide evidence that they have done an exercise in engaging with the community to ensure that it is not simply an idea that a school has come up with that is not impacting in the broader sense. There is a variety of ways in which that evidence is presented.
2110. **Mr McCausland:** If there were a project such as this and 99% of the people in the community in that area other than the board of governors and the PTA knew nothing about it, would that meet the criteria?
2111. **Mr Gilbert:** Again, as you have quoted, the criteria show that there has to be broad community support, and therefore that needs to be evidenced. There were examples in, I think, all of the boards that came forward for the first tranche that were not actually endorsed by the boards. While we put them forward to the Department, because we were very conscious that we were not the judge and jury on this one, the boards themselves, regardless of what sector they originated from, were asked whether they were prepared to endorse. There were examples that came forward that blatantly did not really address the key areas in the criteria, and boards did not endorse them.
2112. **Mr McCausland:** The parent-teacher association is the representative voice, in a sense, of parents. It is not the representative voice of the community.
2113. **Mr McBride:** There is probably a useful resource in relation to our youth service, which works in the communities and does a lot of valuable work through its informal education processes, working in their own communities and across communities as well. That is a useful gauge. It is outside of my area of expertise, but it is another evidential aspect of the community work that is done and is something that could be tapped into and explored as well.
2114. **Mr McCausland:** I make the point that I think that community support has to be more substantial and more demonstrable than simply a board of governors with whatever number of people on it and a parent-teacher association that may well have another 10, when the other 20,000 people who live in the area know nothing about it. Twenty does not really equate to 20,000. I think that it is important to make the point that, in bringing these forward and endorsing them, it is not left then to a very late stage when this is away down the road and, when somebody raises an issue, they become the worst person in the world because here was a project and everybody was behind it. You bring people along from the start, and I think that the schools should be going out and talking to people at their own door and leafletting the area to say, "We are thinking about this. What do you think?"
2115. **Mr Gilbert:** I totally and absolutely accept that point, and, probably, at this stage, as you will be aware, there were, potentially, 10 shared campus projects



in the Programme for Government. Only three were approved in the first tranche, and all three were very mature projects and were very clearly able to demonstrate that. In getting that level of significant capital investment, it would be very false to take that forward without a very strongly bedded approach. With all three — Lisanelly, Ballycastle and the Moy — there was oodles of evidence of very significant community involvement, and one imagines that that would have to be the case. It is an absolutely very well made point.

2116. **Mr McCausland:** It would be helpful, when boards are assessing whether to endorse them or not, that they make sure that they have clear, firm evidence of that broad community support. Ray, you talked about children coming together, and you referred to children coming together with different cultures. We have had a point made by a number of the academic folk who have been in over the period that sharing really only works well when children come together on a basis of equality. I use Pierre Trudeau's illustration of Canada and America: Canada is in bed with an elephant. Sharing works when you get people coming at it from a basis of equality. You work across all sectors. Do you see any differences in the way that different sectors view cultural traditions and expressions and how that is embraced in the schools? That is one of the issues. We can talk about religious differences and children getting an RE background in a school or whatever. By cultural traditions, I am talking about traditional music, games etc.
2117. **Mr Gilbert:** I think that there are some very good examples. The creation, five or six years ago, of the inclusion and diversity service was very explicitly for newcomers and to move us beyond what was the English as an additional language service. That was very focused on language, which is only one element. There is a very significant programme of intercultural awareness that is done with schools and all sectors, because that service services all sectors, not any particular sector. We were chatting

before, and I think that colleagues have some very interesting and specific examples of cultural sharing. I know that John has some examples from the Southern Board.

2118. **Mr Unsworth:** Through IFI funding, we managed a programme called the primary curriculum partnership programme, which brought together schools, mostly primary schools in the same village, to engage. They were doing it through the medium of personal development and mutual education, which is an area of study on the revised curriculum. They used that as the vehicle to come together in shared classes. As Ray has already indicated, exploration of their own cultures within their single-identity schools was part of that process, and then there was coming together to explore each other's cultures. That certainly included looking at different types of music, different types of flags and emblems, and visiting each other's churches. Some very rich and, indeed, moving learning experiences came out of that, and I can think of specific examples that I visited where the Lambeg drum was being played alongside Irish traditional music. There was another situation where schools were exploring what the loyal orders mean in their village, because these were things that children in both of the schools in the village had experienced.
2119. **Mr McCausland:** Did the maintained school have a traditional music group of its own?
2120. **Mr Unsworth:** In the particular instance that I am thinking of, yes, it did.
2121. **Mr McCausland:** Did the controlled school have its own fife and drum tuition?
2122. **Mr Unsworth:** In the particular instance that I am thinking of, yes, it did.
2123. **Mr McCausland:** That is good.
2124. **Mr Unsworth:** They actually came together then to make one music group for a particular event.

2125. **Mr McCausland:** I am interested in getting a perspective from across the boards.
2126. **Ms Neill:** I do not think that you could say that that is widespread. It does occur, but there is still a lot of work to be done. I think that you could have a perception that, in certain schools, it is very clear what we are talking about in terms of what the culture that is appropriate to that community is. When you go into other schools where there is a very diverse population, schools will be challenged, no doubt, by the range of culture that exists in their school and how they have due respect to all of that culture. In the recent IFI projects, we did similar work to the Southern Board, where we did very direct work around cultural understanding within and between schools because we were very clear that there needs to be a connection between what happens in the school and, in doing that in your school, moving out and discussing and looking at those issues in the wider context of other communities. There is a richness in doing both of those things, and there is a value in both of those things. My experience is that cultural understanding needs to be something that comes out of the curriculum in an individual school. It will be enriched if that cultural understanding then comes into a situation where you are looking at it in the context of other cultures. What is similar? What is different? Why is this your culture? Why is that my culture? Those are the kinds of questions. There is quite significant evidence from some of these projects that quite young children in primary school are very capable of engaging in quite high-level discussions about culture, provided that our teachers have the capacity and the skills to manage those kinds of discussions with children. That is one of the things that we will be thinking of in terms of capacity. Our teachers have to be the facilitators of that kind of dialogue.
2127. **Mr Lawther:** I am not sure that I can add much more to that. There have been a number of projects in Belfast and in all boards, such as community relations, equality and diversity in education (CRED). That has been ongoing for quite some time, where they have brought schools together from different backgrounds to experience the different cultural identities that they have and have been very successful. St Patrick's, along with Ashfield Boys' High School, have an involvement in a shinty project, through which they have been to Dublin and, I think, Glasgow or Edinburgh in Scotland. Those things have been going for quite some time, and I think that they all contribute to what Northern Ireland is about and how education is progressing.
2128. **Mr McCausland:** I was talking to Andy McMorran the other day, and I make the observation that I do not find many shinty teams around the Shankill or the Newtownards Road, so it is a bit of an artificial thing.
2129. **Mr Lawther:** It is. I mean —
2130. **Mr McCausland:** It is in that sense. I think that the key point is that you are absolutely right in so far as there are a number of schools that do Lambeg and fife tuition, but it is a very small number, and it is all being funded out of the budget of the Ulster-Scots Agency. It puts the money in to do that, because that has not been something that teachers have been encouraged to do, maybe through our teacher training. I think that there is an issue about teacher training and about how culture is dealt with in St Mary's, Stranmillis, Queen's and so on. There is a big issue there that needs to be unpacked if we are going to bring children together. You will get difficulties and problems. It is not good for the children, the system or anybody to have that. That issue has been an elephant in the room, or maybe put into the "too difficult" cupboard for too long in the controlled sector in particular. It comes back to the point that it is not about the ethos of the school, it is about the culture of the child. It should be child-centred; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be implemented.

2131. **Mr Lunn:** Just on the music issue, it is a fact, surely, that almost all schools promote music very actively, not necessarily of a traditional nature for one sector or the other, but on a basis that could easily be shared and, in fact, is being shared across schools. Nelson makes that point continually about the controlled schools not advocating Protestant cultural-based music, if you could call it that.
2132. **Mr McCausland:** I never used the word “Protestant”.
2133. **Mr Lunn:** Yes, but you know what I mean. It is a fact that the musical output of schools is something to be proud of, in the form that it is now delivered. I think that it is great.
2134. **Mr Unsworth:** Very much so. Our music services, across all five boards, are some of the best examples, and have been for many years through the most difficult of times, of young people from different backgrounds coming together and sharing.
2135. **Mr Gilbert:** I was going to add that point. I made the point earlier about music services being one example of working together completely. For example — I am sure that there are other examples that colleagues could cite — we have a harp orchestra that is made up of young people from a range of traditions who work together and are fantastic when you see them. While it is coming from another direction, it is another part of the service that we provide that encourages young people to work together, live together and so on.
2136. **Mr McCausland:** Since he got a chance to come back on the schools bit, I want to respond to that point by saying this. The key point here is not inclusion, it is exclusion:  
*“Education always reflects a society’s views of what is excellent, worthy, necessary”.*
2137. The point I make is that, if a thing is excluded, it is seen as being, in some way, second-rate. That is why bringing the culture of the child into the school is good educational practice across the board. I do not think that anybody can argue with that.
2138. **Mr Unsworth:** To pick up on June’s point, one of the things that we have found in our experience of these projects is that it is absolutely essential to explore those issues with the teachers first. In best practice, that is what you would do. There have been some very difficult and challenging workshops that some of our colleagues have done with teachers in their single schools and then bringing them together. However, we find that it is essential for the teachers to have explored these issues before they then can come together to help facilitate that learning with the children. Our experience is that that is the sort of practice that really makes a difference, where it is not hidden, set to one side or excluded, but openly explored.
2139. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome, and I apologise for missing the first bit. I read somewhere about the strategic plan for cross-sectoral collaboration. Bearing in mind that sectoral definitions no longer consistently reflect the original make-up of the school, do you believe that the new Education Authority will be a key driver in bringing that forward?
2140. **Mr Gilbert:** The potential of the new Education Authority will be that we will have a single strategic approach, and I think it will be one of the key drivers. We are currently five separate organisations doing very similar work, but we are accountable through five channels. The new single Education Authority will bring us together as a single body, so yes, in time, as the transition takes place. I would not want to characterise us as all very different. Hopefully, it has come across this morning that, regardless of the fact that we work for five different organisations, we do very similar work and we work very closely together. However, one would hope that moving into a single strategic authority will have benefits, Province-wide. One of the big challenges for the new authority will be around service Province-wide, because it is a single authority and, therefore, to use that old phrase: what you get in Ballycastle should not be drastically

- different to what you get in Belleek, provided it meets your needs. So, yes, I think that there is potential there, Seán.
2141. **Mr Rogers:** Do you think we can learn anything from the past in terms of managing conflicting priorities? I think, in particular, of area-based planning. In our first attempts at area-based planning, all we had was so many thousand empty seats and whatever. So we end up, it being Northern Ireland, with at least two area plans: a maintained one and a board one. Maybe, in some theoretical situation, three maintained primary schools over a large country area were coming together. However, had we been looking at building a shared future together, there would have been another option, whereby the maintained primary school could join with the local controlled primary, which would help to meet the challenges, particularly of the rural White Paper and access to services. At least it would keep a primary school in the area.
2142. The other part of that question, really, is what work has been done with cross-border education authorities in terms of working that through? The Brollaghs of this world, where it is a small maintained school on the borders of Fermanagh and you have small Protestant primary schools in places like Cavan and Monaghan. If there were a close relationship with some of the schools here, it would at least maintain a school in those areas.
2143. **Mr Gilbert:** I will make one brief comment on that. It is something that I feel very passionately about. Despite how it has been characterised, area planning is about educational provision for children. Certainly, for those of us involved in it, it is not about who can get the most empty seats taken away. It is about making sure that there is sustainable provision for children and young people. The point I made earlier was that, as this develops, there will be the sort of change that you are outlining. Certainly, one assumes that that will be paid attention to as we move forward. June might want to comment on that.
2144. **Ms Neill:** You raise an important point, Seán. We need to be careful that education policies and initiatives of various kinds do not end up in conflict with one another. At the minute, there is a bit of tension between the notion of shared education and sustainable schools. In one village — it is an issue in some of our villages — you could have two schools that want to come together on a shared campus in a shared way for a shared future but for the sustainable schools policy.
2145. My feeling in all that is that, if we are really serious about sharing and being in the way that we do things, regardless of all these sectors and whatever, sharing needs to be something that is embedded across a range of education policies, so that we do not end up in a situation where one policy conflicts with another. There is potential for that as we bring shared education in this way into the whole system. Just as we would do for other things in terms of equality, we need to impact-assess everything else and ask this question: does this encourage sharing, or has it any potential to actually militate against sharing? That has to be embedded in every policy in education. Otherwise, to my mind, we are still tinkering at the edge of the system. If we are serious about embedding it, then sharing must be fundamental to every education policy. Any policy may not be about sharing, of course not. However, one example at the minute is the review of the transport policy. There is a nonsense that goes on where children in the entitlement framework have to take a bus to the school that they are enrolled in and then, at the cost of the public purse, they get a little bus to take them to wherever they are going when they could have hopped on a bus in the morning that would have taken them to the school that they were going to. That is maybe not a particularly good example, but it is an example of how we need to keep all policies up to date, so that they reflect and support sharing. That is the most important thing in all that.

2146. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
Just in conclusion — I do not mean to pick on you directly, Nicky — in the absence of a paper from the South Eastern Education and Library Board, can you perhaps give us an overview of your experience of sharing within the board?
2147. **Mr McBride:** I am probably not the best person to ask about that, Chair, to be perfectly honest. In comparison with other boards, there have probably been fewer examples of shared education on a formal basis in the South Eastern Board area. I am encouraged to note that, on the second call, there have been a number of schools applying for it, but there does not appear to have been the history of shared education that we have heard, for example, in Moy, Ballycastle and those areas. That is not to say that they have not been happening on an informal basis. We have some examples of that, but they are not formalised to any great extent.
2148. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
When you go back, can I ask that you collate some information for us so that it can at least be included for our deliberations? If any of you feel that there is anything that we have missed or there are particular recommendations that you would like to highlight, please feel free to forward that to us as well, as we move through this process. Obviously, that will also inform us as we move towards a definition and the Bill for shared education. It will be useful for us.
2149. I thank you for your time this morning; it is very much appreciated.



## 11 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Dr Peter Cunningham      *Ceara School*  
 Mr Colm Davis              *Tor Bank School*

2150. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome Dr Peter Cunningham, who is the principal of Ceara special school, and Colm Davis, who is the principal of Tor Bank special school. I offer our apologies for not being able to visit your school this morning. You understand that the plenary sitting on the Welfare Reform Bill has been extended to today. I think that we are all probably under some type of whip to be here today, so it would have been impossible for us to have had our meeting with you. However, we would like to rearrange that if it is possible.

2151. **Dr Peter Cunningham (Ceara School):** So I am told, yes. You will be very welcome. We are not going away.

2152. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Good. We hope to be in attendance. I just want to apologise for that again; it is outside our control. I ask you both to make your opening statements, and members will follow up with some questions.

2153. **Mr Colm Davis (Tor Bank School):** Thank you very much for inviting us along to give evidence. Obviously, you will have read both submissions. I am sure that you read them with intrigue. You may have learnt new things from

the submissions and, hopefully, the submissions were quite informative.

2154. We have a very different view of the whole concept of shared education and that of integrated education, and maybe the terminology that comes with both. We argue, and are able to discuss, that special schools were the first integrated and probably fully inclusive schools in Northern Ireland. They have been ignored quite a bit in the examples of working with other schools, working with different cultures, incorporating and including different cultures and disabilities, even within the very small field in which they operate.

2155. We are here to enlighten you a wee bit more and maybe look at a way forward for special schools within this concept of shared education. Hopefully, you will listen and ask a few questions.

2156. **Dr Cunningham:** Absolutely. As Colm said, shared education is nothing new in the special school system. I am slightly horrified to see that we got a mention in this document from the Department of Education, albeit on page 22; it is a document that has 23 pages. It is almost as though shared education is being landed on the education world as something that is new and novel: it is not. We have been practising this in our special schools from 1986, when we came under the umbrella of the Department of Education. Even prior to that, from 1947, our special care schools were operating shared education provision, because special educational needs is no respecter of religious or political affiliation.

2157. Special education hits everyone. Therefore, the good people who went before us set up an education system that was totally inclusive. Anybody can come into our special educational system. What frustrates me is a lot of the things that these people who were in front of you before said. I do not know

- who they are, but they were talking about different initiatives, different policies and different procedures. Do you know that they call us “other”? Those folk never mentioned the special schools system when they were sitting here, but they talked about community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) policies and signature policies. Did you know that we are excluded from them? Our kids do not do assessments, therefore we cannot tie into these little ticky boxes that you have to complete before you can take part in a scheme that we have been doing in my school for 20 years. That absolutely and totally frustrates the life out of me.
2158. **Mr Davis:** The key question for us and for you in this debate is this: who is best placed to bring the whole concept of shared education forward? What role will special schools play in that? How will they get more integrated status? I do not particularly like the term “integrated status”, by the way. I would call it “inclusive status”, and I have been challenging even the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) on that one. I have been working with NICIE to look at rebranding and redefining that terminology, which is well outdated.
2159. I really cannot see in any proposals that came through any great difference, apart from accommodation. Educational and mutual understanding programmes have been going on since I started teaching in 1981. I am enthusiastic about the concept and idea, but the driving force, and given our financial position and being able to build complexes that have a variety of schools, mean it will be for the very long-term future.
2160. We really have to make a positive commitment to see who is best placed to drive all this. I am not sure whether that will be the new board. It was interesting when you were asking those questions, but has enough thought been given to that in the creation of that board?
2161. For me personally, and speaking off the record, I was very disappointed that we did not have more of a merger. If the money is coming from the Department of Education and beyond, it is disappointing that all those sectors were not integrated into our new model as a natural progression and reorganisation to enable and push people together a bit more than is going to happen. That is off the record, but you can see in the models and work that we have been doing over the years —
2162. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** By the way, just to let you know that everything is on the record.
2163. **Mr Davis:** OK. The shared education models that we have been very much looking at in the last number of years and the likes of Tor Bank, and I can speak for other schools, have been developed from within. They have been self-driven.
2164. I think there is a concept that special schools are exclusionist by nature because they sit outside the mainstream school environment. Actually, we are inclusionary by nature. We are always looking at ways in which we can make our children more inclusive and independent, and to become fully inclusive and contributing members of society on leaving school.
2165. We have driven a lot of this. We were doing this before area learning communities (ALCs) and the entitlement framework (EF) came about and before we got additional funding, and we get very little funding for this. As you know, special schools do not have their own budgets. We strongly believe that we should be looking at formula funding to enable us to be more of a leading edge in a lot of this activity. Having our own funding model would help us in that.
2166. You can see where we have driven projects over the years through sharing with other schools. You can look at our make-up and, yes, we are controlled. Unfortunately, some parents find that label quite difficult. There are 120 people who work in Tor Bank School, and they are from all different backgrounds, be it cultural, religious



- or otherwise. It was very interesting when you were given the example of a shared bus. When children get on that bus, nobody asks what religion they are. They all come to our school. They come from west Belfast and the middle of Ballybeen. They come from everywhere, yet that has not been a problem. I like the idea of the shared buses in the future.
2167. We were able to develop our own models by linking in with local schools, and it was not just local grammar schools or secondary schools but primary schools. Peter will be able to give you his examples of that as well. The commitment of those schools to get involved in a special school has been incredible, and the religious side of it has never been a problem for us. That is a quick overview. We will maybe talk later about some of the projects that we have been involved in.
2168. **Dr Cunningham:** I have been in special education for 37 years. I know that it is hard to believe that, but I have. Colm made the point that there is a view, I believe, among education and library board officers that special education, aka special schools, is segregated provision. It could not be more integrated. I do not believe that there is a special school principal in the country who does not hold the view that a child should be educated in his own area with his peers, but some children, whose special educational needs are of such a nature and degree that they cannot be met in their local community, go to a special school because, de facto, special schools are not community schools. You might say, "Hey, but you just said that you are into shared education". Yes, we are. It happens through the bus.
2169. My school is in Lurgan, and the smallest percentage of children attending my school live in Lurgan. They are brought in from all over the place. We are in the education system. It is horrendous. These are the points that need to be shouted from the steeples. The area learning community is absolutely brilliant. I am a dyed-in-
- the-wool supporter of the area learning community. I chaired the Craigavon area learning community for two years in a row. Did you know that, at the start, special schools were excluded from the area learning communities because they "had nothing to contribute"? It is absolutely breathtaking. There was not a single special school representative in the community relations documentation that the Department of Education put out a number of years ago. Every school in the country got counselling services, but special schools did not because somebody forgot about the special school system. We are consistently forgotten about.
2170. I believe that the ALC is an absolutely fabulous conduit for examples of good practice. In my school this month, we will have children from the local Catholic maintained grammar school and we will be celebrating achievements. Children from my school attend the local controlled grammar school every week. There is a natural osmosis. Do you know why? Because it is the right thing to do. Shared education is working in our special schools. We have practitioners who are excellent at fostering and developing relationships and at fostering and welcoming cultural diversity, but we cannot get our staff out into that educational world because there seems to be a mindset. We are on the periphery of an education system. We are there but are not really part of it.
2171. Our budgets are a disgrace. We manage less than 1% of our budget. Most schools get their budget on 1 April; I got my last budget in the middle of October. How can a school be expected to be proactive and plan when we do not know how much we have in our budget stream? We have been talking for a long time about more delegation of budgets to special schools to allow us to facilitate the types of schemes that we would like to do. Even Bob Salisbury, who I had a chat with, accepted that recommendation, but, once again, nothing was done about it.
2172. **Mr Davis:** Peter made some very valid points. Without doubt, the area learning

- community has been fantastic, but we had to carve our own niche in that. We listened to the politics that went on. I found it very difficult at the beginning, but it allowed us to control the collaborative nature of it a bit better. The focus was very much on the academic, moving the vocational side of it and the resistance to both. We were caught in the middle; we were not perceived as a threat. In fact, it was probably quite good for us, but it was a hard battle. That is a good example of what we always have to do. We always sound like we are fighting. We did not come into this to fight; we came in to celebrate and recognise achievement and to do our best for our children and young people.
2173. It was very interesting earlier when Nelson asked the boards about the whole concept of culture and child-centredness. We are certainly child-centred; we always have been. The whole culture side of it is very interesting. We have teachers and classroom assistants who have been trained in different backgrounds; we have some from St Mary's training college, some from Stranmillis and others from wider afield. I see progress in the last five or six years. Peter, like me, has been involved in challenging the colleges to address the whole concept of special needs so that it is not just an optional module if you feel like doing it. We are saying that, if you are truly committed to the concept of inclusion, you have to ensure that all teachers, whether a chemistry teacher or a primary-school teacher, will get an understanding of autism or whatever. We push the boat further: everyone should have a placement in a special school as part of their training. Thankfully, we have not been affected by that background. Maybe Peter will see a shift like I have over the years. It tended to be very much the case that, because special schools, except for one, were with the controlled sector, we attracted people only from Stranmillis training college. In more recent years, we have been attracting people from St Mary's. It is good to see that shift.
2174. The children and young people who come to the like of our schools are fantastic. We love our job. We will do everything we can for them. We want them to have every opportunity possible out there in other local schools and their local areas, such as local youth clubs and the local community. We would like to ensure that we have linked up with business to get some employment opportunities for them in the future.
2175. The barriers to the concept of shared education are in terms of us getting an integrated badge, if we want to go down that route, or being officially recognised with a more inclusive badge. Under existing legislation, it is very difficult for that to happen. That is a bit of a barrier for our children to being truly recognised as being inclusive members of society. We are seen very much as a controlled school. We do not believe that the controlled system battles for us; it does not battle for us to get a more inclusive nature or to push us down the integrated route. I have been linking with NICIE on a positive partnerships programme towards integration. We are leading the way; we are showing it good practice. We got the rights respecting schools award level 2. That is very much around the concept of respect for and understanding each other's culture. That has helped to push us down that route.
2176. People will argue it that is not a barrier, but it is a barrier for us. A lot of our parents — we have discussed this with them — would like to see an integrated or inclusive badge and a rebranding of the school.
2177. **Dr Cunningham:** Teacher training is important. We have been in special education for 60 years between us. The system is a little bit better. Every so often, though, we get a wake-up call. Just before Christmas, I had a very good student in with me; I will not embarrass the college by naming it. We were sitting having our conversation. She had a great time at the school. She looked me straight in the face, and asked, "Were your grades not good enough to teach in a real school?" That cut the legs from underneath me. She had just spent

- four weeks in our school celebrating our achievements, and here was somebody who would be a qualified teacher within six months but still did not view our school as a real school, and thought that the people who work in our school are in some way inferior. I thought that horrendous; it was absolutely horrible.
2178. **I have said this before:** the only difference between the battle of the Somme and the relationships between the Health Department and the Department of Education is that they have not started shooting at each other yet, but the trenches have been dug.
2179. We represent a group of children, an increasing group, who require the closest, joined-up, collaborative work with the Health Department, and we do not have that. That is a part of shared education that is maybe not in these documents, but I am not going to waste this opportunity here to say to you good folk that, at this moment in time, we are on a divergent path from the Department of Education, the Health Department and the Department for Employment and Learning. We need a very much more joined-up, collaborative model, very much so.
2180. **Mr Davis:** I totally agree. Around the concept of collaboration in special education, we have tried to create those partnerships ourselves. They should have been connected at the top. Maybe you see it differently, but we certainly feel that top-level policymaking should be connected.
2181. A lot of problems arise with therapy provision, for example, because it is not connected at the level it should be, and that is a big problem for us. Shared education for us, which is, I think, the point Peter was making, is beyond just schools. It is very much about partnerships with local community representatives, business, health and education representatives, including you. We are all here for one reason and one reason only: the best interests of each child in our schools.
2182. I am not sure whether you have looked into the barriers for us to shared education. Finance will be a big problem for us in this model. We created the model, and it works well in the small local community in which we both operate, yet, in an ideal world, we would like to do a lot more work. Both our schools have had dual enrolments. In other words, if a child comes from 20 miles away but there is a local primary school near to where that child lives, we would like to be work a lot more with that primary school to see whether we could have partial placement in that school and partial placement with us. That costs money. We would have to send a classroom assistant and provide transport, but the benefits would be enormous for that child, who would get the best of both worlds. It is about us controlling that model, but, unless we have the money, we cannot do it. To do such a thing, we would have to put a request in to the board. It may or may not be heard of six months later; it will probably be ditched somewhere. We will be getting it from parents. We have suggested it as a good idea to the parents, but developing such models beyond our local community is very difficult without the appropriate funding. I see that as a major barrier. We are committed to it — even the parents are committed to it — but the system has not been perfected enough to be able to do that. We have had some fantastic examples in the past of Tor Bank, like Ceara, thinking outside the box. It is being led by us. We have run a lot of the schemes. However, because of the financial constraints and whatever way things are going to go, there will be less of that in the future.
2183. **Dr Cunningham:** Absolutely. When you come into Ceara School, I am told that it is like walking into Strasbourg, because we have the flags of all the European countries. We have been to every one of those countries. Our view of shared education means that we go to other EU member states to look at their special education system. The special education system that we have in the Province is far better than

any other special education system. I read the greatest load of rubbish about how brilliant and integrated the Finnish education system is. I believe that the Department of Education has shares in Finland. It is all we hear. I have been there twice: it is absolutely rubbish. After a school principal showed me around his super-duper school, I asked, "Where are the special children?" He said, "Oh, they're in the annex". I said, "Oh, the annex. Can I go and visit it?" He said, "No, it's 38 kilometres away". I said, "In our country, we call those special schools". He got very upset and said, "I pay for those teachers", so now we have fiscal inclusion. I asked, "How often do those children come to your school?" With a horrified look, he said, "Never". If you go onto the Internet today or into any educational bookshop, they will talk about the fabulously integrated education system that they have in Finland. It is not a patch on what we have here, and we are firing on one cylinder. There are barriers to making our current shared education provision much more inclusive. One of those barriers is the education and library boards. Another barrier is the Department of Education. I make a plea to you good people. We have been in this job for a long time. Lots of politicians have been in my school. There has never, ever been a politician, irrespective of whatever political party they were in, who did not give the same message of support for our children and teachers. All I ask is that, in this big House, somebody somewhere should maybe say, "Let's go for a more collegiate, joined-up approach to our special schools". They are part of the education system; they are not on the periphery of it. That is a plea.

2184. **Mr Davis:** To qualify: when I talked about needing money to do this, I do not mean that we want more money. It would be great if we could have that, but we need a funding model that gives us greater flexibility to use the money in a smarter way. We strongly believe that it has not been used in a smart way. We have a fantastic system of special education here, but it has probably been largely

down to individual enthusiasm and commitment. Board officers have been very good over the years, but we know the model that we need to create to best meet the needs of those children. It is a different model than the one we have now. It is not just about classroom assistants and teachers; we have to learn about other things, such as buying in. It is about being able to bring in a behavioural therapist, a music therapist or an art therapist — not necessarily full-time. The whole funding model and the way in which we are funded needs to be looked at. Something that gives us a bit more flexibility to be able to do that would be fantastic for the children and young people. There would also be benefits for mainstream schools and partners that we are collaborating with. That expertise and those support services will be led from the school. Rather than a board trying to fire fight, we could be more proactive; we could support the needs of the teachers and pupils in those schools.

2185. **Dr Cunningham:** The research is very clear that children who are on the spectrum with autism react very positively to a dog, usually a Labrador. It would nearly take an act of God to get a dog into my school because of health and safety and all sorts of things, but yet they have been in schools in Sweden, Norway and France, and, you know, they have not eaten a child yet. We cannot get one into our schools because of a barrier that has been placed there on no evidence whatsoever. As you can see, special education is a bit of a passion for the people who work in it.

2186. **Mr Davis:** We are probably a bit of a pain for a lot of people. Many a time, I have been told to stop lobbying.

2187. **Dr Cunningham:** Our children cannot speak. They literally cannot speak, so we do it for them.

2188. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I sense your frustration. I also sense your passion. Thank you for your presentation and to both of you for your written submissions as well. I think that we will

- have to return to a number of the issues that you have raised again, particularly when we are looking at the SEN Bill. You are also being invited to our event on 18 March. We talk about the disconnect between health and education and the challenges. Your input to that session will be very valuable.
2189. With regard to shared and integrated education, I always got the sense that special schools were totally inclusive and that there was never any difference made, regardless of your background or creed. Certainly, it resonated very strongly with me that you are naturally integrated, regardless of the fact that you have a “controlled” label. For me, that is always very much about management as opposed to anything else. I do not really understand why you feel that you need to take on another label of “integrated” status, which very much ties you to Catholic and Protestant as opposed to just being naturally integrated.
2190. **Mr Davis:** I suppose that it is a control element for us. It is about looking at how we can develop and the governance of our schools, which we feel, at the minute, is very much dictated by a board model that is quite outdated for special schools to move forward. I feel that, with the whole concept of integration, in some cases, a lot of our parents see the controlled sector as being Protestant schools. You have this range of parents who, do not forget, come in and have no choice as to where their children go. When they are in the maintained sector, for example, they will go to the local primary school, but their child will be bussed to a controlled school somewhere else. We have had parents who initially had issues with that whole concept, but that was the only option they had: a school that was 25 miles away. It would have been a softer element for them, I would imagine — I know this from talking to them even recently — if it had been an integrated school.
2191. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Were you to transform, you would still be a controlled integrated school.
2192. **Mr Davis:** As for the whole transformation, we are already there. We are already integrated, but we are not recognised as integrated in any legislation, are we?
2193. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I get your point that perhaps the education and library boards do not battle for controlled schools. I think that you may not be the only schools that have an issue with that. I would like to think that the controlled sector support body, once it gets up and running, will be a voice and an advocate for you as it will be for other controlled schools.
2194. **Dr Cunningham:** We were not on the circulation list for the establishment of that body, which I thought was pretty interesting.
2195. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** That point has been made.
2196. **Dr Cunningham:** We get documents all the time. At the moment in Craigavon, we have this debate on controlled schools, and it talks about all the controlled schools. Do you know what? It is not actually about all the controlled schools because they never came near us.
2197. **Mr Davis:** With things like that, you are left out quite a bit. It is an afterthought. There is a bit of a panic when we go to an area learning community meeting or an extended learning community meeting, and, all of a sudden, you have been left out. How were we left out? The board officers have a massive panic. That does not happen just in your board; it happens across the boards.
2198. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You both mentioned that you have chaired your local area learning communities. Obviously, there has been a movement towards greater sharing with the schools that you are involved with. Can you tell us about the benefits that not only your school but those other schools have had by having a relationship with you?
2199. **Dr Cunningham:** I chaired the Craigavon area learning community for two years.

I have to say that we had been working with many of the schools in the area learning community for the previous 30 years. There was nothing new. Other schools were brought into that area learning community that we did not have a relationship with, but we now do. We have very dynamic relationships in the area learning community. We are not paying lip service to an ideology: we are into practical things here. As I say, we will have a big function in the school later on this month from one of the grammar schools. We have the wall of hands, where, for everybody who comes into the school, if you help us and we think that you have helped us enough, your hand is put up on the wall. The number of people who come into our school is amazing. We have a full wall of hands of the great and the good, from the Chief Constable right the way through to the wee man who raised £50 for us.

2200. **Mr Davis:** Peter Cunningham has one on the wall as well.
2201. **Dr Cunningham:** We will not even go there.
2202. As regards the advantages of the area learning community, I am going to put it down to the other schools. In my opinion, the advantages of having a special school in an area learning community are all to the other schools, because there is a conduit for them to come into the school and see it. We now have active relationships with local post-primary schools. They will lift the phone and say, “We have just got a child in our school with Asperger’s. Is it all right if my year 3 teacher comes and has the craic with you? Perfect”. That is the sort of thing that we are looking for. It is almost like a sticking plaster over the absence of special education in initial teacher training. The area learning community absolutely facilitates staff working relationships together. The community was mentioned earlier. We photograph any events that we hold, and they are put in the local newspaper. I absolutely and totally support the ALCs.
2203. **Mr Davis:** I will go back to what you were asking for, and one example is careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). We have opened up their eyes to what is available for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. Some of those kids are already in their schools. We have helped them to build partnerships with the voluntary sector that supports employment. One scheme that we are trying to operate with one of our local secondary schools is that some of their young people go out on work experience with some of our young people and support them during that work experience and learn about what it is like to be autistic, the working environment and the type of young person. It opens up their eyes and that in itself — how to work with someone — would be fantastic when it gets off the ground.
2204. We do constant training. As Peter says, this probably has not changed, but maybe there is a bit more. We are in demand for training for very individual children and also collective training on the whole concept of autism, children with multisensory needs or whatever. Without doubt, a lot more of these children are in the system. There is the vocational route and the type of qualifications that we offer for young people. They have learned and we did not realise that those existed, so that has been of value. It has been a two-way process for our teachers and classroom assistants. They are getting a better understanding of the mainstream sector, and, if one of our children ended up being lucky enough to move into the mainstream sector, how they could be supported, the barriers, what we would need to do to support them to overcome the barriers and so on. Apart from that, there are collaborative things with music, choirs and small dramas. Some of our children in Tor Bank go to Newtownbreda High School and Knockbreda High School for classes. We have also gone on college placements together through Belfast Met. Again, all that is expensive. I know that we said that we are not asking for

- money, but the additional money that we got for the early learning community, and a reduction in funding for that and for EF, would put us at a significant disadvantage. Our worry is that, if that is reduced now, can that be sustainable for us, because we do not have our own budget to complement and supplement that?
2205. **Dr Cunningham:** The elephant in the room about the ALC is that there are some school principals and some schools that just cannot work together. That is the reality of it. Therefore, I bring to the Committee's attention the fact that there is a level below the principal's level, and that is that every school will have an area learning community coordinator who will be the senior teacher. If I could be so bold — this is not to deskill school principals — that is where the work is done. The area learning community coordinators are the people who meet, develop and monitor all the activities that we do.
2206. **Mr Davis:** If you do not mind my saying, we are involved in the extended learning community in Dundonald, and that has a make-up from nursery schools right through to secondary schools. That has been a great advantage for us. We have joint French classes and joint sports events. Familyworks counselling comes in to do counselling for the primary-school children. We do not get any funding for that, because a lot of our parents will not fill in free school meal forms. As such, we get money from the cluster but not direct funding for the school. It is an interesting one. It is only in the last five years that we have got fully involved in the extended learning community. A special school has an age span from three to 19, and the problem for us is that we are out of the school quite a lot to attend various meetings to do with all the curriculum initiatives and so on, but we still have to be legally responsible for, or to introduce into the school, a watered-down version —
2207. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Of course, your new build and your relocation have aided that as well.
2208. **Dr Cunningham:** My new build was built for 40 children; there are 140 children at Ceara School, and more children are educated in mobiles than are educated within the brick walls.
2209. **Mr Davis:** We are lucky; we have the new school. I must admit that it is fantastic, and thank you to everybody for that one.
2210. **Dr Cunningham:** Can I have a new school, please?
2211. **Mr Davis:** Our numbers are already increasing, as Peter said. The worrying thing is that we have so many kids and young people with special education needs, and the best provision will be provided in special schools, but there are not enough places. I do not know what will happen in the near future. I am sure that all of you will have letters galore from parents looking for places. We have 10 children leaving this year, and we have only 10 places technically. We already increased the enrolment by 10 from last year. The school was built for 162, and it now has 172. The physical size of the school may not be able to accommodate any more. It will be difficult.
2212. **Mr Lunn:** I had various questions for you, but you have really answered them all. I have a question about the budget. Peter, you mentioned the frustration of having to wait until part way through the year. Is it cynical to say that that is because the board waits to see what money it has left —
2213. **Dr Cunningham:** We get the crumbs from the table.
2214. **Mr Lunn:** Yes.
2215. **Dr Cunningham:** Absolutely.
2216. **Mr Lunn:** So it is not cynical; it is correct.
2217. **Dr Cunningham:** It is factual. There is no budget mechanism whereby I can say, "Look, you have given me x amount of money. Could I please see the formula that you have used for calculating that?". I have been looking for that formula for the last 15 years.

2218. **Mr Davis:** It does not exist.
2219. **Mr Lunn:** With regard to the question of integrated status or otherwise, if you were allowed to apply for integrated status, what would the parents' view on that be? Have you tested their opinion?
2220. **Dr Cunningham:** I am not sure that I would.
2221. **Mr Davis:** We are still testing the waters with parents with regard to that. They are very positive about the whole concept. With respect to our school, the religious background in the community is very mixed. If they think that there are going to be benefits for their children and we were able to sell those benefits for the children, that would be —
2222. **Mr Lunn:** It would not change the ethos of your schools because both are well mixed anyway. That is due to natural demographics and geography, and the fact that parents whose children have the need for what you offer would be much less concerned in the first place about whether it was a Protestant or Catholic school. It would not be an issue for them.
2223. **Mr Davis:** You are right: it would not change the culture of the school. That is already there.
2224. **Mr Lunn:** It would change the funding situation.
2225. **Mr Davis:** That is what we are looking for, if it were a way to help change the funding mechanism. It is the fact that we cannot apply for it; we do not fit in. It is yet another equality issue for a special school. Here we go again. We are fighting our way all the time through this quagmire of a system that tends to ignore special schools.
2226. In England, they had their own funding formula, and we have been to every finance chief and chief executive and tortured the life out of them over the last number of years about this. We brought people over from England who have worked in their special schools under a local authority funding mechanism that changed so much over the years. We have tried to say that we strongly believe that we could have a better system using the existing money but having control over it. We are excluded from that.
2227. **Dr Cunningham:** Absolutely. Over here, we have the local management of schools (LMS), and, in England, there is the local management of special schools (LMSS). Our colleagues in England screamed loudly that they did not want this system 20 years ago. However, you would not find one special school principal in England now who would go back to the old way. They want to be in control of their budgets.
2228. We want to be in control of our budgets. We are effectively de-skilled, because every other principal in the country looks after their budget and is held to account, but we are not. We get our budget in September/October-ish, and sometimes there is money in it and sometimes there is not, and little bits of money go in during the year, but you are never told.
2229. **Mr Davis:** We have to remember that part of the boards' function is to help with training in special education, and we have received very little to no training in the last, gosh knows, how long, apart from team-teach training. This is because, with the closure of Muckamore, we have some very difficult children to manage. This is a good example of positive partnerships. There was a community reintegration model where schools were not consulted, and we and parents have been left with a problem on that one. We believe that if we had additional money, we could train our staff to be trainers. We do it ourselves, but it puts us under enormous pressure.
2230. **Mr Lunn:** Peter, I fear that changing to integrated status would not do much about your point about half your school being educated in mobiles. You share that honour with most integrated schools.
2231. **Dr Cunningham:** In fairness, if someone had asked me 10 years ago if there would be 140 children at Ceara School, I



- would have said, “Absolutely not”. It is a fact that Ceara has the highest number of newcomer children in any special school in the Province.
2232. I will relate this to money. Every other school in the country got £1,000 per newcomer child. Nobody told us, and I found out about it only over dinner about a year ago. I asked the education board, “Where did that money go?” and I was told that it went into the big pot. So, we had to fight. This year, we got that money put into our budget. For previous years, we did not. There was behaviour money given to every school in the country, which was allocated to those school budgets, but it was not put into the special schools budgets until we heard about it, once again, through the grapevine. If we had control of our own budgets, the schools would be run very efficiently and effectively.
2233. **Mr Lunn:** You are actually making my final point. You just keep highlighting the contradictions. We are here, talking about sharing and integration, but you have all this experience going right back to 1947 — of course, not in your particular cases — and the beneficial effects for your children and other children, the relationships you have built up, and the way you operate sharing the system should be of value to this new project. Yet you appear to be being sidelined. I think you mentioned Limavady at one stage. The special school in Dungiven contributes to that area learning community, does it not? It is very well received, I believe. I can only agree with you. I am sorry, I cannot keep asking you questions.
2234. **Dr Cunningham:** I suppose the irony for me is that the 11 year-old I once taught is now the lady at the education and library board who now OKs my budget. Ding ding.
2235. **Mr Lunn:** I will not make the comment that comes to mind.
2236. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome. Peter, as somebody who has visited your school, I see the point. I see that you are very passionate about your work but also very frustrated. I suppose that one of the frustrations right through the whole education system is that we are advancing shared education, but that the entitlement framework has been cut by 29%, which sort of runs contrary to that. I have a very quick question from what I have read. You say somewhere that dual enrolment should be permitted. What do you see as the benefits of dual enrolment?
2237. **Mr Davis:** For me, there are about five very positive benefits. Basically, it is very difficult to get a proper diagnosis for a lot of children initially, especially young people with autism and behavioural challenges. They may not respond to the usual testing requirements and psychological tests. We get them in at three or four years of age. We get them settled down, we work on the behaviour and we put the structure and visuals in — they have no communication. They then start to develop very quickly. You are looking after the needs holistically in a special school and in a supportive environment. However, we may feel that the children would benefit from partial placement in a local nursery or year one. We have done this with Brooklands Primary School, Dundonald Primary School and St Joseph’s up in Carryduff — wherever the parent wants them to go. In some cases, they have then moved to that school permanently. We have opened the eyes of not just the parents. To be honest, it is very hard to get children out of the school, because the parents are delighted that they have made such good progress. We have recognised, however, that we have done our job by getting children fully included. We support the school through that transformation programme. Certainly, that would be an idea and one of the main targets for us of dual enrolment.
2238. We also have some children with good verbal skills but who are very low-functioning when it comes to their academic ability. They would benefit from interaction with other children in the mainstream sector, but not on a permanent basis. It might be for a morning or an afternoon. It may be for

- a sports activity or whatever. We find in that sort of collaborative venture that the social benefits for the young person are enormous as well. That is just two quick examples.
2239. We have had others who have gone through the whole of primary school, spending one day a week at St Joseph's, for example, and the other four at Tor Bank. We take responsibility for the programme and work with the teachers throughout those respective years. The teacher learns a lot from having to work with a child with autism. The pupils learn how to cope and interact with the child with autism. It becomes more difficult as they move further up towards — well, the transfer is not there — the more academic years 6 and 7 and then on to secondary. It works well in early secondary. Again, when it comes to the pressures of GCSEs and so on, schools are a wee bit more hesitant to take the children and young people in.
2240. **Dr Cunningham:** To be pragmatic, sometimes it is very difficult for us to reintegrate children back into a mainstream school. It means that they would maybe come to me for six weeks and then, for one week, go back to their own mainstream school for an hour or so. Then we would build that up to two hours and then a whole day. It would facilitate the move from the special school to the mainstream school and from the mainstream school to the special school. A teacher could ring me and say, "I have a wee fellow up here with sensory issues", and I would tell them that we have a great sensory room and to send him up. They would then say, "I don't know how I could send him up. You are too far away. Who is going to pay for it?". It would facilitate that.
2241. **Mr Davis:** To me, a lot of that part of shared education is ignored. The ultimate goal for us is to build on that.
2242. **Mr Rogers:** I think that that is fantastic, because, to me, that is really advancing shared education for the sake of the child.
2243. **Mr Davis:** Very much so.
2244. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you very much for that.
2245. **Mr Craig:** Peter, Colm, I get the distinct impression that you have a lot of frustrations, and I can understand them. I have worked closely with Beechlawn and Parkview in my constituency, and the frustrations that you have shared with us, equally, have been shared with me by those schools. I have done what I can to help them.
2246. I have one question, and I am honest about the fact that I am a great admirer of what you do in your schools. You are working in a very difficult environment, almost in a one-to-one teaching situation. That is the nature of what you are dealing with.
2247. I pick up very clearly your frustration around the financial model of how your school is run. I need to be fundamentally honest here: even though you have the title of "controlled", it is an absolutely meaningless title. I am the chair of the board of governors of a controlled school, and, in fairness, I have control over the finances of that school. You do not, so it is a meaningless title for you. I do not think that the title is that important, to be fundamentally honest with you. Is your frustration really around, first, the lack of finance for your sector — end of story — and, secondly and more importantly, the lack of control that you or your governors actually have over how that is used in your school? To me, that is fundamentally ignoring the expertise that you bring to that sector.
2248. **Dr Cunningham:** You are absolutely and totally right. No one could argue that my school, for example, is underfunded. You walk into Ceara School, and you see that it is not a poor school. It is not an underfunded school, but I have this thing about proactive as opposed to reactive planning. You will get a telephone call saying that there is £100, £1,000 and £5,000 but that it has to be spent by the end of next Wednesday. Or, at this time of the year, you will get a telephone call to say, "There is £30,000 left in the pot; put your best bid in". You are thinking, "I have to spend £30,000. I

actually need pens, but that will take six weeks and I can't get the invoice in on time. I will buy another photocopier". Photocopiers are expensive, but you can get the money gone quickly, and it can be invoiced quickly. However, that is not the effective management of a school. Effective management is being able to predict what your budget will be; that you will get your budget on 1 April like every other school in the country, and that you will then make out a budgetary management scheme and spend your money according to the needs of the children and staff in your school as opposed to reactive spending to simply get the money spent. That is not an efficient use of taxpayers' money. It absolutely is not.

2249. My sense of frustration is not due to lack of money, because my school is well funded, and I can speak only for my school. The frustration is in that we do not have ownership of that money. They talk about a delegated fund. Delegated funding implies that we do a bit of it and you do a bit of it; but in my school I am responsible for less than half of 1% of the total budget. That is crazy. That has to be crazy. We then have people who are not educationalists and who definitely have no experience in special education telling us, "You can't buy that because it costs more than £4,000, and you have to do whatever". I say, "But, I need this now. We have need." It does not allow for proactive planning. I have spoken to several permanent secretaries, although not the current one, and volunteered my school to be an LMSS school for one year. At one time, it was just Colm and me banging on this drum and saying, "We want our dedicated budget". I suggest that now there are quite a few special schools in the Province that would welcome the opportunity to go to a full, dedicated budget.

2250. **Mr Craig:** I fully get that frustration. I was up in Parkview last week, and when I walked through the door I saw an example of what you are saying about small pockets of money being thrown at you and having to be used instantly.

They had a beautiful, all-singing, all-dancing system for me to log in as a visitor. It was touch-screen and all the rest of it. My first question was, "Where the heck did you get the money for that?" The answer was inevitably what you said: it was the result of reactive budgeting. The school was told, "Here's a pocket of money we haven't spent, throw it at that." That is no way to run our education system.

2251. **Dr Cunningham:** I have a problem here. Without a doubt, the greatest amount of funding spent in a school relates to staffing. I am constantly being handed documents from the education and library board pointing out that the level of absenteeism in special schools is significantly higher than that in primary and post-primary schools. But, there are not too many people in primary and post-primary schools who get their noses broken or their heads pummelled against a wall. There is not a day in life that I do not have to intervene with the girls in my school. I had to take a girl out last week to get a hepatitis B injection because a child took a lump out of her arm.

2252. There are bald statistics. On the one hand, we do not get our budget when we want it and we do not have the responsibility over it, and on the other hand you are shown a document that says, "You're absenteeism rate is three-and-a-half times more than the average." We are not equating like with like. The population in our schools, and I do not know whether you agree, Colm, has changed significantly over the past 15 years. We now have children who have very extreme behavioural issues. It is testament to the people we have in our schools that the absenteeism is not ten times higher.

2253. **Mr Davis:** As you know, the Department has done a review on the behavioural side of things. It softened the documentation that it brought out on the outcomes. We were not very happy with that. I will give you an example. I had a meeting with the Health Minister a few years ago about the community reintegration strategy when they closed

- Muckamore to children. How have they linked that in with schools? They have not. What additional funding has come? None.
2254. Education is saddled with the bill for minding some of those children. In some cases, it is very difficult. We are talking about trying to manage pupils when they get to 6 feet 2 ins or 6 feet 3 ins on school premises. In those circumstances, full-time education should not be an option, but we still try to deliver it. Three children left Tor Bank school at 19, and we were very disappointed to learn that within three months they were in Muckamore permanently. So, education had been saddled with the bill the whole way through, but once the person was handed over to health, this happened. We had worked as best we could in partnership with health, which at the time pays lip service to the issue, and we have got the problems.
2255. That expense is very hard to plan for, even if you have your own budget. Whatever funding model there is in the future for special schools, there will still need to be something sitting outside that to enable us, maybe health and education, to address such expenses. We are talking about accommodation, and we have discussed attaching a satellite to Peter's school — probably outside his mobiles — or outside my school that is organised and run by health and education. The child or young person could go there part of the day and get music therapy and whatever health could provide, but they could also come in and out of the school for as long as their concentration level would permit them to do so. Let us be realistic about this.
2256. **Mr Craig:** This is more of a comment. I share your frustrations on a lot of this. I hope and pray that the Minister listens to the Committee — he normally does — and what you have said about the finances and the lack of a joined-up approach. In fairness, he listens to a lot of the special education stuff, as we saw over the sixth-form provision in Beechlawn. The issue is how you progress these people so that they can integrate into work and society. It is a frustration I share with you. I do not have an answer or a solution.
2257. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for your time this morning. Apologies again for not having relocated to Ceara, but we plan to be there in the near future.
2258. **Dr Cunningham:** There is a place in the wall.
2259. **Mr Davis:** To put your hand.
2260. **Mr Craig:** Is that the fingerprint technology? *[Laughter.]*
2261. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you.
2262. **Mr Davis:** Thank you very much, folks, and good luck.

## 18 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Rev Donald Ker	<i>Methodist Church in Ireland</i>
Rev Dr Ian	<i>Transferor</i>
Rev Trevor Gribben	<i>Representatives' Council</i>

2263. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** We have three members of the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) with us this morning: Reverend Trevor Gribben, clerk of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Reverend Donald Ker, secretary of conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland; and Reverend Dr Ian Ellis, secretary to the Church of Ireland board of education and secretary to the TRC. You are all very welcome, and thank you very much for your paper. I ask you to make an opening statement, and members will follow that with questions.
2264. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis (Transferor Representatives' Council):** Thank you, Chair, for your invitation and welcome this morning. It is a little while since we have been at the Committee, and we thought that we should refresh your memory of who we are and where we are from. We represent the three main Protestant dominations: the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church. Each of our Churches has a board of education, and we work together as three Churches in the Transferor Representatives' Council.

A number of years ago, my predecessor came up with the idea of a council to represent our three Churches, because there was strength in the three being together.

2265. Originally, the three Churches were school owners, and, as you know, most of our schools were transferred to state control in the 20th century. In return for that, transferors were given legal rights of representation in local schools and on area bodies or area boards, as they now are. Of course, transferors are also represented on the new Education Authority. That was all about ensuring that a Christian ethos remained in the schools that we transferred and that in their governance and in the regional body itself, where principals were appointed and where planning took place, there was an emphasis placed on the ethos in the schools. That was achieved in the early 20th century and persists today. We have been here a long time, in the business of the controlled sector especially. As transferors, we tend to speak about our role in the controlled sector, and many of you know that we were up here many times during the debate about the Education Authority.
2266. We are here today to speak to the paper that we gave you in October about the shared education inquiry that you are undertaking. As you know, in parallel with that is the Minister's consultation on shared education, so we may refer to some of the questions that he raises in that as well as some of the points that we made in our submission to the Committee. If it is agreeable, we will do that.
2267. From the outset, it is important to say that the Churches have been strongly in favour of shared education as a concept for quite a number of years. I think that we have even been here talking about it, incidentally, on the margins

- of other topics in the past. It has inspired and enthused us, and, if you look back at the records of debates in the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland over the past four or five years, you will find that each of our Churches has passed resolutions of strong support for the concept. We believe that, within it, there is the potential for so much good: in the educational outcomes achievable when schools work together and in the reconciliation benefits and community cohesion that can come about through contact and the process of sharing in an educational enterprise. As Churches, we have felt that it is a concept worthy of exploring and developing, and we have been keen to see it developed.
2268. Now that I have given the opening comment, my colleagues will say a little more on other topics of interest to you in your inquiry, rather than your hearing one voice all the time. I hand over to Trevor, and Donald will come in after that.
2269. **Rev Trevor Gribben (Transferor Representatives' Council):** Chair, thank you for the invitation. As transferors, we have strongly advocated the need for a definition of shared education. It can be a very nebulous term, and we welcome the move towards defining it. However, we express grave concerns, as we did in our response to the Minister's consultation, about the definition that the Department proposes.
2270. The definition that would sit much more comfortably with us is that proposed by the ministerial advisory group, which reported in 2013. The reason for that is the Department's inclusion in its definition of "socio-economic sharing", for want of a better phrase. We want to be very clear on this point. We believe that a lot of work has to be done to counter and deal with economic and social disadvantage in education and that such work is so important that it should have a particular focus. We also believe that huge work needs to be done on shared education by bringing together schools from different sectors and communities to share real educational experiences. We feel that attempting to mix the two in one definition could limit the potential of shared education to be very effective in Northern Ireland.
2271. We can illustrate the point by referring to an earlier departmental consultation on special educational needs, on which many of us worked incredibly hard. As Churches, we brought together a group of leading experts from this island and put in what we felt was a very credible submission, as did many other groups. We said at the time that the widening of the definition of special education beyond the accepted understanding would damage both the consultation and the prospect of moving forward in special education — that is exactly what happened. The other issues that the Department wanted to attach to special education through the redefinition were good and worthy in themselves, but attaching them to special education meant that much good work was lost. We fear that exactly the same could happen here. Let us deal with these two issues: both need to be dealt with, but let us not try to lump them together in a definition of shared education.
2272. Our response to the Minister's consultation also addressed the proposal to designate schools public authorities, thereby bringing them under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. As Churches, we are not opposed to section 75. Sometimes, we express concerns about its implementation, but we do not want to give the impression that the Churches are against equality. We are not; we are strong advocates of equality. However, placing on schools, and particularly small primary or rural schools, all the administrative demands of being a public authority under section 75 would, we believe, distract them from their real job of education. The sheer bureaucracy that would come with this designation would be counterproductive to education throughout Northern Ireland, so we have real concerns about that. I will come to another issue later, but, first, Donald will address one or two other issues.

2273. **Rev Donald Ker (Methodist Church in Ireland):** Thank you, Madam Chair. What does good shared education look like? We want to express strongly the view that good shared education will not look the same in every situation — the cliché is one size does not fit all. The Department and the Committee need to understand that local situations demand different local responses. It would be invidious to name any particular places. It could be that the fairly simple sharing happening in one place might not be perceived as all that significant, but the local context, its history and the community surroundings need to be borne in mind when seeking to evaluate what good shared education looks like. This has a couple of implications. It has an implication, first, for the inspectorate. If the inspectorate simply says that it needs to see A, B, C, D and E — in other words, it is simply a question of how the sharing fits into a pre-constructed template and no account is taken of the local circumstances and where the community has come from to get to the stage that it has achieved — we will have a difficulty.
2274. Secondly, we want to emphasise strongly that, even where a school is perceived to sit within one section of the community or governance structure, there is already, in a wide variety of cases, substantial cross-community sharing in schools. The population of any given school does not necessarily simply reflect its governance structure. Therefore, where sharing is happening within a school, there should be encouragement and incentive to help that forward.
2275. Where should the capital investment go? We are aware of the announcements made in the last 24 hours. Capital investment should go to places where shared initiatives already take or have taken place and where good outcomes — by “good”, I mean evaluated according to the local situation — have been demonstrated. We are asking for a flexible approach and a deeper understanding, which do not always sit easily with very tightly constructed definitions.
2276. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** I will address one additional issue, Chair. Lacking in the proposals in the Department’s consultation document is the role of sectoral bodies in shared education. We raised this in our submission to the Committee in October. At the very core, we are involved, as you are aware, in getting the sectoral body for controlled schools up and running. In the very remit agreed with the Minister for that body is the promotion of sharing between the different sectors, meaning that the sectoral bodies have to be not just an advocate for their own sector but a leader of that sector in sharing with other sectors. I am sure that we all have our own view of how we ended up with the Education Authority and the sectoral bodies, but we are where we are, and we are very positive about wanting to make that work and maximising the potential of the new era beginning in April. It seems to us that the Minister’s consultation and the various pointers on who will be involved almost totally miss the role of sectoral bodies. The controlled sector body will have a key role in promoting good practice in sharing, in working with other sectoral bodies to help to negotiate local situations and in coming together with other sectoral bodies to advocate together how sharing can be maximised in local situations. We want the role of sectoral bodies, which is, we feel, absent at the moment, to be written in very clearly. It is acknowledged in certain aspects of departmental policy, but — surprise, surprise — that policy is not always as joined up as it might be. In the document on shared education, no real role is given to sectoral bodies, yet the policy on sectoral bodies encourages them to become involved in shared education, which is what we want. That needs to be written in. It may be an administrative oversight, but we fear that sectoral bodies have simply been forgotten.
2277. We operate largely in the controlled sector, as you are aware, and we are perturbed generally, and specifically when it comes to shared education, that the controlled sector body will not

- be up and running on 1 April. Therefore, despite all the developments in shared education — we hope that the Education Authority and Department will lead on that and that the Committee and others will be involved — the controlled sector body does not have the capacity to operate. That is because, largely, it has not been possible to deliver on the assurances that we were given. We have been held up by what one might call bureaucracy. We are still without a chief executive or a body to advocate for the controlled sector in the area of shared education from 1 April; other sectors have publicly funded posts so that they can be involved in that work. We make that general point and attach it to shared education. We are aware that others are coming to talk to you later today and would welcome your exploring that issue with them, if you are so minded, Chair.
2278. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** I have a final point, which follows on from what Trevor was saying about a role for the controlled sector support body. A key role is in providing ethos support. I mentioned that the foundational ethos of controlled schools is characterised by a Christian spirit. Over the years, we have discovered that our colleagues, the Catholic trustees, are very keen to work with us on sharing because they recognise that controlled schools have a Christian faith foundation, as do their schools. We have, over a good number of years, had very positive conversations with our Catholic trustee colleagues, who are keen that we develop work together because of that common bond.
2279. We have been looking at the new concept of a jointly managed church school, which is a possible option for sharing in the future. We are all aware of the spectrum of options for shared education. One of those narrow points on the spectrum is the possibility of a jointly managed church school. That is where the transferring Churches and the Catholic Church come together to form a group of trustees — they would be the trustees of the enterprise — which nominates governors to sit on the school board alongside governors who come from parent groups and teachers. The school then becomes a new type of school, but it is founded on common Christian principles and on the interplay between the two sides, the Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church, which work together in an agreed way.
2280. We are keen to develop that, so the Department, to its credit, has been trying to devise a circular of guidance, which has been requested by a number of schools. We have been working together to finalise that, and it is at a fairly advanced stage. A number of ramifications need to be thought out, not least transport policy, but that is progressing well, and we see it as one option on a spectrum of options for sharing. Requests have come in to the Department from a number of areas for guidance on how that might come about.
2281. If it did come about, it would, in our view, be an integrated school, meeting all the criteria of an integrated school. Both communities are represented there at the heart of the governance and foundation of the school, and that goes right through to the ethos that is developed within it. If such a school could be devised and a pilot produced, it should have all the benefits that flow to and are enjoyed by the integrated sector — that is “integrated” with a small “i”, of course. That is one option for the future, and it comes about because the Catholic trustees are keen to work with us on the basis of a common bond.
2282. That was my final point. Donald, I think, will wrap up.
2283. **Rev Donald Ker:** Yes, and I will do so with what I hope you will not think a cheeky postscript. In so far as we are aware that initial teacher education is not the remit of this Committee, it seems to us to provide the opportunity for a good model for sharing. In the current situation, some enhanced collaboration between the two institutions particularly responsible for initial teacher education would be a good way forward, and we strongly encourage that.



2284. That is all we want to say by way of an opening statement, Madam Chair. We are very happy to respond to questions.
2285. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. You covered quite a number of issues, and I very much enjoyed that neat segue to the controlled sector body.
2286. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Thank you, Chair.
2287. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You were also kind to the Department when you said that the role of sectoral bodies not being in its paper was, perhaps, an “administrative oversight”.
2288. You mentioned the ministerial advisory group’s definition of shared education and pointed out that you have an issue with the focus on socio-economic. The new definition proposed includes terms such as “religious belief” and “political opinion”. What are your views on that?
2289. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We are not convinced that it is a useful change to the definition that the ministerial advisory group recommended, which would sit much more comfortably with us and does not include the word “political”. Let me illustrate our point: would it mean that two schools on the Shankill Road that were influenced by different groups in loyalism could be defined as collaborating in shared education if they were perceived to have different political leanings? We do not think that that is what shared education is meant to be about; it is meant to be about the two communities.
2290. We recognise that not everyone is churchgoing — from our Churches’ perspective, our job is to change that, of course — so some people may no longer define themselves as Protestant or Catholic. However, we are aware also that, in legislation, people are defined as being perceived to be from the Protestant community or Roman Catholic community. That is often how fair employment works, and it is how the Equality Commission works.
2291. Therefore, perceived Protestant or perceived Catholic, or perceived to be from a Protestant or Catholic background, is better phraseology than bringing the word “politics” into it. We are not against politicians; they are wonderful people, but we should keep politics out of the definition, if possible.
2292. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** I come back to Trevor’s original point about the socio-economic aspect. There are lots of towns and villages in this country in which the mix of people is limited. In some towns, there are no great socio-economic divides, and schools just happen to be placed where they are. The definition seems to rule out sharing where the mix of pupils is fairly homogenous. We think that the definition is limiting and are happier with the kind of thrust that Paul Connolly’s group came up with, which was about promoting social cohesion and community identity and so on, rather than placing it in the Bill as a must-do list of things that have to be covered.
2293. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Other than your comment towards the end about jointly managed church schools, which I will come back to, you have not really mentioned integrated education. The comment that I want to make is on the controlled sector. It is often, perhaps, misrepresented as a sector. Natural sharing has taken place in the sector over many years, and there is natural integration there already. Do you have a comment on that?
2294. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** You are right to say that there is some natural mixing in schools. The controlled sector was weakened because it did not have the same support as other sectors. Some schools in the Catholic sector have good mixes, and there are super-mixed non-denominational schools that have quite a range of religious identities. We have not really been opposed to integrated education. As Protestant Churches, our line has been that, where a community wished to develop integrated education and there was no threat to controlled school provision, we have supported it. We have supported communities that wished to engage in the process of controlled schools transforming to controlled integrated status. At the end

- of the day, the Churches still have a place in that kind of new arrangement. There are places for transferors in that.
2295. The downside is that the process has always been perceived as being one way. No maintained school has ever transformed. So the transformation process has been faulty from the beginning, and there is a sense of loss in our community when it happens. The sense of loss is this: although still involved in the controlled school that is created, you have two rather than four places, and, anyway, the maintained schools do not seem to change. In spite of all that, as Churches, we supported transformation where there was community support for it, because we felt that it needed to happen for social cohesion and reconciliation reasons.
2296. It has to be said that some transformations were panic transformations and were because of “last resort” reasons. Maybe they felt that they were not sustainable and that transformation was a way of becoming sustainable. Interestingly, there have been very few transformations in recent years.
2297. We have never been opposed to integrated education. Our main focus has been controlled schools, and defending controlled schools has been our key purpose. We have very good working relations with the integrated sector and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE).
2298. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** As Churches, we want to be clear in saying that we affirm schools that are formally integrated, so integrated with a capital “I”, as one form of sharing. We are opposed to the more purist line that it is the only legitimate form of sharing. The integrated movement has taken things so far in a relatively small number of schools and communities, but the concept of shared education has the potential of rolling out a much better future for Northern Ireland by encouraging people to work together, where they are able to do so, and to stop saying, “We cannot do everything” and start asking, “What can we do?”. I go back to Donald’s earlier point: while we have been one of the groups advocating that shared education needs be mainstreamed and not left to voluntary groups on the fringes — we welcome the Committee and the Minister’s involvement in attempting to do that — our fear is that every Department, not just the Education Department, in case people think that we do not like the Education Department, once things are mainstreamed, will want everything regulated.
2299. Take academic league tables. We all know the farce that is there, because the level that pupils achieve in an academic table depends on the pupils who go to a school. In the system that we have, a selective grammar school will probably achieve higher GCSE results than a non-selective secondary school in the controlled sector; that is obvious. The danger is that we will have league tables in sharing: “These two schools have maximised sharing and are wonderful, but these have done very little”. However, in that community that might be wonderful. We are yet to be convinced that the inspectorate and the Department can devise a scheme that acknowledges those small steps that are absolutely brilliant for that community. However, if you put it in a league table, it looks as if it is a failing shared education enterprise.
2300. Integrated education is one form of sharing; we do not see it as the peak or the new Jerusalem to which we are all heading. It works in some places; it will not work in others. We are delighted that our colleagues in the Catholic Church have embraced shared education and are talking with us about jointly managed schools. If this enables colleagues in the Catholic Church to participate fully in sharing where, perhaps, they have some concerns about the integrated movement, we should welcome that. We would hope that those in the integrated movement would welcome sharing and not see it as a threat to their existence.
2301. **Rev Donald Ker:** May I make a quick personal comment? I have four children,

- three of whom went to a school that would be perceived largely as sitting in the Protestant community while the other went to an integrated school. In terms of actual sharing and alertness cross-community, both schools delivered what I considered to be a high degree of sharing in understanding.
2302. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I want to return to the jointly managed Church schools. While controlled schools have a Christian ethos, generally they are non-denominational and would not necessarily be regarded as faith schools. How, in practice, would a jointly managed Church school work and how would it differ from, say, a Roman Catholic school or, indeed, an integrated school with a capital “I”?
2303. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** I will begin and Ian might come in on some of the detail. The first thing that we want the Committee to hear very clearly is that this would be a model that communities could embrace if they wanted to. We are not going into every village and saying that their controlled school and their maintained school must come together and be jointly managed because some communities are not ready and do not want to go there. However, some communities have already said that they do. The scenario is this: a small controlled primary school and a small maintained primary school in a village are both no longer viable, so close them both and bus the kids to the big town. The other option is a joint school.
2304. For some in our community, formal integrated status is not the way they want to go. Our Catholic colleagues have worked very closely with us and the Department on this jointly managed school. It will respect ethos and will have aspects of denominational religious education in it because that is respecting the ethos of those from a Roman Catholic background. There will be some general religious education in it, and there will be well-worked-out protocols for how differences are dealt with. We have an embryonic framework document almost agreed with the Department. We have been working on
- it for more than two years. As you can imagine, progress has occasionally been slow, but we have got there.
2305. We, as transferors, and our Catholic colleagues have almost signed off on that process. The Minister hopes to publish it as a guidance document for schools that might want to explore jointly managed schools. We recognise that there is potential fear of loss of identity and a fear of this being imposed on a community. That is not what we want it to be. Situations, which are not useful to name in public, have asked for this; they have asked the Churches to work together to deliver this. There are situations who will want to pilot this once the Department enables it to happen. We will want to talk to all kinds of people, political parties and the Committee about this more fully on other occasions, if you wish us to, once we get that document agreed between us.
2306. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** So, at this stage, you cannot share with us how it will work in practice.
2307. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Ian can give you some details.
2308. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** Some of the structural issues, particularly around governance, have been hammered out, as have some of the issues around ownership; we are almost there with that. We think that the nitty-gritty of the religious education aspect is likely to be resolved at a local level between trustees, for example. Each school will have trustees of the enterprise, nominated by the transferring Churches and the Catholic trustees. That group of local trustees will be charged with making the arrangements for religious education in a school. As Trevor suggests, it will be common RE that can be delivered to everyone. Specific sacramental preparation may also be made available, particularly at primary school, to Catholic children for their sacraments, which has to be part of the curriculum. That is a local arrangement. In the circular being devised at the moment, there are some

- gaps still to be filled in because local solutions will be found for them.
2309. It is about the confidence to do it. That is the point that Trevor is making. These requests are coming from the grass roots — from schools that want to do something. Perhaps they think, “The only way to preserve a school in this community is to work together with a solution”, so they have asked for this. There is a great willingness in some areas; it is not for everywhere, but some communities want to pursue this and explore it. So, it is at their request that we have been encouraged to do that.
2310. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Might this be something that could be explored for the Moy, for example, which has already made the step towards looking at a shared building?
2311. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Yes. For us, shared education at its best will always be evolutionary; it has to start somewhere, but it also has to go somewhere. We are not saying that it will all end up in a jointly managed church school, an integrated school or any particular model, but, for those schools that have begun to take steps down the road, this could offer something else on an à la carte menu that could be the option that they would choose. We would advocate the very best à la carte option that they could choose. We have had no conversation with Moy, but do not illustrate from that at all. This could be another step in the evolutionary process for schools that are already working very closely together — maybe even talking about new builds together. Internally, as Churches, we want sharing to be maximised, but we want it to work locally. This could be a good step in that.
2312. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks very much, Chair, and thanks for the presentation. I want to raise a couple of issues. Trevor, you expressed concern that you do not want shared education to overgrow itself. If I am picking you up right, you are suggesting that we should not be looking at socio-economic sharing and that it should be more community- and faith-based. I may not be taking you up right, but I take exception to the term that we hear all the time, “the super-mixed schools”. I grant that the religious mix may be better than in other schools, but the socio-economic mix in those schools is woeful. We have more affluent Catholics and Protestants sitting together in classes, but that is probably not doing a lot for community relations, especially in the areas that we need to act in. It is very important that we include socio-economic sharing. Am I picking you up right? What are your thoughts on that?
2313. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Thank you for coming back to us on that, Chris, so that we can be very clear. A major piece of work needs to be done on helping with socio-economic disadvantage in education. There is advantage in collaborating across socio-economic groups, to use that terrible technical phrase. However, we fear that lumping that in with shared education and with the definition of “shared education” produced by the Minister’s advisory group could, in some senses, harm the key principle of moving in that other aspect of shared education. Both need to move forward, but lumping them together could harm shared education.
2314. **There is an interesting phrase in the Minister’s definition:** “and socio-economic”. Ian has it here. It talks about “those of differing political belief and those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation”. Belfast is peculiar, with kids being bused in from all over the place. Take a provincial town, where the school that most Protestants go to and the school that most Catholics go to are basically the same socio-economically; there are not the huge divisions that there may be in some cities. Would those two schools be prohibited from developing shared education because they were not sharing across two different socio-economic groups? If people from a perceived Protestant background and a perceived Catholic background were going to work together in shared education were somehow inhibited

- because they did not have a socio-economic mix because they were reflecting their community, that would be crazy. That is our fear of putting it in as an “and”; if you do not have the socio-economic group, you do not tick a box and you do not access that funding. In certain communities outside Belfast, there are not the socio-economic mixes. There will always be deprivation, I am not saying that there will not, but building it in as a key requirement could damage the cross-community sharing that is so important. We do not want anything that could damage it.
2315. **Mr Hazzard:** I agree. I do not want any of this process to inhibit; that is why it is important that we look to be more inclusive. I have talked in the Committee before about the Coleman report in America following desegregation. Educational outcomes did not go up; there was no improvement whatsoever because they did not tackle socio-economic division in schools. They desegregated schools, which, of course, was right, but there was no apparent lift in educational outcomes. My worry for this process is that we will get so overlooked by the need to sit orange and green beside each other in classrooms that we do not look at the real reasons why educational outcomes are not as good as they should be.
2316. You talked a bit about the jointly managed school model, which is very interesting. How does it differ from an integrated school, for example? Are you looking at joint-faith models in England? Is that where that is coming from?
2317. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** We visited two in Liverpool: a primary and a post-primary and saw it at work. You cannot replicate what happens in Liverpool here because that was a mix of an Anglican school and a Catholic school, so it was just two identities. There were not so many Presbyterians or Methodists around.
2318. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** There is no place for Presbyterians in Liverpool.
2319. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** It is more complex here because there is a non-denominational element in the controlled sector. That is where we got the concept, and it works effectively. It is not a big player in the English economy of schools; it is a small component of their schools. There are still Church of England schools, Catholic Church schools as well as Jewish schools and Muslim schools. It is not a big player on the English scene, but we felt that it was worth exploring here. The conversations with our Catholic colleagues took us there.
2320. Your question was about the difference between “Integrated” — with a capital “I” — and this approach. The difference is that our Catholic colleagues are keen to be involved in the enterprise; they want to be there as foundation trustees. Our Catholic colleagues here are less happy with being involved in the integrated sector. I am not —
2321. **Mr Lunn:** Why do you keep looking at me? *[Laughter.]*
2322. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** — giving away any secrets. I do not know why I am looking in that direction.
2323. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We suspect that some questions might come from that end of the table.
2324. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** That is well known. I think that they feel some kind of consonance with us and what we are doing. They wish to be involved in doing that with us. If they are involved in the enterprise from the outset, it comes with the possibility of better community buy-in. I think that that is what we are looking at.
2325. **Mr Hazzard:** Again, I am thinking of going towards ownership, especially for controlled schools that did not transfer. Where does that issue take us?
2326. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** There are only a couple left. We have three Church of Ireland schools that never transferred. Trevor has one Presbyterian school.
2327. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** I have one Presbyterian school that is keen to transfer but cannot get the Department

- organised to enable that to happen. We are working on it.
2328. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** It is down to very small numbers.
2329. **Mr Hazzard:** Finally, who drives that process. Is it you?
2330. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** It is driven locally; local churches just decided not to transfer their schools.
2331. **Mr Hazzard:** I mean who drives that *[Inaudible.]*
2332. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** Oh, right. It has been driven by TRC and the bishops.
2333. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We have worked up the scheme, which will then be available for local communities to buy into if that is what works in a locally. If folk from the controlled sector and transferor governors came and talked to us, we would of course put the scheme before them. There would probably be an advocate for it if it is a local situation. It is not imposed, but, as transferors and Catholic bishops, we have worked up this scheme jointly with the Department. The Minister has facilitated us and provided officials who have been dedicated and focused on this.
2334. As one, I suppose, appendix of a shared education document, this is one way in which it might work. We also feel strongly — Ian made the point earlier — that it will fulfil every legal requirement in legislation of what an integrated school is, which, in legislation, has a small “i” — it is not a sector, but a concept — because, unlike in some other schools, which, for instance, Judge Treacy had problems with, it will be management and schooling that are shared. In every sense, we feel that, if other schools have benefited from legislation, these schools will benefit from exactly the same legislation.
2335. **Mr Hazzard:** It is an interesting development.
2336. **Mr Kinahan:** I am pleased to hear about the joint faiths. I sit here struggling with the definition. When I looked at it, what I found was that there was not enough flexibility in it. Any types of schools that felt that they could do more sharing of any type needed to be included in it. You seem to be pushing it just down the sectoral side, which worries me because schools may be in your sector, but you have different ethnic minorities and whole mixtures in there, whether you are talking about the super-mix school right the way through to one that is just a mixture of Protestant cultures. There are so many needing it.
2337. I would like to explore the sectoral side. Do you see the sectors as controlled and maintained or do you see the Governing Bodies Association as being another sector? In that case, we have to get you all to the point where you have the same powers and the same organisations. At the moment, we have difference in how each is set up. Do you see it as all the sectors or as just the main two?
2338. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** Our focus is on controlled schools and the controlled schools support body, but if other groups of schools have sectoral support bodies, we will work with them, of course, Danny. Some of us were involved in the Queen’s shared education programme and the PI programme in the North Eastern Board and the Fermanagh Trust. I have some experience of seeing that in action.
2339. What was interesting about the Queen’s one, with which we were closely involved, was that it was cross-sectoral across faiths and types of schools. You often saw little projects between a grammar school and a secondary school, a grammar school and a primary school or a secondary school and a special school. Each was interesting in itself, and there was obvious educational benefit in it. The thing that we have found from our experience is that the wider the sharing that is available, the better it can be. Particularly where there was sharing between primary and secondary or primary and grammar schools, there was sharing of expertise between staff and facilities that primary schools might not have had, which really did improve and enrich the quality of

- educational experience for children. We do not see it as a narrow focus on Catholic/Protestant sectors. We need to find ways right across the educational system of developing sharing. Those programmes at Queen's and the other programmes led the way. That may be the point that Donald is making: where there have been good experiences when schools have taken part in those programmes is possibly where we need to start to build and do more.
2340. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We felt that the definition that the Minister's advisory group came up with was a good one, that shared education:
- "involves two or more schools or other educational institutions from different sectors working in collaboration".*
2341. To add other things such as socio-economic is unhelpful. We refer the Committee to that definition of shared education from an advisory group whose balance, to be honest, we had concerns about. We had a challenging meeting with them because of perceived presuppositions of some of its members. However, it came out with that agreed definition, and we do not know why the Department has chosen not to adopt it and to add bits to it.
2342. That is our main point. It referred to sectors — we did not create the sectors; it was the Minister's advisory group that used that definition.
2343. **Mr Kinahan:** If we are to amend the definition when the Bill comes forward, we need to have flexibility in it. Last week, I asked the Department who should be the body that decides on flexibility. I asked, "If you were to keep it to your definition but just allow it to be flexible to look at other areas so that you could maximise sharing, who should that body be?"
2344. Should we set up a separate body that has you all represented, or should it be the Education Authority? Last week, the Department wanted the Education Authority to do it. Do we need a body that looks at other types of sharing as
- they arise so you are not stuck at always looking at set types?
2345. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** The Education Authority has a duty to consult sectoral bodies, so I would have thought that the Education Authority was the basis of it, but it has to involve the sectoral support bodies.
2346. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** The problem for us is that you can use "sharing" in its widest sense. It goes back to Chris's point: we agree with sharing between socio-economic groups, but this document has a specific definition of "shared education". We do not want that definition to be so widened that the core is lost. By all means develop and do all those other things — socio-economic, sharing with a small "s", and between other sectors and schools, whatever they might be — but do not lose the core definition of what shared education is. Do not ignore one of the core problems that we have in this community: we need to move from a segregated education system to more sharing in education. Do not lose that by adding all the other bits and pieces. That is our plea.
2347. **Mr Kinahan:** We also heard from the departmental witnesses last week that they felt that no extra resources were needed, given the difficult budget times that we are in. Yet they did at one stage say they might need a little bit of pump-priming, or words to that effect. Do you feel that there needs to be priming?
2348. We know that £500 million of capital is sitting there to be borrowed against, but do you think that there is a need, or can we just do it through the area-learning communities or yourselves? Can get away with not putting extra resources into it?
2349. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Can you do anything worthwhile without resources? The answer is no. How those resources flow is a key factor. For instance, a control sector body, if and when it ever gets up and running, will be funded. The Minister is committed to that, and we accept that commitment 100%, and we thank the Minister and the Department for it.

2350. The other sectoral bodies will also be funded. Part of their job will be to develop shared education, so some of the advisory, support, encouragement and promotion will come through sectoral bodies that will be funded, so it is indirect funding.
2351. There needs to be something to incentivise schools directly. Staff development will be important. There is no point in putting pupils together if staff are not equipped to deal with the difficult questions. We would be up-front and say clearly that there is expertise in the integrated sector that can be shared with schools that are developing shared education. We want that to be shared in the same way as the expertise of special schools in dealing with special needs children can be shared with other schools.
2352. There has to be investment. It is about how that flows. A dedicated fund called the shared education fund is probably not the best way forward. Every other sectoral body has obligations, including through staff development, for shared education through various funding pots.
2353. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you for your presentation. I was taken by Danny's comment about a little bit of pump-priming. The pump-priming is £20 million from Atlantic Philanthropies. That will certainly provide an opportunity to test the process. I wonder what happens when that runs out, but we will see; that is for another day. I want to ask you a bit more about your joint management concept. Donald, you said that it is not a case of one-size-fits-all. Frankly, does it mean two schools under one roof with joint management, or does it mean one school under one roof with joint management? What is your ideal?
2354. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** A jointly managed church school in our vision would be one school under one roof. There would be joint trustees, governance that reflected the community and the teaching staff and a common curriculum. It would effectively be a single school under one management.
2355. **Mr Lunn:** An amalgamation of the two schools, but retaining joint authority — not the Moy concept.
2356. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** In the sense of physical separation? No, it would be a single school.
2357. **Mr Lunn:** You said that you have had a lot of cooperation from the Catholic trustees, and that is good. However, when CCMS was here not too long ago, they set their face implacably against — it is all in Hansard — any attempt to amalgamate one of their maintained schools with a controlled school. They will not have it. Malachy Crudden commented that their remit is to open, close and maintain Catholic maintained schools. It was absolutely clear what they meant: before they would allow an amalgamation — I am staying away from the “I” word, whether a big “I” or a small “i” — they would close the maintained school and see the Catholic children going to the nearest maintained school. That is their attitude, so I am mildly surprised, and encouraged, that they are prepared to cooperate with you. They would not have sanctioned the Moy situation if that had meant an amalgamation of the two schools. They fought against it tooth and nail until it was obviously the solution that the community wanted. Are you satisfied with the level of cooperation that you are —
2358. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Perhaps I can put this on record: Moy is a local solution that is acceptable to the community, which we support. The Moy solution might evolve further, and we would not oppose that. We want to say that very clearly, in case there is any misunderstanding. It is a local solution that works, and we encourage that. The roles of CCMS and of the Catholic trustees are a mystery to a mere Presbyterian like me. Those people need to answer for themselves. CCMS is a statutory body with statutory functions, and it does certain things. The Catholic trustees are a different group; they effectively own the schools. We have been working with the Catholic trustees as colleagues. They are happy to



- develop a new model, but it is not there yet. If you ask the question now, there is no model called “jointly managed church schools”. There is no departmental guidance and no legislative backup if needed.
2359. Our Catholic colleagues have said that they will not go in the direction of integration with a capital “I”. We believe that this is a creative solution that can be embraced both by transferors and Catholic trustees. This could change the landscape. We do not think that it will roll out and every school in Northern Ireland will suddenly become jointly managed; we are not stupid. We believe, however, that it could be a local solution for a significant number of situations. If you ask the question now of a statutory body with certain statutory functions, you will undoubtedly get an answer. If you ask the Catholic trustees whether they are willing to continue to develop this model with transferors and the Department, you will, I assume, get a different answer, but, obviously, the Catholic trustees need to answer that themselves.
2360. **Mr Lunn:** There has been some progress in the Republic along those lines.
2361. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** There has. Education in the Republic is a totally different landscape. Donald knows much more about it than I do.
2362. **Rev Donald Ker:** We are starting from a small base. Yes, patronage of schools in the Republic is a very open question. The Department is now exploring the possibility of others being patrons. The Catholic bishops in the Republic have clearly stated that they do not necessarily want to be patron of nearly every school in the state. Changes are taking place there, and we sense that changes are taking place here as well.
2363. **Mr Lunn:** I am still thinking about joint management. If what you are proposing comes to pass and you get the right level of cooperation from the Catholic trustees or CCMS or both — I think it really has to be from both — that is fine with me. Everybody keeps looking at me when anybody says “integrated”. That would, in my opinion, be a pretty good solution.
2364. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We will write that down.
2365. **Mr Lunn:** Hansard is writing it down. As long as it means one joint school, not two schools.
2366. **Rev Donald Ker:** That is exactly the model.
2367. **Mr Lunn:** I am glad to hear that.
2368. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** “Alliance Party supports jointly managed church schools” will be the headline for the journalists at the back.
2369. **Mr Lunn:** They are around somewhere. That was the main question that I wanted to ask you but I wanted to touch on one other thing. I see in your paper that the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland passed a motion in 2014 supporting shared education. That is warmly welcomed. In the 40-odd years since the opening of the first integrated school, has either the general assembly, the general synod of the Church of Ireland or the Methodist conference ever passed a similar motion in support of integrated education?
2370. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** I am not as old as you, Trevor; I think that is an objective truth.
2371. **Mr Lunn:** I am really getting it today. *[Laughter.]*
2372. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** You do that to friends. To be honest, I am not sure. I am clerk of the general assembly, but I have not been around that long. I know that the general assembly has been supportive of integrated education where that is what parents and local communities want. That has been stated in reports, whether or not we passed a specific resolution. It is not just the general assembly, although we quoted its text in the paper. Exactly the same resolution was passed in the general synod and the Methodist conference. We purposely did that in the same year so that we, as education secretaries,

could go into the public domain as strong advocates of shared education with Church policy behind us.

2373. We wanted the general assembly, the general synod and the Methodist conference to have that debate. We had very good debates, and it was strongly welcomed, because it is evolutionary, rather than one-size-fits-all. It can work itself out in local circumstances, and we are strongly in favour of that. That is a good thing. There are lots of other things that we are strongly in favour of, but have maybe not passed resolutions about. That is a positive statement. We see integrated education with a capital "I" as part of shared education, so, by definition, we are in favour of integrated education where that is the appropriate solution.
2374. **Rev Donald Ker:** Whatever a body formally says, it is what actually happens on the ground that matters. If you look at the various schools under the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education throughout Northern Ireland, you will find support from Churches for what those schools do in governance and everyday life.
2375. **Mr Lunn:** I would not argue with that at all. I am pleased that you have passed such a resolution. I sense that there is a bit of relief out there that the emphasis has moved from the push for integrated education to what some people see as a slightly lesser way out, which is shared education. It is very difficult not to sound as if I am against shared education, because I am not; it has been going on for years. It is a perfectly natural thing to do, and it has educational benefits. I must say that the Department prefers to emphasise the educational benefit rather than the sociological benefits that you would, obviously and naturally, subscribe to. We will have to see where it all goes. I am encouraged by the joint management concept.
2376. **Mr Rogers:** Reverend gentlemen, you are very welcome. Your presentation has been very interesting, but even more telling is your response to some of the

questions that have been asked. Rev Ian, one of your telling comments was when you said:

*"there is the potential for so much good."*

2377. I get the sense of frustration that, maybe, the focus of education, never mind shared education, gets a bit blurred when we try to address everything. You have an ally, Trevor, when you say that Department policy is not always as joined up as it could be. There is frustration. Are there frustrations in respect of the entitlement framework and the proposed cuts, for example, or the entitlement framework with the early learning community, which is a fantastic way of developing shared education? Are there frustrations with recent funding? Maybe shared education needs to recognise more fully when good sharing is going on within one school, rather than having to make that link with a school from a different background.
2378. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** I recently talked to colleagues over coffee about a past life as a parish minister in my first charge in south Tyrone. The youth club in the village was in our church hall. That is all there was in the village. The youth club was 60% Protestant and 40% Catholic. We could not get any grants for cross-community youth work, and we had to work with a Catholic youth club to get those grants, even though, every Tuesday night, we were doing cross-community youth work. That was a fatal flaw in the Department's funding of youth work. There is a fatal flaw in shared education if the Department does not recognise that, in some places, it is happening within schools and needs to be incentivised. Children from different perceived communities are working and learning together. That can happen within one school; it happens in an integrated school. That is a shared education school, and that should be incentivised. It happens. I do not want to name schools, but we can all name schools that are perceived to be Protestant or Catholic but which have significant numbers of the other community within them. That needs to be affirmed and incentivised, as

- should schools of one group or the other working together. It has to be all-embracing. Whilst we want shared education to be mainstreamed, our fear is of any bureaucracy that wants to make it a particular type or no type. We want to guard against that as this progresses.
2379. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** Your point about departmental policies not always being aligned is a good one. In the midst of our discussions about the jointly managed approach, it became clear that the transport policy that existed was going to count against any kind of sharing in that way. To its credit, the Department has done some work on that and is making proposals around how that might be approached. That is the case with so many different aspects of the Departments' work. They are all working in different little silos; they are not always talking to one another. It is whenever you try something new that you suddenly realise that things run up against one another rather than work with one another. That has been our experience. It is a frustration.
2380. **Mr Rogers:** This came across in our visit to Moy, but we know it from our own communities as well: local context demands a local solution. You said that ETI must take that on board. That is a very relevant point. You could have two schools that are next door to each other in an urban environment, but it is very different in a rural environment, where you may be six miles from any school. How should ETI report sharing?
2381. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** As an art, not a science. That is probably very different thinking for those who want to fill in forms and tick boxes. I am not saying that inspectors just tick boxes, but this really is an art, not a science. Therefore, those who seek to assess it must come with that mindset. That is vital. That could be rolled out by ETI in lots of areas of education. It likes to measure against tick boxes and criteria; it does not recognise lots of good things that are happening, but that is a matter for another day.
2382. **Mr Rogers:** Yes, but you raise a very relevant point. In rural areas in particular, it can be much more difficult to work that through.
2383. **Mr Newton:** I thank the witnesses for coming today. I do not really have a lot of questions; they are more comments. I agree with the teacher training comments that were made. It was sad that the blunt instrument of budget was used in such a manner. It requires a bit more thought to achieve teacher training together.
2384. You have consistently referred to integrated education with a large "I" and with a small "i". For my children, my wife and I chose integrated education with a large "I": they went to Methodist College, which is the finest example of integrated education.
2385. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** How much did you pay him, Donald?
2386. **Rev Donald Ker:** I have to declare an interest in that I am a governor thereof. Thank you.
2387. **Mr Newton:** When the Committee held a meeting in the college, we were impressed by the initiatives that Methodist College had undertaken. It undertook those when, effectively, there were no incentives whatsoever. In fact, it might sometimes have worked against it. I was not aware that Methody had been stretching out on socio-economic issues. Indeed, it recognised that, in terms of contact with other schools that may have been in less favoured areas, it needed to provide practical support as well as educational support for the encouragement and the contact between Methodist College and local primary schools, and practical support when youngsters were able to get into Methodist College. If we can achieve that kind of model to address the academic issues and the socio-economic issues, there is a model that perhaps needs to be reflected in some way in where we are coming from.
2388. I will finish by saying that the comment about ETI needing to embrace an approach to achieving shared education

- as an art rather than a science is probably very telling and relevant.
2389. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** The area learning communities are the system's way of approaching sharing, in a way. The needs of driving a curriculum with 24 to 27 subjects should encourage schools to think about more of that sharing. Good educational outcomes should be a primary reason for sharing as well as the community benefits. We would like to think that that area learning community approach could be developed. Any reduction in the funding for that is concerning. Some area learning communities work better than others. There are some good examples of that, and some that have been not just so effective. That seems to us to be a key way of doing it. Sir George Bain pointed that out a very long time ago in his report into our education and schools system. That is probably the best place for that to begin and that is now going to be within the Education Authority's remit.
2390. **Mr Craig:** It is good to see you all again. I apologise for being late this morning, but I caught most of what you said. I was listening intently to what you were saying, Trevor, about how you were going to do a joint school, instead of having almost two separate schools in the one building. I am not playing devil's advocate but I am just curious about how that would work for you. There seems to be a bit of a stumbling block when it comes to the maintained sector, and that is the Catholic certificate. How would you get around that issue, or has that been agreed?
2391. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We have not got into the detail of that. There is a fairly high-level document, which is being drawn up by the Department with our assistance, but those kinds of issues do need to be dealt with. I am sure, Jonathan, that you are not trying to take us into a contentious debate about the Catholic certificate in religious education.
2392. **Mr Craig:** No, I am not —
2393. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** Good.
2394. **Mr Craig:** — because I think I nearly gave one of the bishops a heart attack on that issue.
2395. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We feel that we would be in a better place if such certificates no longer existed, and, if they did exist, were not used as essential criteria in appointments. They may well be desirable criteria, like a football coaching certificate or whatever certificate a teacher will come to interview with. Hopefully, before we ever get to a jointly managed church school, we will be in a better place with regard to the Catholic certificate, but we have not got into the detail of those specifics yet.
2396. **Mr Craig:** Again, do not get me wrong; I have absolutely no opposition whatsoever to faith-based education. I just have a question mark in my mind about whether the state should be paying for it.
2397. The Equality Commission was here last week, and I distinctly picked up that it had a raft of issues around the faith-based sector, which is not really the controlled sector. We know that, at present, it has little or no influence over that sector because of the exemption. Would you support the exemption staying or be happy to see it lifted?
2398. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** It is good to have the easy questions towards the end.
2399. **Rev Dr Ian Ellis:** We were involved in general discussions around that a number of years ago when the Equality Commission was reviewing the certificate. At the end of that review, there was a recommendation to OFMDFM that it should cease to be a requirement post-primary. I think that the Catholic Church since then, through CCMS, has probably accepted that it would no longer be a requirement for employment in the post-primary sector, but I think that they are strongly of the view that it is an essential component of primary education.
2400. We see movement in that they have accepted that it should be seen as no longer a requirement for general

employment in the post-primary sector. I suppose what Trevor has said is where we are: in an ideal world, we really ought not to have any such barriers. However, we recognise that Catholic parents send their children to school and expect there to be preparation for a Catholic way of life and a Catholic way of being a Christian. Around that, I guess, there needs to be a recognition that the teachers providing that education meet a certain standard for the Catholic Church. I think the room for wriggle within that is around who prepares the children for the sacramental aspects and whether there is enough common ground between the Churches to say that other teachers can teach common religious education. I think that that is what the discussion is around. That is where we are with that. It is up for discussion and, as I said earlier, these things will probably be decided at a local level.

2401. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** There are exceptions in all kinds of things but, on the wider issue of legislation generally, we believe that there needs to be a lot of discussion about this before steps that could have unforeseen consequences are taken. That is why we stated, in response to the Minister's consultation, that we would have major concerns about schools being designated as public authorities and coming under all of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. As we stated earlier, we feel that one of the unforeseen consequences of that would be the sheer administrative burden placed on schools to fulfil all the criteria that public authorities have to fulfil. That does not mean that we are opposed to schools developing equality etc; we are not. However, we feel that there needs to be a lot more consultation on the blunt instrument of defining schools as public authorities and sweeping away the current framework. To slip it in as a proposal in the midst of a shared education consultation is not the best place for it. It needs to be a separate consultation. There should be thorough discussion, and all of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities

and concerns about the proposal should be looked at.

2402. **Mr Craig:** It is an interesting one, gentlemen. Forgive me for asking those awkward questions; that was me thinking out loud. I find that the devil is always in the detail with a lot of this stuff. I take it that you would look more kindly on locally based solutions for local areas. That is what I am clearly picking up from all of you. There is another aspect to this: controlled schools and sectors get everyone from all backgrounds, including the Muslim background, which brings its own challenges in how you accommodate their faith. I know of local solutions that were found in Lagan Valley, and I have no difficulty with them. I wish you all the best in the efforts that you are making around shared education.
2403. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No other members have indicated that they wish to ask a question. Thank you for your presentation. Given your interest, you are very welcome to stay to hear the Department talk about the Education Authority. If you wish to stay in the Public Gallery, you are very welcome.
2404. **Rev Trevor Gribben:** We might stay for a little while, Chair. Thank you for your invitation and for having us today.
2405. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much.



## 25 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend

### Witnesses:

Ms Libby Robinson	<i>Edwards Primary School, Castlederg</i>
Mr Eamon McClean	<i>Speedwell Trust</i>
Mr Eric Reaney	
Mr Brian McGurk	<i>St Patrick's Primary School, Castlederg</i>

2406. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome the members of the Speedwell Trust to our meeting this morning. We have been joined by Mr Eamon McClean, the manager of the Speedwell Trust, Mr Eric Reaney, trustee, Ms Libby Robinson, principal of Edwards Primary School, Castlederg, and Mr Brian McGurk, principal of St Patrick's Primary School, Castlederg. Thank you for joining us. Please make your opening statement, after which, members will follow up with some questions.

2407. **Mr Eamon McClean (Speedwell Trust):** Thank you, Madam Chairperson and members of the Committee, for taking the opportunity to hear from the Speedwell Trust. We greatly welcome the Committee's decision to hold an inquiry into shared and integrated education. These two forms of education are of the utmost importance in helping to ensure that our two main communities in Northern Ireland can move forward constructively and with a greater degree of understanding than hitherto.

2408. Our comments will be confined to shared education, as our work involves supporting schools and implementing shared education but does not extend to the implementation of integrated education. We appreciate that there have been significant developments

since we made our submission in October, with the Sharing Works policy, the proposal to remove community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) funding and the significant injection of funding for the shared education project.

2409. The Speedwell Trust is a charity with 23 years' experience of delivering education programmes designed to facilitate constructive contact and greater understanding between children from different religious and cultural backgrounds. We are based near Dungannon, and we do a lot of work in the mid-Ulster area. Recently, however, we have been working in Belfast, Newry, Armagh, Craigavon, Magherafelt and as far down here as Castlederg and some places in Omagh. We have worked with well over 200 schools, and, last year, we worked with about 100 schools.

2410. We are not in receipt of any funding from the Department of Education. We get our own funding from different sources including, for example, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin and the European Peace funds. Recently, we got funding from the Tudor Trust in England, which supports the work that we are doing in Castlederg. Those funders recognise that there is a need. As we are all very aware, that need reflects the fact that the education system, comprising controlled and maintained schools, is primarily based along religious lines.

2411. Crucially, a recent Young Life and Times survey indicated that 24% of 16-year-olds do not have any friends from the other community. It also showed that 77% said that if there was a situation that allowed the facilitation of mixing and meeting, that would improve good relations. Taking those two points together, we believe that there is a huge need for more sharing of education. This evidence strongly supports the idea that there is a need. However, if shared

- education is going to form a central element of the Executive's approach to cross-community relations, as we believe it definitely should, it is essential that all involved are using the same definition of shared education and that any shared education will facilitate sustained and meaningful contact between children from the two main traditions on this island.
2412. We are, therefore, disappointed to discover that there is no clear statutory definition of shared education. The Executive seem to be using a definition that appears to allow collaboration, for example, between a Catholic grammar school and a non-grammar school, on one hand, and between a predominantly Protestant controlled voluntary grammar school and a non-grammar school, on the other, to be viewed as shared education. We appreciate that they are still working on a definition, but we believe that it should contain a line that says that sharing should be specifically between the two main traditions in Northern Ireland. We welcome the Minister of Education's commitment to introduce a statutory obligation to facilitate and encourage shared education. However, as I have outlined, it is essential that this relates to a cross-community definition of shared education.
2413. The need to require and encourage schools to participate in cross-community education is underlined by the fact that, in a recent survey of 568 schools, only 306, or 54%, said that they had been involved in shared education on a cross-community basis. That leaves 46% saying that they took part in shared education but it was not on a cross-community basis. Moreover, we found that only 15% of schools that had participated in shared education had done so in a way that involved the whole school. While we believe that shared education is a great concept and is very exciting, there is a danger of losing sight of the initial goal, which is central to the Speedwell Trust's ethos of bringing children together from both sides of the community.
2414. In conclusion, the Education Minister should bring forward, at the earliest possible opportunity, a statutory definition of shared education that makes it explicit that it must involve meaningful cross-community interaction between pupils on a sustained basis. Using this definition, the Department of Education must make it a statutory obligation for schools to ensure that all their pupils are provided with the opportunity to participate in shared education on a regular basis. We think that the Department should initiate an award scheme for schools. There are plenty of schools doing a brilliant job of promoting good relations and shared education, and I believe that these two schools in Castlederg are a great example of that. I will hand you over to Brian McGurk, who will say something about the work that they are doing.
2415. **Mr Brian McGurk (St Patrick's Primary School, Castlederg):** Good morning, everybody. I will give you a brief overview of our programme to give you an insight into what we do. I am the principal of St Patrick's Primary School, which is a Catholic maintained school in Castlederg, and Libby Robinson is the principal of Edwards Primary School. We have a programme of sharing. We use the Speedwell project for a large part of that. We start at nursery school, and we work through a musical pathways project. At the end of that, we bring parents together. That is like a gateway project; all the parents who come to our schools, both of which have nursery units, come in at the start of their children's schooling and see the work that is bringing the children together. Building on that, we bring P1 to P3 classes together, and they do school visits. Our kids visit Edwards Primary School, and vice versa. We look at nature and diversity in nature etc. That is really to build up friendships between the staff and the pupils.
2416. In P4 and P5, when you have all those things built up, we look at similarities and differences in people, cultures and religions. For instance, the P4s look at the issues of flags and different



- traditions in their communities. In year 5, the children visit all the local churches in the community and meet all the ministers and clergy etc. Moving into P6 and P7, it is a process of getting ready. We look at sporting opportunities in the community. We look at similarities and differences again. We involve the IFA, the IRFU and the GAA. The Irish Hockey Association has been used in the past as well. We look at all the sports that are available in our locality, and the children participate fully. In year 7, we link in with the council and Speedwell to do orienteering. We will have a new orienteering course in the castle site, which the council has facilitated. That is part of our work with Speedwell. It manages that for us. We meet it, and that is how that is done. We also have links through our extended schools work in the school. That is a much narrower focus on attainment; we are looking there at resourcing together and things like literacy and numeracy projects. We are sharing experience. We work with Border Arts, which is a local cross-community group in Castlederg. We do different projects with it. We link in with Strabane District Council, and we have worked in the past with the Donegal and Strabane partnerships. We have accessed funding from the Riverine project. We also work with the PSNI, and the primary schools come together through safety projects at different stages. We also go on field trips together in years 6 and 7; we do outdoor pursuits and visits together.
2417. Libby and I are involved in the Strabane principals' cluster. We meet regularly. There is also work around area learning partnerships for the secondary schools. It is a whole sharing of expertise. It is not a perfect model, but the whole emphasis is on children visiting each other's schools and sharing. It is built right from nursery through to P7.
2418. **Ms Libby Robinson (Edwards Primary School, Castlederg):** I arrived in Castlederg seven years ago. I have wider experience of being in London and Spain. I also did some advisory work on the board. When I got the job, my friends and family said, "You're not going to Castlederg, Libby, because it always gets negative press. There are 31 unsolved murders". There was real negativity. I arrived in the school and found all this amazing work going on. There have been lots of contentious parades in the town, and I wondered whether that would affect people's attitudes towards our programme and whether any parents would pull their kids out. There have been no abstentions on the part of any of the parents from any of the programme in our schools because it has been so effective. The parades passed off with silent protest, but everybody had the right to march and the right to protest. They all passed off peacefully. I attribute that to all the work that has been embedded and done at grass-roots level in the schools, thanks to the support of the Speedwell Trust. It is so effective because it is a whole-school approach. It is cross-curricular and diverse. It includes teacher development. It networks with the wider community, and it includes the environment as well.
2419. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** How close are the two schools geographically?
2420. **Mr McGurk:** We are within walking distance. It would not even be a mile. Would it?
2421. **Ms L Robinson:** No. It is probably half a mile.
2422. **Mr McGurk:** We often just walk across for projects. During bad weather, we bus the younger children down and up. We are both town schools.
2423. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Are both schools sustainable as regards their numbers?
2424. **Mr McGurk:** Yes.
2425. **Ms L Robinson:** We are actually oversubscribed.
2426. **Mr McGurk:** Both schools are close to maximum enrolment and growing.
2427. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** That is all very positive. Thank you. I will

- direct my questions to your comments on the definition of shared education.
2428. You were critical of the ministerial advisory group's definition, because you want it to include cross-community collaboration. Are you aware of the definition that is currently being considered by the Minister that shared education means the education together of those of different religious belief or political opinion and those who are experiencing significantly socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which will be secured by the working together and cooperation of two or more relevant providers? What are your thoughts on that as a working definition?
2429. **Mr McClean:** That must be a more recent definition, and I would definitely welcome it. There is a danger of losing sight of the overall goal of promoting good relations between the two communities here. If that is not clear, that sharing could take place between schools from both traditions, as I mentioned earlier, it is essential to have that clarity in the definition.
2430. In a survey by the Department of Education last year, out of the 568 schools that replied, 306 or 54% replied that they took part in cross-community activities. That means that 46% did not. There needs to be a clarity of definition to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate, and if it is shared education, it needs to involve our two communities.
2431. I know that there are different socio-economic areas and areas of ethnic minorities, but we cannot lose sight of the goal. Our ethos is that our two traditions need to share. If our society is going to progress more constructively than we have done previously, that needs to be in it specifically.
2432. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** A growing number of our population would consider themselves to be other or neither. How do you think they could be incorporated within that?
2433. **Mr McClean:** That may well be, but, in the education system, they are either in controlled schools or maintained schools — well, over 90% are. So, whether they describe themselves as other, they are bracketed into one or other religious grouping. There needs to be opportunities, even for those who describe themselves as other, to meet the other and form friendships or relationships, or at least have the opportunity to do so.
2434. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** OK. In your written presentation, you recommended that:  
*“The Department must institute a robust system of monitoring”*
2435. and evaluation. How do you think that that could be achieved for shared education?
2436. **Mr McClean:** I suppose that it is up to the Department of Education to do that in whatever way it will do it. All schools need to monitor exactly what they are doing and have good evidence to show what they are doing. Many schools might say that they are doing shared education, but they may not be doing the shared education that they are supposed to do.
2437. We go out to schools every day and have our monitoring forms. The schools in Castlederg do it all the time, and they are able to say what gender the children are and whether their background is Protestant, Catholic or other. They have all that evidence. They can show that they can actually do that and what backgrounds the children are from. We also look for evaluation every day to see whether it is working and, if it is not working, what we can do to improve it and to reflect on how we deliver the project. With the new shared education project, the Department, through the boards, will be looking at its own practices, and we think that it is essential that it does some effective monitoring.
2438. **Ms L Robinson:** Can I just add that it should be included at inspection level? I had an inspection last year, and there

- was no mention of all the good practice going on. If it is included at inspection level, it will happen.
2439. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You reflected that you have a cocktail of funding, but you do not receive any funding from the Department of Education. Is there a reason for that? Have you approached the Department, or have you approached it, and it had declined?
2440. **Mr McClean:** We got funding until 2007, and a lot of other organisations similar to ours got funding until 2010-11, when the schools community relations programme finished. With the ending of that, a lot of organisations like ours went to the wall, and with them went a lot of good experience. We felt that there was still an existing need, particularly when we get schools coming to us every year asking us to help them to facilitate activities, particularly those that may be sensitive. Brian talked about flags, symbols and emblems, and he talked about diversity and religion and visiting different churches and different sports. A lot of teachers do not feel very confident or comfortable in their own communities dealing with some of those issues. Yesterday, we were in Tobermore, and they have had a lot of problems recently with issues to do with different cultures and flags, and they want to address that. They are doing a project with their neighbouring school in Maghera, but they did not feel comfortable talking about contentious issues, and they were delighted that we could go in and do that. We feel that there definitely is a need for us to do that.
2441. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Can I ask everyone to check that their phone is switched off, because a phone is interfering with the recording? I apologise for that.
2442. You also listed some barriers and enablers. Do you consider the ultimate outcome of shared education to be about reconciliation or about educational benefits?
2443. **Mr McClean:** I think that it is a combination. I think that, ultimately, it is about the young person — the child — and their educational attainment. However, I think that both can complement each other. You can have adequate and very good shared education programmes that incorporate and improve educational attainment and outcomes. I believe that it is important that children get the opportunity to learn together, and through that, reconciliation outcomes will also improve. It is a combination.
2444. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I have a question for the schools. You have obviously witnessed educational and societal benefits in practice. Which of them would be a priority for you in schools?
2445. **Mr McGurk:** I think it is both. We have not mentioned the fact that part of the curriculum is personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU), so a lot of the work that we are discussing here is embedded in the curriculum. The work that we do enhances that. Whatever religious curriculum or PDMU curriculum you use, you look at diversity and equality and all those things, but then it is a work in practice, because we have the outworkings with sharing with Edwards, which is our neighbouring school. If there were other schools of different traditions or whatever, we would work with them as well.
2446. We talked about the Speedwell projects; however, we do not just take the Speedwell project down and let it facilitate for us. We pick and choose, and we remodel the programmes where we see as appropriate. I meet with Ms Robinson and discuss our projects. Aside from that, the other types of sharing that we have, such as extended schools, have a very clear focus on educational attainment. I think both things are important. Do you agree?
2447. **Ms L Robinson:** Yes, and so we extended the programme, about three years ago, to run right down to nursery. When I arrived, it ran from year 4 to year 7, so we took it on a practical level

- through topics on birds and mini-beasts, so that it was enhancing the learning as well.
2448. **Mr McGurk:** The teachers are building that into their planning and they are working on their science projects, ‘The world around us’ or whatever but, as I said, it is the added value that pupils are getting in working with children in their own community because of the way the school situation is.
2449. I would also add that we are not funded. We do not access funding from the Department at all. We either work with Speedwell or bid for money ourselves. We have approached and looked at CRED. It did not work for us; it did not do what we wanted it to do.
2450. **Ms L Robinson:** It was too narrow.
2451. **Mr McGurk:** We wanted to manage the project ourselves, and look at the curriculum that we wanted to give our children. Therefore, we just felt that CRED was not the right direction to go in. We have sent teachers out on training, etc, and one year, I think you applied?
2452. **Ms L Robinson:** We did not get it.
2453. **Mr McGurk:** We did not access funding. I would say that, yes, there have to be outcomes from what you are trying to do, but bringing people together is a skill in itself. It is a natural thing: children will generally bond. As they work through the school together, you can see real development. Border Arts did a survey; did they work with Peace III?
2454. **Mr McClean:** International Fund for Ireland (IFI).
2455. **Mr McGurk:** They said that, in Castlederg, 200 households were surveyed, and 74% of returns said that community relations were either “good” or “very good”; 68% of the households said that they would engage in cross-community activities. We do not over-publicise our work or anything; it is all quietly done, and what we are trying to do, as educators, is develop the children. That is the other thing: the responsibility as teachers comes from the teacher. It is not something that you add on. As a teacher, I look at what my children need. My school is situated in Castlederg, where there is a history of division, so, as a teacher, that is what my role and vocation is. Ms Robinson shares the same thing. Regardless of what funding is available or whatever files are on your desk, that comes from the teacher, and that is why our project is successful. It is not perfect, either; we know that there are things that we need to change in it.
2456. **Mr McClean:** I would just like to add that, in this project, I access funding through the Tudor Trust based in London. It is a two-year project. We put together a plan to work with four schools on a whole-school basis. We work with the schools to develop what they thought was the best way to deal with it, with education and reconciliation outcomes in mind. This is a work in progress, and I am delighted to report to funders that it has been very successful.
2457. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Once that funding is concluded, is there still a legacy left to the school?
2458. **Mr McClean:** There is.
2459. **Ms L Robinson:** It is in teacher development.
2460. **Mr McClean:** We are planning to do teacher development and teacher training this summer, so that teachers can take it on board and, hopefully, it can become a little more sustainable in future.
2461. **Mr McGurk:** We have been at this juncture before. For example, the schools community relations project stopped, and we continue to fund ourselves or bid for money by ourselves. If this project, funded by Tudor Trust money, runs out, we will sit down and look at what there is and, if we have to, we will generate the income from within our own schools, because we see the value in it. We are not really tied to funding, per se.

2462. **Ms L Robinson:** Yes, I think you can always access money somewhere. It is great to have the expertise and the skills of the Speedwell Trust to facilitate it.
2463. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** That is very positive. Maybe we should bring you along to a budget meeting, if you can always access money.  
[Laughter.] OK. Thank you very much.
2464. **Mrs Overend:** It is good to see you this morning. You do not work just with the pupils, but you continue to work with the teachers to give them guidance to continue the shared education after a project is finished, is that correct?
2465. **Mr McClean:** In this project, that is part of the plan. In the first year, we will establish it and organise it and work with teachers to set it up. In the second year, we will act in a mentoring role to teachers so that they will take more of a lead so that, hopefully, in the future, with adequate funding, the project can move on on its own. That is how we envisage the project working.
2466. **Mrs Overend:** That sounds good. So, it is more than just one-off projects.
2467. **Mr McClean:** Definitely. This particular project is whole-school over two years. We have also delivered projects with European funding. Children came together on six occasions, and we delivered teacher training to try to embed it more in schools and to expand it a bit more to give teachers more confidence and to give the children a real opportunity to make positive relationships with their peer group from the other school.
2468. **Mrs Overend:** Do you feel that you have more opportunity going down that way, and maybe that is something that you will do more of?
2469. **Mr McClean:** We would love to do that because we feel that we have the expertise to do it, but it all depends on funding. Coming down the line, we hope that part of the Peace IV criteria will be shared education, and we hope that they will support us in that field.
2470. **Mrs Overend:** OK. Is that how you feel you will fall into the Department of Education's future plans for shared education? How do you think you will fit into its aspirations?
2471. **Mr McClean:** We are not sure about how we will fit into it, although we would love to play a role in it. In 2010, when the schools community relations programme finished, we felt that, to quote a phrase, they threw the baby out with the bath water because a lot of expertise was lost. Since then, we have been going to schools all the time, and teachers have been telling us that they would like more support, training and help in the delivery of some of their programmes because they feel ill equipped to do so. We feel that there is a role there for us to work with schools and teachers to use our expertise, knowledge and resources. We have considerable resources to help teachers to work through it. In four years' time, when the money from shared education runs out, schools will become a little bit more sustainable, but we feel that they need assistance.
2472. **Mrs Overend:** I agree. If that is a goal of the Department, you would think that it should provide support and guidance; you are the experts, so it should be bringing in the experts or taking advice.
2473. **Mr McClean:** We have a lot of experience and we work with a lot of schools. Schools will not come back to you if they do not feel any value in it. Every year, they keep coming back and asking for assistance.
2474. **Mrs Overend:** How do you target where the need is? Do schools come to you? The Department will have to figure out who needs support to enhance shared education. How do you —
2475. **Mr McClean:** For the shared education project, schools will submit a proposal to facilitate it and then access funding to deliver it. How do we do it? Every year, we hold a teachers' information workshop. Usually, between 30 and 40 teachers come along to see what is available and how they can improve what they are doing in their schools and see

- whether there is any funding or help that we can give them. Our reputation goes before us.
2476. **Mrs Overend:** So, you get the word out to all schools that you feel you can reach.
2477. **Mr McClean:** Yes. Some schools do not take part in shared education for geographical reasons or because they are not in a position to deliver it; however, most schools in the mid-Ulster area and in the areas that we work in are taking part.
2478. **Mrs Overend:** OK. Thanks very much.
2479. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks for your presentation. The work that you two are doing is terrific. You have outlined to us the whole programme and how you graduate through it. It is marvellous. That is from somebody who would, perhaps, favour more emphasis on the integrated model. You could not diminish that at all; it was terrific. Obviously, that applies to you as well, Eamon. Where do your kids go when they leave primary level? Is there any evidence that they go to the local integrated school? Is there one?
2480. **Mr McGurk:** Generally, children from the Catholic maintained sector will go the Catholic schools. The choices are grammar or secondary schools in Omagh or Strabane. We have a diverse choice, because Castlederg is between Strabane and Omagh. The issue for me is this: what happens to all that work at the next level?
2481. **Ms L Robinson:** My chair of governors also chairs a local high school. Last year, he had lots of enquiries from the Catholic community to come into the local high school, so I know that there is a proposal now for more shared and integrated at that level.
2482. **Mr Lunn:** Is that the high school in Castlederg?
2483. **Ms L Robinson:** Yes.
2484. **Mr Lunn:** I am not all that familiar with Castlederg.
2485. **Ms L Robinson:** That is the next stage of development.
2486. **Mr Lunn:** Do any of your pupils come here? I presume that it is reasonably handy.
2487. **Mr McGurk:** My average class size is 35, which is what I have at P7. One or two pupils come to Drumragh annually, but children in the maintained sector will generally follow that pathway of education. That is my experience.
2488. **Ms L Robinson:** I do not think that Drumragh's criteria lend themselves geographically to the area. There might be a problem with —
2489. **Mr Nigel Frith (Drumragh Integrated College):** There is no geographical bias in our criteria.
2490. **Ms L Robinson:** I think that it is always oversubscribed as well, so there were definitely reasons. I know that some people thought about it, and there were reasons why they did not access it.
2491. **Mr Lunn:** I am not trying to trip you up. I just think that if there is evidence that, following all your good work, some parents feel moved to follow it through and encourage their children to think about the integrated school, it is further evidence of how well it is working. That is all I am saying. Eamon, do you do any work with integrated schools?
2492. **Mr McClean:** We do; we work with integrated schools in Dungannon, Cookstown, Banbridge and Magherafelt. The primary schools are very keen to participate in projects that will help the children to mix with and meet children from another sector. We did a lot of work in Phoenix primary school in Cookstown. There is a three-way partnership there between Cookstown primary, Holy Trinity and Phoenix. That model is being driven very carefully by the three principals, and feedback from teachers, children and parents is very positive. I think that they are moving on to try to do a bigger project in Cookstown.
2493. Some of the integrated schools are very open, as you probably are, about

- diversity and flags, symbols and emblems, but they are keen to learn about our diversity as well. My child goes to an integrated school. It is not just a matter of sitting together with children from a different tradition; it is also about looking at and exploring our diversity and our community. Many integrated schools are very interested and keen to do that.
2494. **Mr Lunn:** Last year, my grandson, who has just turned 10, told me that his primary, which is controlled, had been working with a local Catholic maintained primary, St Kieran's, and that they had had a day out in Parkanaur.
2495. **Mr McClean:** That is right.
2496. **Mr Lunn:** It has only dawned on me now that it was probably something to do with you. It was St Kieran's and Ballycarrickmaddy. He said that it was "class". I do not think that the sociological benefit had entirely dawned on him at that age, but it must sink in to some extent. Fair play to you.
2497. **Mr Eric Reaney (Speedwell Trust):** I will address Trevor as "Trevor", because we have known each other over the years. One of your comments made me think that we focus very much on the work and projects that are done through the schools, but the question of what comes after that is interesting for Speedwell and its location in a superb forested area at Parkanaur.
2498. Their summer programmes, and other programmes such as Halloween activities, attract people who were there often many years before. That is quite interesting. Some of your volunteers, I think you would agree, Eamon, were with you at primary stage, but when they are in teacher training or looking at the next stage of their career plan, they come back and volunteer.
2499. To be involved in such hands-on work is very good for a young person, but it is also very good for them to be able to share with whatever experience comes after. Sometimes, it is hard to get the statistics to prove that the practice is happening on a year-by-year basis.
2500. **Mr Lunn:** You work a lot in the Dungannon area because that is where you formed. Did you work with the two Moy primary schools?
2501. **Mr McClean:** We did. We have done and still are. We find that their relationship is very good. They do a lot of work together, and we come in and facilitate programmes with them. I know about their project. Our role is to assist the schools in facilitating good relations between them.
2502. **Mr Lunn:** Some of us find the proposed outcome of the Moy situation a bit strange, to be honest: two schools under one roof, two boards of governors, two uniforms and separate classes. I hope that it is not a sustainable solution; I hope that over the years common sense will prevail.
2503. You must have been involved down the years in the coming together of those two schools. I do not want to put you on the spot, but do you not think that a more obvious solution would have been to bring those two schools together into one school?
2504. **Mr McClean:** There are different opinions on that; you highlighted that yourself. In my opinion, it is a long-term project, and I hope, as you said, that over 10 or 15 years common sense will prevail and that sharing will take place in that building.
2505. **Mr Lunn:** Sharing will take place in the building.
2506. **Mr McClean:** Yes, but more integration will take place as well over the years. Something needed to be done so that the controlled school in that town did not close and the children bussed elsewhere. It was a goodwill gesture as well to try to keep the balance right in the town and to keep both schools in the town.
2507. **Mr Lunn:** You are not funded by the Department. Do you get co-operation or encouragement from the Department?
2508. **Mr McClean:** We generally do not have much contact with the Department.

2509. **Mr Lunn:** I thought so. I wish you well. I am not being critical at all, but I am slightly discouraged by the fact that the outcome of all your good work does not translate into more. In every poll, 75% to 80% parents say that if there was an integrated solution in their area they would use it. Even after the encouragement that you give your children — I do not mean encourage them to go to an integrated school but the encouragement to see both sides and learn from each other — I am surprised that there is not a bigger impetus or momentum towards that. You say that some of your children go to play at the local high school, and that is fine but —
2510. **Ms L Robinson:** I suppose that, long term, it will probably become an integrated post-primary. The long-term vision of many people in the area is probably that it will become integrated.
2511. **Mr McClean:** Trevor may not know that the Catholic secondary closed down.
2512. **Ms L Robinson:** Right, you do not know the geography of it.
2513. **Mr Lunn:** I did not know that the Catholic secondary school had closed down.
2514. **Mr McGurk:** I am the principal of a school in the Catholic maintained sector — that is where my roots are — but that does not preclude me from developing cross-community relations. I have no control over parental choice. I sometimes feel that people try to squeeze cross-community relations into primary schools, and we do not want to face up to the fact that perhaps we need to address it at second level. I cannot talk for second-level schools, but sometimes I think that some of the things that we are asked to address at primary level are not age-appropriate. Parents have the choice of some very good schools to pick from because of our geographical location. We have Strabane and Omagh, and, every year, about 60% of our kids, maybe more, go to grammar schools. That is a big thing, and that is parental choice as well. That may preclude people from applying to integrated schools.
2515. **Mr Lunn:** Finally, is there a sector, Eamon, in Northern Ireland that you would like to see more actively engaged in what you do?
2516. **Mr McClean:** By “sector”, do you mean controlled, maintained or Irish-medium?
2517. **Mr Lunn:** I can put it another way. Do you get much encouragement from the grammar schools?
2518. **Mr McClean:** We do not have much involvement with grammar schools; most of our work is done in primary schools. We do some work at second level, but we do not have much involvement with grammar schools.
2519. **Mr Lunn:** Is that by choice or because they do not express much interest?
2520. **Mr McClean:** They do not express much interest. We work with Aughnacloy College, St Joseph’s College in Coalisland and St Ciaran’s College in Ballygawley, but the bulk of our work is done at primary level.
2521. **Mrs Overend:** In mid-Ulster, there is one grammar school, the Rainey, and it is already naturally integrated. There are no other grammar schools in mid-Ulster.
2522. **Mr Lunn:** I was not making that point at all. From what you say, the work that you are doing with the grammar sector is largely with the Catholic-maintained grammar sector.
2523. **Mr McClean:** Our work is really confined to the primary area, and, on, occasion, we work with second-level local schools, but not so much with grammars.
2524. **Mr Lunn:** Fair enough. Thanks very much.
2525. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I do think that it is difficult to draw conclusions in relation to what happens at post-primary level in the area outside of what happens in Drumragh, given the fact that we have not had any conversations with those schools. That would be difficult for us to do today.
2526. **Mr Newton:** I thank the members for coming today. I have not met the Speedwell Trust before, so it is a



- new experience for me. I will ask a couple of questions of the Speedwell Trust and then maybe one to the two principals. When the Chair was reading out the definition as being refined at this time, she indicated that a socio-economic aspect was being taken into consideration now. Indeed, you placed your emphasis on the two main traditions mixing.
2527. It is not peculiar to inner-city areas where there is underachievement; nevertheless, many schools in difficult inner-city areas have suffered much over the years. Could you see the potential in a definition that would include the socio-economic aspect of maybe a controlled school from an affluent area working with a controlled school from a difficult, challenging area? The Catholic maintained sector could do exactly the same, and that would see the benefits of shared education addressing those problems.
2528. **Mr McClean:** It is definitely not one size fits all. Considering the Speedwell Trust's ethos, mission and constitution, we wanted a specific line in the definition to allow children from both our main traditions to take part in activities. I know where you are coming from regarding underachievement, particularly in urban areas. That is a specific problem that needs to be addressed, and the Department needs to look at whether that would involve primary schools and second-level grammars working together across the economic areas.
2529. I am not sure whether it could be done through shared education. It is a serious problem that needs to be addressed, but we are looking for the definition to include reconciliation outcomes. As you know, we are a society emerging from conflict, and we would hope if there is a huge amount of money being pumped into shared education, that it involves the two main communities. I do not personally have a lot of experience working in the areas that you refer to, but we think that our two main traditions should primarily be taking part in shared education.
2530. **Mr Newton:** There is the Catholic maintained sector and the controlled sector, but we are sitting in a school that has achieved much and which has a huge amount to share with other schools that are not in the integrated sector. Why would it not be possible, within your definition, for a school such as Drumragh to become involved with a Catholic maintained school or a controlled school under shared education?
2531. **Mr McClean:** There is no reason why it cannot. It can, and I hope that there will be a possibility that schools —
2532. **Mr Newton:** That is not the two distinct traditions.
2533. **Mr McClean:** Ninety-two per cent of our schools are divided along religious lines, and 6% or 7% are in the integrated sector. However, there is nothing precluding schools, like the integrated sector, mixing and sharing with any other sector. We work with schools in Cookstown, Dungannon, Banbridge and Magherafelt. We facilitated a programme last year between the integrated and Irish-medium sectors, and they shared the experiences of the Irish-medium sector. It is possible for the four sectors to share their experiences and views. In saying that, 92% of schools are affiliated with either the controlled or the maintained sector, and that is where we would like the focus to be.
2534. **Mr Newton:** OK. Can I ask the two principals — I greatly admire what you are doing and thank you for it — about the good work that they do inside the school? Do you see any evidence of that happening outside the school? Is it influencing the communities in Castleterragh to mix and to work together on projects, other than school projects?
2535. **Ms L Robinson:** We hire the Alley Theatre at the end of every term for a huge dance project. That is facilitated through Border Arts, and all the parents come together and get involved in it, so yes, there is evidence of it.
2536. **Mr McGurk:** I go back to the survey produced by Border Arts. Seventy-four

- per cent of the population of the town believe that there are good or very good relationships. A lot of things are outside our control because children traditionally meet at schools, sporting clubs and certain organisations. We do not have control over modelling that, but there is a lot of sharing between the children. Our aspiration is that children who leave our schools will have made friends, developed an opinion on people from the other side of the community and will be good citizens moving forward. Beyond that, it reflects on Northern Ireland in general. It is fair to say that the children select the activities.
2537. Ms L Robinson: I am thinking of all the activities outside school in Castlederg. There is a very successful drama club, and kids from both sides of the community go to that. They develop their confidence and self-esteem through putting on plays and go the local feis for verse-speaking. It is very successful. Parents use shared childcare facilities run by a local community group.
2538. Mr Lunn: I just want to clarify what you said about Castlederg High School and its future. Did I pick up from what you said that the ambition is that it would perhaps become — use whatever word you like — mixed, integrated or amalgamated? Are you looking towards an integrated solution in Castlederg?
2539. Ms L Robinson: I was not aware that you did not know the geography. St Eugene's closed down, leaving one high school, which I know has had lots of enquiries from the Catholic community. I think that the vision would be for that.
2540. Mr Lunn: Whose vision?
2541. Ms L Robinson: The board of governors. It had quite a few enquiries last year and this year from the Catholic community, and it is looking at addressing that.
2542. Mr McGurk: I cannot move away from the fact that most of our kids go on to Catholic maintained education. They are satisfied with it, and it is high-quality, so they opt for that. There probably was an opportunity in Castlederg 10 years ago. There have been a lot of closures there because of the sustainability issue. When I went to the town about 11 or 12 years ago, there were about 12 schools; there are maybe seven now. People are looking at solutions now, but, looking back, maybe we should have done so then. That is the reality. There are only a certain number of pupils. We share with Castlederg High School on sporting projects and so on, and I have strong links with the principal etc.
2543. Ms L Robinson: It is a natural progression.
2544. Mr Lunn: You know how an integrated solution has to come about. You seem to be quite good at surveys in Castlederg. It would be interesting to see a survey of the population's opinion on that proposed solution.
2545. Mr McGurk: I think that about 70% indicated that they would opt for an integrated solution. As I said, I am here as principal of St Patrick's, and Catholic education exists across the world. That is how I view it. It is here, and my job in the school is to meet the demands and needs of the community. I feel that we do that adequately.
2546. Mr Lunn: I am sure that you are. Absolutely.
2547. Mr McGurk: It goes back to parental choice. We encourage parents to look at all schools — in Strabane, Omagh and the integrated school here. That has been borne out in practice, but it is down to parental choice.
2548. Mr Lunn: I am with you on parental choice, and I have absolutely no hostility towards the faith schools or the Catholic maintained sector. I am encouraged by your saying that there is, perhaps, a feeling that this would be the inevitable, logical solution.
2549. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for your written presentation and for coming to speak to us this morning. It was very interesting and an important part of our inquiry.

## 25 February 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend

### Witnesses:

Mr Caen Fahy	<i>Drumragh Integrated</i>
Mr Nigel Frith	<i>College</i>
Ms Zara Hemphill	
Ms Cara Monaghan	

2550. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome our witnesses. Nigel, will you please introduce yourself and the other witnesses? After an opening statement, members will follow up with questions.

2551. **Mr Nigel Frith (Drumragh Integrated College):** Thank you very much. First, welcome once again to Drumragh Integrated College. We are delighted that you have gone to the trouble of coming down to see us today. I am slightly disappointed at the turnout, and we would welcome an opportunity, if possible, to follow up on another occasion. Nevertheless, we are delighted that you are here. We look forward to sharing lunch with you, and there is the offer of a tour this afternoon. We hope that as many as possible will take advantage of that.

2552. The primary purpose of our presentation is to give the students a voice and to let you hear from young people directly. I am delighted to introduce to you to Zara Hemphill, who is already a politician and is campaigning to join the UK Youth Parliament. She may tell you more about that in a moment. Cara Monaghan is our head girl, and Caen Fahy is our head boy. I suggest that each of them speaks, starting with Caen, followed by Cara and then Zara. I will follow up at the end, if that is OK.

2553. **Mr Caen Fahy (Drumragh Integrated College):** Hello, and welcome to Drumragh. I have been asked to speak about integration, which has been a major influence on my life and moulded the student and individual I am today. I feel privileged to have been at integrated schools for the entirety of my education. Throughout the years, I have had friends in Catholic and Protestant schools. This, in itself, has raised my awareness of why Drumragh is different. Today, there is still hostility between schools, which I see daily. My point is that this hostility — this judgement — does not exist in Drumragh. Even today, seven years on, I may not know the religious and political beliefs of students in my year.

2554. President Obama shone the global spotlight on integration during the G8 summit. Along with others from Drumragh, I was lucky enough to attend his Waterfront Hall speech. Obama discussed how ending segregated schooling in Northern Ireland was essential for lasting peace. President Obama is not naive; nor am I. Supporters of integrated education know that, by itself, it cannot cure all our troubles, but it is a step forward that we need to take. The demand for integrated education is here, now more than ever before, and poll after poll tells us so. Yet so many students are not given the opportunity to attend an integrated school, which I do not think is fair. Integrated education was addressed in the Good Friday Agreement and described as key to peace in the future. I will leave Drumragh at the end of this year with something that other students may not have, namely a facet of understanding and open-mindedness.

2555. A recent student of ours, Shauna Mulligan, spoke at the open day last month. Shauna, who had recently graduated from university in multicultural London, discussed how integration had benefited her outside school. She

specifically mentioned job opportunities. When asked how she would mix with different religions and cultures, her answer was simple: integration, which meant that she had mixed every day, had prepared her more than anything else could. In my opinion, the message is clear: integrated education heals division; integrated education is fair and considerate; integrated education encourages people to achieve their ambitions. The question I ask is this: can the same be said for shared education? Can it achieve what integrated education can achieve?

2556. **Ms Cara Monaghan (Drumragh Integrated College):** Good morning. I am the head girl at Drumragh and am lucky enough to have been in integrated education for my entire academic life. I describe myself as lucky because I feel that integration provides the perfect backdrop for learning, as all students are supported and allowed to prosper, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or ability.
2557. I understand the concept of shared education and admire the aim of bringing people together and breaking down the potent barriers in our education system and in our day-to-day lives here in Northern Ireland. Shared education gives two schools a chance to interact in a way that they would not otherwise do. People are judged by their character, interests and hobbies rather than by the uniform that they wear. However, I see weaknesses in shared education that do not exist in integrated education. Schools are still separated by building, religion and uniform. Schools may partake in shared education one school day a week, but what about the other four days? They still experience a segregated learning environment, mixing only with their own religion. One day a week is not enough to overcome the divide between communities. In integrated education, this divide does not exist. For five days a week, everyone works and learns together, wearing the same uniform. Segregation is a word that has no place in a school like Drumragh. Every ability is catered for,

from those with special needs right through to academically highly gifted students.

2558. I believe that our community and civic leaders should be more vocal in their support for integrated education, which is, I feel, the most obvious solution to bringing our polarised communities together. When I was at primary school, the 11-plus test was compulsory, and I got an A. When this comes up in conversation, I am asked why, if I had the ability, I did not go to a grammar school instead of Drumragh. First, I am from a mixed marriage family and feel that, having experienced integrated education from the age of four, I would have found it difficult to settle in an environment made up of predominantly one religion. More importantly, I feel that the education that I have received here at Drumragh surpasses anything I could have learned in a grammar school. Drumragh has taught me to be accepting of everyone.
2559. This is my last year at Drumragh, unfortunately, but not my last year in integrated education. For many students, university is their first experience of an educational or social environment with different religions and ethnicities. I have applied for a course in London, which has been described as the most multicultural city in the world. People from segregated schools may find it difficult to settle in such a vibrant and diverse city, having never experienced anything like it before, but I feel that my time in the integrated sector has more than prepared me for this transition.
2560. Recently, a good friend of mine moved from a local grammar school to Drumragh to complete her A levels. I asked her what positive differences she saw between her old school and Drumragh. Immediately, she mentioned the atmosphere — how everyone was so friendly and welcoming — and how easy it was for her to settle in. She talked of how the year group mixed as a whole rather than separating into small groups, as was the case in her old school. She went on to say that the student-teacher relationship here, with mutual respect

- between staff and students, was a world apart from that in grammar school, where there was an “us and them” mentality. She felt that this was what made our environment so appropriate for learning. Last week, here in our school, she experienced her first ever Ash Wednesday service. She said that it was lovely that we managed to include the whole school in a traditionally Catholic day, crediting how it was explained that those who wanted to receive ashes were welcome to do so but those who did not could use the service as a time to reflect. I do not get ashes, but I use the service as a perfect example of how the whole school comes together to respect and celebrate everybody’s differences.
2561. Integration has sculpted me into the individual I am today. One day, I hope to teach the strong values that I have been taught at Drumragh to my children. Instead of clinging to the hatred and segregation of the past, we need to look forward to a brighter and more united future. I feel that quality shared and integrated education will play a key role in how successful this future could be.
2562. **Ms Zara Hemphill (Drumragh Integrated College):** I am a sixth form student. Integration has always played a major role in my life. As I was brought up in a mixed marriage family, I have always been aware of and known how to respect different cultures and beliefs.
2563. Although I was brought up a Roman Catholic and attended a Catholic maintained primary school because there was no local integrated primary school that I had access to, it was in my primary education that I became aware of and learned about different prejudices and views towards different religions and beliefs. The fact that my primary school was located in a rural village meant that few or none of the other children had ever come into contact or mixed with people from different religions or backgrounds. Looking back, I feel that this left those primary-school children at a disadvantage because they did not know how to interact with people who were in some way different from them.
2564. Even though we had shared education trips and activities with the local Protestant school, often the two schools did not mix or work with each other simply because most of the children did not want to mix with someone from a different religious faith. This often left me in a very awkward situation as I had family and friends in both schools. I did not know how to respond to the situation. It seemed as though, if I mixed with a Protestant primary school, there would be a slagging off from my classmates, and, if I did not mix with the other primary school, I would be annoyed at myself for not communicating with those whom I was friends with. This was an extremely confusing time for an 11-year-old. I did not understand why I could not mix with both schools without anything being said or any remarks being made.
2565. Fortunately, here at Drumragh, you can mix with anyone, and no one passes judgement on who you are friends with and who you are not. Everyone here is so accepting, which makes the college atmosphere so calm and relaxing and the school such an enjoyable environment to learn in. As we are all constantly mixing and working with pupils and teachers from different backgrounds, you do not pay any attention to what religion they are, the colour of their skin, how they look or what type of background they come from. Instead of paying attention to the exterior of the person, you are paying attention to the person on the inside, which is what truly matters. Drumragh is like a huge family where you can fully accept everyone, no matter what. The school’s motto, “Excellence for Everyone”, really sums up what integration means to me. It means that the same standard is for everyone, and that standard is excellence. I love how everyone is treated so equally here. That is so welcoming and refreshing as you are assured that you can truly be yourself and still be accepted.
2566. Being a pupil of Drumragh has truly benefited me and prepared me for life when I leave school. Receiving

- integrated education for the past six years has enabled me to be confident to mix with anyone from any social group and background. It does not faze me at all. The fact that I grew up in an environment where everyone is equal and treated exactly the same gives me great comfort and reassurance. I believe that integrated education is the only way forward for Northern Ireland and will bring all communities together so that we can all live in peaceful coexistence. Someone needs to take the first step forward in integrated education. Here at Drumragh, we are doing that together.
2567. **Mr Frith:** There are a few points that I would like to make, but I am uncomfortably aware that I have just been completely upstaged and that there is no effective way of following what you have just heard. However, these are the points that I would like to make. My submission to you began with a quotation from Dr Martin Luther King. Students at Drumragh know that rarely a month goes by without my quoting him from this stage in an assembly. This is the one that I would like to quote for you this morning:
- “We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.”*
2568. Whether we are talking about integrated or shared education, the starting point for me is whether our education system is teaching children to walk the earth like brothers. Yes, we need academic excellence and results matter — I can talk with pride about the academic results achieved in this school — but it has to be much more than that. The point of a school and an education system is very much the young person, not just the results that they leave the school with. I am talking about seeing the wood as well as the trees — the big picture and the vision. For me, that has to be that the school that a child goes to plays a central role in transforming their mind, heart and values and that the ripple effect of that leads to a better Northern Ireland.
2569. The debate is whether that should be achieved through quality shared or quality integrated education. I think that either should be encouraged and facilitated. You will not hear me say that I think that shared education is a terrible thing. In fact, I do not particularly like the gap between the shared education lobby and the integrated education lobby. I want to be clear on this: integrated education and shared education are two distinct things. Last May, Judge Treacy made that very clear and reaffirmed the fact that the integrated sector is definitively that: the way that it is run, and even the way that the board of governors operates, is distinctively integrated. He said clearly that a school either is or is not an integrated school.
2570. Shared education, where it is of quality, should also be facilitated and encouraged. In my mind, I am moving towards a continuum. Whether it is integrated or shared education, the continuum includes, at one end, the Rolls Royce impact and, at the other end, the wheelbarrow impact. Whether you are looking at a shared education project or an integrated school, the Rolls Royce end says that whatever is happening is having a transformational impact on the lives, values and attitudes of the children experiencing the project or school. Where it is of quality, it should be encouraged and facilitated.
2571. Somewhere in all of this is my favourite academic theory, which is called the contact theory. It is my favourite because it is very simple and powerful. It simply says that the more time young people spend in contact with each other, the more likely there will be a meaningful impact. The project that Zara described to you had relatively little impact, in her opinion, because, I am guessing, there was relatively little contact. Although what happened between the children could be called shared education and thus tick a box, the limited contact involved suggests that it was perhaps down towards the wheelbarrow end. Therefore, in Zara’s evaluation, it had relatively little impact

- on the lives of the children who took part.
2572. Integration achieves everything that I am describing, as Cara said, by having the children in one uniform and in one school five days a week. Everything that they go through together is together. Even the Ash Wednesday service and traditionally separated events are integrated here in one way or another. We do not have separate events for different members of the community. We never send children off to another room and say, “Forgive us, but you are not part of this particular event or ceremony.” We do it together so that mutual respect and understanding emerge very naturally.
2573. One of the most integrated environments in the entire school is the football ground at lunchtime, when children naturally decide that they want a game of football and choose for themselves who they like and who they want to be friends with. There is something very natural and organic taking place there. The youngsters here are as human as anybody else, and we occasionally have the odd manning up, rolling up of sleeves and fisticuffs, but it is never over religion or background. It might be over a bad tackle in a game of football. It might be because a row on ‘Facebook’ the previous night about whose boyfriend is whose rolls into school the next day — welcome to the world of young people — but it is not over religious difference.
2574. As we speak, they are sitting beside each other in class in this building and learning that those barriers do not matter. They are encouraged to have their own ethos, background and values. Nothing is watered down or swept under the carpet. Crucially, there is never an attempt to say that we are all the same — in fact, quite the opposite. What we are saying here through, for example, the Ash Wednesday service that was described for you, is “Yes, we are different, so respect it. Be who you are, and respect each other’s differences actively and openly”. The integrated sector does account for approximately 7% of Northern Ireland’s school population. Some people are saying, “That is not very much, is it?”. Actually, it is a phenomenal achievement bearing in mind that most of that was achieved through parent power. If, traditionally and historically, over the past 30 years, there had been the kind of backing for the integrated sector that is currently being put into shared education, I think we would be looking at a phenomenally different statistic from the 7% we are looking at today.
2575. To ensure the effectiveness and impact of shared and integrated education, I would like to explore for a moment some of the requirements that I think could make it live and real. The first is that, in my opinion, the new draft shared education Bill should sit alongside the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, and they should be seen as being equally important. The reason is that if we are achieving this transformational impact on the lives of young people either through shared or integrated education, we should be saying, through our funding, evaluation and statutory representation at every single level, that either is to be supported, encouraged and facilitated regardless, if it is achieving the impact we are looking for.
2576. I think that shared and integrated education should be placed on the continuum that I was describing earlier and supported, or not, depending on, first, whether they achieve the Rolls Royce impact and, secondly, whether the reasons for undertaking it are the right ones. In other words, we should not allow ourselves to be distracted by whether funding is available. If shared education funding is for four years, the big question, and the deep intake of breath, after the four years is going to be, “What now?” The hope of course will be that something lasting will roll forward. Brian and his colleague this morning were inspirational in saying that, without funding, they still believe in the vision of shared education. That was brilliant. My hope would be that we will see a lot more of that. The irony is that

- they deserve funding because that is their attitude and approach.
2577. We need to know that whatever is going on is sustainable. Transformation takes time. I suggest that four years will not be enough to see anything except the smallest of buds and shoots appearing above the ground. If we are talking about something to have effect, it will take more than four years. Crucially, in the world in which we live, whatever happens has to offer value for money. Ironically, in any community, integrated education is one of the cheapest and most cost-effective ways to have the impact that I am talking about on the lives of young people.
2578. Integrated schools should be able to receive funding in the same way that shared education projects can. The current approach bothers me a little bit; the requirement that it must be between at least two schools. I suggest that we should be able to bid for funding and receive it for achieving exactly the same goals under one roof as we would if we were co-operating with another school to that end.
2579. It would be a step forward if schools were offered the choice of either opting into a shared education project or considering the possibility of transforming to become an integrated school. Again, if they were to be given equal weighting, and schools were to explore choice on the basis where they were presented as equally important options, equally live, equally viable and equally supported, even down to the funding available, I think we would be taking quite a dramatic step forward. Picking up on Trevor's comments earlier, I would be interested to know which option parents would actually want within their local community.
2580. I also think that NICIE should be involved, as a vital experienced voice, which indeed should be a more statutory one, in any of these debates. It seems to me that if you are giving the balance of power in any educational debate to the education and library boards, soon to be one authority, and CCMS, you are essentially giving it to the bodies that have greased the wheels of the system that we have seen for years. I am not sure why we should expect anything particularly different if we are asking them to move forward into the future. It does seem to me that a greater bringing to the table of all the relevant bodies, including NICIE, would generate a more healthy debate and a greater chance of something changing for the better. I think that both models should be considered within area planning. Both should have clear and equal statutory voices on the new education authority. A lot more work needs to be done in each community to help parents to understand the choices available to them. I believe fundamentally that historical inertia and the status quo need to be challenged or I fear that nothing much will change.
2581. I would like to finish with the concluding paragraph of my submission to you. It reads like this:
- "In a society that is scarred and struggling toward real peace, it seems completely obvious"*
2582. — to me anyway —
- "that young people should be educated together — all day, every day. A central goal of integrated education is the transformation of young people's hearts and minds. This is achieved by actively helping them to respect difference and encouraging them to form friendships that break down barriers. This is not always easy, but it matters. And so we can shape a future that includes tolerance, peace and healing."*
2583. Thanks very much.
2584. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation. Can I particularly commend your students for their words this morning? We really appreciate that and the level of passion you have brought to it. Thank you very much.
2585. Nigel, you mentioned the gap between the lobbies for shared and integrated education. They are somewhat divided over the priorities within both, whether it be educational attainment over societal



- benefits and reconciliation. What is your view with regard to the integrated sector? Is it educational attainment versus community reconciliation or are they both equally important?
2586. **Mr Frith:** I am going to say that they are equally important, but I would be interested to know what our student speakers think on that as well. Guys, which is more important: educational attainment or the more personal impact of integration?
2587. **Mr Fahy:** I agree that they are probably equal. They are both major contributors to the school as a whole.
2588. **Ms Monaghan:** I do not think that you can call yourself a success story if you come out with no qualifications, but, in coming together as one school, they are equally important.
2589. **Ms Hemphill:** I believe that they are equally important too. You need both in order to succeed. One is not more important.
2590. **Mr Frith:** We put as much work into educational attainment in this school as we do into the business of integration. I will give you a couple of examples. We have live tracking and monitoring systems. We have mentoring systems to help children achieve their best and we use the phrase “personal best”. This is not an ethos where you either achieve an A or you have failed: this is an ethos where if you were predicted to get an E in one of your GCSE courses and you come out with a D, well, that is cause for celebration because you have exceeded your personal best. We take that very seriously.
2591. We have abandoned the traditional concept of study leave. When our children finish on the Friday with their traditional timetable, the irony is that we are saying, “Excellent. Well done. We will see you on Monday”. When they come back in on Monday morning, the majority of them are coming to a whole new timetable of revision classes. Teachers work with them until the day before or even sometimes the very day of the exam and continue to teach.
2592. These are just small examples of ways in which we take educational attainment very seriously. Our results speak for themselves. They are significantly above the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools. The grammar school results are in a different ballpark. Obviously, if you feed something in at one end, do not be surprised at what you get out at the other. For an all-ability ethos, our exam results are high. It is because we balance both priorities very clearly and very seriously.
2593. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** What collaboration do you have with other schools in the area?
2594. **Mr Frith:** First, we are an active member of the Omagh learning community and an equal partner with eight other schools in the area. The majority are within Omagh itself. St John’s Business and Enterprise College, Dromore, and Dean Maguirc College in Carrickmore are part of the community as well. At principal level, we collaborate every month. The primary goal is to ensure that students can access the courses that they need. If we cannot provide the full range of courses here, they head off to one of the other schools. At a very daily level, what that literally means is taxis pulling up at the front door, students heading off to other schools and coming back when the lesson is over. While that seems like a very simple outcome, it actually takes quite a lot of planning to get around the practicalities, as I am sure you are aware. However, we also collaborate in other ways; the careers teachers work closely together, and the special needs coordinators have a level of collaboration.
2595. I was telling Robin earlier that, in the autumn — in October — we had a joint careers day for the teachers from all of the member schools. As all the schools came together, that had tremendous pulling power for employers across Northern Ireland, who came down to join the conference. The point of the conference was to make sure that the careers advice that we give is relevant, up to date and reflects the modern world, because a school can become a

- kind of a bubble and you can be offering well-meaning advice but missing the fact that you are not aware of how the world out there is changing and shaping itself around us.
2596. A number of the contributors were employers, including local companies and PricewaterhouseCoopers. They talked about entrance requirements and the fact that they employ English graduates, which challenged my stereotypical understanding of PwC as a company.
2597. There is a range of levels of collaboration within the learning community. We also work with local primary schools. Our vision at the moment is to develop stronger links with three in particular. There is the integrated primary school here in Omagh, and the vision is that it is going to move in next door to us within the next three or four years, so that generates all sorts of new possibilities. There is also Gibson Primary School and Omagh County Primary School, so our primary liaison work at the moment is directed primarily towards those three, but we are open to working with other primary schools as well, and, indeed, we have students from other collaborative schools coming in here as well. It is not just our students going elsewhere.
2598. **Mrs Overend:** I commend you all for your presentations this morning. I was really impressed, so thank you very much. In fact, when I indicated my question, you answered it before you finished. Some previous witnesses to Committee talked about how other schools in other sectors have changed over the years and do not have just one religion in them. Are you aware of this or do you feel that the sectors need to be recast? Furthermore, what do you feel that you do differently to, say, a controlled school that already has a mix of religions in it?
2599. **Mr Frith:** It is possible that there are some schools that are so genuinely mixed that they are already three quarters of the way to being integrated, and I commend them for that.
2600. **Mrs Overend:** What do you mean three quarters of the way to integrated? Surely they are integrated then, in all but name.
2601. **Mr Frith:** Let me unpack that a little bit. It is a good question. Judge Treacy was interested in that question and it became one of the key points he ruled on in the end.
2602. To go back to the experience of being in court and listening to Judge Treacy; there was a moment during the court case when the Department's barrister said, "My Lord, we are interpreting article 64 of the 1989 Order to mean the education together at school of Protestant and Catholic children. My Lord, there are many schools across the Province that are doing just that and they are outside of the integrated sector". Judge Treacy said, "Oh yeah; I know of schools all across Northern Ireland. There are schools here in Belfast that are doing that. That is great". At that moment, I thought, "OK; well, we're going to lose the case". In his final ruling, he actually wrote, "On first appearance, it would look as though shared education can fulfil article 64 of the 1989 Order. However, upon closer inspection...", and he then went on to outline his findings.
2603. One of them was that if you are a controlled school by design you are required to have a particular ethos in the way you operate, the way you are governed and the way you run. While you may be welcoming children from another background or sector of the community into your school by design, you are not going to be as equal as one sector, which is the integrated sector. He said that the integrated sector was the only one that he could see that, by design, from the very beginning, grass-roots up, even to the way that it is governed, is set up to be completely equal to every single child and every single background.
2604. In practice, that means that we balance our intake. There is a very healthy balance of Catholic, Protestant and those who, for whatever reason, designate themselves as other. It is not

- a minority of one or the other. You are walking around in a school community where the numbers are fairly well balanced and there is that sense of equality, even if you are aware of other children's backgrounds.
2605. There is also the fact that, given the way we operate, there is a deliberate bias and emphasis on things being done with equality to all. That can extend into the religious education curriculum, and staff here are acutely aware that the delivery of the curriculum has to be in a completely balanced way because every single background and culture is represented in the classroom. It is the same with history. Brenda, our head of history, is sitting behind me, and I imagine that she wishes she could chip in at this point. History is delivered here in a very thoughtful and very strategic way, and it is deliberately designed to encourage youngsters to embrace history, learn the lessons of history and explore the questions that emerge from it, along with giving them a range of skills that will prepare them for adult life.
2606. It is the same in our assemblies. The example of Ash Wednesday was quoted. Because of the emphasis on absolute equality and choice here, we have the whole school community in the school hall and we go through those experiences together. To choose another example; Remembrance Day is often seen as being primarily a Protestant time of year. Here, we run an education programme through form teachers on personal development in the run-up to Remembrance Day, and we establish the principle that we all surely regret that life was lost through conflict and war, but the wearing of a poppy is down to individual choice. Children here either wear a poppy or do not. It is entirely their choice. There is an overriding emphasis on delivering things with absolute equality that, I think, often makes the integrated experience different. Let me say this again: if there is a shared education experience that offers the same, it is to be applauded, encouraged and supported in exactly the same way as I believe integrated education should be.
2607. **Mrs Overend:** I appreciate that. Thank you very much. There are areas where the community is not equal in numbers. In an ideal world, there will be integrated schools. If that is the ideal scenario but the population is not balanced, how would you fix that?
2608. **Mr Frith:** We have that here.
2609. **Mrs Overend:** There are other schools available. I know that you have equal numbers here, but, if all the schools were to be integrated, how would you fix that?
2610. **Mr Frith:** I will come to that. I was really saying that the community mix of Omagh and Strabane is predominantly Catholic, and so we do deal with the challenges of getting a reasonable balance in this school. The real answer to your question is that I do not think that the key defining factor in deciding whether a school is integrated or not should be its religious balance.
2611. **Mrs Overend:** You said that you start off with —
2612. **Mr Frith:** You aim for it, and we do that year-on-year. Let us say that we are talking about a rural area; we could use Castlederg as an example. People there are talking about their one remaining post-primary school and deciding whether to transform it to integrated status. I do not think that what the community mix will be if they do that, or not, should define that decision for them. It should be about what the school will do once the children are through the door. That is what decides whether it calls itself integrated. It is about the way it operates and, as I described earlier, the practice in the classroom and beyond it. It is the practice that defines integration, not religious balance.
2613. I believe, for example, that the only post-primary school in a rural area and with a heavy bias towards one side of the community could still be legitimately and effectively integrated. I would want

- to know what that school is doing for the children who make up its population.
2614. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you; I appreciate that.
2615. **Mr Lunn:** I do not need to ask you questions; every question I might have asked, you have answered, all four of you, in your presentation. I will just say this: I was quite proud of the three pupils; you did so well. I am sure you were too, Nigel.
2616. **Mr Frith:** I was.
2617. **Mr Lunn:** You are absolutely right in saying that you were completely upstaged.
2618. **Mr Frith:** I know.
2619. **Mr Lunn:** You dealt with it manfully. Honestly, I do not have any questions. Not to be political, but I think that it is more important that others on the Committee — and it is a pity that not more of them are here — ask you questions. I am a long-term convert. I will just ask you one thing about sporting activities. Do you find that there is a reasonable crossover between the two traditions in the sports that you play?
2620. **Mr Frith:** Yes, there is.
2621. **Mr Lunn:** Am I right in thinking that you won a schools' Gaelic championship at some level in recent years?
2622. **Mr Frith:** We did.
2623. **Mr Lunn:** What was it?
2624. **Mr Frith:** It was the McKee Cup. It was an integrated schools split. Yes, we are proud to say that we are the winners, and I am grateful to you for bringing it up. Thank you.
2625. **Mr Lunn:** I bring it up at every opportunity. It was relayed to me by a Sinn Féin Member during a debate in Stormont. I was challenged to disavow the notion that integrated schools played only football and rugby, and somebody passed me a note saying that Drumragh was the holder of that Gaelic cup. Fair play to you. I do not know if you played in it, Caen.
2626. **Mr Fahy:** Yes, I did. I play a number of sports.
2627. **Mr Lunn:** I have nothing but praise for you. Keep up the good work.
2628. **Mr Frith:** I wonder if we could put your question to our three student speakers. What have you seen of sport and the balance of sports in the school?
2629. **Ms Monaghan:** Up until fifth year, PE is a compulsory subject. You do at least two periods of PE a week. Throughout the year we took part in netball, hockey, Gaelic and gymnastics. I was part of a good few school teams. There are integrated competitions for a range of sports, and we are quite successful. I did not hear any uproar about, say, hockey being a predominantly Protestant sport, or Gaelic being a Catholic sport. Everybody participated, and there were no problems. That is probably down to the ethos of the school. Nobody has a problem with people of different religions and political views playing together.
2630. **Ms Hemphill:** I agree with Cara. PE was more exciting, because you got to try different sports. I went to a Catholic primary school, so I would never have been introduced to the likes of hockey or rugby. It was through PE that I learnt how to play those different sports. It was exciting to experience sports that I would not normally have been able to experience.
2631. **Mr Lunn:** Do you play rugby?
2632. **Ms Hemphill:** The girls play tag-rugby.
2633. **Mr Fahy:** In my year, and probably in many other years, the goal is to win. We formed the best team for every sport; Catholic or Protestant does not matter. Maybe Catholics are better at Gaelic, but then some are better at hockey, and each team had their best players. It was always about getting the best team to win whatever the sport. It is really good to play loads of different sports throughout the year, rather than playing

the same one all year. You get to use different skills.

2634. **Mr Frith:** That answers it. We deliberately run a wide range of sports and make sure that sports that could be construed as being linked to one community are included in the school experience. Personally, I love it when I see a little chap pottering on his way home in the afternoon. The parents ask: “What have you been doing today?”. If he says, “I do Gaelic on a Tuesday and rugby on a Thursday”, that is beautiful. That answers the question, I think.
2635. **Mr Newton:** Like Trevor, I do not have any specific questions on integrated education, but I would like to pay tribute to the students for the presentation. I fear for our political futures if Zara is elected to the UK Youth Parliament and embraces politics as a career. I wish you every success in whatever academic route you take.
2636. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
I thank you for your presentation and echo the comments of members. You did extremely well this morning. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us.
2637. **Mr Frith:** Thank you for the opportunity.



## 3 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mrs Teresa Graham	<i>National Association</i>
Mr Justin McCamphill	<i>of Schoolmasters</i>
	<i>Union of Women</i>
	<i>Teachers</i>
Ms Gillian Dunlop	<i>Ulster Teachers' Union</i>
Ms Diane Nugent	

#### 2638. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome Teresa Graham, Northern Ireland president of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT); Justin McCamphill, the national official from NASUWT; Gillian Dunlop, past president of the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), and Diane Nugent, past president of the UTU. You are very welcome. Thank you for coming. You may make an opening statement, and members will follow up with questions.

2639. **Ms Gillian Dunlop (Ulster Teachers' Union):** We have come as two separate unions, so, with your permission, representatives from each of the unions will speak. I teach at a controlled primary school in Lisburn.

2640. **Ms Diane Nugent (Ulster Teachers' Union):** I am from Park School, special educational needs.

2641. **Ms Dunlop:** The Ulster Teachers' Union represents 6,000 teachers in all sectors. We feel that the funding

by DE of two separate management systems — the new Education Authority and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) — is not conducive to shared education or, indeed, a shared future. Shared education can go forward only on the premise that both sides are willing to engage in a process where there could be common ground and understanding of the purpose of shared education. The Education Authority and the CCMS do not appear to have a consensual understanding or demonstrate a shared structural system that models the Department's vision for education. These apparent barriers in the management system inhibit shared learning and need to be addressed urgently if progress is to be made. In this respect, UTU still believes in a single education authority. Recently, there was also the contentious proposal to merge the teacher training colleges, and UTU believes that this is a missed opportunity in the Province.

2642. In the interim, where there is a significant political impasse, shared education has to be a conscious part of the political discourse, and there has to be genuine systemic change. The membership of UTU support the policy and the proposed legislation to advance shared education; and we will reply before the deadline next week. UTU is willing to engage and provide examples of cost-effective practice that already exist — we are not recreating things — and that work for the communities we serve.

2643. The main mechanism for enabling shared education is sound investment. UTU believes that failure to provide this investment is a false economy. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has stipulated in many reports that countries that invest in education programmes recover from austerity much more quickly. In Northern Ireland, such investment also

- helps to secure a shared future for us all. Over the past few years, a lot of the funding has come, as we are all aware, from Atlantic Philanthropies. Schools also draw down a lot of EU Peace money, and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) has provided much needed support for all shared education practices. We acknowledge that Queen's University Belfast has taken a lead role in much of the work.
2644. The community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) policy and 'Classrooms Re-imagined: Education in Diversity and Inclusion for Teachers' (CREDIT) courses for our teachers have been welcomed by UTU and schools. Unfortunately, not all schools have been able to avail of this because of funding. We were horrified to hear, after the consultation ended, that funding is being withdrawn from CRED. If funding can be drawn down from Atlantic Philanthropies, we certainly feel that the CREDIT training and CRED programme should stay.
2645. **Ms Nugent:** We also believe that this Committee should recognise that cohorts of schools have been involved in the Queen's University Belfast shared education programme since 2007. In my own experience of leading a shared education programme, which involved two special needs schools and a university, the pupils benefited greatly from their experience of sharing. Now that the three years of funding and the effective work have finished, the momentum gained by pupils, staff and the communities in each school has stopped. Due to lack of funding for the ongoing projects, the schools are back at square one. Unfortunately, no one in DE had the foresight to continue the funding and fulfil the vision.
2646. Some examples of shared education practice are as follows: the enhanced qualifications framework; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in rural primary schools, and shared teacher initiatives, which were evaluated and found to be successful, with benefits for the economy, education and for reconciliation. 'How to Create and Maintain Primary Partnerships' was an excellent publication, but the project was never rolled out across the Province, and, sadly, as for all the effective initiatives, the funding has all but ended, with the result that the good work is now operating on a skeleton budget or not at all. The momentum gained from sharing has been dissipated, and if funding is not provided to ignite the successful transformational work that was being carried out then it has been all but lost.
2647. DE needs to make shared education mainstream as soon as possible: there have been enough pilots and research to show that it works. There is a wealth of evidence highlighting that, where clustering occurs, neighbouring schools that work cooperatively are able to make more effective use of the resources available, whether it is through, as Gillian said, CRED, the social investment fund (SIF), or the entitlement framework. Indeed, at the UTU/Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) joint leadership conference in November 2013, each of the primary and post-primary schools from across the Province highlighted, in their presentations about shared education, the great impact of sharing not only on their schools but on the local community. These examples were not contrived, but were real, verbatim accounts of the success of shared education and the pride those communities had in their creativity, innovation and imagination. The Education Minister stated that this is what is needed to advance shared education.
2648. Such advancement was made possible by the autonomy of schools to find ways to support the most vulnerable children in their localities. As a result, shared education leaders have demonstrated the capacity to take risks and break vicious cycles of hatred, ignorance and single-mindedness in many of their communities. It is those negative views that continue to blight much of the work in our education system; and shared education, we believe, can help to address or, indeed, eradicate that.



2649. New buildings can also help to create a good working environment on neutral territory, and UTU welcomes the ongoing commitment to the shared education campuses programme. However, if we are to create a culture of shared education, we are dependent on the quality of our teachers, and the same investment has to be made in continuing professional development of teachers, as in the CREDIT modules at Stranmillis and shared education at Queen's University that is available to teachers in all sectors. Teachers need support on how to enable collaboration, and schools need coordinators to lead shared education, with roles recognised and teachers remunerated for their leadership skills and expertise.
2650. **Ms Dunlop:** How can we ensure that all schools in Northern Ireland engage in shared education? UTU believes that the current funding model of bums on seats and the selective system militates against sharing, as it puts schools in competition with one another. Schools need to be supported to become innovative in their approach to enrolment, and that means addressing the detrimental competition between schools and sectors and, instead, promoting Every School a Good School.
2651. Unfortunately, this Committee and the Assembly continue to demand league tables and school results from the Department, the publication of which creates turmoil and competition for us. Schools and communities are very apprehensive about sharing. As trust is the social glue of any community, these actions erode the bedrock on which shared education must advance.
2652. There are already workable models across Northern Ireland, such as in Ballycastle and in the west of the Province; and school leaders and boards of governors should be afforded the autonomy to decide what model best suits the needs of the pupils, staff and school communities.
2653. **Ms Nugent:** To return to finance; one example of how all pupils could benefit is through a shared education premium that would be incorporated into the funding formula. The Minister, as I am sure you are aware, announced a £58 million budget for the next four years. If we take it that there are 335,366 pupils in Northern Ireland, according to the October census, then we can do a calculation. If we divide the £58 million by that number of pupils, it gives £172.95 per pupil that could be spent on education within the age-weighted pupil unit (AWPU). We believe that this would ensure that all pupils are given the opportunity to have shared experiences in their education. Furthermore, ring-fencing the money would ensure that shared activities are carried out in every school in Northern Ireland and would give shared education the status it deserves.
2654. UTU believes that seven years of pilots is enough, and that now it is time for shared education to be rolled out universally. Schools and communities could still apply for additional funding to enhance the experiences of pupils as they saw fit.
2655. Furthermore, UTU believes that while funding should support continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers, other outside agency professionals should also be funded to deal with the communities. We also believe that parents play an integral part in ensuring that shared activities take place, and their voices also need to be heard and fully supported by schools and outside agencies. Furthermore, UTU believes that boards of governors should be given training on shared education and should fully support the shared views and activities taking place in schools. The new Education Authority and CCMS need to provide support and advice for realistic, feasible, long-term, workable arrangements for schools. The Education Authority must be cognisant of the views of all school stakeholders and facilitate realistic consultation time frames that enable everyone to respond to transformational changes suggested for schools.
2656. Finally, UTU believes that the introduction of a Shared Education

Bill will go far to advancing the work of shared education and ensuring that all schools develop a positive ethos towards sharing. This will enable schools to contribute towards the Programme for Government's shared future agenda.

2657. **Mr Justin McCamphill (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers):** I am the national official for Northern Ireland. Before taking up my role with the union, I spent 19 years in the classroom. My colleague Teresa Graham is president of the NASUWT in Northern Ireland. You received our submission back in October. We will also be submitting a draft response to the Department of Education's consultation on shared education before the end of the week. I will speak on the nature and definition of shared and integrated education, the key barriers and enablers, and the models of good practice we have identified from other jurisdictions.

2658. Teresa will outline what priorities and actions need to be taken to improve sharing and integration, why the CRED policy should remain in place and the need to engage more effectively with parents, carers and the role of special schools.

2659. I believe that the NASUWT brings a unique perspective to the debate on shared and integrated education. Although we were established here only in the 1960s, we have worked assiduously to recruit from both sides of the community to become the largest teachers' union in Northern Ireland. Our team of elected officials and staff reflect the composition of the teaching workforce. We are the largest teaching union in east Belfast, west Belfast, south Armagh and north Down.

2660. Despite the divisions in our education system, NASUWT members choose to work together regardless of the sectors they teach in. It is our belief that education has a critical role to play promoting the reconciliation of our people and the development of safe, just, inclusive and tolerant

communities. Like the ministerial advisory group, we believe that shared education has to be about more than just the religious beliefs of pupils, parents and wider communities but also their socio-economic status. Our schools are divided on class lines as well as on religious lines. To have real shared education, we must address all divisions in education. We agree that there should be a commonly recognised working definition of shared education and agree with the definition put forward by the ministerial advisory group. Given the acceptance by the Minister and the ministerial advisory group of that definition, it is not clear why it has not been incorporated into the draft Shared Education Bill published by the Department of Education. Maybe someone around this table knows the answer to that.

2661. If shared education is to be established on a statutory basis, it is important that the Department sets out its reasons for departing from the definition of shared education contained in its remit to the ministerial advisory group.

2662. While the definition of shared education may still be under consideration, we all have a common understanding of integrated education already, which is quite distinct from shared education. Integrated schools have an important and legitimate role to play in the education system in Northern Ireland and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. As a union, we are concerned by the perception that DE has failed to discharge its statutory responsibility to encourage and facilitate integrated education. We hope that the Committee holds the Department to account for that failure.

2663. The NASUWT will continue to offer its full support to the integrated sector, in light of the critical contribution it is able to make to advancing shared education across Northern Ireland. The union is clear that, in viable circumstances, active consideration should continue to be given to establishing education provision on an integrated basis. However, the NASUWT recognises that,

as currently constituted, integrated skills in education provision are in settings with a Christian character. Given the increasingly diverse nature of Northern Irish society, it must be recognised that many parents would prefer, if given the choice, to express a preference for education that is provided on an entirely non-denominational basis for their children. Where there is not the demand for integrated education in a particular locality, there should be no barrier to the establishment of other approaches to shared education that are tailored to the needs and circumstances of local communities.

2664. We believe that the promotion of shared education should not be a statutory duty on the basis proposed by DE until a clear and coherent implementation framework is introduced. If not, it would lead to the imposition of duties on DE schools and other public bodies, including the Education Authority, that they may not be in a position to discharge effectively.
2665. We cannot discuss shared education without addressing what I believe to be the elephant in the room; academic selection. As a union, we are opposed to the current system of academic selection in Northern Ireland. However, given that the issue of academic selection will not be resolved to everyone's satisfaction any time soon, shared education draws attention to the ways in which academically selective schools might contribute effectively to the learning of all children and young people. The Committee should be giving consideration to the ways in which academically selective schools can be integrated into genuinely collaborative arrangements with non-selective schools. This collaboration, if it is to be meaningful, would need to include provision, where appropriate, for selective pupils to take an active and direct role in the education of pupils enrolled at other schools as part of their contribution to local learning partnerships.
2666. One of the barriers to shared education is the accountability regime. The
- NASUWT is clear that a fit-for-purpose framework of accountability is critical to ensuring that public trust and confidence in the education system can continue to be secured. Those responsible for the accountability system must ensure that it does not operate in ways that contradict or undermine shared education. The increasingly high stakes nature of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) establishes powerful incentives for schools and other learning providers to focus on their own pupil performance indicators rather than on addressing, through collaboration, the needs of all learners in the communities they serve. It is evident that, at present, the current framework for holding schools to account in Northern Ireland works against the establishment of effective, collaborative arrangements between schools.
2667. We need to address, in a context where greater emphasis is placed on shared education, that a growing number of pupils, although remaining formally enrolled in one school, would receive education in more than one setting. In such circumstances, we believe that it would be inappropriate to continue to attempt to hold schools to account for their performances solely on the basis of the progress and achievement of the pupils on their rolls. It is therefore evident that building effective collaboration between institutions would require a fundamental review of the way in which schools are held to account for the work that they undertake collectively with other settings.
2668. Schools need to be incentivised to focus to a greater extent on the work they undertake in collaboration with other settings, including their contribution to the education of pupils enrolled in other schools. There is now an opportunity to explore alternative policy options for school accountability in Northern Ireland. We need to learn from those countries that are often cited as high performing or fast improving as to how they are able to establish and sustain accountability rated processes that

- maintain high levels of public confidence and support system development improvement without use of the high stakes approaches to school accountability that characterised the arrangements in Northern Ireland.
2669. There are great stories of shared education that we can all share, but it is evident that more attention needs to be paid to developing the capacity of institutions to embed collaborative arrangements in areas where there is no history of partnership working. Schools need time, additional resources and support to be able to develop and implement effective partnerships.
2670. We believe that the primary responsibility for shared education should be with the Department of Education and not with the new Education Authority. Until the Education Authority is established, it is not clear whether it will have the capacity to deploy staff effectively or would commit to do so in a way that is consistent with DE's policy objectives in relation to shared education. Given the system-wide level importance of the shared education agenda, the NASUWT believes that giving responsibility for the deployment of support staff to the Education Authority would create unacceptable risks to the successful implementation of that policy. The union can therefore identify no reason why staff who are appointed to work in shared education partnerships should not fall within the direct remit and direction of DE.
2671. We also need to address issues relating to the training and development of teachers and school leaders working within a shared education context. The effective development of shared education will not be possible without a credible professional training and development strategy.
2672. It is critical that clarity is provided in the models of funding as a matter of urgency before any attempt is made to begin the implementation of shared education on a wider scale. We seek clarity on how the Department intends to secure the extra £25 million of funding that was identified in its consultation document and the basis upon which it will be distributed. It also needs to clarify what relationship, if any, that funding has to the £500 million capital funds that were referenced in the Stormont House Agreement or to the existing shared educational campuses programme.
2673. The union is clear that collaborative arrangements between schools can secure the more effective use of finite resources through the generation of economies of scale and by minimising unnecessary duplication. However, it is essential that any proposals for the development of local shared education arrangements are not used as a pretext for attempts to reduce overall levels of current spending in the schools sector or undermine the job security of members of the school workforce through the imposition of inappropriate approaches to school rationalisation.
2674. As a union, we represent teachers who are already trying to juggle a massive workload while delivering one of the best education systems in the world. Inter-school partnership arrangements must be properly assessed in their impact on teacher workload. That assessment must examine the capacity for institutions to cope with the changes and the capacity of the workforce in the areas of time, knowledge and skills. That is particularly important with the increased demands that may be made of teachers and school leaders in the future development of shared education campuses.
2675. In our annual survey of teacher opinion last year, we found that 84% of teachers and school leaders in Northern Ireland cite excessive workload as their main concern. Attempts, therefore, to progress a shared education agenda in ways that do not take meaningful account of those pressures and that would further intensify the workload demands on teachers and school leaders would be entirely unacceptable and, therefore, unsuccessful.

2676. I note with interest that the Committee is interested in evidence from other jurisdictions that could provide some support for the development of shared education. The development of education policy in Northern Ireland must acknowledge the unique post-conflict context in which the education system operates. We must therefore resist simplistic attempts to transplant approaches from other jurisdictions that do not take account of the particular circumstances that pertain in Northern Ireland. However, the NASUWT is clear that it is possible to identify some policy lessons from other jurisdictions that are relevant to the development of shared education. The main lesson I would highlight is the avoidance of the privatisation of education as happens elsewhere. The status of education as a public good means that policy and practice should not only seek to secure benefits for individual pupils and learners but should recognise the importance of education to the economic, cultural and civic well-being of wider society. I will now hand over to Teresa.
2677. **Mrs Teresa Graham (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers):** First, I will look at the effectiveness of the relevant parts of the CRED policy. The NASUWT supports the stated aims of the CRED policy, which seeks to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others and by providing formal and non-formal education opportunities for them to build relationships with those from different backgrounds and traditions.
2678. It is clear that CRED activities have had a positive impact in Northern Ireland. There is strong evidence from the Young Life and Times Survey 2012 that, of the majority of young people who have experienced CRED activities, it is the impact on section 75 groups that is particularly striking, with at least two thirds of such respondents feeling that CRED activities have resulted in them feeling more positive towards those groups. The section 75 groups particularly affected by CRED activities are those in the categories of religious belief, race, sexual orientation and disability. Of those, the first three are also the top three groups in the PSNI hate crime statistics tables.
2679. Therefore, it would appear to the NASUWT that, while a move towards shared education is very positive, it will also need to embrace significant groundwork both in and out of school that will lead to building a peaceful and stable Northern Ireland. We would also be of the opinion that the evidence would support an extension of CRED activities within the concept of shared education to include work on tackling sectarianism, racism, homophobia and disability.
2680. There is strong evidence that CRED programmes on those issues work. For example, the surveys show that, among those who have taken part in CRED activities on disabilities, over 80% reported more positive attitudes to people with different disabilities as a result. From such evidence, the NASUWT suggests that the CRED programme should form an effective part of shared education. Therefore, we would urge that funding for the programme should remain in place.
2681. Secondly, there is the need to engage more effectively with parents and carers. In a context in which greater emphasis is being placed on shared education, pupils are likely to be educated in more than one institution. In such circumstances, the present system for reporting or engaging with parents will have to be re-examined. It is without doubt that the introduction of effective approaches to shared education will depend very much on effective parental engagement, and it is vital that that aspect of shared education is examined. The NASUWT therefore advocates an objective and detailed review of models of school accountability to parents. The review should include considerations of the way in which accountability and reporting frameworks that are in operation elsewhere have engendered

- greater levels of parental involvement in the education system, and, if that has led the promotion of the public valuing and celebration of a shared education system, as can be seen in high-performing jurisdictions such as South Korea and Finland. Also very importantly, the role of technology in such accounting and reporting systems would need to be reviewed.
2682. The NASUWT welcomes the recognition by DE of the important role that special schools play and can play in the future in the provision of an inclusive or shared educational system. To all intents and purposes, special schools are already shared schools. The NASUWT is of the opinion that special schools are well placed to be of great benefit to all schools, with their experience of sharing across many areas of society. It might well be that special schools could be at the heart of shared education in an area and that, with enhanced collaboration between mainstream schools, special schools and education support centres, the educational needs of all children, including those with disabilities, emotional troubles, behavioural issues and special needs can be met more effectively in a shared school system. However, that should not be interpreted in a way that would undermine the importance of ensuring that decisions about where pupils are educated are guided by objective and professional assessments of the settings where their needs are best met. The NASUWT is very supportive of the need for and work of our special schools. Thank you.
2683. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. A number of Committee members have had to leave to take part in a debate, hence there has been some movement while you were speaking. Mr Rogers, I understand that you also maybe have to leave.
2684. **Mr Rogers:** Yes.
2685. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will take you first. 4.30 pm
2686. **Mr Rogers:** First, you are very welcome. Diane, when you talked about the Department needing to make shared education mainstream, there was an acknowledgement that it may be a bit of a patchwork and sporadic at the moment. You talked about the shared education premium and how it would be divided. Do you not think that, when there is £172 for rural schools versus urban schools, it can be difficult for rural schools to link up with a school from another community? A lot of money could be spent on transport for that type of thing.
2687. **Ms Nugent:** I suppose that is true, but the ideal sharing partnership is with those schools from neighbouring communities. There have been good examples of that, such as in Ballycastle, where students walk from one school to another. I think there is some ambiguity about integrated schools. Integrated schools have to share as well, so a lot of controlled and maintained schools are in those schools' locality. Basically, it is about any school in sectors that are sharing together.
2688. I understand that there are going to be transport issues, but if schools work together, the beauty of autonomy is that they could come up with ideas that would enable a workable way for them to share and maybe minimise transport costs. For example, a school could have a minibus and the other school could avail itself of it. That may be one way you could develop that kind of collaboration and partnership.
2689. The fact that the shared education pupil premium would be shared out among every pupil also links into equality. Every child has a right to shared education, and by giving each child the same amount of money and the schools an economy, it would be up to the transformational leadership of schools to come up with innovative, flexible, workable ideas that would enable the money to be spent on a value-added basis. That would be documented in the school's improvement or development plans to ensure that the money is being spent in the correct way and that there is value added to the shared education premium.

2690. **Mr Rogers:** A quick question, Justin. You commented that integrated education is quite distinct from shared education. Do you not believe that integrated education is a logical conclusion of shared education?
2691. **Mr McCamphill:** It is, but it is not something that can happen everywhere. Integrated schools are set up in such a way that means that there has to be an equal balance of pupils from different communities. To set up integrated schools as they are to be constituted in every locality will not be practical, but where it is possible, we support it as the long-term aim. In other places you have to accept the reality that people live in divided communities and that you have to plan for shared education based on where people are, not where you want them to be.
2692. **Mr Rogers:** Do you believe that faith-based schools have a key role to play in developing shared education and all that?
2693. **Mr McCamphill:** Yes, most certainly.
2694. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Just to pick up on your point about funding, there are obviously schools that have been working together for maybe 40 years, long before there were any Queen's University groups looking at shared education and before any funding packages were available. If there is a willingness for sharing, does it necessarily have to have an associated monetary incentive?
2695. **Ms Dunlop:** The monetary incentive begins the process, especially with schools that have not been involved in sharing. This goes back to the EMU programme in the 1980s and 1990s, if you remember that. That was not ideal, because we were linked with schools that were away somewhere else; they were not our neighbouring schools. Certainly, it is going to take less finance to link with some schools. For example, in Lisburn there is a maintained school less than 1 kilometre away from us. That would be our natural clustering, but we are looking at quite an overloaded curriculum at the moment, and if DE sets the priority that shared education is up there with literacy, numeracy and ICT, a coordinator to roll out a programme needs to be remunerated for.
2696. It is taking on an extra workload, unless a priority is set. That is what we mean when we talk about the league table of results and competition between schools needing to be brought down a peg. The school down the road is pulling back from sharing, and there is a big divide between our grammar and secondary schools. I know that, in Lisburn, we share through the SIF funding and try to bring in every sector. Grammar is the hardest sector to get in to the overall picture. Funding has been a way of softening that and attracting leadership to it. If that is the beginnings of it, you can look at self-sustaining programmes down the line.
2697. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Is there not, then, a duplication? We already have area learning coordinators, and we have money involved in the entitlement framework and how it is to be brought together. Are you not duplicating all the time?
2698. **Ms Dunlop:** I think they are overlapping. The problem we have at the minute is the talk of lifting the CRED and CREDIT funding, SIF and the community education initiative funding. Yes, that is promoting sharing in a learning community. It most definitely is. You have to be careful that there is no overlap. That is what we were talking about with the shared education premium, which is ring-fenced for those activities. It can be the CRED, CREDIT, SIF entitlement framework, but it is all from the one overarching funding stream for those that is pulled down from wherever, whether it be Atlantic Philanthropies or DE.
2699. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You talked about league tables. I have been on the Committee a long time, and I do not remember us calling for or promoting league tables, but I stand to be corrected on that point.

2700. Justin, you commented on the ministerial advisory group's definition. Are you in support of that?
2701. **Mr McCamphill:** We believe it is an excellent starting point. To go back to the question you asked Gillian, I will say that shared education has to be about more than just practical sharing between two schools that happen to be adjacent. The ministerial advisory group's definition also covers promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. We need to put funding into shared education, because partnerships that happen spontaneously, when two schools are built back to back, will happen anyway. This is about breaking down barriers, such as distance in some places, academic selection in others and barriers between special schools and mainstream schools. It takes planning, and money needs to be spent on it.
2702. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I really just want to compare the ministerial advisory group's definition to that which is out for consultation from the Minister and to get your views on the difference.
2703. **Mr McCamphill:** I am afraid I do not have the Minister's definition in front of me.
2704. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It is this:
- "Shared education' means the education together of —*
- (a) those of different religious belief or political opinion, and*
- (b) those who are experiencing significant socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant providers."*
2705. **Mr McCamphill:** We were just curious about why they are different. That is not to say that one is better than the other. Do you know why there is a difference?
2706. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No.
2707. **Ms Dunlop:** The two maybe address two different things: the religion side of it and the socio-economic barriers. Any learning community will tell you that it is most difficult for grammar schools. Primaries and secondaries have very close relationships involving the toing and froing of pupils. When a relationship forms between a grammar and a secondary, it very much goes one way, with the secondary going into the grammar school for a sharing of lessons and CRED or whatever. Rarely does grammar move back the other way.
2708. I will give you an example of what happens for us in primary schools. My last school, Donaghadee Primary School, had Killard House School, a special school, on the same campus. We brought those kids together, and you might say that that was the special school coming up into the mainstream to learn, but equally our kids got such an education in the problems that those kids face and what it is like to have a disability, how they can help and what they can learn from it. It has to go both ways, and that is where a barrier exists between grammar schools and secondary schools in town areas. You are all nodding in agreement.
2709. **Mrs Graham:** That is where the socio-economic barrier is, and that is what needs to be addressed, along with everything else. If you are going to have mixed, shared education, it has to be shared across the socio-economic groupings as well.
2710. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The NASUWT submission talks about section 75 and the fact that you needed to look at the potential implications of any implementation. Are you aware at this stage of what those implications may be?
2711. **Mr McCamphill:** I have some idea of what they may be. I do not want to pre-empt that, because I might almost be predicting how people would discriminate, and I do not know whether that is something that I want to throw out to people. For example, we know at the moment that there are issues



- around religious discrimination that need to be looked at. There are also issues around discrimination against people on the grounds of disability. We want everything looked at. Schools have a responsibility, and there has to be a conversation about what all the implications will be.
2712. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** At this stage, do you want to be any more specific than that?
2713. **Mr McCamphill:** No.
2714. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for your presentations. I have lots of questions, but my concern with the way that the Bill is coming through is that, if we just specify those three areas, we forget community and the complex mixtures of others. Do you not feel that we should have a slightly vaguer definition that may allow a school that is doing well in sharing to apply for funding so that it is not just about two schools? Sometimes you can have one school doing phenomenally well, as an example. Do you think we should have something that is a little bit looser and more flexible? If you are going to do that, who makes the decision about sharing funding? Is it the Education Authority, or is it the Department?
2715. **Mr McCamphill:** In my view the decision should lie with the Department. I think that there are too many vested interests in the make-up of the Education Authority, and I would prefer that the strategy and its outworkings come from the Department. I am not ruling out what you are saying; I am listening to it. Whoever is assessing the project could look at it, but I do not have a strong view.
2716. **Ms Nugent:** Can I just add to that? We had also discussed the idea that the ETI should be trained in what shared education is. That would be another mechanism for looking at shared education practice to make it more realistic on the ground.
2717. You talked about religious discrimination and things like that. I was privy to a very good example of shared education in Glasgow, which, we all know, is a bit similar to Northern Ireland. There was a maintained primary school and a controlled primary school, and in the middle there was a special needs unit and a shared nursery. I thought that that was a beautiful example of shared education, because the children were coming into the school together. We know that, when kids are young, that is the best time to expose them to the realities of life and to let them learn new skills, even with things like languages. When I spoke to some of the children in that school and asked them how they shared, they told me that they loved coming together at break time and lunchtime. So, as Gillian said, sharing education is not just about lessons, academic learning or examinations. Sharing can take place in local communities and youth centres. Sport is ideal for sharing; what better way is there than that? That is how some of that pupil premium could be used.
2718. To go back to the example of the school with special needs, that facility meant that those schools could transfer the kids in and out so they could have the support base and the teacher-informed professional judgement that they needed. That is another model of good, effective continuing professional development. The teachers in each of those schools planned together. They designed opportunities throughout the school year with themes in both schools. The important thing was that both those schools could retain their own identity. The maintained school still had its symbols and things, and the controlled school had what was related to it. I think that respecting differences is what sharing education is about.
2719. In my experience of leading the shared education programme, we linked our two special schools — ours is kind of mixed but mostly controlled, and there is also the maintained — with the university. We take for granted that students or whoever know how to share. However, even their eyes were opened in the sharing engagement process. When students came into our schools, we had

- kids saying, “Miss, can we be friends with a black person?” They did not know, because they have preconceived notions.
2720. While we support coordinators being in place and their being remunerated, it takes a special kind of leadership and person to enable those collaborations. In the past, it was maybe taken for granted that sharing was happening. However, it was not real sharing. It was not having the outcomes that are perhaps being seen in the shared education programme that Queen’s University has rolled and in all the research from 2007 that proves that it works and can have long-lasting impacts on communities, as well as between and among children of different ages and abilities. That is what is important with that.
2721. **Mr Kinahan:** I will ask a second question, if I may. The NASUWT mentioned getting parents more involved. We do not really seem to have parents involved anywhere in our education system. You get it from ‘Belfast Telegraph’ polls and other things. What do you see as the mechanism for getting them involved?
2722. **Mrs Graham:** At the moment, the way that parents are involved in most schools is through an annual report and an annual visit. It is really important. I know that the Department has been stressing that school improvement really needs parental involvement. If we have shared education, we were looking at how we could use it as a vehicle to involve more parents. That would bring about not just a better understanding of sharing among parents but parents would become more proud of their schools and communities. If you go down the shared school route, you will not be able to send out a report on a child. That child might be enrolled in your school but be in that school only some of the time. Some mechanism will have to be developed whereby the progress and attitudes of the child are conveyed to parents. To get buy-in from parental support, it is going to have to be different and more dynamic. That is
- why we talked about technology and all that stuff and how it could be utilised to encourage the shared nature of any project. You might well have the added bonus that parents, by becoming involved in it, could become more involved in sharing in the community.
2723. **Mr McCamphill:** There could also be consultation with parents in the establishment of any new shared arrangements, in that they could look at the type of shared arrangement they want. Is it two schools beside each other? Is it an integrated school? Is it a faith school? There needs to be greater consultation with parents and wider communities when the decisions are made.
2724. **Ms Dunlop:** We mentioned that it is not just funding in schools that is required for parental involvement. There are organisations that we have used for the last 30 years. I was heavily involved with the Children’s Program of Northern Ireland. A lot of the parental involvement that we saw benefit communities most happened outside school hours, but some was in school hours. It was delivered through outside agencies like Community Relations in Schools (CRIS), YMCA and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. DE had funding attached to programmes that dealt with conflict resolution.
2725. We are sitting here as teachers, and we know that, when you bring parents into a room, there is a big elephant there. Who will broach the difficult topics? Who will broach the community disaster that happened last weekend? How do you go about dealing with that? I know that, all through the 1990s, when we lifted kids from the Templemore Avenue divide in east Belfast and from Ardoyne, we had the parents in the leisure centres working with their kids, and CRIS and YMCA ran conflict resolution workshops. Those people knew what they were doing and were able to tease out of those parents an open and frank discussion of prejudice, racism and all the things that we still have huge problems with in Northern Ireland. I know that you also mentioned outside

- agencies that support educators' work, but the community people are the ones who really tackle the big issues. Those communities and the parents benefited from that.
2726. **Mr Craig:** Thank you for the presentation. I gathered from some of the comments that maybe not all the unions are singing from the same hymn sheet on shared education. Is that because of a lack of definition, or is there a more fundamental disagreement between you on it?
2727. **Mr McCamphill:** I thought that we agreed with most of what the UTU said. In which areas did you detect the difference?
2728. **Mr Craig:** I thought that it was quite interesting, because one of you was pushing very heavily to get this implemented immediately, even though we do not exactly know what it is. You, in particular, were urging caution and looking for more money for it, so I am just curious.
2729. **Mr McCamphill:** I think that we both have the same vision down the line. I think that that was coming across. We are more cautious, in that we do not want to go ahead into things where, if the money is not there, because of the extra workload on teachers, people will end up not prioritising shared education and will just get on with the delivery in the classroom. If the money is not there, we will run into problems.
2730. **Mrs Graham:** Our idea is that, before you go down that line, you should look to see what problems there are. There would be nothing worse than to start off on this shared education programme and for it all to crash halfway through. What message would that give? You really need to have thought right through not just how it will work but what will make it work. I think that we all agree that, at the end of the line, we all have the same ideal of what we would like shared education to be. As I said, we do not want it to end in failure. If we do not prepare adequately, that could be the result.
2731. **Ms Nugent:** Both our unions have concern for teacher workload. It is easy to dump everything on the teachers and to say that they are the superheroes who can heal everything. That is not the case in shared education. The good thing is that, through the research that has been carried out and in engaging with teacher unions to advance the shared education agenda, there is collaboration. We need to collaborate to ensure that everybody is protected. We would all love 90 hours a day to do everything. That is why we made the point about making sure that coordinators are remunerated so that teachers are given time. It is about the time that teachers need to plan the shared education activities and to engage with communities. From being involved with shared education, I know the time and commitment that it takes. I also know, from being engaged in the ministerial advisory group, that some of the comments that were made were about the people who are coordinating getting some recognition for the work that they do. That effective work has been documented in the evidence. It needs to be ensured that, in the new shared education advancement, that is the kind of model that reflects all that and is used to advance shared education. So, I do not see that there are so many apparent differences, except for the fact that you had maybe detailed it a bit more. Those are our concerns.
2732. **Mr Craig:** I find even that answer fascinating, because I think the problem is that we have all got different interpretations of what shared education is about. You are already talking about additional resources and coordinators, and I am thinking, "Coordinators for what?" What exactly are we talking about in shared education? I see shared education as cooperation between sectors, between schools and especially between smaller schools that cannot sustain the economic model that they have. That even applies within the same sector. None of that has the additional burden that you are talking about, which is coordinators. This is not about

sharing religious experiences between children; it is about administration.

2733. **Ms Nugent:** That is not what I was talking about. With respect, I have been a shared education leader. I have done it without being remunerated. It is difficult and challenging, it takes a lot of time and not all the agencies that you contact to develop activities in schools and with parents and communities are available within a teacher's 1,265 working hours. We are not looking for remuneration for coordination of shared education because we are greedy. It would be easy for those to come back at teachers and say, "You're well enough paid". If you want something done medically and you want the best job done, you go to the best person. We need the best people in schools to enable those communities to engage, enable schools to come together and to have the time to purposefully carry out that role and engage with everybody so that there is not that element of some kind of competition, which, I think you are hinting at. It is not about competition. That is why it needs people who are creative, people who can take risks and people who fully understand shared education and have the time to commit and devote to that role to enable it to be done purposefully. That will ensure that those schools are not in competition and that the pupils and communities will benefit. That is what the coordination role is about. Does that clarify it for you?

2734. **Mr Craig:** I get what you are saying, and I do not doubt that, at a higher level, probably within the Education Authority, there will be a need for people like that to promote shared education ideas between schools and sectors. I do not doubt that for one second. The difficulty I see with all this is that, if shared education is to work — we have seen this — it needs to be a bottom-up approach, not a top-down approach. Top-down does not work. We have sat with an integrated sector for 30 years. It reflects 7% of the pupils of Northern Ireland. So, the forced approach did not work. Parents did not vote with their feet. That is the difficulty with it.

If we are going to make this work, it should be a bottom-up approach, where schools and the authority are bringing solutions to the table that mean sharing between schools and sectors. That will be a completely new kettle of fish, and I would like to think that the unions will support that approach.

2735. **Mr McCamphill:** It is difficult. There are learning partnerships, for example, that have only one community in them. There are some like that, so it is probably a matter of looking at those partnerships and considering how you then put a shared model on top of them. That will have to be worked out. You made the comment that there has to be a bottom-up approach, but there has to be a structure from the top. That is why the Department is bringing forward legislation. There have to be incentives for people at the bottom to aim for. When the European Community gives out grants to farmers, those grants are there at the top but somebody at the bottom has to say, "This is what I'm going to do so that I can apply to get that". It is no different in education.

2736. **Mr Craig:** Will the unions actively promote that approach? I have seen ideas for schools to come together — there would have been a fantastic opportunity — yet, because of competition between them, it all fell apart.

2737. **Mr McCamphill:** In my view, that competition does not come from teacher unions; it comes from principals and governors. It comes from teachers as well, but it has to be worked around. That is why I talked about the accountability mechanism. People worry that their school will end up in intervention, and that can drive schools more than anything else.

2738. **Mrs Graham:** I mentioned earlier that it is absolutely vital that the parents are involved from a bottom-up point of view. It will not succeed unless the parents buy into it, as well as everyone else. Before you go any further, you have to develop a mechanism by which the parents will be brought into the planning

- and running of the shared education experience.
2739. **Mr Craig:** I wish that we could get them into the existing system, never mind the shared one.
2740. **Mrs Graham:** Perhaps this is the new start for them.
2741. **Mr Newton:** I thank the members for coming this evening. I think that Diane said that teachers are not superheroes. I think that they are superheroes.
2742. **Mrs Graham:** Thanks. *[Laughter.]*
2743. **Mr Newton:** In many ways, they contributed to tackling the difficulties that we had over the years of what we call the Troubles; they played a fantastic role in that.
2744. I would like a succinct answer to a few questions. Grammar schools that share at the moment — there are a number of examples across Northern Ireland — have done so without any incentive whatsoever. They are reaping the benefits of that, so why do we not ensure that the other schools employ the same methods as some of those grammar schools?
2745. **Ms Nugent:** I am thinking about the kinds of behaviours and disciplines in schools. There are different challenges. Speaking as a special needs teacher, there are challenges in that environment compared with secondary, primary and grammar schools. I have to be careful about how I say this, but children who attend grammar school generally have the wherewithal to go between schools; behaviour is not an issue.
2746. Shared education works for areas in which you may see a higher incidence of behavioural problems and even special needs and things like that; those are the low socio-economic areas. Mention was made of working with parents. You have to bear in mind that a lot of parents do not want even to go near the gates of schools. I have had children going through school for five years without ever once seeing a parent. Through the shared education programme, the interesting thing for me was that we had parent/child workshops. No one ever wants to be seen as a bad parent. That was an innovative way of getting our parents into the schools. Interestingly enough, the parents who never darkened the door were the ones who brought their child to school to do things like cookery, jewellery-making and art; not English, maths and things like that. It was creating a new kind of culture so they could see that education is not maybe the same as when they were in school. That was one way of getting parents engaged with the schools.
2747. It is great that some schools have been able to collaborate, as you mentioned, but I think that there are different challenges in different areas. Perhaps it is a little easier in a sector where there are not so many apparent challenges, although that is not to say that there are not special needs and other issues in those schools. The grammar school sector will have different challenges, which might be accreditation based.
2748. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Perhaps your question was more about the fact that schools are mixed. Is that what you were referring to?
2749. **Mr Newton:** Yes.
2750. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Of course, special schools are naturally mixed, so sharing is already taking place as a natural consequence of the population that is at the school.
2751. **Ms Dunlop:** Looking at the school population, the current DE policy is forcing integration without purposely going out and doing it. We have the policy of going to the neighbouring school. The transport issue that has come in recently will force people to their neighbouring school. I speak from experience. Where I sit in Lisburn, in a controlled primary school, 12% of my enrolment is children from what normally would have been the Catholic maintained sector. That was down to the population explosion in Lisburn and the number of places available in the schools available. As we are going down

- that route, there is forced integration happening. I have not put my hands up, and my board of governors has not said, “We want to go down the transformation route and become an integrated school.”
2752. We are quite happy to be a controlled primary school but to accept newcomer pupils from, for example, the Polish community. Integration is being forced upon us. Look at the number of newcomer pupils in our system currently. They bring with them their own challenges of other prejudices as well. So, if the DE continues on that route, we will, slowly but surely, have a shared system without going out of our way to achieve it. Our children are educated together in nursery provision and, at the other end, they are educated together in further education. We have lots of special education. We still have our two sectors but, certainly, the controlled sector is becoming more integrated without going out of its way to do so.
2753. **Mr McCamphill:** To come back to Mr Newton, there could be lessons to learn, but that would involve looking at why some grammar schools end up with a different intake than others. There needs to be a study to look at why parents are choosing a grammar school from what could be perceived as the other side. Are they choosing it because it is the grammar school they want to send their children to? Are they choosing it because there was not a place available in the grammar school they wanted to send their children to? Different parents will have different motivations. If it is working at the grammar sector level, at least in some grammar schools, we should ask what is good about what they are doing. What lessons are there? What does not work well? There will be issues within those schools about the respect for diversity and identity. Those issues exist in all schools, regardless of sector. Somebody needs to take a look at that.
2754. The other thing we have to look at is that pupils in grammar schools are travelling greater distances, they have different motivations, and there are non-selective schools in some areas, which serve the local communities and reflect the composition of those communities. If we want to build a more cohesive and diverse society, we need to have shared projects to bring together children who would not otherwise meet across, maybe, five or six miles.
2755. **Mr Newton:** What do you think will be the impact of effective area planning?
2756. **Ms Dunlop:** Effective area planning will happen where the community can decide what it wishes its schools to become. We have had a few contentious cases over the past while where maintained schools have looked to go integrated simply because the village would send their children to that school if it was integrated. They have had a certain amount of input into area planning. Certainly, CCMS has looked at planning, and the controlled sector has started and is some way into it. As I touched on earlier, I believe that the way forward for our communities is for schools to come together and educate children together, and then let the community decide whether to go integrated. That is a personal opinion. We have villages and towns that are further down the line than others. If a community is ready for it, let it happen.
2757. There are CRED programmes that encounter, shall we say — “a hard line” is the wrong thing to say — but there are towns in which we know there is a divide that will never be crossed. The schools there need the CRED programmes and outside organisations brought in. There are some schools that could not link with others at the minute, but they need the education in their own school. Every school is on a different journey. Some are ready, some are not, and some will not be ready for a long time. That is where there is still the necessity for funding for the CRED and CREDIT programmes.
2758. **Mr Newton:** That is not effective area planning.
2759. **Ms Dunlop:** No. As far as area-based planning is concerned, the community is willing. In education, we only see people

- wanting the best for their communities. Transformational leadership is required. For example, at Lisanelly, it took the leaders in that community to sell a programme to their stakeholders. In education, we are always in the business of looking to sell something to the stakeholders and saying, “This is the best route for your children. This is the best thing for your kids.” It is a huge job. It is about the winning of hearts and minds.
2760. **Mr McCamphill:** We in the NASUWT are of the view that there should be more cross-sectoral area planning. There is a perception out there that one sector is moving on with its area planning and maybe not taking it across and asking, “What is happening in the sector neighbouring us, and what do we need to do to plan together?” We would like to see more evidence of joint planning between the controlled and maintained sectors.
2761. **Mr Newton:** Finally, can I ask about your attitude towards a school working with similar schools across socio-economic barriers?
2762. **Mr McCamphill:** Do you mean one school that has lots of socio-economic differences within it?
2763. **Mr Newton:** No. I am thinking of a school from the controlled or maintained sector, or whatever, instead of working across a divide or with a different sector, that wants to work with schools in its area that would be less well off — socio-economically deprived.
2764. **Mr McCamphill:** That in itself is a good thing, but why not take it out to make it shared with the other community as well? That may be difficult in some areas but, if it is possible, I think it should happen.
2765. **Mrs Graham:** We believe that sharing on socio-economic grounds is as important for the good of society in Northern Ireland, and for its development, as any kind of sharing. The way it is at the moment, that type of sharing is not going on, and it is very difficult to get it happening because the grammar school sector is not, by and large, buying into —
2766. **Mr Newton:** It does not have to be a grammar school.
2767. **Mrs Graham:** Yes. I said, “by and large”.
2768. **Ms Dunlop:** I have a wee example that might illustrate this. Early Intervention Lisburn took only the schools across the bottom free-school-meals band in targeting social need. It was across sectors, so we had Catholic maintained schools, controlled schools, special schools and nursery schools. When the work started, the question was asked, “Why can the next schools up in the other free-school-meals bands, even up to well-off schools, not be a part of this?” And they were. It was opened up because we realised that the gap was there and that we have a lot to learn from each other’s schools. We opened it up, but it took two years for somebody to ask the question: why are we not sharing this with the next band? Dare I mention the class system in Northern Ireland; we have middle-class schools and prep schools. They have all been included now, but it took somebody in the leadership of the community to invite them into it. That is where leaders in each community are key to the success of sharing, even in the learning community.
2769. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You talk very much about community reconciliation rather than the educational benefits and outcomes that can and are being realised through sharing.
2770. **Ms Dunlop:** Early Intervention Lisburn is about educational outcomes. It was looking at barriers to learning and transitional programmes between primary and post primaries to achieve better outcomes for our 16-year-olds. They are being tracked through to see whether the transitional programmes will work. So there are educational outcomes for our kids as well as social outcomes. We would not say that we have touched on any religious or CRED activities, but we have opened

- equality as an educational outcome for the children we serve. So, even in the secondary sector, the post-primaries in Lisburn work like other towns. Through SIF funding, the learning partnerships meet as a committee and then they meet some link person who would come from post-primary to primary, and we organise programmes within our schools.
2771. **Mr Craig:** On that point, Gillian, you know that I know that sector. The simple truth about the whole area learning community is that it is simply based on needs. I think that that applies to shared education unless, as you say, there is some forced method. I notice that, especially in the secondary sector, schools that need to share resources, especially at A level, have done so and have done incredibly well in that. They have crossed barriers we never thought would be crossed. However, there are examples in Lisburn of schools that did not need to do that and therefore did not bother.
2772. **Ms Dunlop:** I agree with you. It happens when the need is there.
2773. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Thank you all for your presentation. A lot of the points have been covered. By way of commentary, I see the issue of definition as critical. What I am hearing is that shared education is not going to be truly shared unless it starts crossing all divisions. James, you pointed out that you cannot address shared education without reflection on academic selection.
2774. **Mr McCamphill:** Yes.
2775. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** How do you do that?
2776. **Mr McCamphill:** I cannot tell you how to get rid of academic selection. We have to work with what we have. A lot of academically successful schools now have a wider intake and are looking at how they will deliver the entitlement framework, so they will be sharing with neighbouring secondary schools. There will be people in some non-selective schools who will want to access subjects that are only available at the grammar school. In the absence of being able to remove academic selection, that is a good thing to do. If academic selection were to change, educational campuses with several schools built in one area will make it easier to make future changes.
2777. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** That leads to another point that I have picked up about barriers. You were very specific about the barrier to shared education being the accountability regime: can you expand on that?
2778. **Mr McCamphill:** Yes. If schools are basically in competition for children all the time, that drive can sometimes stop people wanting to share with a neighbouring school. We have all experienced other teachers in other schools who want to share. However, you also get those teachers who think, "Maybe not". They are worried about being compared with other schools. There was mention of league tables. The Department does not publish league tables, but the information is released on a spreadsheet and the newspapers can sort out schools into rank order. We know that that is what happens. I know that ETI does not do that, but people are always looking over their shoulder at someone.
2779. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Is there is specific issue with the ETI? You referred to it, and so did Diane.
2780. **Mr McCamphill:** It comes down to who is ultimately responsible for the progress of pupils. When ETI looks at a school's exam results, it is going to have to somehow factor in where these children were educated and be able to make a judgement that is reflective of the education that took place.
2781. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Does that come back to Diane's point about the need for more training?
2782. **Ms Nugent:** Yes.
2783. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** You also talked about ETI training.



2784. **Ms Nugent:** Yes. As we mentioned, parents are important too. They may not need training but information sessions and a realisation of what they are looking for. Often, we hear from members — I am sure that NASUWT can say the same — that inspectors come in, and it is perhaps someone from a completely different sector telling you what you should or should not be doing. That leaves teachers very demoralised and wanting to leave the profession.
2785. Interestingly, burnout, depression and things like that are quite commonplace within the teaching profession, more so now than ever. That is due to the additional pressures and workload put upon the role of the teacher. That is why we suggest that a teacher who is going to take on the role of shared education coordinator needs to be given the recognition for that.
2786. I would also like to add that, although we have talked about the grammar sector, a lot of the barriers to learning for our children, particularly in low socio-economic areas, is their self-esteem. One thing that I certainly noted was that, when children from my school engaged with university students, it gave them aspirations of what they could be. For example, working together can help, even should it be a piece of art or something that is communicating who they are and where they want to be. Children from low socio-economic backgrounds and those who have the most learning barriers are going to cost society most in the long term. I also believe that those children — all children — need to become more mentally tough so that they are able to cope with challenges and changes. That gives them a more realistic experience of what life is. When you go into a job, especially for special children or children for whom school is not the most favourite place in the world, they have to see that there are other things out there.
2787. It is useful to remember that teachers are also “teacherpreneurs”. We talk a lot about entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland. If you look at the likes of Richard Branson, there is a man who is an entrepreneur and who everyone can look up to. One thing I tell the kids in my school is, “He was dyslexic, just like you.” That breaks down preconceived notions that children have and raises their self-esteem so that they can have aspirations, and look to the school up the road and say, “I am as good as them”, or, “We can work together. Look at what we have done together.” It is about being able to see the vision for the future as well as looking for accreditation. Accreditation is not for everybody, and perhaps the children who have the most barriers are those who are not going to be coming out with 10 A\*s and go to university. However, it is about creating an education that is for all, and I think that that is what shared education does; it creates life chances for all our children.
2788. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** I get that completely but my question was not about barriers to individual children, families or communities; it was about barriers in the system to shared education. James, in fairness, you have answered that.
2789. **Mr McCamphill:** Sorry, my name is Justin.
2790. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** OK. Thank you.
2791. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for your time this afternoon and for presenting together. I know that it is often not easy to do that, but you did it well. Thank you very much for that, and no doubt we will be in touch again. We have quite a number of other consultations and pieces of legislation that we will look at over the next number of months, so I am sure that our paths will meet again. Thank you very much.



## 4 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Ms Siobhán Fitzpatrick *Early Years*  
 Ms Pauline Walmsley

#### 2792. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):**

I welcome the witnesses, Siobhán Fitzpatrick, the chief executive officer of Early Years; and Pauline Walmsley, its director of knowledge exchange. It is very good to see you. I invite you to make an opening statement.

#### 2793. **Ms Siobhán Fitzpatrick (Early Years):**

Thank you very much. We had an opportunity to listen to the previous discussion on the budget and were absolutely horrified to learn that, without any consultation, £2 million has been cut from the Department of Education's early years fund, which will have an enormous impact on the delivery of early years services. We have just heard about that, and we will analyse the impact, but we feel that it is important to make our point.

2794. We have submitted a paper on shared education that I will speak to, and we welcome any questions. Early Years, the organisation for young children, has been operating in Northern Ireland for 50 years, since 1965. When we started, one of our key objectives was to establish high-quality, inclusive early years services on a cross-community, shared basis. That has been the case from the inception of the organisation.

Thousands of communities across Northern Ireland operate early years services that are shared and that operate on a cross-community basis.

2795. Despite the nature of and commitment to sharing in Early Years, we discovered — I think that it has been an impact of the nature of the society that these services have operated in over the past 50 years — that, to embrace fully an inclusive, anti-sectarian approach to early years care and education, staff in settings, parents attending settings and management committees also needed access to high-quality support, capacity building and training to make the services truly shared. That led us to the introduction of a flagship project that has been used in preschool services, and latterly in primary schools. The Media Initiative for Children Respecting Difference programme supports staff, management committees, parents and children to embrace fully an approach to sharing that respects the religious, cultural and ethnic identities of all children and all communities represented in those services. The programme has been subject to a large randomised control trial and a number of qualitative and process evaluations. It has been highlighted as a very successful programme for enabling parents, teachers and children to move away from a situation of mistrust and lack of knowledge of other to implementing with confidence, in both preschool and primary school settings, curricula that really reflect the nature of the society in which children, families, schools and preschools operate.

2796. We welcome the attention being paid to shared education. We were very much involved on the ministerial advisory group and had the opportunity to bring representatives from that group to see services in practice. However, if we are to support fully an agenda of shared education, we feel that it is not

- appropriate just to provide money to schools and ask them to get on with it. We believe that there has to be attention paid to capacity building for preschools and schools. There has to be attention paid to the current preschool and foundation curriculum that really embraces an approach to respecting difference and sharing in the curriculum, not just an expectation that teachers and children will come together to achieve narrow educational outcomes. We believe that, if teachers and those associated with supporting children, such as management committees and ancillary staff, are to embrace fully a shared education agenda, initial and ongoing teacher training also needs to be reformed to ensure that teachers in particular have an opportunity to explore their experience of difference in the past and to be given the skills and strategies necessary to embrace fully a shared approach to education. We know that the work that we are doing in the preschool sector — the informal sector — has not been trammelled by many of the controls that have perhaps affected the formal sector in the past and that that work is viewed internationally in other areas of division as an exemplar of practice. We would welcome an opportunity for the approach that has been developed in preschool to roll up the system as opposed to what often happens, which is that initiatives in the formal sector roll down to preschool. There is an opportunity to create strategies and structures that will allow young children, older children and the youth sector in Northern Ireland to begin to experience a very different educational experience than children here experienced in the past.
2797. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Thank you very much. I think that your organisation is a beacon for, and an example to, us all. We are very keen to push that.
2798. The Bill that is coming in focuses mainly on the definition, and I wonder whether you have any comments on how it seems to be defining “shared education” as controlled and maintained, socio-economic and political. Do you have any comments on that?
2799. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** We welcome an all-embracing approach to sharing, but it is critically important that it does not ignore the particular issue that divides us, which is religious and class divisions in Northern Ireland, especially given our context. That must be recognised as being particularly important. We welcome an all-embracing approach that allows schools and preschools from differing sectors to have an opportunity to begin to create shared experiences. We have had a very good example in rural County Fermanagh through the Fermanagh Trust and the shared education programme funded by the International Fund for Ireland. There, we have been able to develop a truly embracing approach to sharing in a rural context. That embraced a variety of forms of education provider, but there was a strong focus on ensuring that the key issues of identity and religion were fully embraced.
2800. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** You are happy with people being specified, but it may make them have to be put into boxes where they are not in boxes. I like and very much take on board the all-embracing aspect, but it is a concern that runs through the Committee.
2801. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Yes.
2802. **Mr Newton:** I thank you for coming and for your obvious enthusiasm, commitment and passion. I agree with the Chair that, in many ways, you have been a beacon.
2803. I know that you will be well used to measuring the outcome, given all your projects and history, and so on. I am struggling with something at the minute. If you were making proposals to DE on shared education, how would you measure the outcomes — I was going to say “value for money”, but it is a bit wider than that — and whether shared education is delivering for our folk?

2804. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** That is a very important question. Given the austere financial environment, it is even more important, but it is also very important in policy terms. From the very beginning of our work on developing the Respecting Difference programme for young children, that very issue was at the core of what we were doing right. Therefore, we began by thinking about the outcomes that we wanted to improve, and we developed those outcomes from Professor Paul Connolly's evidence base, which showed that children in Northern Ireland were, importantly, developing very strong and positive senses of identity but also very negative attitudes to others whom they perceived to be different, mainly on religious grounds but also on grounds of race, ethnicity, physical disability — the whole range of differences. That led us to thinking about the types of outcomes. We then set an outcomes framework that we would work to, through which we aimed to achieve a situation in which all children in Northern Ireland, regardless of their background, could grow up and become inclusive in inclusive communities. We measured their confidence in their own identity and also their understanding, respect for others, willingness to engage with others, understanding and respect for other traditions and cultures, and the removal of fear of others.
2805. We also set indicators and outcomes for teachers and parents. Before we commenced our work, the baseline analysis indicated that, in the main, teachers here had neither the confidence nor the inputs through their initial and ongoing professional development to address issues of difference and sharing adequately. It was very important for us to be able to measure the degree of competence and confidence in teachers. Then, for parents, it was also very important that there were opportunities to measure their confidence and their willingness to be engaged in activities for sharing and also to support their own young children. Therefore, setting an agreed outcome framework is critical for the policy.
2806. **Mr Newton:** Yesterday, the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU) made the point about the need for investment in teachers to be delivered. Perhaps I took the UTU up wrong, but it is less clear how you get parents to become involved. If teachers are involved and parents are not, or vice versa, how do you encourage teachers and parents to work together? What strategy is needed?
2807. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** That is a critical factor. We know from evidence and research that 80% of what children know and understand does not happen in the school; rather, it happens in the family. Creating a real strategy and partnership between schools and families is critical. We have found that a first step is to support the board of management to develop a strategy for parental engagement around that type of work. The programme that we have developed has, as an intricate part of the service design, a number of parent workshops over the year. If it is a single-identity school, the workshops happen with parents first in their own identity grouping, and, if it is a shared environment, they happen on a shared basis. It is critical that identical support to what is happening in the classroom be given to parents to support the work in the home environment. We have found that to be a very successful strategy. Indeed, we have found that parents very much want the opportunity to have a different experience for themselves and their children from the one that they had.
2808. **Ms Pauline Walmsley (Early Years):** What has also been important, particularly in interface areas where we have been working, is the whole idea of clustering schools, preschools and Sure Starts so that you are really working with children and their families from age two to age eight; so that, throughout that period, the whole involvement and engagement of parents is deepening; and so that their understanding and confidence around the issue and their willingness to address it is really evolving. That has proved to be very positive.

2809. **Mr Newton:** Give me just one example of how the schools' management teams have engaged with parents that had a successful outcome.
2810. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Schools approach us. The County Fermanagh example is a good example of sharing. The management boards in primary schools in County Fermanagh agreed that they wanted to embrace that type of approach.
2811. The first step is that management boards have an opportunity for training and reflection and the development of a shared policy in the school. The management committees, some of whose members are parents, then engage with the parent workshops. The first element of the workshops is to provide parents with an opportunity to reflect on their experience of living in a divided society and of being educated separately and what that has meant for them.
2812. There is then an introduction to what the Respecting Difference curriculum will look like for their children. That is used as a way of embracing a whole-school approach to sharing around other curricular content areas. Activities and other events engage parents outside the school environment. As Pauline said, it is a whole-community-based approach to shared education.
2813. **Ms Walmsley:** On a shared basis.
2814. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome, Siobhán and Pauline. You put it very well when you said that developing shared education is not a matter of giving money to schools and letting them get on with it but a matter of capacity building. Can you tell me a wee bit more about how you built capacity in your organisation for sharing education?
2815. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Absolutely, Seán. That is a critical point. Teachers and preschool teachers are very willing, but they need the support and the strategies. We started by developing training for teachers so that they can implement the curriculum in preschool, primary school or further up the system.
2816. We have also developed a range of culturally and contextually appropriate resources that support teachers in delivering a new curriculum. You may not be surprised to hear this, but, when we started the work, there was very little in curriculum resources that reflected the reality of a Northern Ireland context. There were lots of resources about ethnic minorities from other environments but not anything that reflected the tensions in Northern Ireland's divided past. We firmly believe that the preschool and primary-school curriculum needs changing to reflect that greater focus on sharing.
2817. We know from our practice and from international evidence that as much focus and support for teachers needs to be centred on the emotional development of children. There is the issue of respect for their own identity, understanding that and then a growing of the emotional intelligence as well as the knowledge intelligence around understanding and respect for other identities and cultures.
2818. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** I need to nip out for 15 minutes. Apologies.
- (The Acting Chairperson  
[Mr McCausland] in the Chair)*
2819. **Mr Lunn:** You do know that it is unpaid, Nelson.
2820. **Mr Craig:** We went for the oldest. *[Laughter.]*
2821. **Mr Lunn:** Siobhán, you are welcome. The Deputy Chair already said this, but I admire the work that you do, and long may you do it.
2822. You are heavily into understanding, respect, identity and the Respecting Difference programme. That is grand. Our inquiry is about shared and integrated education. I do not think that the word "integrated" has been mentioned yet this morning. Do you find it necessary to do much work with integrated schools? Do you not think that an integrated school is a perfect

- example of the type of instruction that you would like to see in our schools?
2823. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Apologies for not using “integrated”. We would use “integrated” for the integrated sector, because we believe that everything that we do in our organisation and in our sector is fully integrated. It is interesting that, when we began to be more proactive in this type of work — creating shared and inclusive spaces — we assumed that a lot of it would have been carried out by the integrated education organisation, but it actually came to us for some of the training that we have since developed, so we have a very positive relationship with the integrated sector. Yes, we would love to see schools fully integrated in the broadest sense, but I suppose that we have had to deal with the reality of the Northern Ireland situation. Our latest estimate was that only 5% of children are formally educated in the integrated sector. We had to make sure that our approaches were reflective of where children were in the informal preschool environment and where they would be when they entered the formal system.
2824. **Mr Lunn:** It is actually 7%, but we will not —
2825. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** It is 7% now.
2826. **Mr Lunn:** It is slightly over 7%.
2827. Fair enough. When the Department talks to us about the shared education programme, its emphasis is unashamedly on educational attainment. If you forget about trying to define it, shared education was going on long before the term “shared education” was ever invented. It has been a necessity and an invaluable thing down the years in a quiet way, and Fermanagh is perhaps the best example that we have of it. I do not think that there is any conflict between what you are trying to do and what the Department is trying to do, but there is a different emphasis.
2828. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** I worry that the Department will have a focus on narrow cognitive educational gains, when we know that, especially in the context of a divided society, children and young people also have to have outcomes that reflect their ability to be citizens in an inclusive society. Unfortunately, we know from all the evidence, and there is increasing evidence of this, that young people are growing up with prejudicial attitudes formed when they are between three and six. If only the educational focus on outcomes is addressed, with the other issues — inclusion, respect and citizenship — not being addressed, we will continue to have some of the problems that we have.
2829. **Mr Lunn:** Those aspects are more likely to be addressed in a school in which there are pupils from all sides of the community. I am deliberately not saying “in an integrated school”, but they are more likely to be addressed in a mixed or amalgamated school. It perhaps happens more at secondary level. Obviously, the grammar schools are quite well mixed and integrated these days.
2830. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** One would assume that, but unless there are intentional strategies around the issue and a move away from neutralising the environment to recognising, celebrating and respecting the environments that children come from —
2831. **Mr Lunn:** I do not think that you are saying that integrated schools neutralise the environment.
2832. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** No.
2833. **Mr Lunn:** They confront the situation head-on.
2834. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** In other environments, it can be ignored.
2835. **Mr Lunn:** OK. Thank you.
2836. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** That was an interesting exchange from the oldest member of the Committee. I just thought that I would say that since he had a go at me.
2837. **Mr Lunn:** I have not had a go at you yet.
2838. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** I want to pick up on the issue. In paragraph 3.2.7 of your

submission, there is an important statement, which is:

*"It is vital therefore that children's identity is validated in the school or pre-school setting."*

2839. I agree with that absolutely. You have set out already this morning the important role that that plays. In the next paragraph, you talk about the dangers and pitfalls around colour blindness and tokenism. What are the examples of good practice or of how the children's identity can and should be validated in the school?

2840. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** I will give you a couple of examples. We have taken a very intentional integrated approach to the development of what we are doing. Using curriculum resources, particularly with young children and primary-school children, we have persona dolls, which have been developed by the local context. Therefore, there are personas representing the Protestant loyalist community, the Catholic nationalist community, Traveller children, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children. That is one example. We are helping children from across the various identities to identify with those personas and understand and develop respect for the other personas.

2841. We have also taken a very intentional and sensitive approach to many of the cultural and sporting symbols that divide us in Northern Ireland. When we started our work, we were really surprised that there were very few resources for children in classrooms celebrating the Orange Twelfth of July march, St Patrick's Day, Gaelic games or other games, Irish dancing or Scottish dancing. Therefore, we have found that introducing all those traditions in a developmentally appropriate way has been very important to growing, and continuing to grow, a confidence in one's own identity and beliefs, while, at the same time, growing a confidence of and respect for others. The outworkings and implementation of that in many of our settings have been parents being able to celebrate other traditional events with children and families from different communities in a

community context. We feel that that is very positive.

2842. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** I was interested in what you said at one point about very young children developing a strong sense of identity. What was in my mind then was how and where you learn about that identity can shape the child's appreciation of the identity. Therefore, to be Irish, British or whatever will be influenced by how that is transmitted, because children from different backgrounds and with different experiences will have different understandings of each. Does that suggest that it is important that these things be explored in schools and in early years provision so that children get an authentic, accurate, comprehensive experience and understanding of what the identity is and so that it is not very sharp-edged or abrasive?

2843. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Absolutely. We began this work in 2001, after the Good Friday Agreement, when a lot of people were thinking that the generation of children aged three to six would not have been affected by the past. However, when we looked at the murals, flags etc and heard the voices of the adults, parents and others whom those young children are constantly influenced by, it is no wonder that positive identify is skewed one way or the other. This leads, unfortunately, to negative attitudes and beliefs about others. For us, this is extremely important.

2844. We have also found that adults, teachers and parents may have an emotional dislike or perception of the other that, when examined, was often based on a total lack of understanding. As part of some of the experiential elements of the training, some teachers and parents were saying, "We don't like the green Hibernian marches", but they did not understand what those were about, and vice versa for the 12 July marches. There needs to be a real approach to deconstructing history, culture and identity before you can reconstruct it in a very positive way. That is critical.



2845. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** In that area, do the teachers whom you come across and talk to about this come with their own perceptions about the other culture and maybe even about the culture of the community from whom they come?
2846. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Absolutely. I think we are all products of our past and our history. One of the first things we do is help teachers to explore in a very experiential, positive and safe way their understanding of the other. It is very interesting when you get a teacher to write 10 very positive things about a Traveller family. When they see what that looks like, it begins to help them to reflect on where they got their beliefs. It is the same if they write 10 positive things about the Catholic community. This is the starting point for us. We have found that teachers want support to develop strategies and curriculums to create shared environments.
2847. **Mr Newton:** I think that Trevor covered my question, Chair, so I will forgo it.
2848. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** Is everyone content? Thank you very much indeed, Siobhán and Pauline.
2849. **Ms Fitzpatrick:** Thank you very much.
2850. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** We appreciate your presentation.



## 4 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Mr David Guilfoyle OBE     *Youth Council for*  
 Ms Norma Rea                 *Northern Ireland*  
 Ms Joanne Stainsby

2851. **The Acting Chairperson (Mr McCausland):** I welcome to the meeting David Guilfoyle, the chief executive; Norma Rea, the development officer who deals with equality principles; and Joanne Stainsby, the project officer. I invite the representatives from the Youth Council to make a presentation.
2852. **Mr David Guilfoyle OBE (Youth Council for Northern Ireland):** Thank you, Chair. On behalf of the Youth Council, I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Committee today. You have already heard the introduction of my two colleagues, so I will refrain from repeating that.
2853. I am confident that we will be the only organisation presenting to the Committee whose focus is on the Northern Ireland Youth Service. We believe it is important that, when we comment on shared and integrated education, we do so through a Youth Service lens. This will be the key focus of our input today. The Youth Service is often a forgotten member of the education sector family, yet it engages on a regular basis with 150,000 young people annually. It is also recognised — indeed, the Minister has recognised this — that 70% of a young person’s learning takes place outside the school, and it is therefore evident that the Youth Service is the key player in impacting that 70%.
2854. We all believe that youth work is a very important part of education. Indeed, the Minister flagged this up in his key policy document ‘Priorities for Youth’. He said:
- “Youth work has an important contribution to make to the development of young people within the context of the education service”.*
2855. He also said that it contributed to educational and lifelong learning outcomes. Indeed, in the ‘Priorities for Youth’ document, he goes on to say that we have a very important role to play in building a new and shared society. He also said that we equip young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours that they need, and that those, in turn, work towards addressing the legacy of conflict and moving towards a shared and inclusive society.
- (The Deputy Chairperson [Mr Kinahan] in the Chair)*
2856. I know that you have heard a little bit about us this morning, but the Youth Council was established in 1990 with statutory functions including advising Departments on the development of the Youth Service and encouraging and developing community relations work. For a number of years, we have been involved in coordinating a wide range of initiatives on behalf of the sector, and, through many of those, the sector has been recognised for its contribution to a shared and peaceful society.
2857. I know that you are also aware that the Youth Council provides core funding to around 40 regional voluntary youth organisations. These provide crucial support to front-line youth work and, indeed, work with 112,000 young people. In fact, that is about 75% of the total young people involved in youth groups. However, it would be pertinent for me to point out that the majority of

- Youth Council staff are not involved in the administration of such funding. They are involved in discharging the Youth Council's statutory responsibilities in areas such as training, international North/South work and community relations.
2858. Since we submitted our initial response to the Committee, there have been four very significant developments that we want to flag up today. The first was the draft policy on shared education. The second was the draft Shared Education Bill. The third was the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluation of the community relations, equality and diversity (CRED) policy in schools and youth organisations. Finally, the Minister has now submitted in his draft budget to end all CRED funding. Our presentation today will concentrate on these.
2859. I want to touch on the four items very briefly, Chair. First, the policy on shared education evolved from the ministerial advisory group and was written at a time when we all envisaged an Education and Skills Authority being formed that would have subsumed Youth Council functions. The new Education Authority is obviously a new animal, so we wait to see how the Youth Council's current functions will be taken on board. There is also a need for the key actions on shared education to be developed in consultation with our sector, and we believe that we have a major role to play in assisting our sector to comment on those.
2860. The second point is the issue of the Shared Education Bill. We recognise the inclusion of youth work in the Bill and the recognition of the role that youth work can play in encouraging shared education. We note that we are cited as the Youth Council in the Bill, with the power that we may encourage and facilitate shared education, but we contrast that with our existing statutory functions, which actually require us to address the issue of community relations work in society. In actual fact, our current statutory functions are not weaker than that which is actually included in the draft Bill.
2861. Thirdly, I want to touch on the Education and Training Inspectorate. Its policy review came out last week, which was very timely because it noted, amongst other things, that voluntary youth organisations need support to expand and embed CRED through the dissemination of good practice events, training and increased access for young people to programmes. Those young people react very favourably to the safe places that these organisations were able to provide for them. The report also went on to commend the Youth Council setting up the CRED reference group, comprising organisations that we fund who support us in these roles. It went on to commend the Youth Council in providing appropriate support and guidance to challenge voluntary youth organisations to develop CRED and embed CRED in their own organisations. I will step aside briefly to say that, in our initial response, we noted that shared education must not diminish the valuable role and place of CRED. In fact, shared education is something we see living within the CRED umbrella.
2862. The fourth point is on the announcement that the Minister made before Christmas to remove the entire CRED budget, followed by his announcement for funding shared education. We believe that the removal of the CRED budget poses a very major threat to youth work moving forward. In summary, we will attempt to highlight several key points this morning. First, there needs to be clarity on the role and place of the Youth Service and, indeed, the future role of the Youth Council in all these matters. Secondly, to remove the CRED budget in light of shared education is to seriously erode the valuable contribution that youth work has to make in this area and will jeopardise the legacy of the valuable work supported by CRED over the last few years.
2863. Thank you, Chair. I will now hand over to my colleague Norma Rea.
2864. **Ms Norma Rea (Youth Council for Northern Ireland):** I thank everyone for the opportunity to speak today. I will take a moment to look over the

- proposed policy from a youth work lens. It is good that it is out before we came here today, and we feel that we have very important points to make about youth work in general in terms of that policy.
2865. The Youth Council very much welcomes the Minister's reference in his foreword to the long history of community relations work in youth work organisations. However, although he goes on to make specific reference to teachers benefiting from improved professional development, senior leaders and governors working more closely together and collaboration becoming a vehicle for school improvement, he makes no reference to a vision for youth work. The introduction to the shared education policy states that it is intended that all children and young people should have an opportunity to be involved, and it notes that the policy is aimed at early years, schools and non-formal education environments such as youth work. We very much welcome that clarity.
2866. However, the policy goes on to state that, to reflect the full educational commitment of DE, within available funding, schools and other educational environments will receive resources, acknowledgement, support and encouragement to start or continue to develop high-quality shared education opportunities for their pupils. This is an example of the confusing nature of the policy. If it is about the full educational commitment of DE, references to "pupils" throughout the policy must be reviewed to ensure that they are not being applied at the exclusion of the work of other educational environments. In many cases, including the example above, these need to be replaced with the term "children and young people".
2867. We very much welcome the vision for the shared education policy for vibrant, self-improving shared education partnerships and, in particular, the reference to promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity and respect for diversity and community cohesion. We believe strongly that this vision is strengthened when it is placed within the existing Department of Education CRED policy, and we very much endorse the Department of Education position that was presented here on 21 January that shared education forms part of the CRED policy. The CRED policy is broader. It goes beyond a focus on shared education partnerships to mandate all schools and youth organisations to contribute to improving relations between communities. It states that this is about educating children and young people to develop self-respect, respect for others, promote equality, work to eliminate discrimination and by providing formal and non-formal educational opportunities for them to build relationships with those from different backgrounds and traditions.
2868. When applied correctly, it does and should deliver whole organisational approaches to this challenging task. As Alan Smith recently noted, one of the concerns of shared education is that the Department's own plan suggests that, even after four years, only 65% of schools will actually be eligible to receive funding under shared education.
2869. Turning back to the shared education policy; its background makes no reference to the fundamental role played by youth work in this area since the 1980s. This is despite the Department's review of community relations, which was completed between 2009 and 2010, having found that work already completed in the youth sector is further ahead than that available for the teaching profession and the contribution of Youth Service having been recognised in the resulting CRED policy. Specifically, the CRED policy made reference to the work of the joined in equity, diversity and interdependence (JEDI) initiative. I should state that that was a strategic initiative funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), which brought together the lead voluntary and statutory youth work agencies across the Youth Service to develop coherent approaches to practice, training and policies in this field. The work resulting from it also

- informed the CRED training, which I will refer to later.
2870. As I said, the policy made reference to the work of the JEDI initiative, stating that, within the Youth Service, the JEDI initiative has developed a range of training programmes, support resources and practice models. That work has been recognised as good practice and, in particular, its ability to address the needs of those more marginalised young people. It is a model that could usefully be built upon. That was stated four years ago.
2871. The contribution of the Youth Service to the field has been further endorsed by the recent publication of the Education and Training Inspectorate's evaluation of CRED. David has already made reference to its recommendation on the need to expand and embed CRED, its endorsement of the safe space that youth organisations provide for young people to develop confidence around issues of diversity and inclusion and the appropriate support and challenge role that YCNI provides in the development of that practice. The ETI evaluation report went further than that. It noted that children and young people respond well to strategies that welcome and celebrate their uniqueness and diversity in youth organisations. In the most effective practice, children and young people demonstrate high levels of self-respect and respect for others. It also notes that there are too many missed opportunities for schools and youth organisations to work together to promote better learning for young people.
2872. Of the schools and youth organisations currently engaged in CRED work, the ETI report noted that most demonstrated effective CRED practice in helping children and young people build relationships with others from different backgrounds and traditions. Yet the shared education policy only briefly mentions the arrival of the Department of Education's CRED policy in 2011 and makes no consideration of the work that it has brought forward across the educational settings. That significant oversight puts existing models of good practice at risk, with the potential to damage work, which has been building up a commitment to the agenda — relationship building and sharing — across voluntary sector youth groups and the local communities in which they operate.
2873. The background to the shared education policy notes concerns as to whether the educational and social needs of young people are being met, and it makes reference to a number of groups, including those living with disabilities and those who may identify as GLBT. As part of our commitment to the CRED agenda, Youth Council funds the hub, which is a consortium arrangement that brings together all the disability focused youth organisations across the spectrum of disability, to promote the inclusion of young people with disabilities across Youth Service. Work of this nature needs to be recognised in the shared education policy and linked to a clear vision on how it will be taken alongside actions for shared education, either as part of the shared education policy or under the CRED policy.
2874. There are a number of oversights in the policy. The case for shared education makes reference to a body of research regarding the effectiveness of school collaboration but makes no attempt to consider the case for collaboration across Youth Service groups or units. The section outlining the current and future context of shared education makes no reference to the Department of Education's CRED policy, the Department's policy for youth document or the Youth Service curriculum. The policy section does note that shared education involves schools and other education providers, which we welcome, and goes on to record an expectation that it will be organised and delivered to promote equality of opportunity and social inclusion for children at school and in less formal education, which, again, Youth Council welcomes. However, it makes no attempt to elaborate on how the Department will take account of the particular needs of Youth Service.

2875. There is reference to a wide range and variety of opportunities for shared education, including adequate training for teachers, support staff and youth workers, yet there are no key actions to support funding for youth worker training. With the Minister's intention to remove the CRED budget, that matter is critical. At this point, it is important to note that the voluntary youth sector makes up over 90% of our youth service. Annually, over 22,000 volunteers contribute to that work. The young people who participate in those groups, the volunteers who support them and the communities they represent all have a role to play in delivering success in the shared education and related T:BUC agendas.
2876. Linked to that point, the CRED reference group has recently developed comprehensive CRED training for those working with young people. That is accredited training available under the qualifications and credit framework, if you are familiar with that. That training has much to offer those wishing to take forward both the shared education and the summer camps initiatives within T:BUC. It is about supporting those to engage young people in that work. Again, the removal of the CRED budget puts that at serious risk.
2877. The core principles for the delivery of shared education, the policy aim and the objectives need to be amended to be inclusive of Youth Service and the bodies that support its work. That is related to David's earlier point on how recommendations for ESA and the ministerial advisory group's research, which informed the policy, do not automatically read across to the Education Authority. That context needs to be reflected and considered within the policy.
2878. The intended outcomes for the shared education policy include increased opportunity for young people to learn in a shared environment, both formal and non-formal, and increasing the number of children and young people participating in high-quality shared education programmes. That outcome will be strengthened when placed within the CRED policy. However, that further highlights David's earlier recommendations on the need for clarity on the role of Youth Service within shared education, for key actions to be developed for shared education — in consultation with the representative bodies, including YCNI — that reflect the specific needs of youth work, and for shared education's relationship with the CRED policy to be clearly stated.
2879. The current proposal to remove the CRED budget will seriously marginalise the capacity of voluntary sector youth work organisations to deliver the shared education outcome within existing and very stretched budgets. I want to take a moment to specifically outline the work that will be lost as a result of the CRED budget being removed for regional voluntary youth organisations. It was a budget of £152,000. For example, during 2012-13, it impacted on up to 20 organisations. You have regional organisations, which then impact on local organisations, the volunteers within them and the young people. Over 500 young people and volunteers were supported to a level where they would be taking forward CRED work in their own local setting, so we are not just talking about young people engaging in CRED based-activities. It is capacity-building and the need to build that capacity. The multiplier impact of that is difficult to calculate, but if those young people and volunteers influence just five others, the investment costs about £60 per person.
2880. The following year, 2012-13, we had two streams; strategic investment in organisations working in partnership and looking at whole-organisational approaches to embedding that work, and then organisations themselves might pick up on extra activity that they would need to further embed that work within their organisation. The following year, one of those organisations picked up on short-term funding of £2,500 and developed learning opportunities on the CRED themes, which then impacted in that year — they will still exist within

- that organisation — on 360 young people and 185 volunteers.
2881. In addition, the CRED budget has contributed to approximately eight staff members — not full-time posts — who play a crucial support role across the funded and support groups. That is what we regard as a skeleton infrastructure of skills and expertise across voluntary, church, rural, community and the uniform-based youth work settings, but it provides an essential mechanism to support and enhance that work and take it forward to the volunteers. Significant investment is expected to take forward the shared education agenda across schools. However, there is no alternative investment proposed for youth services.
2882. My colleague Joanne will give you a flavour of feedback from young people and volunteers who took part in some of that work.
2883. **Ms Joanne Stainsby (Youth Council for Northern Ireland):** I also extend my thanks to Committee members for the invitation to be here. I would like to use the opportunity to give you a flavour of the impact that the CRED funding distributed by YCNI has had on youth organisations, volunteers and young people, and share with you some of what they said.
2884. CRED funding issued by YCNI is supporting a number of strategic partnership arrangements to undertake agreed programmes of work to enhance the capacity of youth work activities across four settings — uniformed, rural, Church and community/voluntary — to help deepen the experience for young people and improve understanding of the CRED policy and its themes across the wider youth work sector. The uniformed CRED partnership includes six organisations: the Boys’ Brigade, Catholic Guides of Ireland, the Girls’ Brigade, Girlguiding Ulster, the Scout Association and Scouting Ireland. The uniformed sector in Northern Ireland works with in excess of 55,000 young people and 12,000 volunteers.
2885. At a CRED sharing event in December 2014, a uniformed consortium member said that
- “this investment in CRED and developing these collaborative approaches resulted in the six organisations in this partnership embarking on a journey together that would not have happened without that investment.”*
2886. Another uniformed organisation stated that
- “the investment was relatively small per organisation but the impact vast.”*
2887. The learning from the uniformed sector partnership has resulted in a range of new training being developed for volunteers and young people across all the organisations. It is being embedded into the existing voluntary sector Youth Service infrastructure. However, as the partnership reiterated,
- “this work is still in its infancy”.*
2888. Across the four partnerships and other YCNI CRED projects, the inclusion of marginalised young people is at the core of the work. This includes work to promote the inclusion of young people with disabilities, young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and other section-75 groups, further addressing educational underachievement and contributing to raising educational standards for all.
2889. This work continues to engage young people who often have limited opportunities to engage with or meet others from communities outside their own. One young person who recently engaged with a CRED project for the first time said:
- “I was the victim of a sectarian attack not so long ago. After that happening, it would be very easy for me to feel bitter, angry, hateful. Community relations, however, is important to me and to my community. We need opportunities to engage across the divide.”*
2890. Another young person said:
- “In the beginning, there were some issues to do with sectarianism within the group. We all come from areas where sectarianism is a problem. It’s easy to get caught up in all*



of that. However, this project is giving us the chance to talk and we will continue to talk some more and this has really helped me to understand things a bit more.”

2891. A young person from the uniformed partnership shared that an important learning outcome for them has been visiting the peace lines in Belfast:
- “I have never visited them before but regularly I have heard about them. This was a great opportunity to learn about why they are there in the first place and to gain more insight from a range of different perspectives about the country that we are living in now.”*
2892. This work, however, supports young people not only to participate in CRED projects but to take on leadership roles and share their learning with others, for example by co-facilitating discussions with peers. In November 2014, one young person reflected on their feelings about being a peer leader and discussing CRED themes with other young people:
- “At the start of the CRED project I felt slightly uneasy about being a peer leader because I wasn’t sure how others would react.”*
2893. Another young person added to this, however:
- “I want to do youth work. I want to help other young people to discuss cross-community and diversity issues. I want to represent my community in a way that no one has seen before so that, in time, people will look at me and see me as someone they are proud of. I want to provide something for young people coming behind me that I didn’t have when I was growing up.”*
2894. As a youth worker recently expressed:
- “If we are asking our young people to be brave and to lead the way, it is important that we get behind them and adequately support and resource them to do so, otherwise what message are we sending out?”*
2895. YCNI staff have also been involved in developing a number of practical training resources that have involved collaborating and sharing with other sectors, for example, providing space for teachers and youth workers or for outdoors instructors and youth workers to come together to explore

CRED themes. The inCREDible Drama Toolkit training is one such example. A teacher who participated in this training concluded:

*“I have been given many new ideas and fresh strategies to help me to explore citizenship themes with young people in the classroom.”*

2896. Another stated:
- “The training has highlighted the potential of using these tools and techniques to raise awareness and look at social issues relevant to the community in my classroom. Often in schools we are focused on the end product. However, this training has reminded me of the importance of the process or the journey that a young person is on and the links that this can have with other areas.”*
2897. At the CRED sharing event in December, youth organisations wanted to reiterate that:
- “Without this seed funding we are now concerned about what will happen to this work and how it will impact on our ability to deliver, thus decreasing the educational opportunities for many young people from a diverse range of communities, backgrounds and circumstances.”*
2898. The Youth Council echoes this concern.
2899. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Thank you very much. I apologise for not being here at the beginning. Thank you, Nelson, for chairing the meeting in my absence. None of us doubt the massive work that you do and its strength. When the Priorities for Youth consultation was presented to the Committee 18 months ago, we suddenly realised the sheer scale of what you are influencing. Having heard about the importance of CRED, I agree with that, and as a Committee we have to find a way to make sure that we do not lose what was learned or, on the other side, to try to help you. I very much take those points on board.
2900. We are focusing on the Bill here, and the debates will all be about the definitions. You mentioned celebrating uniqueness and differences, and I have always been intrigued by the balance between teaching someone who they are and making sure that they are proud of it and then respecting someone else for

- the same. It is about balancing that against blurring the passion that can go with your identity. When we get to the definition, my concern is that, by defining maintained and controlled or socio-economic or political differences, we will force people into having to choose which they are. I wonder how you feel about that. It is that fine balance in the middle.
2901. **Ms Rea:** I completely agree; it is a very difficult one. For me, that is where, in my experience, I would go back to the debates that we were part of in the development of the CRED policy, which was about maintaining that tension between your uniqueness and your identity and its place in a diverse society and respect for others if you are to receive respect for that identity too. That underpins the learning and training with which we support teachers and youth workers primarily to deliver on and the messages for that. I think that if you start to get into defining who is in and who is not, as opposed to focusing on the outcomes, that becomes confusing, because the outcomes, for me, are around respect for each other. You are then not about excluding people, and, if this is also relating back to T:BUC, reconciliation agendas and peace-building agendas must be there, too. Focusing on the outcome can sometimes help to keep the path clear.
2902. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Do you think that we should have a slightly broader definition rather than three tighter definitions?
2903. **Ms Rea:** I think that the emphasis needs to be on the outcome. I do think that, in some way, the CRED policy reflects that. It is an aim that the outcome is there. Then, you are not excluding groups with regard to who is in to achieve that outcome, but it is about demonstrating that the work will achieve that outcome.
2904. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Something that I have very much got from you today, other than obviously your passion in what you do, is that CRED really is what should be leading shared education and therefore all the work that you have done. I know that one group that we have been talking to felt that the integrated sector should also be heavily involved because it has learnt so much. Maybe what we should take forward is what has been learnt from both.
2905. **Ms Rea:** I very much think that if the Department of Education's commitment to this agenda becomes only shared education as it sits at the moment, it is very narrow. That is quite risky for the outcomes that it should really be contributing towards. That is not to take away from the proposals necessarily, but, yes, you cannot do this in isolation.
2906. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks for your presentation. If I had questions, you have really answered them. That was quite a good, lengthy presentation. I admire what you do. I suppose that I say that to all the groups, but I really do mean it in your case.
2907. I am interested in what you were saying about the uniformed organisations that you work with. That wee badge is historical, but [*Inaudible.*] the Boys' Brigade. Where do you stand on what appears to be a slight conflict between the Department and various organisations about where the emphasis should be on shared education? The Department makes the point that it is basically about educational outcomes. I gather from you that you would see the other types of outcomes as being at least equally or perhaps more important.
2908. **Mr Guilfoyle:** In the Youth Service, we are very much aware that what the Department funds must be framed within educational outcomes. Indeed, we are very proud of the fact that the Youth Service is part of the youth education family. What we do is complementary to what happens in school. Indeed, a number of us up here have direct or indirect links with schools. I used to be a teacher myself, so I appreciate what happens in the classroom. I also recognise that there are things that happen outside the classroom that cannot happen in the classroom, so we can work together. We do see what

we do as being about educational outcomes. What we have done recently through a project that involves our colleagues in both the statutory and voluntary sectors is to look at how we can map youth work outcomes across to educational outcomes. We feel that it is a very easy fit. In fact, youth work outcomes certainly help educational outcomes for young people. We have recently come up with a framework for this. We have identified six areas of capabilities, such as enhanced personal capabilities, improved health and well-being, developing thinking skills, work and life skills, developing positive relationships, increased participation and active citizenship. Those are all relevant to the classroom. They are also relevant to the Youth Service. Indeed, in the Youth Service, we have the opportunities to perhaps do things that, as I say, you cannot do in the classroom. You can teach citizenship, but the Youth Service can practise active citizenship. We can provide opportunities for young people to work with others from diverse backgrounds in voluntary settings of their choice. Certainly, it seems to us that there is no contradiction or conflict here. We are in educational outcomes. Youth work outcomes map with that. With the work that we do in the CRED, we actually specialise in some aspects.

2909. **Mr Lunn:** You directly or indirectly finance youth club activity. Is that mostly cross-community?

2910. **Mr Guilfoyle:** I was personally involved with youth work as a volunteer away back in the '70s. Going back over the last number of decades, the Youth Service has always sought to work with young people of all communities. Certainly, we have become more sophisticated with that as the years have gone on. The Youth Service is something that is based in the community, and that allows us to make good links with all sections of the community. It is very challenging. Certainly, we have had to make sure that we train people and equip them to be able to cope with that. We, as the Youth Council, do not fund local groups

on the ground, but, very importantly, as I think that you have already heard this morning, we fund 40 regional voluntary youth organisations whose support for those local groups is crucial. The Boys' Brigade, and I say this as a former member and officer in it, relies very much on its headquarter body, which recently had an inspection carried out by the inspectorate. I do not think that I have read the output yet, but there is no doubt that it was very positive. Certainly, the BB would be very supportive of all its companies across Northern Ireland, ensuring that not just the badge work but NCO training and other work is carried out to the highest standards. If that support was not there, the work on the ground would suffer and the young people's educational outcomes would suffer in turn.

2911. **Ms Rea:** It is also fair to say that the Youth Service, because it is rooted in the community, will be a reflection of the community that we have, so it will be prone, in some areas, to be more representative of one community than the other. That is why we are very proud of the community relations work that has been carried out in that. In those settings, you also have parents who volunteer, so you need to bring the community with you and wider representative organisations.

2912. **Mr Lunn:** Which BB company were you in?

2913. **Mr Guilfoyle:** I was in the 22nd Woodvale.

2914. **Mr Lunn:** I was in the 73rd Finaghy.

2915. **Mr Guilfoyle:** I am sure that we *[Inaudible.]* drill anyway.

2916. **Mr Lunn:** We are talking military stuff here. *[Laughter.]*

2917. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Robin.

2918. **Mr Newton:** I am content, Chair.

2919. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** I think that the issue around the definition is critical. You have answered that. In your paper, you talked about almost a sense of

- support for an arm's-length body around peace-building. Could you maybe elaborate on that?
2920. **Ms Rea:** I think that that was looking at the wider T:BUC agenda coming down through government and feeling that there would still be a place for challenge back to coordination for that work, but also, then, where does the challenge role come back to government? That was really what we were thinking around: where do we all have that opportunity for a critical friend to feed back and respond to decisions?
2921. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** I suppose that the challenge in that would be almost an additional tier of bureaucracy, at a time when we have just had the previous discussion about the protection of the front line and the need to be very focused in targeting social need. Has the council explored what that model would be with regard to impact or cost?
2922. **Ms Rea:** We are just familiar with the benefits that we have seen of having that; even, for example, back to us in terms of the work that we do and being able to monitor that. The Community Relations Council (CRC) does its own monitoring at the moment. It plays that role very well. We would rely on a lot of its research to help to inform where we should be going, and we have done over the past. Where does that then lie in future arrangements? It is a very important function. It is about the placing of that.
2923. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** It is more about a challenge function, but it is not, in your view, I suppose, detailed with regard to cost or impact.
2924. **Ms Rea:** No.
2925. **Mr Guilfoyle:** Your question could be interpreted in a number of ways. Certainly, over the years, the Youth Service in Northern Ireland has been very much a mix of voluntary and statutory. As my colleague Norma said, the voluntary sector is, by far, the biggest provider. The statutory sector plays a big role as well. Since 1990 — I have been there right from the outset — when the Youth Council was formed, it was formed with specific functions in mind. One of its statutory functions was to assist the coordination and efficient use of the resources of the service. We have interpreted that as actually trying to get all of the players together to make more efficient use of what money is on the table and to bring forward various initiatives. Certainly, if you have seen any of our stories of our 25-year history, you will have seen many examples of initiatives that we have facilitated — not our initiatives, but ones that were brought by the sector — that have produced real products and impact on the ground. The challenge for the future is about who will provide that coordinating function. The voluntary sector needs to work with the statutory sector. The statutory sector needs the voluntary sector to deliver, primarily. That has to be coordinated, so there is an important coordinating function. I do not interpret that as administration; I interpret some of that as being developmental that has good impact on the ground.
2926. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Is that not something that comes within the remit of the new Education Authority?
2927. **Mr Guilfoyle:** As I understand it, the Education Authority was meant to subsume the functions of the five education and library boards; I have read nothing contrary to that to date. I speak as someone with some background in the education and library boards; I used to be the head of service in the Southern Education and Library Board. Education and library boards are responsible for funding local youth groups. They try to facilitate and support good work in the board areas. That is very much a role that the Education Authority will take on board for Northern Ireland as a whole, but we need to have a conversation about how other aspects of what is essential for good delivery on the ground are managed in a way that works within existing resources. Obviously, everything is resource-capped. How do we work out the best division of labour between the statutory sector, the

- Education Authority, the Youth Council and the voluntary sector, which is the key deliverer in all this?
2928. **Mr McCausland:** Thanks for the presentation. If I have it right, there was mention of six uniformed organisations — ranging from the Girls' Brigade to the Catholic Guides and everything in between — 55,000 young people and 12,000 volunteers. That is a very big sector. It is important that the needs of that sector are not overlooked.
2929. I pose two questions. The question around shared education currently references religious belief and political affiliation. The other element in our society is around cultural distinctiveness. That has been identified even by CnaG in terms of the cultural dimension of the Irish-medium sector. Do you think that there is merit in broadening that out to include not merely religious belief and political affiliation but cultural identity?
2930. **Ms Rea:** Sorry to go back to the CRED one, but I found that the different backgrounds and traditions worked quite well for us. I reiterate what I said: you cannot have in and out; it is about the end game and the outcomes. Once you start to define who is going to be in there and who is not, it is going to be quite difficult. It is quite complex.
2931. **Mr McCausland:** I have no difficulty at all. The point that you made earlier around equity, diversity and interdependence is the fundamental of the whole thing. It is a three-legged stool. It takes three legs to hold it up; you need all of them to be there. A two-legged stool does not stand up. That combination recognises difference on the basis of equality, but it also recognises interdependence, good relations and community relations — however you describe it. That is hugely important, and it needs to be acknowledged. Otherwise, you could have a dysfunctional situation moving forward.
2932. It is a pity in some ways that we did not have the sequencing this morning
- in a slightly different order. The paper that we got from the Committee Clerk mentions budgets. Your budget in 2013-14 was nearly £6 million. Staff costs were £700,000. There was £5 million from the Department and £1 million from whatever other source. Half of the spending was on regional voluntary organisations and infrastructure funding, and there was £200,000 on CRED policy activities. How much of your budget from the Department would be pure administration, as opposed to developmental work, support or whatever?
2933. **Mr Guilfoyle:** As I understand it, the figure is £5.1 million rather than £6 million. Of that, the council distributes £4.9 million. The vast bulk of the funding received is from the Department. We try to draw down European funding as well, and we help many other youth organisations to draw down about half a million pounds a year in European funding; but that is another story. As an arm's-length body, the Council has the discretion to decide how best to split that funding up, consistent with our statutory functions. The council has always, historically, put the vast bulk of that in the hands of voluntary organisations in a variety of funding schemes. The £900,000 that seems to be held back for the Council is certainly not an administration budget. I have had this argument with the Department for decades now. Administration, to my mind, is when someone passes a piece of paper across a table and is not actually engaging with the youth organisation receiving that funding; they are basically a paper passer. There is a certain percentage of our staff's time spent on that. We do administer funding, and obviously we are accountable for that funding, so there has to be a certain amount of paper associated with that. However, the vast majority of our staff's time, myself included, is spent engaging with the sector and with those outside the sector that may be good allies for the sector, which could be another Department such as DSD, DHSSPS, DOJ, DEL etc. It is also spent advising others on how best to utilise

- the expertise of the Youth Service and to take forward initiatives such as the United Youth programme, T:BUC summer camps etc.
2934. I would challenge the Department to demonstrate how much of the £800,000 is actual administration. I would be very happy to sit down and have a discussion to show exactly where staff time goes. The Department has our business plan; it knows what the staff do. I would have thought that it was quite obvious to them, from our business plan, that the majority of our staff are not pen-pushers but are actually doing developmental work, supporting those on the ground by doing work that is moving the sector forward. We are doing work in areas such as the North/South context. International work is also referred to, and, as Norma was saying, we are developing accredited training for CRED work and for youth work. We are developing youth work apprenticeships in liaison with DEL. There is a lot of work that goes on that I would not personally say could be construed as administration.
2935. **Mr McCausland:** It might be helpful to inform our correspondence with the Department —
2936. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** I have made a note of that. I think that that is exactly what we should be doing.
2937. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the presentation. The vast majority of my questions have been answered, but I just want to pick up on a couple of points that Nelson was talking about. You would obviously contradict the Minister and Department's assertion, made this morning, that £800,000 was spent on administration. How much do you spend on administration?
2938. **Mr Guilfoyle:** I would not like to give a specific figure because it depends what one is counting. Certainly we have become aware — I have been chief executive for almost 25 years — that the level of public accountability has greatly extended over the years. Obviously we have no problem with that. We have to abide by that, and we have no problem doing so. There is certainly a lot of money, time and effort taken by staff looking at how we give out the funding. In fact, we have just had an internal audit report carried out, and we will have our external auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, in in a few months' time. I am delighted to say that we have always had very good reports on how well money is administered. You will appreciate that, giving out that money in public funding, we have to carry it out very carefully. We have people going out on the ground carrying out financial verification visits to groups we fund. I am sure that no one is suggesting that that is not essential.
2939. I would not like to give you a figure today, but I am happy to go back to base, speak to colleagues and come back to the Committee with a figure in due course. What I can say assuredly now is that the vast majority of our staff time is not involved in funding. Funding is important; it is the lifeblood for the many organisations we fund, and, if some of them were sitting here today, they would say to you that, without their core funding, they would go out of business, because very few funders nowadays will fund core or infrastructure. They will fund short-term project funding. That is relatively easier to get. However, we do know that, sadly, a couple of the organisations we fund have gone out of business in recent years because of problems with funding. A couple more, I know, are on the brink, and certainly if the council is forced to impose a further cut in funding, that could be prejudicial to their future survival.
2940. The only occasion, in my memory, when we had a cut, about 10 or 12 years ago, Youth Council itself took a bigger percentage cut from its own running costs, as it were, to try to cushion the regional voluntary organisations. With the £1 million cut, no matter how hard we hit ourselves and yet maintain our statutory functions, it would be very hard to cushion much of the impact on those organisations. I feel for them,

- having personally worked not just in the education and library boards but as a voluntary worker at a local club and a regional voluntary organisation. We empathise very strongly with our colleagues.
2941. **Mr Hazzard:** I think that this warrants further investigation. I was alarmed this morning when the Minister mentioned £800,000 on what could technically be looked at as another layer of bureaucracy that we do not need. A bit of clarity around this would be useful.
2942. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** It has also made me think about whether there is duplication in the authority. We should investigate that as well.
2943. **Mr Hazzard:** It may not be the Youth Council but the authority that has the duplication. It is worth checking it out.
2944. **Mr Guilfoyle:** My colleague would like to make a comment that is relevant to your point.
2945. **Ms Rea:** The Minister will be familiar with the Irish-medium work and youth work. Although I look after the funding that goes out to support regional development of that and its coordination across the voluntary organisations, a huge amount of my time is spent — this is an emerging area of work — on supporting those who are involved in that work, so that they are aware of training opportunities, and working with my board colleagues to bring everything together to try to develop that area more coherently and, in some ways, protect the voice of the voluntary sector. I think that the Youth Council has been very good at protecting that. We are not a huge organisation, and perhaps that will be our downfall. A lot has been about where the voluntary sector can take it forward.
2946. **Mr Hazzard:** I certainly empathise with what you are saying, but we have a duty to look at that, given the very harsh economic climate and some of the budgetary decisions. If we did not examine that issue, questions would be asked of us as a Committee.
2947. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** We will look at it.
2948. Thanks very much for a very good presentation. We know how valuable you are, and you should hold your heads high and know that you are incredibly important to us.
2949. **Mr Guilfoyle:** Can I make two brief comments? I have two good colleagues here without whose work a lot of the work that we have described would not happen. I do not take the plaudits; I applaud my two colleagues Norma and Joanne. I thank you for the appreciation that you have shown today not just for the work of the Youth Council but for the work on CRED, which is crucial. As we understand it, the Minister is yet to make a final decision on that because the equality impact assessment consultation on CRED is not yet finished. That is a live issue. On behalf of all the youth organisations that we work with and fund, I thank you for your interest in this. Hopefully we will get a better settlement while still recognising Mr Hazzard's point that we all live with restricted resources. We certainly respect that.
2950. **The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Kinahan):** Norma, Joanne and David, thank you very much.





## 11 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Sir Robert Salisbury      Other

2951. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome Sir Robert Salisbury. You are no stranger to the Education Committee.
2952. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Yes, I seem to have been grilled a few times.  
*[Laughter.]*
2953. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for your submission. I ask you to make an opening statement, and members will follow that up with some questions.
2954. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Good morning, everyone, and thank you for the invitation to come along. I had expected to look at the view at Shimna this morning, but it is not easy to see it today.
2955. I made my submission as a private citizen. I have lived in Northern Ireland since 2001. Before that, I was a professor in the school of education at the University of Nottingham. Before that, I was a vice-principal of a prestigious school in England, and I then took over the Garibaldi School, which, at the time, was the seventh worst school in the whole country. I did that to see if you could apply a different way of running a school to raise standards, and it was a fascinating experience.
2956. I am firmly based in education and, since moving here in 2001, I have been asked to chair the literacy and numeracy task force, the review of funding for all schools and a review of further education colleges. I have had the absolute privilege of looking at hundreds of schools over the years I have lived in Northern Ireland and meeting thousands of teachers, head teachers and so on. That has given me a unique chance to look right across the board from nursery schools to universities that I appreciate greatly.
2957. Some of the points that I raise in the paper are peripheral to the review that you are conducting into shared and integrated education. However, I think that they have a bearing, and that is why I put them into the short, bullet-point submission. As an independent individual, I have no vested interest whatsoever, and I do not come, as many of the other submissions do, with an agenda to say what you should hear from me. My paper is independent; I do not have any axes to grind one way or the other. These are just my observations, some of which relate to the subject under discussion.
2958. The first point is that it strikes me that virtually all world leaders from outside Northern Ireland repeatedly say to us that we should look at an integrated system of some sort. That message has come over very clearly. As a relative newcomer to Northern Ireland — as I said, I first came over in 2001 — I really could not believe that division was so entrenched in the system from the age of three and that there were separate routes through education. Some research that I read about said that only a tiny percentage of 16-year-olds had ever had a meaningful conversation with somebody from the other tradition. It seems to me that the first major point is that integration and shared education both have virtues, and it is about whether that is the pointed issue or whether the whole system should be reviewed and looked at. To most outsiders, separating children from the age of

- three seems incompatible with 21st-century education.
2959. The second point is one that you have heard from me many times before. It was brought home again only last week when a business leader said on the radio that we educate for too many teachers, pharmacists and lawyers and cannot get enough people for modern technological industries. A point that you have heard me make before is whether we still steer our schools through our rear-view mirrors and educate for a world that is no longer with us. Are we underpinning our education with the right core skills for our young people? What will make them marketable in the next 10 or 15 years? What will make them successful citizens worldwide? Are our schools doing the right things in that area?
2960. When I look at schools — as I said, I have looked at a lot of them — I ask whether we are teaching flexibility and adaptability. One thing that I am certain of is that the rate of change in the world will increase, not decrease, and that its direction is fairly unpredictable. We want flexible and adaptable young people, not prescription. It seems to me that many schools still drip-feed a prescriptive way to pass examinations, and the world is not like that.
2961. Are we teaching enough about global opportunities? Angling is one of my passions, and I write about it for four magazines. I was sitting at my desk in Seskinore writing something, and an email came in from an editor in Australia. I have never been to Australia, but the editor said, “We have read some of your writing. Would you like to write for our magazine?”. I sent an email back saying, “I have never been to Australia. I have attached a couple of pieces”. Ten minutes later, she replied saying, “I love them. I have attached a contract. Will you sign it?”. I was still sitting at the same desk, and only 15 minutes had gone by. The world is shrinking. What I am trying to say to schools is “Start having a global view of the world, not just of Northern Ireland”.
2962. That view has its pitfalls. Every notice in the school that I ran was in seven languages to give the view that the world is out there, and the bottom one was Arabic. It said “head teacher” on my door in seven languages, the bottom one being Arabic. Every Arabic-speaking family who came into the school and passed by my door always looked at it and smiled. It was only after I retired from that school that I wondered if it really did say “head teacher”. Sorry, I am being flippant, but I was just reminded of that.
2963. Cooperation, networking and confidence in meeting ever-changing circumstances are crucial. I go round school after school where youngsters are sitting in rows, saying nothing. If we are teaching communication skills and the ability to meet new circumstances with confidence, are we doing that in our schools? Those are crucial things that business leaders say to me that we should be trying to teach: technological competence, communication skills and so on. Have we looked hard enough at the underpinning skills that are taught in our schools?
2964. The third, almost peripheral, point is that, if we were the best in Europe in our schools and our achievements were the highest in Europe and could compete with the world’s best, there would be great virtue in sticking with what we have. Some of our top students achieve good results — we know that — but we have a huge, long tail of underachievement. I was staggered to learn that the achievement of some of our poorest performers in our inner cities was one click above Roma children. Some of the Protestant boys in Belfast are one click in achievement above Roma children who do not attend schools. However we look at that, it is pretty disgraceful for a country like this. This is a country that has superb youngsters, good teachers and a culture that values education. It does not have many of the major issues that we had to contend with in England, such as migration, shifts of population and ethnic groups. We have nothing like

- that, yet the results in some parts of Northern Ireland are very poor.
2965. The next point that I would like to make is that, whatever we think about the future of education, it has to address the achievements of all children. That ought to be a fundamental point that we take on. It has to be about raising achievements for all children.
2966. The fourth peripheral thing is that, when I was doing the funding review, it struck me that, overall, there was enough money in the system. It was spread so thinly because we had too many small schools and too many types of schools. To give you an example, Omagh, where I live, has six post-primary schools. That means six principals' salaries and six buildings to run, with caretaking and everything else that goes with that. Retford in north Nottinghamshire, with a bigger but similar population, has two schools. If you replicate that across Northern Ireland, you can see why we do have not enough money in the system. There are all sorts of hurdles in the way of addressing that in Northern Ireland, but doing so is a goal that we should be looking towards. There are too many small schools and too many types of schools.
2967. The fifth point is that amalgamation and the closure of some schools is inevitable. Some of the smaller primaries that I looked at in the funding review could not really offer a proper educational entitlement to youngsters. For example, there were not enough pupils to form sporting teams. Amalgamations are inevitable, and we have not made nearly enough of the positive things that parents said to me about moving their youngsters to bigger schools. I have not heard that said by anybody, but parents have said to me, when schools were amalgamated and became bigger, suddenly the whole thing was better. There was a wider range in the curriculum and more sporting and cultural events; there was more that you could do. So, working out how you can amalgamate schools is a further thing to think about.
2968. I was disappointed that the area-planning process was based again on a divided school system. If you remove a school totally from an area because it is either Catholic or Protestant, you have bigger transport bills, less convenience and all the rest of it. It struck me, particularly in Fermanagh, where there are many small rural schools, that the first thing you should offer to communities is the chance to amalgamate before you close a school. That way, at least you retain a presence in the area.
2969. It may be that you have to offer some sort of inducement to some principals to retire early. It struck me, again in rural Fermanagh, what block development can mean. You have two principals who are, obviously, interested in their own career and do not want to come together if one of them is going to lose their job. There may be some merit in looking at systems that make that easier.
2970. Lastly, there is a cost in transport and financial support for small schools. We hear a lot about the right of parents to choose a school, and that is quite right. However, my school — Drumragh Integrated College — was limited in the number of youngsters it could have. It seems to me that there is a clash between saying that parents have that right and saying that you can limit that to a number of pupils. Why not let popular schools expand and let the unpopular ones — I will not say “wither on the vine” because that was tried in New Zealand and it failed — but close them if they are not — *[Interruption.]* Does the school bell mean my time is up? *[Laughter.]* Moving on to the main point of your review, the integrated school movement has made strides over the last few years. I was involved with the Integrated Education Fund when I first came to live here. There was more emphasis then on building new schools than on trying to draw existing schools into transition. The whole thrust of the integrated movement in the early days was simply to build new schools, and I made the point that, if you are adding to the problems that I have just outlined,

- there must be a finite limit to how many new schools you can build. You ought to be thinking about that.
2971. I felt that, in the early days, the integration movement was less encouraging to heads and governors who wanted to transform their schools into integrated ones. One said to me at a conference that I was speaking at, "I feel a bit like a pariah here. Nobody wants to speak to me because I am not for pure integration; I want to transform my school." There was that kind of feeling in the early days. I also felt, in the early days, that the idea of integration alone was enough to promote a school. I always felt that integration had to go along with very high standards. Integration on its own is not enough; you still have to compete and have the highest standards you can.
2972. I also felt, as an educationalist who had worked in education for a long time, that some of the earlier integrated schools aped the selective schools and did not create a true integrated ethos. One principal who did do that put it to me very clearly when she said, "I want a school where everybody is equal and where we can cater totally for youngsters with special needs and youngsters who want to go to Oxbridge." In the end, she had a school like that; it catered for everybody. Schools that have streams, so you have a grammar school within a school, have missed something about how you truly create a proper integrated school.
2973. This sounds a bit critical, but it is not because the movement's intentions were in the right place. We have not had strong enough or committed enough political support for integration either. We have characters like May Blood who do a great job in promoting integration all over the place, but there has not been a real commitment to push it forward and maybe there should be. There has been some covert pressure to block it too. My wife was head of an integrated college in Omagh until 2004, and she was blocked consistently from going into any Catholic primary schools to talk about the possibility of integration. The heads were told, "No, they can't come in." There was covert blocking, which seemed a little bit sad. I do not know whether that still goes on because it is a long time since she was the head of a school. I was speaking at a conference and one head said to me, "The shared education lot have stolen our thunder." I said, "Surely it's all about the same thing: bringing youngsters to be educated together." That resistance was a little bit sad, I thought.
2974. Shared education is believed to be a step in the right direction, but there are some serious flaws in the way it is being viewed at the moment. You might not like some of the things I am about to say but I am going to say them anyway; it was a long journey from Omagh. The shared education movement is fashionable, partly because it has got a lot of funding. However, when I was doing the funding review, I found that some of the schemes were clearly designed to protect schools that were under threat of closure. They had no other educational virtue than that. It was simply a way of saying, "Let's come together to try to ward off the possibility of being closed." That seems to me to be the wrong sort of thought to underpin a new education system.
2975. In nearly all the submissions to the Committee that I read, educational outcomes were viewed as really positive: this is happening, that is happening, everything is possible and everything is positive. It struck me that, if it is so good on such a limited interaction, how much better would it be if you fully integrated? That is the question that I ask everybody. If it is so good when you come together a couple of times a week, would it not be a hundred times better if you were together all the time?
2976. Years ago, when I was a vice-principal, I was asked to timetable for five schools in England that were trying to amalgamate sixth forms. They were five large schools, and I had the lovely job of timetabling them together. Anybody who has ever worked in schools will be smiling now, thinking of the difficulty of doing that. I have to tell you that,

- logistically, there is a limit to how much shared education you can have. If you start to share with more than one school, it will soon impact on your own curriculum. Trying to put those five schools together made a shambles of the internal timetabling lower down the school. A classic example was one French class having three different teachers because you had used all your teachers in the combined scheme between the other schools. Those five schools have all amalgamated now and so the problem is over, but there is a limit to joint timetables, arranging transport and moving staff and students around.
2977. When I was doing the funding review, I met people from almost all the shared education schemes and said, “If your funding stops or you can’t get any funding for transport, what will happen to your shared education scheme?”. Without exception, they said that it would fall. That is a key point for you to consider. The scheme might be running now with funding, but what happens if the funding stops?
2978. There is one scheme — I think it is the Moy programme — where young people share the same building but come in different uniforms through different doors. That is unbelievably absurd. I thought that it was a joke when I first read about it. I could not think of a better scheme to distance and divide youngsters than having them like that. I wondered what happens to all the non-believers and the Muslims who are milling about outside saying, “Which door do we go in?”. It seems an absurd scheme to me. I am sorry to be so brutal about that but, when I read about it, I did not know where people were coming from in having youngsters coming through different doors wearing different uniforms.
2979. I would like all shared education schemes to be time-bound, because there may be a feeling that you are doing something and moving in the right direction but wondering where it will be a few years down the line and how it will develop. If things are working and there is positive benefit, how do we push it to something else? Having a time-bound scheme would, I think, work better.
2980. I also think that, in the long run, if shared education schemes are to develop, you have to look at the whole notion of how you govern schools, how you recruit teachers, how you share teachers, how their contracts come together and how governing bodies work. That is a whole new area of development for somebody. This will sound awful, but I feel that, in some ways, the movement of shared education is lip service to something that we should be doing. If the whole world is saying, “Do something about bringing youngsters together”, this is a way of saying, “Well, we are doing it through shared education”, but it seems to me that it will make little impact further down the line. We might, 10 years from now, still have those smaller schemes rather than doing the overall picture that I have been talking about. It is a bit like somebody who is overweight eating a five-course meal, then going afterwards for a gin and tonic and saying that it has to be slimline tonic. It might give you a bit of satisfaction and pleasure, but it will not make a jot of difference to the overall picture. Do you see what I am talking about? OK.
2981. There are things that we can do straight away. When we were looking at the funding review, I wondered why you did not have fully integrated preschool and nursery school places. That would seem straightforward and easy. I was truly disappointed that the teacher training thing wobbled. I was astonished when I first came to live here that you have separate training for teachers. That seems to me to be something that could and should be done pretty quickly. It is nonsense.
2982. Lastly, it struck me in the FE college review was that there is a golden opportunity for bringing together sixth forms because, at the moment, school sixth forms are very limited towards medicine, pharmacy, law and so on. The sign of a small sixth form is, “You can take this subject, but you can’t take

- this. If you take this, you've got to take that subject". I have three sons. Two of them stayed in a school sixth form. They had a choice of French or German in languages. My third son went to a joint sixth-form college and had a choice of 11 languages in any combination, from Mandarin Chinese to Russian or whatever. There is a whole world there that we could easily bring together and integrate. It would be cost-effective, but, more to the point, it would give the youngsters going through the system the pointers that I was talking about earlier. That would be very easy to integrate. It struck me in the FE review that you have school sixth forms and FE colleges vying for the same people. There is a massive saving to be had in that area.
2983. I am getting to the end of this, you will be pleased to know. We have moved forward. I sincerely think that, when I meet youngsters in Northern Ireland — my wife is currently working at a school that is doing cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with youngsters, and I meet quite a lot of them — they are superb young people. We definitely have some of the best young students I have met anywhere, including in the school that I ran. With a few tweaks and some major changes, we could easily have the best system in Europe for all of our children.
2984. The reason why I stay passionate about education and I am prepared to drive over here this morning is that I believe there is a much better future for our children if we take bigger steps and move in the right direction. Long term, it seems to me that educating our children all together is the way forward. Of the submissions that I read, the only one to say that integration was the way forward, full stop, was from the National Union of Students. It might be a good start to forget some of the vested interests and ask young people, "What do you think ought to happen in the future?". In all the different schools, I have asked youngsters this same question: what sort of schools do you think we should have in the future? They all said that some sort of integration is the way forward. A good starting point would be simply to ask youngsters, "What do you think?". We have to try to equip youngsters for the next 10 or 15 years, not the last 30.
2985. Thank you for the invitation, I hope that it has not been too drastic.
2986. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. You referred to vested interests and said that perhaps they should begin to soften their traditional resistance to change. How do you think that could and should be encouraged? Do you not see shared education as starting to do that?
2987. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I did when I first looked at it. However, I started to think that, unless you have progressive development of it, with — as I said earlier — some time-bound scheme, I can see us sitting on these minor schemes or small schemes indefinitely, because it placates the wider interests. It needs fairly root-and-branch change; we need to challenge some of the vested interests. As, I hope, you have understood, I do not think that we can afford the number of types of school that we have. Year by year, finance gets tighter. I talk to many head teachers who can barely manage and are talking about redundancies etc. That is because you have too many schools. There is an economic argument and an educational one. The vested interests have to be challenged, but it will take a major decision by somebody to do that.
2988. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The fact is that we have parental choice. You have said that it is right that we have that, but it comes at a cost. While parents still choose to send their children to whatever type of school they want, that obviously, in some ways, creates or adds to the problem.
2989. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** There is pressure on sending children to certain schools, but, at the moment, there is no transport. I do not know where the transport review has got to, but it has some serious considerations to come up with. The transport bill is huge. The

- cost that I refer to is that parents may have to pay for transport if they choose a different sort of school. The key point for me is whether parents really want to make that choice, or do they have another choice? Let me put it another way: if you had an integrated school in a village, would they choose that or choose going further afield and losing the convenience of having a school in the area? That is the question that I would like to ask parents.
2990. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Are you removing choice?
2991. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** In some ways, yes; but then you remove it, as I said, by having a restriction on the number of pupils that a school can take in. That, too, restricts choice.
2992. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** We go back to the view that there is also a vested interest in integrated education, and there is a view that that model is the right one. Not everyone agrees with that.
2993. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I just think that there is probably less resistance than we think in choosing schools. I think that it should always be put to communities that, in the area-planning exercise, it is scheduled that a school might have to close and move out, but, if you had the opportunity of amalgamating two schools and keeping that presence in the area, would you choose that? You might not be pushing at the closed door that you think you are.
2994. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Change is not going to happen overnight; there will have to be a process. Do you consider that shared education is a road in the right direction to that change?
2995. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I like to think that. I am always an advocate of trying out new schemes to bring schools together, as long as it is not something that you do and do not develop. As I said, if it is lip service to integration, I would not like it. I think it should be a case of, "OK. Try something small; next year, enlarge it, enlarge it and keep moving forward",
- but it ought to be time-bound and challenged.
2996. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Often, when we look at this, there is, I suppose, a misconception that all schools are — I do not like to use the word — segregated, but that is not necessarily the case. There are very good examples of schools that have a natural integration without being called "integrated". Is that something that should, perhaps, be more encouraged?
2997. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Absolutely. As I said at the beginning, my reservation about the integrated movement in the early days was that it did not take on the notion of transition schools. We should absolutely promote the notion of integration through the ordinary channels. I do not think it is necessary to change the name of it, but if you can encourage parents into integration in that way, I would be absolutely fully supportive.
2998. Despite what you were hinting at earlier on the choices that parents make, they usually base their choice on where they think there is a good school. You can go and look at Methody; it has all sorts of youngsters. It is almost an integrated school. That is what I thought when I had a look around it. Why? Because it has a good reputation. If you have a good reputation, people will come, whatever its traditional background. St Dominic's is another one; it is a girls' school in Belfast. It has a very mixed catchment area, but, in many senses, is an integrated school.
2999. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Many of the choices that are being made by schools around shared education are also linked to delivery of the entitlement framework, academic outcomes and educational outcomes, as opposed, perhaps, to the societal outcomes. In your view, would or should the educational outcomes come first over the societal outcomes?
3000. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I think that you can have both together, but remember that I said that there is a limit,

logistically, to how far you can go with that. I think that you would have to do both. It is no use having groups coming together and fostering integration if you do not have some educational outcomes from it. That is why I said in the paper that sometimes the outcomes were vague and hard to quantify. I definitely think you have to have that harder edge to making sure that integration or shared education is working. What are your objectives? How do you manage them? Are they really worth the money that you are putting into them and the disruption they are causing in transport and moving people around? Are you getting something out of that? So, the answer to your question is yes, if you get society working better together, that is great, but you also have to have some educational outcomes at the other end of it. I think that you can do both though. Some of the schemes I looked at were warm, sort of fuzzy, schemes. They felt right, but when I asked, "Tell me what the harder educational outcomes of your scheme are?", it was harder to quantify. I think that you do have to have both.

3001. **Mr Lunn:** Sir Bob, I have a problem with you, because —
3002. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I know you have.
3003. **Mr Lunn:** I cannot disagree —
3004. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** He is being honest. *[Laughter.]*
3005. **Mr Lunn:** I cannot disagree with a single word that you say *[Laughter.]* It is heartening to hear a senior academic with your experience express an honest view about something like the Moy situation. I completely agree with you.
3006. I really am a bit lost for questions, because you keep answering them before I have asked them. You are an Omagh man: what is your view of the expense of the Lisanelly project, which will build new schools for schools that already exist on a site that just happened to become available? There is no sense of integration or amalgamation between those schools, and it would not have happened if the Lisanelly site had

not been available. What is your view of that?

3007. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I have to be a bit delicate with my answer, Trevor. When I first came to live in Omagh in 2001, the council asked me to talk about education in Omagh. I went and talked about pupil numbers, the number of schools and the usual stuff that I have been talking about here. When I was presenting my second-to-last slide, I asked why they did not do something innovative with the army site and create an integrated campus. I was shot to ribbons. I told my wife that I had suggested an educational village, that they shot me to ribbons and that you lose some and you win some. That has been resurrected, but I still fully endorse the notion of doing it. It is potentially a huge step forward, except that what I had in mind when I first suggested it to the council was a truly integrated educational campus in which all the youngsters would come together with all the notions that I outlined earlier of huge opportunities for sixth forms and across drama, sports and all the rest, which, potentially, it still has. The idea of having totally separate schools just seems to be a wasted opportunity. I had it in mind that the schools would come together and interact fully in all the art, design and music and all of that. It would be fairly easy to interact in those areas. If the project is built in the end, I am hopeful that, as things develop, they will see those opportunities and how silly it is to have totally separate schools. It is expensive, but if it works in the way that I tried to outline in the early days, it could be a tremendously exciting project. If you have five schools that still retain their boundaries and their separate entities, it will be an opportunity lost.
3008. **Mr Lunn:** OK. You obviously talked a lot about the shared education projects. Four years down the line, when Atlantic Philanthropies has gone home and we start to hit funding problems with the shared education projects, it will be quite hard to assess their success, either in educational or societal terms.



- What do you think is the mark of success of a good shared education project?
3009. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** If it continues when the funding stops. If the teachers, the governors, the parents and the youngsters see it as a really valuable part of school life and the powers that be generate funding to make sure that it runs, it will be a success. If it folds, you can draw your own conclusions. I would see it as a success as well if it goes on to develop into other things. If these small steps suddenly start to say to people, “Let us think about wider integration because it is working”, I would deem that to be real success. If, eventually, the fear factor that exists in some schools was eroded and we moved on to a bigger project, that would seem to me to be working. As I said earlier, when I said to most people, “If the funding stops, will the scheme stop?”, they said, “Yes”. That was in the early days, and I am optimistic to say that they may see virtue in it and see the wisdom of raising the money from somewhere else.
3010. **Mr Lunn:** I would have thought that the main measure of success would probably be the acceptance of an integrated solution. It might take longer than four years, but, if the shared project as a whole has a virtue and is something that we could cling to as being a genuine ambition, it would be that schools, such as that in the Moy, see the virtue of it and make a decision to come together. The parental decision in the Moy was taken by a relatively slim margin. You said that you thought that most parents would accept an integrated solution if one were available. In the Moy — I keep repeating these figures — the 85 responses to its consultation were in favour of the solution that was on the table, but 70 responses were in favour of the integrated model. It is close. You talked about vested interests. The main barrier to progress in the whole area is CCMS; let us be honest about it. Its attitude to all this is completely destructive.
3011. I am inviting a comment.
3012. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** One question that I have been asking regularly for 10 years is this: what do you actually lose out of a school if you become integrated? What is it that you lose from one sector or the other? Nobody will give me a straight answer to that.
3013. **Mr Lunn:** I see it like this: what do you gain? We heard young Gabriel — I think that you were not in the room at the time —
3014. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I asked him what he said outside.
3015. **Mr Lunn:** I have heard it twice. He and any of the pupils that are here from an integrated school — we heard from some of them at Drumragh a couple of weeks ago — could tell you in 10 minutes what they gain from an integrated process. The others from the dedicated sectors that we have at the moment cannot tell me, as they cannot tell you, what they would lose. I am sorry; I am not asking you questions. However, I said at the start that I agreed with everything that you said. Thank you very much for your presentation.
3016. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I would like to say one thing to CCMS. My wife ran an integrated school, and she was taken away to be a troubleshooter of schools in England after that. However, one thing that she said that stuck in my mind was that, when she was in Drumragh College, children who had the Catholic faith, Presbyterian faith or whatever, tended to maintain it in the integrated sector simply because all faiths were taught. At the end of it, they still maintained their faith. I talked to a lot of youngsters at CBS in Omagh, and they said that their faith had gone because they have been through that school. CCMS should consider this question: why is it that a lot of youngsters who go through the system do not finish up with the faith at the other end? That is a very good question for somebody — not for me.
3017. **Mr Hazzard:** Thank you, Bob, for a fairly thought-provoking presentation. Like Trevor, I find myself agreeing with

- much of what you say. I may just have thoughts rather than questions.
3018. The Chair touched on the question of vested interests. How do we smash through vested interests? It seems to be very, very difficult. Vested interests seem to be entrenched in every walk of life, be it politics or the schools themselves. I would like to hear a few thoughts about how we could smash through vested interests, as that is exactly what we need to do.
3019. Another question goes back to a reference you made to world leaders. If I just touch on Obama and Cameron, when they came here, and the stuff around visiting an integrated school. The two of them oversee education system divided between those who can afford a good, private education, and the less well off who cannot and perhaps suffer. Is there a risk that, by tackling religious or ethnic division, that we open up massive fault lines in socio-economic division, and that we need to ensure that bringing together — integrating — is also socio-economic. For example, Shimna does it very well, but we have made reference to Methody and some of these big, super grammar schools in Belfast that consider themselves to be super-mixed. If you look at the impact that they might have on the same inner-east Belfast Protestant boys we talked about earlier, is there not a danger that we lose that? Maybe you could give a few thoughts on that.
3020. Finally, then, there is the need to facilitate the growth of popular schools. Say there was a development proposal, hypothetically, for an integrated school, but it was going to have a massive impact on a controlled school, perhaps closing it. That controlled school will, rightly, say, “We are going to take that decision to judicial review. We are going to take you to court because you are having a detrimental impact upon our school, and that could lead to the closure of our school”. Would they not have a right to do that? In my own head I am not sure, so this is just a few thoughts around what I have heard this morning. I would love to hear the —
3021. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I will take the third point first. In New Zealand there was a scheme which just let popular schools expand, and the unpopular ones withered on the vine. They have stopped doing that now because that is the worst of all worlds. You need leadership there. You cannot just let a popular school expand. You have to say to the unpopular one, to be fair to the pupils and the students and the parents, “This is going to close; you have not enough numbers” or whatever. Then the popular one can expand. The point that I am making is that you cannot just let market forces dictate; you have to have planning.
3022. It seems to me that, if a school is really working and the parents want to get there and you have a limited budget to expand schools or new build, you have to plan that. Keeping open schools that nobody wants to attend by propping them up with huge finances seems to me to be going nowhere. That is the first point.
3023. The integrated comprehensive system in England often gets a bad press. It is linked to private education. There are some good private schools and some awful private schools; there are some poor comprehensive schools in England, and there are some brilliant ones that never seem to get the headlines. I could take you to half a dozen schools across England that cater for all abilities and all religions and perform as well as any grammar school in Northern Ireland. Sweeping generalisations about what happens are not helpful.
3024. If you look at London schools where the London Challenge is in place, you will see that they have made massive strides forward in all schools. It can be done if heads and governors are challenged and targets are set. It sounds like a hard economic world, but it can work.
3025. **You are right:** it is difficult to use a system in one country and lift that entirely into a new one. Often we hear about Finland and how well it is doing, which it is, but there are so many

- differences in the Finnish system that you could not lift that and pop it into Northern Ireland. For instance, teachers are taken away every three months and given another month of training in Finland. Nobody could afford that in the UK. All the teachers have second degrees. It is different. I worked in Finland; I know what it is like. It is dark for six months of the year anyway; you have nothing else to do, so you might as well read. *[Laughter.]* There was a third part to your first question.
3026. **Mr Hazzard:** It was on vested interests.
3027. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Vested interests: that really is a tough one to crack, is it not? The teacher training issue has proved that. You can do it only by persuasion and funding, but it takes hard, strong leadership to do that. I often think that of Liverpool Hope University. There were two colleges in Liverpool. They messed about for years trying to come together. In the end, the Government got fed up with them and simply said that they would stop the funding to both of them unless they came up with a solution. Three months later, there was a solution, and Hope University was formed. It sometimes takes tough decisions. It is so difficult in Northern Ireland in that a lot of it is sort of covert, and what people say publicly is not quite what they do in practice. You get returns that say that 80% of parents want integrated education, but they do not opt for it when it comes to it. It is that kind of thing.
3028. **Mr Hazzard:** I have one final question touching on the patronage process in the South and Educate Together. We met just after Christmas. It was very thought-provoking. What seemed as though it would be a very worthwhile process when it started off has stalled. It seems to have stalled big time. I think that, in the past few days, it has picked up again. Even there, where I think that well over 90% of schools were in the control of the Catholic Church and even it wanted to free up a few of them, it was becoming very difficult. Can we take any lessons from that process in the South?
- Again, I am presuming that you know something about it; you might not.
3029. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** The South of Ireland is doing quite well in the OECD score. What they have there is not quite the same. They do not have some of the challenges that I have been pointing to today. It is strange in the South in that, daily, it is becoming more secular. It is changing as a country. It will be hard to predict where it goes. I worked on a scheme to put in a policy of entrepreneurial and enterprise skills. I have been working with the Dublin Government on that. They had agreed that it was vital for the future of Ireland, but they had no money to do it. Change there is hog-tied by the money that is available.
3030. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome to south Down. Hopefully, you will come back some time and try out some of the fishing in our rivers as well.
3031. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I will do, yes.
3032. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you for being, let us say, controversial, because that challenges us and makes us think about things. When I say “controversial”, I am talking about when you said that the Moy situation was absurd. Have you visited the Moy and spoken to the parents or principals of the two schools?
3033. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** No, I have not. I read all the details of it. I visited a school in Scotland that had a similar process. It just struck me — maybe I am being too harsh on the scheme; I have not spoken to the two principals — that, with a little bit more movement, youngsters coming in through the same doors and a little bit more tolerance on both sides, you could have had a better scheme. I cannot envisage what it must be like for a youngster to have a separate uniform, come through a different door to the same school and meet for some things and not others. It seems odd, to say the least.
3034. **Mr Rogers:** I see it not as ideal but as an important step in the journey. When you listen to some of those people from Moy, particularly from the preschool,

which was originally in a GAA club and was then moved into the controlled school as it had free classrooms and so on, you know that they have come a long way on the journey. I also have experience as a former head. I come from a town that, 30 years ago, was very divided. Thirty years ago, the only cross-community experience that my students had was the annual football match, but today there are really good joint curriculum experiences as well. What I got out of listening to the people in Moy is that we need to actively bring our community along with us. Moy is on that journey but has a long way to go.

3035. **You talked about area planning:** do you believe that we could amend the area planning process to better facilitate shared or integrated education, or do we need to start again from the beginning?
3036. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** There are two points on that. If the Moy arrangement is time bound and moves pretty quickly to something else, I will applaud it. It is my dream that, within a year, they will suddenly say, "It is crazy having any difference here. Let us move to having an integrated school." I would then give the people there a real pat on the back, as it would have been proven to have worked. If, 10 years from now, they remain as separate schools, that will be disappointing.
3037. I was disappointed with area planning in that the CCMS came up with a plan early, and that was imposed on the rest. I asked the guy at the Western Board, "Why did you not have an area plan that looked at all schools, particularly in the Fermanagh area, where, in some cases, you have only one school in a massive area and closing it would have a tremendous impact in terms of inconvenience, extra travel and so on?" I felt that a more radical view would have sufficed. In Tempo, for instance, there are two schools, and fairly limited shared education is going on. I asked the two heads, "How will this develop in the future?" They both said, "It will more or less stay as it is." It seemed to me that there was no vision to bring those two schools together. They are only a few hundred yards apart, and it seemed to me that neither had quite the funding, the curriculum width or the cultural or sporting capacity to offer the very best to the youngsters. Coming together, they would have had a much better school. However, you have two heads who are not likely to do that because of careers. That is why I suggested a scheme that says to one of them to take redundancy or whatever and then amalgamates the two schools. There is no doubt that the concept in Tempo is right in that they are talking to one another and working together. However, the next step would be so much more massive in its impact on society and in its achievement. Do you see what I am getting at? That is the first stage, but the next stage would jump them forward massively.
3038. **Mr Rogers:** I liked what you said about technology and communication, which applies to this as well. We are really steering our schools through a rear-view mirror in all of this.
3039. You talked briefly about the fact that we tend to be exam-driven and whatever else. Do you believe that, if we could scrap these league tables altogether and look at the value that we get out of education, we would be in a much better place?
3040. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I have always been a supporter of league tables in that you need some objective measure to see how well a school is doing. Maybe you do not need to publish the league tables as a league, but you do need to measure the performance of a school. We have not looked enough at the sort of outcomes that we get. The private schools in England were recently accused by their own inspectors of spoon-feeding their youngsters, with a predictable outcome; "If you do this, you will pass this. You will get an A\* grade". Everything is spoon-fed in order to get them over that hurdle. Their achievements are good, but are they any good long term? Look at the dropout rates in many of the universities, particularly Queen's. Youngsters get there, and suddenly they are not being spoon-fed. There is a flaw there

- somewhere because, as I said, the world is not predictable and the rate of change will be even greater. We should be trying to say to youngsters, “You need to be adaptable and flexible in your studies”.
3041. Looking back, I do not think that spoon-feeding them to get them through exams is the way forward. We have to have a lot more. It is not difficult to do. A teacher challenged me on that and said, “It is all right you saying, ‘Teach communication skills’, but I have this examination to get through.” I asked, “How do they hand their homework in?” She said, “Just in books.” I said, “Every day, get three of them to read it out and tell you and the rest of the group what they have done. It will not cost you any more time, yet you will be practising communication.”
3042. A long time ago now, when I was head of a school, once it was developing and moving forward, we published a paper for the ‘Nottingham Evening Post’. The editor said to me, “Why don’t you bring the team that did it down to see it roll off the press?”. I took seven or eight youngsters, and we got out of the bus at a big, glassy, flash office in the middle of Nottingham. We went through the door, and those seven youngsters were dumbstruck. A young reporter came up to one of them and said, “Do you fancy getting into the newspaper business?”. She could barely answer. All the way through, it was embarrassing how tough they found it meeting this new circumstance. On the bus on the way home I said to the teachers, “Whatever else we do in this school, we are going to teach youngsters how to meet new circumstances with confidence”. The whole of the school has moved towards trying to teach that and to get people to speak. That is what I am getting at.
3043. **Last year, I did a pupil pursuit in a school. You will know what that is:** it is when you follow one pupil around for a whole day and they think that you are stalking them. Wherever they go, you stay in the background and watch. This girl, who was 13 or 14, did not ask one question all day and was not asked a question all day. The only times that I saw her speak were at break and lunchtime, and I suspect that it was like that for the rest of the week. If our school systems are aiming to teach communication skills, what are we doing?
3044. **One last thing:** I noticed you smile when I mention timetabling. That is how I knew that you had been a head. *[Laughter.]*
3045. **Mr Rogers:** A nightmare.
3046. **Mr Newton:** Thank you for making the journey down from Omagh this morning.
3047. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** It is a pleasure.
3048. **Mr Newton:** Thank you, too, for being challenging. I want to be a wee bit challenging as well. I think that the two principals in Moy deserve a lot of credit for what they have done, particularly the principal of St John’s, who showed us the whole case study of what he had to go through to get to the decision. They deserve credit. Getting to where we are going in education, shared education, integrated education and the various sectors of education is a marathon, not a sprint. I believe that, eventually, we will get there.
3049. On teacher education, when I first joined the Committee for Employment and Learning I was surprised at the divisions in teacher education. Particularly at this time, had we not used the Budget as a blunt instrument, we might have made more progress on the matter.
3050. Like you, I have some concerns about area planning. As it was described to us by another witness, they did not believe that it was area planning and that it was a cut-and-paste exercise. Having amalgamated the five education and library boards, we have an opportunity now to look at area planning in a much more effective manner. If you were offering some advice or support, what would that advice be? How should the views of parents and young people, which you have stressed are so vital — I agree with you on that — specifically in that area planning process be sought on a way forward on education provision?

3051. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** First of all, with the Moy, I think that my strong words were about impatience with moving forward. I am not going to decry the work that is already being done by those two heads, because I do not know them and that would be unfair. It is impatient of me to say, "Let us get to the next stage as quickly as we can". That is what was behind that, because it seems that the long-term view of that is well worth doing.
3052. With area planning, it struck me that it was not a wide enough exercise to have a look at where you needed schools and what the best pattern of schools should be. It was one system imposed on another system. I asked the chap at the Western Board why that was so, and he said that that kind of challenge just seemed too much to take on, and I do not like the thought of that. I do not think that it is too late to have a fresh look at it under the new regime, because I think that you can definitely get a better plan, and there will be some natural places where integration will be the right way forward and can be done quite easily and be acceptable to all communities.
3053. Convenience was a major consideration with all the people that I spoke to in Fermanagh. Having a convenient school in an area almost overrode what kind of school it was. That is why I made much of saying, "Ask people first whether they want to retain a school in the area". It seems to me that we should try to get out to as many schools as we can to probe youngsters about what they think schools should be. I have done that, and it seems to me that there is nowhere near the resistance to working with other schools or integrated that we often perceive it to be. Yes, there are traditional routes that people take into different schools and there is great pressure on that. When my wife was head of an integrated school a long time ago, in 2004, many of the parents said that they had great pressure from their peers and from religious leaders on both sides not to send their children to an integrated school. That existed in 2004, but I do not know whether it still does.
3054. It takes a fairly determined parent to go against that kind of pressure. If you are asked, "Why on earth are you sending them to an integrated school when it is not the tradition?", it takes a fairly strong parent to come up with an answer to that. I would definitely devise some scheme of asking youngsters whether what they are getting from education is what they want. I just think that it is sad. I have lived all the time in England, and I find, as I said, youngsters who are 16 and 17 and have never had any contact at all with anyone from the other tradition, whether in entertainment, sport, education or whatever. I would have been pretty miffed if I had been brought up in Northern Ireland, mainly because I played rugby at school and I would have liked to have played Gaelic — it looks like a good game to me. The musical traditions that I have found in Ireland are tremendous. They were missing in my school. I think that, living here, you have only half a culture. Do you know what I mean by that? Whatever side you are on, there is a tremendously rich culture on the other. I would have been pretty miffed to have been exposed to only half a culture.
3055. **Mr Newton:** You would need to get the grammar schools to embrace soccer, then. The other area that you have missed out, perhaps, is the role of the transferors. You have referred to vested interests, and they are one. You referred to the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Church of Ireland and so on. What do you see as a consultative role for them?
3056. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** That is a hard one for me. When I was doing the funding review, I met all the religious leaders. The question of integration was raised. I asked whether they would be prepared to relinquish their automatic positions on the governing bodies of schools, and the answer was clearly that they would not. So there is an influence — well, I am hesitating here. You can see where I come from. I would always have the governance of schools at a wider cross-section. I would not have automatic positions on governing bodies. When I ran a school I recruited

- my own governors, depending on what the school needed. Sometimes you had a group of politicians, business leaders, finance consultants or insurance people — people that I needed to support me as a head — and that was a very effective governing body. Where there are fixed positions, obviously they are going to try to defend their vested positions. That is why I made the reference to looking afresh at the whole notion of governance and how you put it together. I think that we just need a fresher sort of governing body on schools. Chris here made the point about private schools in England, which have a different sort of governance. They have people from the community who are going to assist the school in one thing or another. That is what I tried to copy from them in the structure of the governors. I needed a group of people — parents, business leaders, politicians, media — all of them around to support me and what I was doing. I think that that is the way that we should work — religious leaders if they have something to offer.
3057. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you indeed for your presentation to us this morning. I have a number of questions. One is around the issue of the size of a school. We have around 1,100 schools in Northern Ireland, for a population of 1.8 million or thereabouts. What do you think is small for a primary school?
3058. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Anything below 80 is very small; I think 100 is more likely. If you can go up to 150, the opportunities suddenly become greater. Where you have schools that still exist with 20 or 25 pupils in them, the educational experience, by definition, must be limited. When I was doing the literacy and numeracy review, I asked, “How many small schools have a maths specialist?”. It was surprisingly few. There was usually an English specialist in the school, but, if you have got a primary school with nobody leading mathematics and helping to support the other teachers in the school, it is difficult. There are quite severe limitations once you drop below 100. If you have not got enough youngsters
- to run a football team, Gaelic team or hockey team or to run a proper school play or a choir, a whole chunk of stuff is being missed.
3059. **Mr McCausland:** In urban areas, I suppose you are talking of 140 being the figure set by the Department. Most schools in urban areas are above that, but there are issues with a few. This is obviously more a rural issue.
3060. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I was talking about a rural school. It definitely becomes easier to run and organise a school once you are up into 200 or 300 youngsters, because you have a range of staff and more money.
3061. **Mr McCausland:** At one stage, you mentioned schools that are not officially integrated education schools but which have an integrated intake. You mentioned Methody as an example.
3062. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I am only quoting Methody because, when I looked around it, the head said it was integrated. I have no hard evidence that it is.
3063. **Mr McCausland:** OK. When you look at the figures for Methody and Belfast Royal Academy, you will see that there are a number of schools where there is a very mixed intake. I was interested in your reference to St Dominic’s; I assume that that is the Dominican College at Fortwilliam. Has it a significant intake from —
3064. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Again, I have no idea. My wife does CBT there. She says that it seems to be a school that is working extremely well with a mixed intake. I do not know whether that mixed intake means different denominations or socio-economic backgrounds. It is a successful school, but whether — I do not know.
3065. **Mr McCausland:** I think it is probably more a case of socio-economic. I am going to an event at the Dominican College on Friday, so I must ask.
3066. How do you see the Irish-medium sector, which is one of the sectors we have here, fitting into a single integrated system?

3067. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** That is another huge question. When we were looking at literacy and numeracy, I felt that Irish-medium units at schools were more practical than a straight Irish. I have no basis or hard facts, but, when I first looked at it, I could not see that you would have a huge demand for totally Irish-medium schools. I visited a post-primary school in Belfast and several primary schools. They were all vibrant schools; I liked them. They had a lot going for them, but, long term, I could not see that there would be a huge demand for Irish-medium schools across the Province. Having Irish-medium school units fixed to other schools would be a practical way. It is a vague answer, but I am vague about that. It is part of the initial agreement in Northern Ireland, so you have it anyway.
3068. **Mr McCausland:** If we are looking at challenging vested interests of all sorts, is everything on the table?
3069. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** Personally, I would put everything on the table.
3070. **Mr McCausland:** Following on from that, you mentioned at one stage the cultural diversity of Northern Ireland. Chris Hazzard talked about not just religious division but ethnic division, which is a reality. In some ways in Northern Ireland, religion is a synonym for a deeper ethnic division, of which religion is one element.
3071. Bringing together cultural identity, cultural expressions and ethnicity, and bearing in mind the different cultural traditions we have here, how do you see those being worked out in integrated schools? The chairwoman of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, whose name I have forgotten, was in Belfast the other week to give a lecture at the Children's Law Centre, and she talked about education rights, so some thought is being given to this. How do you see the rights of children, integrated schools and the cultural mix we have here playing out?
3072. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** The cultural mix in many schools in England is huge. A school I worked closely with in north London has 30 languages and people from all over the world. You just celebrate cultures in the school, and it happens easily and smoothly. There is no dominant culture and, where anything is worth celebrating, it is done.
3073. If you look around the schools, there is a clear mix of all kinds of cultures. It is just encompassing, and I think that can be done. It is done very well in integrated schools. Look around this one. I do not think it is a difficulty if you have the initial concept that all youngsters and cultures are equal and you celebrate the lot. There were a lot of youngsters from Asian backgrounds in the school I worked in, and we celebrated their ceremonies like everything else. It was just accepted. It is hard for me, coming from that background, to even consider that as a difficulty.
3074. **Mr Hazzard:** My question is around secular education. To a large extent, our integrated movement here in the North is still a non-denominational Christian-based schooling. Is there a space for secular schooling in the North? How does that fit in with the view of where we need to go?
3075. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** I took the view in the school that I ran that the culture was humanitarian. You had a moral base to the school, but religion was taught in religious studies classes. I took morning assembly, and I do not think I mentioned religion once. There was always a moral view, and you get to that if you have a very diverse population. If you have a diverse audience, you cannot start to say the Muslims do not attend, the Hindus do not attend, the Buddhists cannot attend. You have more outside than you have in the assembly. I wish all education was secular, but there we are.
3076. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for attending and for supplying us with a written briefing.
3077. **Sir Robert Salisbury:** It is a pleasure.



## 18 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Jim Clarke	<i>Council for Catholic</i>
Mr Malachy Crudden	<i>Maintained Schools</i>
Father Tim Bartlett	<i>Northern Ireland</i> <i>Commission for</i> <i>Catholic Education</i>

3078. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
 I welcome Jim Clarke, chief executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), Malachy Crudden, head of educational standards in CCMS, and Father Tim Bartlett from the Catholic commission. Thank you for coming to meet us this morning. I invite you to make an opening statement, and members will follow up with some questions.

3079. **Father Tim Bartlett (Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education):**  
 Thank you very much for your welcome. I will begin by thanking the Committee for its generosity in facilitating the earlier start to our discussion today. As you know, we have to leave as close as possible to 11.00 am to attend the funeral of the late Sheila Lundy, the mother of our colleague Mr Gerry Lundy of CCMS, who would otherwise have been with us this morning in some capacity. I also thank the Committee staff for helping to facilitate that.

3080. I am here on behalf of the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education (NICCE) as a member of that

commission. NICCE represents the Catholic bishops and the leaders of religious congregations in their role as the trustees of the family of over 500 Catholic maintained schools and Catholic grammar schools in Northern Ireland. In other words, we are the trustees of the largest sector of education in Northern Ireland. On behalf of NICCE, I welcome the opportunity to engage directly with the Education Committee this morning in respect of our written submission on the theme of shared and integrated education, which, I understand, you have received copies of.

3081. The most important point that I would like to highlight from that written submission is the one made in paragraph 3, which is, in essence, that commitment to promoting respect, tolerance and understanding and, indeed — I do not shy away from using the term as a Christian — promoting love of every person in society is precisely what defines the very purpose and aim of a Catholic school and, for the Catholic Church, the whole mission of the Church in education. This is because Catholic schools are based on the gospel of Jesus Christ, which, as you all know, has at its very heart the message of love of God, of neighbour and of self. This includes a profound duty to love and care for especially those who are most vulnerable, the marginalised and those most in need in any society. A lot of the religious congregations in particular on this island that have involved themselves in education grew out of that interest or concern for the most marginalised and those most in need.

3082. Catholic education also, therefore, implicitly includes a commitment to forming citizens who contribute positively and constructively to the common good of society. Commitment to the common good is a fundamental tenet of Catholic social teaching and doctrine. Essential to that, again, is a

commitment to building peace, mutual understanding and reconciliation. If I may be so bold as to suggest it this morning, it is sometimes forgotten in political commentary and, indeed, in general debate in Northern Ireland that these are fundamentally Christian concepts that have been promoted, supported and articulated by Catholic and other Christian Church leaders over the years, not least at times when they were not as popular and as claimed by politicians or secular commentators and groups as they are today. I just want to put it on the table that those themes, which are at the heart of the whole concept of sharing and integration and, ultimately, the task of peacemaking, the common good, mutual understanding and reconciliation, are all the very essence of the Christian message and the Christian Churches' mission. I am not claiming that we have always lived up to them, but they are what drives and sustains us fundamentally. In the case of the Catholic Church, that is also fundamental to the mission and purpose of Catholic schools. Commitment to these values is fundamental to our schools.

3083. Our Catholic schools continue to be in high demand here in the North of Ireland and throughout the world among parents from a very wide range of backgrounds. Indeed, Catholic schools on this island and elsewhere have a very proud record of openness and inclusion, in particular to newcomers to our shores here. I am also mindful, for example, at the international level of the time I visited Gaza in 2008, where the largest primary and secondary school in Gaza City is the Holy Family Catholic School. It is 96% Muslim. The day I was there was the day of their graduation ceremony, which went on for hours. The Muslim children put on a great show on the theme of the prodigal son as a play that was written and developed from the Gospel story by the then parish priest Monsignor Musallam, who, although he grew up and lived only 40 miles away from Gaza, had never been able to get out of Gaza for 20-odd years to see his mother 40 miles away. That was his commitment to peace and reconciliation. I cite that as just one of many international

examples of the consistency of a Catholic view and mission of education with the values of inclusion, reconciliation and peace building.

3084. The commitment of Catholic schools to peace, reconciliation and the common good was set out by the Catholic bishops in their nodal document, 'Building Peace: Shaping the Future', which I commend to the attention of members of the Committee. We have copies here to leave with you. In that document, we point out not only the commitment of the Church to the value of sharing and reconciliation in our society and the role of our schools in that but that any such effort on the part of schools involves a wide range of strategies, partnerships, shared activities and curricular initiatives and so on. We are and have always been very committed to engaging with any of those initiatives as part of the fundamental mission of our schools and our commitment to peace and reconciliation.

3085. More recently, we have engaged with the Transferor Representatives' Council and the Department of Education to look at a whole new concept of joint church schools in Northern Ireland. These already exist in GB, and we have always been enthusiastic about the concept of joint church schools. However, what is not always appreciated is the particular development of the systems here in Northern Ireland where, in fact, the Protestant Churches, as you know, handed their schools over to the state. Therefore, it was difficult to engage in a model of trusteeship of a new type of joint church school in a way similar to what has been done in Britain with Anglican and other Christian denominations to have joint faith-based schools. Happily, we have had a very constructive conversation with the Department and the transferors about that, and I think that the transferors mentioned it at their last meeting with you.

3086. I will conclude by saying that Sir George Bain, in his 2006 report — this is in paragraph 8 of our submission — pointed out what I am saying about our commitment:

*“all schools, and all the educational interests, need to, and wish to, play their part in the journey towards the goal of A Shared Future”.*

3087. He then concluded:

*“We advocate, therefore, not a single approach to integration, but a more pervasive and inclusive strategy, focused on the dynamic process of integrating education across the school system.”*

3088. As I say in our submission, NICCE supports the general principle underlining that approach. That is a good summary of our disposition and our commitment.

3089. At the heart of this debate, as we suggest in our submission — it might be something we want to pick up in our conversation this morning — there is a wider conversation about what we mean by a diverse and pluralist society. Do we see integration in the narrow sense as some form of homogenisation of diversity, which is essential to a pluralist democracy? We would wish to claim, citing not least the European Convention on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, that parents have the right to have their children brought up in accordance with their religious and philosophical convictions. The two established conditions on that are, first, that there is a duty on all parents and providers to the common good. I am making the argument that the trustees of Catholic schools are fully committed to the common good of this society through their schools and that we have consistently demonstrated that. The second caveat or parameter is available resources. That is something that, again, the Catholic trustees and CCMS have demonstrated that they are incredibly responsible administrators of, in terms of efficiencies in the Catholic education system. We are at the forefront of area planning at the moment, finding greater efficiencies across the systems as well as opportunities for sharing in new and creative ways.

3090. **I want to emphasise this point:** our challenge to the general thrust of how the debate tends to go in the

public domain is that, in any normal, democratic, pluralist, diverse society, it is totally appropriate and consistent with human rights principles that there would be diverse provision in accordance with parental rights, including provision of faith-based schools where they are chosen in significant numbers. Those schools are also, in terms of the Catholic ethos of education, completely consistent with the common good.

3091. There are a few other points that I may make as the conversation develops, but, Chair, I thank you for the invitation to be here this morning.

3092. **Mr Jim Clarke (Council for Catholic Maintained Schools):** I will pick up from the base of the philosophical backdrop that Tim has created. Recognising CCMS as a non-departmental public body (NDPB) that has to deliver on the ground, I am going to take a more operational perspective.

3093. When we made our submission to the Committee late last year, the media picked it up as a kind of attack on the integrated sector. I want to state absolutely clearly that we have the utmost respect for the integrated sector, its right to exist, its philosophy of education and, indeed, its philosophy of life. However, we recognise that, over 30-odd years, it has not achieved what people in the mid-1990s would perhaps have expected in terms of outcomes and support. Our comments were a response to the reality, not to the right. Of course, the media want to sensationalise things sometimes, and I can understand that, but it is important that that position is stated. That does not diminish our belief that there are things that need to be changed. Our commitment to shared education is a recognition that there are different routes to the same objective. That objective is a much more peaceful, settled, inclusive society where there is respect and recognition of the rights of others. Education has a role to play in that, but it is not the only player in the game.

3094. There are issues that are practical. One of them is that, anywhere in the world,

- education — particularly in the early years — is local. It is a community-based activity. If our communities are of one denomination, one class or one ethnic group, there is a likelihood that that will be replicated in schools. How we break that down is a job for schools. It is a responsibility of education, but it is not education's responsibility alone. We have to look at the society that we have, how it is shaped and framed, where it lives and how it lives to understand part of what our education system looks like at this particular moment in time.
3095. If we accept the principle of parental choice — we do — we have to accept that parents make choices for a range of reasons. In those early years, convenience is certainly one of them. If an area is predominantly one grouping or another, there is a likelihood that parents will make that choice. We are faced with what people have chosen. They also choose because they make decisions about the kind of education that they want. On that basis, the right to a faith-based education is one that exists throughout the world and one that we in Northern Ireland ought to respect. I do not think that there is any dispute about that. However, there are times when it appears — maybe this is an external view as well as an internal view for some — that the only way to move forward is to get rid of the groups that appear to be the purveyors of the past: the big sectors — the Catholic and controlled sectors. That is illogical and impractical and is not deliverable. It is on that basis that we look at the issue.
3096. What is deliverable? In our view, the shared schools agenda is a spectrum from very limited association between one school and another to, as Tim has described, jointly managed faith-based schools and, indeed, integrated schools at the apex of that. However, the reality is that that will not be achieved overnight. Indeed, the evidence is that, over the last 30-odd years, it has only been achieved to a very narrow degree. The extent to which the decision of parents to send their children to an integrated school is about integration is open to question, because there is a range of other things that may impact on their decision-making. Education undoubtedly has a role in delivering a shared future for everyone, but so does society as a whole. We have to see it in that broader picture.
3097. There are issues about school size. It is often said that, in a diverse society, we want to bring schools together that balance the community. Again, I make the point that that is achievable where people buy into it. It cannot be imposed; it is a bottom-up model. Parents have to make the decisions. It cannot be something that can be legislated for. On that basis, we have a range of policies around area planning, including the sustainable schools policy, and we have to look at the issues in the context of those policies. In some ways, sustainable schools might create circumstances that allow for a greater degree of sharing — a jointly managed school being an optimum on that strand — but we cannot force that.
3098. The Deloitte report of 2007 or thereabouts identified the issue of the costs to a divergent society in Northern Ireland. In real terms — one of the authors acknowledged this in a radio interview that I was part of — economies of scale are economies of scale. It does not matter from what background people come; it is the economy of scale to achieve the curricular output that young people are entitled to. We have to have sustainable schools that deliver an education service, not schools that are there as preservations of one community or another. If they live within the constraints of funding and the policies, there is every reason for those schools to be retained; if they do not, we have to look at alternative models. Certainly, the integrated model is one; the joint faith-based model is another; but a sharing model with a wider range of choice within the curriculum is another.
3099. If we are going to look at shared schools, we have to ask, "What is the purpose of this?". We see it very much

- as increased access to the curriculum and to curricular choice for young people in post-primary in particular. We are going through difficult financial times, as everyone on the Committee well knows, and one of the things that have suffered over the last number of years is the degree to which teachers and others have had access to professional development. The context for schools working together on that basis is very strong, and it is being promoted further now by the expansion of the principle of area learning communities (ALCs) from the post-primary into the primary and nursery sectors.
3100. The economy of scale is very important, but we always have to have it in mind that all of us have a role towards the common good and to creating a peaceful society. It is our view that legislation is not the way to do that. By that I mean reference not just to article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which gives the requirement for the integrated sector to be facilitated and encouraged but to any legislation around sharing. As the Towards a Culture of Tolerance: Integrated Education (TACOT:IE) report, in 1998, indicated, schools will move forward according to the circumstances in which they find themselves, and not every environment is exactly the same. Therefore, it would be difficult to impose targets. The problem with targets is that you could be pushing towards them for the wrong reasons, and you could create a circumstance where you are not going to be able to deliver because, as I have said, parental choice is a key player in this game.
3101. Of course, in the area of funding, we would encourage — indeed CCMS will set out tomorrow on the first of a series of meetings with principals — interdependence, working with schools and the wider community, rather than simply seeing the delivery of an education as something that is only in that school alone. The wider issues of the school in the community need to be taken into account as well. ALCs are practical responses. We see sharing as a practical response to an educational need to a societal need, but we believe that it is one of those things that do not necessarily lend itself to a Programme for Government target or, indeed, a Department of Education target.
3102. One of the big issues, of course, when we look at sharing is that there is a tendency to see it in terms of religious difference. We have racial difference in Northern Ireland, and we have a significant class difference. Going back to the report on sharing and integrated education, the issue of selection is a key one. The right of people to access schools with equality is a key issue. When we look at sharing, we have to look at it right across the spectrum. Again, I go back to the point that it has to have a practical outcome. We are there to create the conditions and the circumstances where sharing becomes the natural response to dealing with how things move forward in our society and in our education system. In that respect, I will use an analogy that draws on my background. I grew up on a mixed street where Catholics and Protestants lived together side by side, knew each other, worked with each other and were friendly with each other. That is how I see sharing. Sometimes, the purity of the integrated model almost requires everyone to live in the same house and not the same street. The reality is that it is more achievable to live on the same street than to live in the same house.
3103. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. First of all, can I —
3104. **Mr Malachy Crudden (Council for Catholic Maintained Schools):** May I conclude by making a few brief points? The commitment of CCMS to shared education is evident in the fact that we are involved in shared education initiatives right across the country. Some of those initiatives predate the shared campus discussions and the shared education initiative coming to the fore in recent years. As Jim said, our approach is very firmly based on the educational principles and how shared education can contribute to providing greater access and greater equality of access

- to as broad a curriculum as possible, particularly in the post-primary sector.
3105. CCMS has demonstrated its commitment to the shared education initiatives and is especially supportive of them when they come from the bottom up. CCMS is not necessarily proactive in this respect. To date, we have been mostly reactive in supporting initiatives for shared campuses and shared education when those have come from the communities, because, for those to be successful, they must have full community support and full community buy-in.
3106. Where shared education has been successful in the past and where it will be successful in the future, it must be based on respecting difference. We have to accept that we live in a society where we are not all the same. Our aim is to create a mature and inclusive society. That is the goal that we all share. In that society, we must be able to respect and cherish difference. While waiting outside to come in here this morning, I noticed a plaque on the wall for the late Senator Paddy Wilson, and, at the bottom of that plaque, there are three words: equality, tolerance and respect. CCMS is fully committed to those principles, and it is our belief that we can fulfil those principles through diverse provision in our education system.
3107. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much and apologies. I pass on my sympathies to Gerry Lundy on the passing of his mother. I am sure that I speak for other members of the Committee in saying that.
3108. You outlined very well a Catholic education and what you see in your schools, particularly around peace and reconciliation and the feeling of a common good. I visit many schools, and I do not see an alternative to that. I see that in controlled schools and in integrated schools. Could you define the difference between a Christian education and a Catholic education? Is it about control?
3109. **Father Bartlett:** That is a very good question. There are two dimensions to
- it. A Christian school is based on the objective document of the Christian Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ. Any Christian ultimately makes the claim that that is their point of reference. We say two things. The values that are articulated there, such as the principle of love of neighbour, love of God or even love of enemy, in that very harsh sense of describing an enemy, are fundamental to what animates the values of the community gathered in that place and the mission behind that educational enterprise. We say that it is a religious vision but it is also completely consistent with human society and the principle of the common good. In other words, it affirms what is good for society.
3110. I said that this is part of a wider debate about religion, society and the whole concept of what we mean by a pluralist and diverse society. It takes us into a spectrum of issues. In relation to education in particular, what sets a Catholic school apart from a controlled school or, I would even argue, some integrated schools, as I understand it, is this: the defining purpose of that school and the legal protection of the ownership by the trustees of the enterprise and the property guarantee that that is the core driving purpose and objective. In an increasingly secular society, controlled schools cannot guarantee that, because there is no legislative protection or protection of the trusteeship of those schools. I agree that it is there — it is largely there — but that is what I see as the difference. It becomes more stark if, for example, you take Catholic education at an international level. You can see that, in many societies, whether atheistic or otherwise, that protection, that difference and that mission become more distinctive, relative to the society. I think that it is part of the good news, which we can build on, that, as you properly say, all our schools are largely committed to that vision. What makes it different and why the Catholic Church did not hand its schools over to the state is that it guarantees that. As I understand it — I stand to be corrected

- here — in some of the integrated schools it will depend on your board of governors what the commitment is to a specifically Christian ethos. If human values of peace and reconciliation are what defines them, we welcome and support that and are happy to engage and cooperate with it.
3111. The final thing I would say is that we also have a right to a specifically religious character and identity and to have that reflected in the building and in the delivery of the whole curriculum, as well as in the liturgical and pastoral life of the community. Parents who are taxpayers and even those who are not have the same right, in a publicly funded system, to choose a system that reflects their religious ethos.
3112. The first thing is that it is a response to parents to have a distinctive character to a Catholic school that is Catholic in a religious sense. Secondly, the fundamental values of shared common good, reconciliation and peace, which are central to Christianity, are protected in law by the fact that we own, manage and are trustees of the school. Thirdly, other school sectors in Northern Ireland do not have the same protection, even though I openly acknowledge that the vast majority are fully committed to the same principles, which I welcome. Does that —
3113. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It strikes me from your response that the issue is about control and that you have the ability, through having ownership of the schools, to ensure that there is a Catholic, Christian ethos in them.
3114. **Father Bartlett:** Maybe the challenge I would make is that the word “control” has a very loaded sense. It is a responsibility. The word “trustee” is important. We hold, in trust, the responsibility to ensure that the character of that particular Catholic school reflects the choice that parents make to choose a Catholic education system. There is nothing hidden in what we offer or what we do. Management, trust and responsibility: that is how we would see it, rather than maybe in the more euphemistic sense of “control”.
3115. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I appreciate that. You are working with the transferors and looking at drafting a paper on faith-based schools. Your comments suggest that perhaps the barrier is in ownership.
3116. **Father Bartlett:** No, in fact there is no barrier, in principle, in the discussions. The barrier was in law. There was no model that the Department had available to it in Northern Ireland to date to allow joint ownership and trusteeship. In fact, in the conversations, discussions and responses to the Department, the transferors and the Catholic trustees have said that they would be very willing to engage on a joint trusteeship/joint ownership model in certain circumstances where it can be arranged.
3117. **Mr J Clarke:** If I can just add to that —
3118. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Can you tell us how such a school would operate? Who would have ownership of it? Would it be equal partners? How would pupils be engaged in the school?
3119. **Mr J Clarke:** Those questions are part of the ongoing discussions. I was about to say that we have a very constrained range of governance models, and all through the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) debate, one of the things we wanted on the table was a wider range of governance models to reflect the greater diversity in our society. The questions you ask are the practical questions that the subcommittee, which the Department is managing, is addressing. I made a point about people coming from different perspectives and environments, and that will play into the discussion.
3120. The one thing that it is important for us to say is that CCMS, as a body, does not promote Catholic education. We are the advocate for what is there, if you like, for the sector. I will not go into the history of why we came about, but we came about largely because the Government perceived a need. It is important to acknowledge that, in engaging with the transferors, all of us are trying to exploit the common ground. Once we can close

- that ground to a point where there is agreement, we will move forward. I think that the willingness is there to achieve that. It is as the old phrase says, “It is a work in progress”, but we have to go back to the fact — this reflects some of the things that Tim said — that parents make choices.
3121. To ask why there are Catholic schools, you have to ask why parents want to choose Catholic schools. The same point will apply to people who choose other schools. In some instances, parents choose schools because they regard them as secular. That is a perfectly legitimate position. One of the challenges in Northern Ireland is that the controlled sector, because it is a state system in the broadest sense, has all the nuances of our society. How that is to be encapsulated in an agreement with a sector that is overtly faith-based is a challenge on the other side. We need to look at how we can exploit the possibilities on that spectrum of sharing, as I described it.
3122. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** How do you see joint faith schools differing from integrated schools?
3123. **Father Bartlett:** Precisely on this very misunderstood point in the general concept of integrated education in Northern Ireland, as opposed to joint faith schools: the legal construct guarantees the religious ethos. As I understand it, most integrated schools are controlled in that sense. In other words, there is no legal protection to a religious ethos in those schools. That is a popular misconception. People often think they are talking about joint faith schools.
3124. I go back to your earlier question. The spectrum of possible modes of implementation for a joint faith school already operates very successfully in GB — in Scotland, England and Wales. We are looking at those models and engaging with the people involved. They tend to have a bit of local variation, depending on the balance of the population and so on, but the fundamental principle is joint ownership and agreed management structures.
- That is exactly the same thing as has characterised the discussions to date with the transferors and the Department on the new model.
3125. We have actively supported the transferors in reclaiming their space in the education sector in Northern Ireland. We can work with another faith-based Christian entity. People often wondered why the Catholic Church kind of held out. We cannot do that with a secular fluid controlled sector that has no interest in faith, other than in a very general societal sense, but we can do a joint ownership model with other Christian Churches. That represents the bulk of the society in Northern Ireland. That is the difference: it is guaranteed in law.
3126. **Mr Crudden:** You asked about the difference between a joint faith-based and an integrated school. One of the key differences is that a joint faith-based school has a distinctively Christian ethos, whereas an integrated school is secular. An integrated school should not promote any particular faith.
3127. I will go back to a point that you made. This question is asked constantly: why do we have Catholic schools? I sometimes ask this question: why should we not have Catholic education in Catholic schools? If the argument against Catholic schools is based on economics, we in CCMS have demonstrated through the area planning process that we are very conscious of our obligation to the economics of the argument. Secondly, are Catholic schools exclusive? No, they are not. Catholic schools are fully inclusive and are becoming increasingly so. We also need to recognise the contribution that Catholic education makes to society in general. That contribution is recognised in over 80 countries where a Catholic education system exists. We need to ask why we should not have Catholic schools, as opposed to why we do.
3128. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You are calling for the removal of the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education. Would you say that the same



- duty should be removed from the Irish-medium sector?
3129. **Mr J Clarke:** Over time, all sectors that have had a start-up, if you like, have to reach the point where they are going to fly or not. Whether they are Irish-medium, integrated or even Catholic schools on a different model or whatever, there is a period when they should have the facility to have that encouragement through some form of support. However, it has to come to an end at some point; otherwise, you distort the system. If we work on the principle that parents make choices, we have to respect when they start to show over a period the trend in their choices. I come back to the point that education is a publicly funded service. It must be efficient and deliver its primary purpose, which is education. On that basis, we think that the integrated sector has had a sufficiently long gestation period. If it came to an end after 30 or 35 years, the same should apply to the Irish-medium sector and to any others. Indeed, you could argue that the legislation that is being considered for shared schools should fall into the same category. You can promote certain things for a certain length of time. As I said, I am not sure that legislation is the best way to promote a shared approach. There is a concept that promotion for a while is useful, but it must eventually stand on its own two feet. It is a pure business model.
3130. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The requirement for a Catholic certificate to teach in a primary school creates a barrier to the integration of your staffing cohort. Have you given any consideration to changing that from an essential to a desirable criterion?
3131. **Mr J Clarke:** We have, I think, said to the Committee in the past that we are moving towards increasing access to the certificate. Malachy's point is that parents' entitlement to access a faith-based education requires, by implication, that people are developed in that ethos. Our belief is that people who are committed to the Catholic ethos, whether they are Catholics or not, can make a contribution to Catholic schools.
- It is not a case of whether we should take the certificate away; it is whether we should extend access to it. That is the approach that we are taking.
3132. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much for giving us food for thought. I congratulate you on the success of the schools and on a lot of the suggestions in your report.
3133. One of the key questions we have asked everyone is on the definition in the Bill. My concern is that, by making it maintained, controlled, unionist, nationalist or socio-economic, we define people by groups, rather than having a more community-based idea that allows us, through the Bill, to push merging everyone together and sharing through a community ethos. Could you comment on that?
3134. **Mr J Clarke:** You are talking about the Bill for shared education. Malachy, do you want to answer?
3135. **Mr Crudden:** I will take you back to the point that the focus should be on delivering better provision for children. Where shared education is proposed, it should not necessarily be stipulated that there needs to be sharing between one community and another. There will be occasions when schools will not have the opportunity to share with a school from another sector because of location. Shared education should be viewed in a much broader sense to include the opportunities that exist for schools, either across sectors or within sectors, to share so that they can provide better education for children.
3136. **Mr J Clarke:** We should caveat that by saying again what I said, which is that we do not think that this would necessarily benefit from legislation. Clearly, however, a definition of shared education is important. I cannot put my hands on this at the moment, but Joanne Hughes, I think, of Queen's proposed a definition that we are in broad agreement with. Again, it is about parents making choices; we cannot force that.

3137. **Mr Kinahan:** Thank you. Following up on that, Jim, you, specifically, said that we do not need legislation, yet Father Tim quite clearly says that the basis for Catholic education is that it needs to be legislated for. Part of the reason, as I understand it, for pushing shared education through the Bill is that everyone needs a jolly good nudge to do more. We could argue that some of the things you are now doing with joint faith and shared schools would not have happened had we not nudged and nudged heavily. I look at your excellent schools and see that they are 97% Catholic. You still have the certificate in place, which you want to enlarge, rather than reduce. In area planning, your schools merge, rather than share with others. There are some excellent examples, but they are tiny. What I am really saying is this: the Bill and the push from most of the parties for more sharing are aimed at getting this continuum or the spectrum that you talked about to happen. I am not sure where to go with a question, but do you not see why we need to break down barriers, rather than go for one system?
3138. **Mr J Clarke:** I do not agree with you that this is happening because there has been a push. One of the risks of putting something into a Programme for Government is that you set a target and fail to achieve it. That then makes the thing look —
3139. **Mr Kinahan:** If you do not set a target, no one bothers.
3140. **Mr J Clarke:** But targets are being set, and this is one of the options. It is not in legislation, but we have an objective to create 10 campuses, for instance. We can achieve these things — this is the point we keep coming back to — only if there is a willingness on the ground for people to support them and if the conditions are right. Those conditions are, in some cases, set by government. For instance, there is no point in pulling two schools together to create another unsustainable school; there has to be sustainability to it. We have to remember that education is the primary purpose, not some kind of model that shows that, as a society, we are becoming more tolerant of each other because we are going to be forced to work together.
3141. 'Building Peace, Shaping the Future', which we will leave with you, goes back to 2001. It sets out very clearly the Catholic view of sharing. It makes the case that Catholic schools are not schools for Catholics. I think that the same could be said of controlled schools: they are not schools for anyone in particular; they are down to parental choice.
3142. The reason why we do not think that legislation is helpful is that all the steps that have been taken so far have occurred without legislation and without the threat of legislation. I contend that, certainly in the post-primary sector, what has probably accelerated the process most has been the sharing education programme (SEP) through Queen's. There was a practical reason for that, which was to extend the range of curricular choice in schools. It has created an environment where children from different schools, wearing different uniforms, walk up and down corridors in all kinds of school every day and work together. It is those practical steps that will bring things forward, not legislation.
3143. **Again, I go back to TACOT:** IE from 1998. You have to look at local circumstances. In some cases, these things happen because there is a need; in other cases, you are kind of constructing a need. EMU, I suppose, is an example of constructed need. It has not led to the expansion that would have been hoped for. The point that I make is that we constantly need to change how we can move forward.
3144. The really important thing that you are hearing from all of us — I am sure that you have heard it from others who have sat in these chairs — is that there is now a willingness to work together. Indeed, if I can go back to the practical side of it, the funding situation that we face creates another practical need. We are very responsive to that. Malachy made the point that we cannot go out and promote a particular model, but we

- can say that, if the circumstances are right, other models may be considered. If we and the board went to an area and said, “This is what we are going to do and there are sufficient numbers to create a school”, it is equally possible that the community will say, “Well, that is fine. If you want to do that, you go right ahead, but we are heading off this way to the nearest controlled school and that way to the nearest maintained school”. There has to be buy-in. It is not something that can be imposed, which is why we make the point that it needs a bottom-up approach. It is about hearts and minds.
3145. **Mr Crudden:** Just to go back to your point about a definition, I have found it. The Centre for Shared Education in Queen’s University said:
- “Shared Education is broadly defined as any collaborative activity within or between schools or other educational institutions that can: contribute towards school improvement, provide access to opportunity, encourage more effective use of resources, and promote social cohesion”.*
3146. We think that that is an excellent definition of what shared education could be.
3147. There are occasions when legislation is required to ensure conformity. With regard to the consultation at the moment on bullying in schools, we believe that there is a strong case for legislation to ensure that schools address the issue appropriately. Having legislation for something such as shared education brings me back to my point about the location of some schools. If they are not able to engage in sharing, will they be penalised in some form because it is in legislation and they are obliged to do it?
3148. Finally, you made the point that CCMS, through area planning, tends to rationalise schools in our sector first. That is our primary obligation under legislation. We are obliged under the 1989 Order to plan for the development of Catholic schools. That is our primary responsibility. If opportunities present themselves and they come from the community, CCMS is certainly committed to exploring opportunities for sharing in those contexts.
3149. **Mr Kinahan:** They have to bring the opportunities in front of you, then.
3150. **Father Bartlett:** Could I add one further dimension to that? It is the concept of the principle of subsidiarity and incentivisation. In other words, law is not always the best way. Law can be quite a blunt instrument, as you well know. It is not always the best way, especially with the principle of subsidiarity at local level, to get communities to engage in the way that you want. Incentivisation, rather than obligation, while it may be a slower, steadier process, is still very important and valid. I suppose that we are arguing that, for the time being, incentivisation is a better way to go than legislation.
3151. **Mr Kinahan:** This is a very short question. What other groupings are on the subcommittee that you talked about? Are integrated schools, voluntary grammars and Irish-medium schools on it? Is it just the controlled sector and you?
3152. **Mr J Clarke:** I am not on it, so I do not know precisely. I think that the main thrust here is to develop the model of joint faith schools. I think that it is mainly transferors, trustees and the Department at this stage.
3153. **Mr Lunn:** You are very welcome, as usual. I had better say at the outset that I regard all three of you as friends, because, by the time that I am finished, that might be open to question. *[Laughter.]* Could you pass on my condolences to Gerry Lundy, who I think is a constituent of mine?
3154. **Mr J Clarke:** We will.
3155. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Electioneering.
3156. **Mr McCausland:** There is no limit to it.
3157. **Mr Lunn:** No, frankly, Chair —
3158. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No, sorry; it was just —

3159. **Mr Lunn:** I am passing on condolences.
3160. Having said that, I find your whole attitude to parental choice in particular dispiriting, not to say depressing. You seem to favour the principle of parental choice when it means that parents choose a Catholic school, but you do not apply it when parents decide that they would like to send their children to an integrated school. In particular, you would not apply it if a Catholic school was to opt for transformation or amalgamation with a school from another sector. You would not allow it. That is pretty clear, Malachy, from what you have said today and in the past. Do you not feel that you are being slightly hypocritical about parental choice as a principle?
3161. **Mr J Clarke:** The parental choice that we describe is the parental choice expressed by parents when they choose a school. I think that some of what you are saying is about what you might call an area planning approach and giving an incentive —
3162. **Mr Lunn:** No, I am talking about parental choice: the clearly expressed will of a group of parents in a school or two schools on how they see the way forward.
3163. **Mr J Clarke:** You are going back now to the 1989 Order and transformation. We have always regarded that as an unfortunate piece of legislation that, as Tim has pointed out, actually diminishes the rights of the trustees. Groups of parents can be mobilised in a range of ways. What we are talking about is individuals expressing a view.
3164. I accept that, in some circumstances, how you create an integrated school may be difficult because, as has been said, there are what might be called the two big blocs there. However, that will have worked, going right back to the very inception of the integrated movement. It is perfectly legitimate for people in a community to lobby for that right, and we would support that. We do not support trying to undermine our sector for that to be achieved. I have made the point that CCMS does not have a responsibility to promote Catholic education; our responsibility is to ensure that we have high-quality Catholic schools.
3165. The other point that I would make — I will not refer to the specific circumstance — is that, if this is going to happen and there is to be transformation, it should be on the basis of the policies that exist. If we are going to create schools, we have to create sustainable schools. We should not come in behind legitimate policy proposals to unnerve a community and create a circumstance that, according to policy, is not achievable.
3166. **Mr Lunn:** If two schools in an area decide that they would like to amalgamate on an integrated basis and three quarters of the parents in your maintained school opted for that, you would still block it.
3167. **Mr J Clarke:** If they were choosing to build a school —
3168. **Mr Lunn:** Tell me yes or no. Would you or would you not?
3169. **Mr J Clarke:** If they were choosing to build a school, that is a matter for the community to decide. If they want to take over a Catholic school, there is an issue that we would have to address.
3170. **Mr Lunn:** No, if that were the preferred solution amongst the parents, you would still prefer to close the Catholic maintained school if it was not viable and move the children to the nearest Catholic maintained school, whatever distance away it was.
3171. **Mr J Clarke:** Malachy has made the point that —
3172. **Mr Lunn:** That is a genuine position to hold. I just want to clarify that that is your position.
3173. **Mr J Clarke:** That is our legislative position but —
3174. **Mr Lunn:** There are no circumstances in which you will countenance the transformation of a Catholic maintained school to integrated status.
3175. **Mr Crudden:** Could I ask —

3176. **Mr Lunn:** Do not ask me; I am asking you.
3177. **Mr Crudden:** I am not aware of any circumstances where CCMS has actually stood in the way of a Catholic maintained school transforming.
3178. **Father Bartlett:** Can you evidence the claim that you are applying to us?
3179. **Mr Lunn:** I am asking —
3180. **Father Bartlett:** You are making a claim, Trevor; you are not asking. You are making a claim. You have said what we would do and what we would not do. Evidence the claim.
3181. **Mr Lunn:** I am putting it to you. Let us go to the Moy situation; this will be an interesting one. The vote amongst the parents there was actually quite close. Very nearly half the parents across the two schools preferred an integrated option, but it went in favour of the rather bizarre arrangement that we will be stuck with in a few years' time. What would you have done, had the parents opted the other way and said that they would like to see an integrated solution there?
3182. **Father Bartlett:** So you cannot evidence your claim.
3183. **Mr Lunn:** I am not making a claim.
3184. **Father Bartlett:** You did make a claim.
3185. **Mr Lunn:** I am asking you what you would have done.
3186. **Father Bartlett:** You told us what we would do in your earlier statements.
3187. **Mr Crudden:** I am not aware of any vote taking place in the Moy, certainly in our school.
3188. **Mr Lunn:** The votes that were cast are on the file of the two headmasters in the Moy. Also on the file is your complete opposition to the whole principle until it became obvious that something had to be done.
3189. **Mr Crudden:** Our opposition to it?
3190. **Mr Lunn:** Yes.
3191. **Mr Crudden:** I would be very interested in seeing that documentation.
3192. **Mr Lunn:** I think that you should. You can read it for yourselves.
3193. **Father Bartlett:** With respect, Trevor, I would have expected that, if we had come here to respond to something like that, you would have presented us with the detailed evidence, papers and so on to sustain it. You are asking us to deal with very hypothetical situations. We have clearly affirmed our respect for the principle of parental choice. How that works out in a particular local circumstance will be an incredibly complex question. It will also involve responsibility to answer questions such as, to use the scenario that you suggested, if 50% of parents want to go for a particular integrated model, what will happen with the other 50%? Are they going to support that? Will that lead to a sustainable school? A range of complex questions arise in that regard.
3194. We have affirmed consistently our respect for the right of parents to choose and our respect for the integrated sector. We have also indicated our willingness to look at new models where faith-based education can be sustained. There will be new options emerging for communities to consider in those situations. I do not appreciate coming here and being told what we would do when you do not have evidence to sustain it that you are willing to present here in detail.
3195. **Mr Lunn:** I have asked you what you would do.
3196. **Father Bartlett:** I would expect a more responsible approach from a public representative.
3197. **Mr Lunn:** Let me just —
3198. **Mr Crudden:** May I just make one point before you ask again, Trevor?
3199. **Mr Lunn:** I am looking at the clock.
3200. **Mr Crudden:** In the one instance of that situation arising that I am aware of, CCMS advised the governors of the schools concerned of the process that

- they would need to undertake in order to explore the possibility of becoming an integrated school. We have never stood in the way of any developments in the integrated sector.
3201. **Mr J Clarke:** May I just make a point, Trevor? These last few minutes have encapsulated the issue that there are difficulties for those who want purity of a model. What we are talking about is how we can take steps forward that our communities will support. There is a range of these emerging. They do not have to be about changing governance or anything like it. It can simply be that you exploit the facilities of a community together to achieve the best outcomes for young people in that community.
3202. **Mr Lunn:** I am not interested in the purity of the model; I would like to see our children being educated together on a much greater scale. It is not happening in your schools.
3203. **Mr J Clarke:** Trevor, I have to disagree with you on that —
3204. **Mr Lunn:** Hold on a minute, I will get to the question.
3205. **Mr J Clarke:** You cannot have sharing in this society without the Catholic sector and, indeed, the controlled sector, being intimately involved in it.
3206. **Mr Lunn:** Let me move on just slightly. I am sure that you will tell me that you have all been in an integrated school.
3207. **Mr J Clarke:** Yes.
3208. **Mr Crudden:** My first teaching post was in Hazelwood College.
3209. **Mr Lunn:** You seem to have a problem with the quality of faith education in integrated schools. I must say that that is completely at odds with anything that I have seen in extensive visits to integrated schools. It just is not the case. They deal with religion and faith in a very balanced way. They also prepare your sector's children for the sacraments in a way to which, as far as I understand, there is no objection from the Catholic Church. Is that the case? What is your problem with allowing Catholic children to be educated in an integrated setting?
3210. **Mr Crudden:** We do not have a problem.
3211. **Mr J Clarke:** We do not have a problem. Parents make the choice. I will let Tim speak for himself, but the point that he was making is that the commitment to ethos in a Catholic school is very clear. It cannot be quite so clear when — this applies to all other sectors as well — you are dealing with a much broader range of backgrounds, including people from ethnic backgrounds that are not Christian at all.
3212. **Father Bartlett:** I would challenge your fundamental assumption that integrated schools are religious schools in law: they are not.
3213. **Mr Lunn:** They are not religious schools in law; of course they are not.
3214. **Father Bartlett:** That is the point. May I finish?
3215. **Mr Lunn:** Yes.
3216. **Father Bartlett:** A Catholic school is a school that is defined, founded and based on the religious mission of that school. It is the fundamental and founding characteristic and principle of that school. There is a fundamental qualitative difference that parents are free to choose between when they make a choice between an integrated school and a Catholic school.
3217. As a person of faith, if I had children and was considering where to place them on that spectrum, a question in my mind would be this: in an integrated school as currently constituted, as opposed to the alternative of a joint Church school, for example, could I rely on the stability of the approach of that integrated school towards the whole issue of religion and my faith and my faith disposition? That is a movable feast in terms of what boards of governors do at any time in response to society, societal emphasis, change and all the rest of it. A Catholic school remains a Catholic school. That is a fundamental qualitative difference in terms of the religious question that

- you ask. We are not casting aspersions on the quality of religious education in integrated schools.
3218. **Mr Lunn:** It sounded that way. I respect your faith schools, I respect the Catholic maintained sector and I respect the right of parents to send their children there. It is the reciprocation of that view that worries me, frankly. I do not get that from you, and I wish, Chairman, that we could have a longer discussion with these guys. It is unfortunate about the funeral; of course, you have to go. I will leave it there, but we need to talk more about this.
3219. **Mr J Clarke:** Can I make one final point? Trevor, if we are looking at the purity of an integrated school, as I have described it, at the far end of the spectrum, we say that that is not always achievable, particularly within a limited timescale. We say that the commitment to get to a more shared, inclusive, respected and respectful society is through steps that can be taken in different circumstances at different paces. We are supportive of that. We have the same long-term objective, but we believe that, along the way, we need to ensure that certain things are in place because that is what parents want.
3220. **Mr Lunn:** Yes, that is what parents want.
3221. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mindful of Trevor's comment and the fact that you need to leave and that several other members wish to ask questions, would it be possible to reschedule and come back for an additional session?
3222. **Father Bartlett:** How much longer would you like? We can arrive late to the funeral. We can accommodate that. We would rather deal with this this morning.
3223. **Mr Lunn:** I could do with another half hour. Let others have a go.
3224. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** We will see how we get on with the rest of the session.
3225. **Mr Sheehan:** Thanks, gentlemen, for coming. Tim, you mentioned in your opening statement that the maintained sector is based on Christian values such as the love of God, neighbour and self, yet it continues the iniquitous practice of academic selection. In my view, that is the worst segregation in the education system. I understand that boards of governors are in control of schools and can set the entrance criteria, but, at the end of the day, I have spoken to many principals, former principals, teachers and former teachers, particularly from a non-selective background, and they feel that the Catholic hierarchy has let them down terribly.
3226. **Father Bartlett:** I challenge that absolutely and unequivocally. The Catholic bishops and trustees — the Catholic hierarchy, as you call it — have collectively been at the forefront of supporting the transition from academic selection. That is their formal stated position, which your party does not fail to claim and point to, so I am surprised that you make that claim this morning. I accept, however, that the trustees' ability to change that matter in law in accordance with their policy is limited because the boards of governors, as you properly say, have that responsibility. Those boards of governors include Department representatives appointed by the Minister, who is from your party, so there is an influence there. They include other representatives, legitimately and importantly, such as parents, teachers and so on. Part of this is clearly about winning hearts and minds and winning the argument, but the position of the Catholic trustees has been unequivocal and clear. Pat, no other sector has moved as much as the Catholic sector has, and we can point to any number of schools that have begun that process and are committed to it. Regrettably, there are others who will take longer on that journey, but the trustees, as trustees, are fully committed to that policy.
3227. **Mr Sheehan:** I am not going to argue with you about other sectors; our view on that is very clear. I am concerned about the sector that you represent. In spite of the honeyed words about what the Catholic bishops —

3228. **Father Bartlett:** Which your party quotes regularly.
3229. **Mr Sheehan:** In fact, you have been very unsuccessful at removing academic selection, apart from a small number of instances.
3230. **Father Bartlett:** St Killian's on the north Antrim coast in this diocese has transformed. There is also St Patrick's in Armagh and Loreto in Coleraine. There are others in the pipeline. Lurgan is another case in point. These things do not happen overnight, by their very nature.
3231. **Mr Sheehan:** What percentage is that, Tim?
3232. **Father Bartlett:** Your own Minister has a role in this.
3233. **Mr Sheehan:** What percentage is that?
3234. **Father Bartlett:** We do not have the majority on those boards.
3235. **Mr Sheehan:** What percentage is it of the overall grammar sector?
3236. **Father Bartlett:** Your Minister has been very slow in appointing his representatives to those boards.
3237. **Mr Sheehan:** Tim, what percentage of Catholic grammars have done away with academic selection?
3238. **Father Bartlett:** I cannot put a percentage on that.
3239. **Mr Sheehan:** That is the question I am asking. It is very small.
3240. **Father Bartlett:** Your words were that the Catholic hierarchy or the Catholic trustees — there are more than just the bishops involved; it is the religious orders — were not committed to it. Their repeated public position on the matter is unequivocal, so I challenge your claim.
3241. **Mr Sheehan:** The evidence is in the outcome. The Catholic bishops or the trustees can say what they wish, but people will look at the evidence of the number of schools that have changed, and it has been a tiny percentage. Some schools have even recently rolled back from commitments to reduce the number being taken into schools through academic selection, so we are moving backwards.
3242. **Father Bartlett:** Yes, the board of governors of some of those schools — not, in the words you used, the Catholic hierarchy, not the trustees.
3243. **Mr Sheehan:** Why, then, are so many people from the teaching profession disappointed in the role that the Catholic trustees and Catholic bishops have played in all of this?
3244. **Father Bartlett:** Because they may misunderstand the legislative responsibility or authority that trustees have to influence that decision.
3245. **Mr Sheehan:** We are not talking about legislative influence; we are talking about influence of the bishops with people who are on boards of governors.
3246. **Father Bartlett:** The board of governors has the responsibility, full stop. We can only encourage —
3247. **Mr Sheehan:** You have no influence.
3248. **Father Bartlett:** Of course we have influence, and we have sought to use that influence to our best endeavours, just as you do as politicians. Would you like me to litany the areas in which your Minister, your party or politicians generally fail to achieve what they want? We are all in the same boat. We are committed to it, and it would be better if we worked collaboratively, rather than using this as some political point-scoring thing about the Catholic trustees. If that is what you want to do, fair enough. Our position is unequivocal on the matter. It is clear, and we regard it as something at the essence of equality and sharing. It is interesting that the Committee has not made a big issue of it, and, indeed, in terms of educational policy, the issue is not there to the same extent as the idea of promoting integrated schools in that narrow sense. I am sorry, Pat, but I can only say that our position is unequivocal and clear, and, to our best endeavours, we are trying to influence the situation. It is a work in progress.



3249. **Mr J Clarke:** CCMS's position on this is absolutely unequivocal. I share your frustration. I may have a better understanding of some of the impediments, because we are moving the agenda forward as far as we can, but we do not have the influence over those boards of governors. One of the things we have to remember is that it is outside of policy. If it were a policy matter, you would be deliberating on it and giving us the scaffolding, if you like, to move forward on it.
3250. We have ended up in a philosophical discussion, which is not the way that the issue needs to be handled. As a society, we have to recognise that our economy is very important to us. We create a settled, peaceful society when we have people who have a place and a stake in that society. Education is very important in creating the economy that allows that to happen. My concern is that many of our very able young people are being disadvantaged in society because the view of what our economy needs is not reflected, in many cases, in the curriculum of our schools.
3251. Trevor, just to take an example of how the integrated sector works effectively with the rest of the sectors, there was a piece of work conducted about a year ago or 18 months ago in Hazelwood, where they were making a bid for a joint STEM centre.
3252. **Mr Lunn:** It is still going ahead.
3253. **Mr J Clarke:** They canvassed the curricular offer of all the schools in the wider north Belfast area, and the difference between the subject choice available in the grammar sector and that available in the non-selective sector was quite stark. We have to get an alignment between our economy, our education system and, indeed, what goes on in Nelson's former Department, DSD, to create the circumstances to ensure that young people are included in our education system the whole way through. When I talk about parental choice, I am talking about parental choice that is available to everyone. We have inequality in that some young people are excluded from certain schools. In many cases, their exclusion diminishes the range of choice available to the other young people in those schools.
3254. For educational and economic reasons, we need to put education at the heart of this issue and we need to promote the concept of inclusion and equality in our education system so that we have an economy and a society that is at peace with itself. The steps towards that are steps that the politicians primarily have responsibility for. In the Catholic sector, we are doing our damndest, against policy, to create those circumstances. So, Pat, I understand your frustration, but I would prefer that we see the steps that have been taken, rather than decrying the steps that have yet to be taken.
3255. **Mr Rogers:** Thanks, Father Tim, Jim and Malachy; you are very welcome. I want to go back to the point that was raised by the Chair and by Trevor about the Moy campus. Does CCMS support the proposals for the Moy campus as it is now?
3256. **Mr Crudden:** The proposal for Moy could not have gone ahead without the support of CCMS and the Southern Education and Library Board, so we are fully supportive. The sharing that has gone on in the Moy predates the shared campus initiative and the shared education initiative. We see that as a strength for the Moy, hence our support for it.
3257. **Mr Rogers:** I am sure that you do not have the figures today, but what percentage of post-primary schools have 10%, say, coming from the non-Catholic community?
3258. **Mr J Clarke:** We do not have the figures but there are differentials in different areas. There is one school with a very significant non-Catholic population. Our point is that the door is open; it is for parents to make that choice. It is not about counting numbers but asking whether parents are satisfied with the education that is available in the school.
3259. **Mr Rogers:** I probably should have declared an interest, having spent 30 years in the Catholic sector, which I

- fully support, and as chair of a CCMS primary school board of governors. I was surprised, Malachy, when you said that, in terms of sharing, you were more reactive than proactive. I am thinking particularly of St Columbanus' College in Bangor.
3260. **Mr Crudden:** We are reactive in terms of the latest shared education initiatives. The success of a shared education campus, for example, rests very firmly in the community's support for it. As Jim said earlier, we cannot go to a community and say that this is something that we want to impose on it. We have to react to the community coming to us and saying that there is an initiative that they would like us to support. So, in that sense, we are reactive.
3261. **Mr J Clarke:** We are very proactive in other ways. The spectrum of access to the curriculum is something that we very clearly support through area learning communities and initiatives in individual schools. In area learning communities, it is not just the religious mix but the class mix that is an issue. Many of the constraints are imposed by schools making their own decisions. One of the things that the Committee needs to be aware of, not just in relation to the sharing model but in relation to access to the curriculum, is that schools possibly have too much autonomy in the wrong areas. I am not suggesting that we handle that by legislation when it comes to shared education, but we need to look at governance models and what the rights of governors are with the belief that it is not the school that is important but the child accessing an education through schools.
3262. We do not see area planning as the planning of buildings; we see it as the planning of access to the curriculum. If that means working with sectors outside the Catholic sector, so be it, but that is what we see area planning being about.
3263. **Mr Rogers:** Finally, Father Tim, supporters of secular education say that religion should be taken out of the school context altogether. When we were in Dublin, one sector there said that, if they wanted to have religious instruction of any sort, they could use the school premises after school. Some people believe that it should be left to the parish. What is your view on that?
3264. **Father Bartlett:** Catholic schools have evolved in response to a sufficient number of parents wanting their children in a given place to be brought up in a Catholic school environment. So, the Catholic school, in that sense — in relation to the faith formation of a child, which includes its cultural and social formation — is a response, as we said, to that fundamental human right of parents and cooperates with the community of faith in a parish. It is at the service of that community of faith as well, and that is why, particularly at primary level, the link is so close between the parish and the primary school. That is something fundamental to Catholicism. We believe in a community-based vision of Christian faith that you cannot just live a Christian life in isolation; you are part of a community. In that sense, the community has a right also to a space where it can be itself.
3265. That is why I said that this is part of a wider discussion about what we mean by a pluralist and diverse society. You mentioned the secular trend. My personal experience is that, often under the guise of a claim that secularism and secularity is a neutral space, it actually becomes an incredibly intolerant space of religion and religiosity, which, itself, is a human right and fundamental to our human existence. I think that that comes through into this debate a little bit about shared and integrated education. Some secular views that want to get religion out of schools altogether do not recognise or accept the human right of parents to have their children brought up in accordance with their faith. They actually do not respect faith — they really do not — and they go further and make the claim that, uniquely, faith in our world and in our society is a source of tension and division, when we could point to many secular atheistic societies that have had their own bloodbaths on very different axes.

3266. We need to get beyond the simplistic claim that sometimes lurks behind the whole shared/integrated thing and is sometimes a cloak for anti-Catholicism in particular, although not always. It is manifested, for example, when international visitors are brought to Northern Ireland. When President Obama, for example, came to Enniskillen for the G8, they were brought to the integrated school. They passed by the controlled school and the Catholic school. Why? “Well, they are the problem”. That is the message that is so often communicated. I say that they never were the problem and that they have a social responsibility that they do their best to live out in contributing to the common good, and we need to end the attitude, which is, frankly, offensive, that faith-based schools are of their very nature divisive. They are completely consistent with and contribute to and are actually a sign of authentic diversity and pluralism, and I will defend the right of those schools to exist in response to the community choice of a group of parents in sufficient numbers.
3267. **Mr Crudden:** Having taught at a Catholic school through very difficult times, I would go so far as to say that the school that I taught in made a very significant contribution to ensuring that various situations did not become worse.
3268. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you for that.
3269. **Mr Newton:** I welcome the delegation to the Committee and thank them for coming, particularly in the difficult circumstances.
3270. I have only one question, Chair, and you have partially dealt with it. You will be aware that the transferors, as represented by the three main Protestant denominations, outlined to us but did not give us any detail of what might be a faith-based initiative that they seemed quite confident was going to go ahead. You referred to it today, and I am not sure whether your confidence is as high as theirs, but you might want to add to that.
3271. You made reference to the Catholic ethos running throughout the school and permeating the operation of the school, how it delivers and, indeed, the whole ethos of the school. If you are supportive of a faith-based school amongst other faiths, that would presumably be limited to the Christian faith.
3272. **Father Bartlett:** In relation to our schools?
3273. **Mr Newton:** Yes. If you are committed to moving towards a faith-based school that will involve other denominations, it would be, presumably, a Christian faith-based school. If that is the case and it has the various denominations in it, how can the Catholic ethos run throughout every aspect of school life?
3274. **Father Bartlett:** That is an issue that we have already dealt with in the examples from GB, in Scotland, England and Wales. Obviously, there is a spectrum of provision in this regard that is permeated through the school. It is completely consistent with Catholic theology that we would share with other Christians in the enterprise of the common purpose of education built around agreed values. There is so much that we agree on, that we can build on, and that we are committed to building on together that we can do that. This goes back to what I think George Bain said. There is a dynamism in education and in faith-based education. We are not stuck in a particular form or mode of Catholic education per se. Part of being Catholic is to be ecumenical and to be involved with our sisters and brothers in the Christian Church. Part of that is also to open up our schools, as they exist as Catholic schools but also potentially as joint Christian schools, to wider society, so that the schools would be welcoming of a diversity of pupils. That is reflected in the experience in GB. The fundamental issue is a negotiated agreement about how the Christian ethos is protected, respected and present and that it is there as the defining character of the school in law.
3275. **Mr Newton:** If the Catholic ethos is dominant in CCMS schools and you make a move in partnership with others, then one Christian value or ethos cannot dominate.

3276. **Father Bartlett:** I will try to explain it more succinctly. As it is with another Christian Church with which we already share so many of the basic values that are fundamental to the educational enterprise and because we can then work on so much together and provide a common environment with particular negotiated ways and spaces — this is calibrated slightly differently in each school in the GB context — for the particular identity of the Christian tradition within that to be reflected. In other words, it is precisely because it is another Christian Church with which we share so much in common — or other Christian churches — that we can still make sure that the Christian ethos, where it is common, is the dominant ethos, pervading the whole community and mission of that school.
3277. **Mr Newton:** I know it is in an international context, but the example you provided of the school in Gaza, which obviously does not have a Catholic ethos, but yet —
3278. **Father Bartlett:** It does. This is —
3279. **Mr Newton:** The pupils are not Muslim then?
3280. **Father Bartlett:** This is why the concept of mutual respect is, as I explained at the very beginning, implicit to what a Catholic school is about. It includes respect for other religious faiths. To cite Monseigneur Musallam, on that visit, he said that they regarded it as a very serious breach if any child — Christian or Muslim — showed disrespect to the other in terms of their religious convictions. This is what people find difficult to get their head round. It is fundamental to the character of a Catholic school that it is tolerant and respectful, which is why it is so hurtful and unjust to claim that we are sectarian and a source of conflict.
3281. **Mr Newton:** I hope that all educationalists are tolerant of and respectful to children from whatever background.
3282. **Father Bartlett:** Take the school in Gaza, for example; again, there is mediation.
- Because it is there as a Catholic school, no one can challenge the idea that there would be a celebration of Mass for the Catholic children in the school or that the seasons and feasts of the Christian calendar would be celebrated and acknowledged. The same school, however, precisely because it is Catholic, will also welcome the Muslim community and give them the space to celebrate their faith and traditions, as long as it is all done with mutual respect. That is fundamental to Catholic schools everywhere. That is the point I am trying to make. Arrangements can be negotiated according to the situation.
3283. **Mr Newton:** I am then trying to get my head round, in that example — you have taken me to that example — the difference between an integrated school and a shared faith school.
3284. **Father Bartlett:** The faith dimension is protected in law; it is not a secular state school.
3285. **Mr Newton:** I am saying that not because I share Trevor's views but because I cannot see the difference from the example you gave.
3286. **Father Bartlett:** I acknowledge that many integrated schools achieve a similar thing, but that will depend on the board of governors at the time; it is not guaranteed in law. Moreover, how it is allowed for, accepted or tolerated could be subject to — we have international experience of this — the shifting sands of the state or Government of the place. Let us imagine for a moment, that you have an aggressively atheistic, communist Government coming in who did not respect religion. They would have more difficulty in their own legislative process undermining a faith school that was based in law, than they would with one that they controlled and owned. Does that make sense?
3287. **Mr Newton:** Well, it is a fairly extreme example.
3288. **Father Bartlett:** Sorry, but we are in the luxurious position, if I may say — as the Chair mentioned at the beginning — that there is actually a great symbiosis in the

- values that all our schools share. That is a great thing.
3289. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you. Just to let you know, four further members have indicated that they wish to ask questions. I am just mindful of your time.
3290. **Mr McCausland:** It has been interesting to hear the presentation this morning. It reflects something that has been obvious in other presentations on other days: once you start to look at shared education, a range of other educational issues suddenly open up, and you start to discuss them. It has therefore been stimulating in that wider regard. First, the figure was quoted that around 2.5% of children at Catholic maintained schools were from, probably, a Protestant background. I was at a Catholic maintained school on Friday that quoted around 10%. Mention was also made of a grammar school up in Portstewart —
3291. **Father Bartlett:** It is close to 40% — Dominican College Portstewart.
3292. **Mr McCausland:** The other was Dominican College, north Belfast. Is the one in Portstewart called that as well?
3293. **Father Bartlett:** Yes, that is Dominican College.
3294. **Mr McCausland:** They are both called Dominican College. I know that we have not got precise figures, but does it tend to be focused in grammar schools?
3295. **Father Bartlett:** No. It is primary, secondary and grammar. We could point to examples at every level.
3296. **Mr Crudden:** Any statistics quoted in our paper refer simply to Catholic maintained schools. They do not refer to grammar schools.
3297. **Mr McCausland:** If it is 10%, 20% or 30% in a number of grammar schools, that would skew the thing higher, obviously, and the figure must be lower in other schools. My second question relates to Catholic ethos. It is very much the governors who run the school. How do you ensure that the Catholic ethos plays out?
3298. **Father Bartlett:** First, it is part of the legal ownership structure. Then, it comes down to the trustee representatives and the scheme of management of the school. All members of the board of governors would be expected to respect the Catholic ethos of the school and its fundamental mission in that regard, but, in theory, the trustee representatives are there to ensure that it is presented and mediated, if you like. All members of the board of governors would have that responsibility.
3299. **Mr McCausland:** What percentage of the board of governors are trustees?
3300. **Father Bartlett:** Four out of the nine.
3301. **Mr McCausland:** The other five are —
3302. **Father Bartlett:** Department representatives.
3303. **Mr J Clarke:** In the maintained sector, the Department and the board of the Education Authority — the Education Authority does not have a seat in the voluntary sector — and, then, parents and teachers or staff.
3304. **Mr Crudden:** It is two from the Department, two from education and library boards, four trustees, and then a parent governor and a teacher governor.
3305. The importance of leadership in a school is vital. The governors have overarching responsibility for the management of the school and to ensure that the ethos is evident. The prime responsibility then comes down to the leader in the school, the principal.
3306. **Mr McCausland:** That brings me on to another question. Would there have to be a change to the current legislation to enable joint faith schools, from the GB model, to happen?
3307. **Mr J Clarke:** The only model we can use from current legislation is a maintained school model, not a Catholic maintained school model but a maintained school model, which is in legislation. It means

- jumping through hoops a little bit. I refer to my earlier comments that we want to see a much wider range of governance arrangements in our system. To do it at the present time would mean that it would be a maintained school.
3308. **Mr McCausland:** You can have a maintained school in Northern Ireland that is not a Catholic maintained school.
3309. **Mr J Clarke:** Yes, there is a number. I think there are only six or so maintained schools that are not Catholic.
3310. **Mr McCausland:** So, there would not need to be a change in legislation to create one of these.
3311. **Mr J Clarke:** No, but it is messy; we would have to jump through a few hoops.
3312. **Mr McCausland:** Without going into all the technical detail, could you give me a summary of what they are?
3313. **Mr J Clarke:** It is very technical. On that basis it would be difficult, other than to say that it is legally possible, but it is stretching the forbearance of all the partners, not to mention the law.
3314. **Mr McCausland:** Maybe we could have a conversation about that separately, because I am curious about how that would work.
3315. **My final point is this:** I have visited a number of Catholic schools recently that are extremely inclusive and welcoming in their approach, and that is good. I have been encouraged by my visits to them. Nonetheless, there have been a couple of incidents at Catholic schools that, certainly, I felt, were inappropriate. I think, in particular, of the school last year that linked an Irish language event to a hunger striker. I would have thought that, if you have four trustees out of nine, it would be possible to deal with those situations. I would be interested to hear your comment on that.
3316. **Mr J Clarke:** It is always difficult to deal with an individual situation and say that it is representative of a view. I do not think that it would be appropriate for us to go into the detail of that. The issue has to be how the decision was made and on what evidence basis it was made. I think that the intention of all our schools is to play a constructive part in society within the communities in which they exist. Sometimes, the media can create headlines. I dare say that you have been subject to that yourself, Nelson.
3317. **Mr McCausland:** Never.
3318. **Mr J Clarke:** Those headlines give a view of something. Issues become media issues that, on the ground, are actually very different. As I said, I do not think it is appropriate to go into detail, but I think that it proves that these are very exceptional events where things go wrong. The vast majority of schools that you visited — I use your language here — show inclusivity. That is our intention. We can all stumble along the way. What we need to focus on here is that which is positive, unites us and allows inclusivity and sharing to be promoted and sustained.
3319. **Father Bartlett:** I have just two points. On the wider issue of the difference in the intensity of commitment that you have experienced in schools, it comes back to the earlier point I made about incentivisation and, particularly, maybe resourcing more fully leadership training in schools, particularly but not exclusively for principals, because that is what makes the critical difference in this area. I suggest to the Committee today that it might want to recommend leadership training in schools in this area. That would be very welcome.
3320. In relation to the other matter you raised and without going into any specifics, our schools across society are located in particular communities. It is important that they deal with the reality of our historical, political and cultural issues. They cannot be apart from that. They were very anxious to maintain and did successfully maintain what I would describe as an oasis during the height of our violent conflict over the years, one that was very welcome for everybody. Everybody generally tried to respect that. However, now, in a more

- normalised political environment, they have a responsibility — I think this is your basic, fundamental thesis here — to be part of the building of a shared, cohesive society. They cannot ignore the political tensions and realities in society. The only thing that we would say then as trustees, if I may, is that it is vital that these issues are dealt with in an appropriate, professional, constructive and agreed way. No matter how localised it might be and how justified with regard to a community's tradition locally, that type of issue should always be dealt with as part of an overall process, the overall process of sharing and how we deal with the past and the future, rather than bouncing people into situations that create difficulties.
3321. **Mr Crudden:** We all aspire to an ideal. We recognise that there will be times when schools do not reach that ideal. What we try to encourage schools to do with respect to being a Catholic school is to evaluate themselves as Catholic schools in exactly the same way as they would evaluate the standard of literacy, numeracy or whatever in the school. In cases when something goes wrong, we would encourage schools to ask why it went wrong and how that situation could be changed or avoided in the future.
3322. **Mr McCausland:** I accept entirely Jim's point that we all stumble; it is human nature. The key thing is to learn from the stumble and ensure that we do not do it again.
3323. **Father Bartlett:** On that point, I would be anxious to say, if I may, that communities and their local histories across our society are part of that school community. They will have a view about their particular history, values, emphasis and so on in this area. All that I am saying is that this has to be respected and thought through. The trustees of Catholic schools would be anxious that difficult and sensitive issues would be part of the mainstream and not something that is bounced on or imposed on, in our case, a Catholic school without consultation or without being dealt with in this more mainstream way.
3324. **Mrs Overend:** It is good to see you here this morning. I want to continue with previous conversations. I really was not aware that there were many Catholic maintained schools that were welcoming to those of non-Catholic faith. I was not aware of the 40% in Dominican College, which you referred to earlier. Is that a policy direction that the CCMS is now promoting across all schools in Northern Ireland? Are you actively engaging with controlled schools outside the Catholic maintained sector? A lot of them now have a mixture of religions. Are you engaging with those schools to try to get more into them?
3325. **Mr J Clarke:** Those are two issues. First, with regard to enrolment in schools, I made the point that we do not promote the Catholic sector per se. Schools can promote themselves in their own community. On that basis, the comparative success of the Catholic sector at this moment on all the measures that we have — I am not saying that they are the right measures — shows that the Catholic sector is outperforming other sectors despite higher levels of social deprivation. Parents can respond to that and make their decisions in their own area.
3326. Collaborating with controlled schools is the thing that has moved forward substantially in the last 10 years. I was a member of the Costello group back in 2002-03. As part of the background work that we did, we commissioned the Department to go out and look for examples of good practice of sharing across schools. It actually found very few. Five is probably as many as I can recall, and many of those were quite tenuous. If you were to conduct a similar exercise today, you would see a myriad of sharing across all sectors. I think that is the move forward. That has been led by the schools, whether through such initiatives as the Queen's/Atlantic Philanthropies initiative or other local ones. There are initiatives in the North Eastern Board, for instance, which I think have been very successful. These things are characteristic of our education system as a whole, which is

- why we think that the sharing agenda is being driven by practical need in response to practical situations that may include funding.
3327. Circumstances have moved on, and we have a society which is much more open to that. Very importantly, that openness is more evident, very often, amongst the young people themselves rather than their parents, many of whom have grown up through the Troubles with concern about safety and all the rest of it. That has had an impact on our system over the years, but we are growing up through that, which is one of the reasons why we feel that we must be full partners in that spectrum of sharing at whatever level we can engage in a community.
3328. **Mrs Overend:** I take from what you are saying that your priority is to enhance shared education projects across schools in an area rather than to actually encourage people of non-Catholic faiths to come into Catholic maintained schools. Is that right?
3329. **Mr J Clarke:** Yes. It is an open door. ‘Building Peace, Shaping the Future’ said it: it is an open door. Schools are there; if people want to avail themselves of the ethos of that school, they are very welcome to do so. What the statistics do not tell us is the number of people from different ethnic backgrounds, such as the Chinese or Indian communities, who, for many years, have been part of the controlled and Catholic systems. It is about people making choices. The key thing here is that we are promoting access to education.
3330. **Mr Craig:** I apologise for being late, gentlemen. I listened with great interest to what was being said. I want to get to the fundamentals of all this, because it is an inquiry about shared education more than about integration, and I am not getting into that argument.
3331. Father Bartlett, you made that strong argument about the faith-based education that comes with the Catholic maintained sector. That is people’s choice. I have no issue with that. In a shared situation, though, that brings forth unique opportunities — I was told never to use the word “difficulties” — and there was a hint from the controlled sector representatives when they gave evidence to the Committee that one of those is the Catholic certificate. How do you operate a school that is shared by the controlled and maintained sectors if there is a need for a Catholic certificate that some teachers just do not have and do not particularly want to have? Will there be a resolution of that? That is what was hinted at.
3332. **Father Bartlett:** On the wider point, I think that the trustees of Catholic schools, supported by CCMS, in implementation, have demonstrated an openness to the creative spectrum of possibilities for sharing from shared campuses to shared enterprises and all sorts of arrangements within those.
3333. Depending on which calibration you are referring to, all those issues can be worked out at the local level. It is not reinventing the wheel in terms of concept; this already happens in Great Britain. The critical thing, as others have pointed out, is that it is a shared Christian school that we would be talking about. Within that, we argue that the reason why the RE certificate applies at all is that it is perfectly legitimate for parents who wish to choose a Catholic school to expect that the teachers in that school have a verifiable professional competence to support that ethos. The mechanism that we generally use to do that and that, we argue, fits under the concept in European law of genuine occupational requirement exceptions for teachers and so on in schools is the RE certificate. In Catholic primary schools, every teacher is an RE teacher because RE is taught by that one teacher in the curriculum, so they all have to do that. However, they do not have to be a Catholic to have achieved the verifiable professional competence that the trustees apply through having an RE certificate. The real issue is accessibility to the certificate, not the denominational adherence of the person who has it. We would argue that, across the spectrum of possibilities, parents



- have a right to expect that there is some verifiable professional level of competence in supporting the ethos or presentation of the Catholic aspect of the school and curriculum. Does that make sense, or have I confused it even further?
3334. **Mr Craig:** It is an interesting answer, because I see that as a practical obstacle in the way of reaching a shared school where you have controlled and maintained in the same classroom. I do not know how you deal with that.
3335. **Father Bartlett:** Just to be technically correct, we would not be talking about controlled and maintained in the same classroom; we would be talking about a jointly owned and managed Christian school. This is a new model that does not fit. As Jim explained, it would not be a Catholic maintained school, but the legal model would be a maintained school, not a controlled school. It would not be a state school; it would be in the ownership of the Churches collectively in some agreed way. Do you understand? In other words, it is not a mixture. It would be a school owned by the spectrum of Christian Churches: the transferors and Catholic trustees together. The discussions with the Department have been precisely about that and how that could be constituted in the representation on the boards of trustees. We are not reinventing the wheel in terms of implementation in the school environment, because there are examples in Britain. That is part of our commitment to the concept of sharing.
3336. **Mr Craig:** So, there are tentative talks going on about how you deal with those issues.
3337. **Father Bartlett:** They are more than tentative. They are formal talks with the Department about how that could be done.
3338. **Mr Craig:** That is reasonable.
3339. **Father Bartlett:** And we are committed to the concept.
3340. **Mr Craig:** There is another issue that puzzles me. I am no theologian, and I do not know where you get into the theology of academic selection not being acceptable. Has the Church some sort of theology that it is not acceptable, and what are the grounds for that? My experience is that all schools use academic selection. It does not matter whether they call themselves all-ability schools or grammar schools, they all do it.
3341. **Father Bartlett:** Let us be clear: there is no doctrine in the Catholic Church about academic selection or not. However, what is fundamental to the established and verifiable in writing social doctrine of the Catholic Church is that part of being Catholic is that you have, in imitation of Jesus Christ, a commitment to and concern for everyone equally and a particular concern for those who are most vulnerable, marginalised and poor. I mentioned that in my opening presentation before you came in. That is part of Catholic theology and is what is sometimes called the preferential option for the poor. It is our judgement that academic selection militates particularly against that principle and is therefore inconsistent with the ethos of a Catholic school, but that is balanced with the difficult issue of parental choice, even in that area. We are probably all struggling with that.
3342. I will go back to Pat's question about his frustration with the Catholic Church or leadership. Why is he expecting a higher level of leadership? We have achieved more on the ground than his party and Minister have. Why are you applying a higher level to our leadership as a Church? You have failed to get agreement in the Chamber about the issue. We are trying to get agreement around a spectrum of views that exist in the Catholic school community. We are committed to trying to do that. What motivates it is the fundamental concern for the principle that every child should be given the same opportunity in education with the same resources and commitment in our schools through the common curriculum that now exists.
3343. **Mr J Clarke:** Could I add something to that? You made a point, Jonathan, that there is selection everywhere. There is differentiation throughout our system,

but that does not require people to go to different buildings, particularly when you have a common curriculum, to be differentiated. Our schools need a sufficiently large enrolment to offer a range of choice that will meet the needs of all young people. I was a teacher of English, and so one would expect that I should be reasonably good at English, but I might not be so good at maths. I could very easily be in the top set for one subject at a school and in the lowest set for another. Larger schools give you the flexibility to structure according to differentiation, but that differentiation is not absolute. It is not saying that person A is in the top band for everything and that person B is in the bottom band for everything. We have to reflect the fact that we all have different strengths, and one of the things that education does is develop those strengths.

3344. When I was before the Committee in the past, I used a phrase from the Marmot report on health. He talked about a universal entitlement but said that access was proportionate to capability to access that service by oneself or support needed to access that service. The concept of proportionate universalism is very important here in education, particularly from a Catholic perspective, in that those who have greater obstacles need additional support so that ultimately they will hopefully achieve the outcome. Selection does not facilitate that. I made the point earlier that selection inhibits even those who are selected because the option of understanding wider society, accessing a wider range of curricular choice and responding to their learning needs and motivation is easier if you have that access.
3345. I would much prefer that we got away from the philosophical discussion about selection and ask how we can best prepare all our young people to be contributors to the economy and the society in which we live. I think that the Catholic view on education has come to understand and promote that in a way that it possibly did not

do in responding, back in 1947, to the introduction of the three-tier system, as it was at that time. Society has moved on. Our understanding has moved on, but, unfortunately, the legislation, which goes back, in various forms, to that time, is still pretty much in place. That is why I think that you as politicians have a responsibility to ask what the role of education is in the big picture. I actually believe that it is at the centre of the development of this society and economy.

3346. **Mr Craig:** That is a fascinating answer from both of you, because you actually believe that there is an ethos there and an ethical issue around all of it. I find that fascinating, because, from my religious background, we do not see any ethical argument on it at all. That is fascinating. Is the simple truth out there not the fact that parents have voted with their feet, despite what you believe?
3347. **Mr J Clarke:** A parent will make the best choice, as they see it, for their child from what is available. What we are saying is that, on the basis of parental choice, everyone should have the same choice. What we have at the moment is a system where not everyone has the same choice. That is the equality argument. We believe that, once that choice has been made, it is the responsibility of the school chosen to ensure that that young person has access to all the support that they need to fully benefit from the educational choices that they make.
3348. **Mr Craig:** Jim, if I get you right, you are on the same path as me. All schools should be equally good. The fundamental problem with that is that — we need to be honest with ourselves; I am honest with myself about it — all schools are not equally good. I will pay you one tribute: you have worked very hard on trying to rectify that issue, which is something that has been missing in the controlled sector and hopefully now will be rectified. Is that not the ultimate solution? Parents make the ultimate decision on where their child goes.

3349. **Mr J Clarke:** We face significant financial difficulties in our schools, but one of the things that I will say to our principals is that we are still about raising standards. We cannot give up on raising standards, and everyone is entitled to that education. I agree with you that what we should be doing is ensuring that all our schools are as good as they can be. This is the encouragement for the controlled sector. When CCMS came into being, we were behind every other sector in terms of outcomes for young people, our employment practices and our buildings. We have caught up significantly and gone ahead in some areas. Everybody can achieve it, but we need to look at the tools that need to be put in place to ensure that.
3350. **Father Bartlett:** Can I just take the opportunity to say that the Catholic trustees are as concerned about the underachievement of young Protestant males as we are about our own school system? We have said to the controlled sector and, indeed, to the transferors that we are there. Part of the sharing should be about helping each other to ensure that we achieve the ideal of every school being a good school — an excellent school.
3351. On the selection issue there is no shortage of evidence — I am sure that we do not have time to go into it; it might take a different Committee hearing to go into it — that academic selection, in pure pedagogical terms and whatever about the ethical issue that we believe is there, is not necessarily the best way to provide in our environment for the spectrum of children's abilities and needs in terms of achievement. There is also the idea that you just define educational achievement on some narrow academic base, when we have a common curriculum and a common curriculum duty on all our schools at post-primary level. It is a wider and more complicated subject, but, in so far as that gets us through the initial question that you asked, that is where we are coming from: the commitment that every school in our society should be a good school and that the sectors should cooperate to achieve that goal.
3352. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** We have deviated somewhat from the inquiry at this stage. Mr Lunn is next.
3353. **Mr Lunn:** Thanks. We do not normally get back in.
3354. **Father Bartlett:** Round 2.
3355. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You were so good the last time.
3356. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you. You mentioned the G8 situation, Tim. As far as I understand it, the president of the United States wanted to visit a Northern Ireland school.
3357. **Father Bartlett:** He is only one of many examples of this, by the way.
3358. **Mr Lunn:** He also wanted to visit an integrated school because of his open advocacy of the principle of children being educated together. That is why he went to Enniskillen Integrated Primary School. You also, almost in the same breath, used the term “anti-Catholicism”. I can only tell you that, as far as I am concerned, there is no anti-Catholicism involved here. I may well be anti some of the attitudes that you take around the protection of your school system, but that is not an attack on your faith in any way.
3359. I want to ask you a question, first of all. Your paper indicates that you would like to see the protection for integrated schools removed — the facilitation and encouragement protection. Now, that —
3360. **Father Bartlett:** The duty to favour, not to protect —
3361. **Mr Lunn:** You would like to see the duty removed. That duty is only really applicable to the setting up of a new integrated school, as with the Irish-medium sector, where certain licence is allowed to set up a very small school. They still have to prove themselves over three years, and, in the long term, if an integrated school is not viable according to the criteria that are laid down, it is

- subject to the same pressures as any other school. People often talk about the protection or superiority that integrated schools have, but, in fact, they do not have any more protection than your sector and, frankly, your organisation has, Jim. Malachy actually said that the Moy situation could not have gone ahead without the agreement of CCMS. I would like to see NICIE being able to take a similar —
3362. **Father Bartlett:** You are using a word that is not in the legislation though, Trevor. Protection is not the issue.
3363. **Mr Crudden:** In terms of shared education, there had to be a lead body, and that lead body had to be CCMS and/or the education and library board. That was part of the regulations around shared education. That was just the way it was. In order for that to be taken forward, CCMS and the local education and library board had to promote it or support it.
3364. **Mr J Clarke:** One of the things that is important here is that we acknowledge absolutely — I restate what I said at the start — the right of the integrated sector to exist, but equally, we believe that our rights and those of other sectors to exist need to be recognised. Some of the things that were said were about almost everybody else promoting integrated schools. If you look back to the history of the integrated movement, you see that it was a ground-up initiative. We have said that to achieve that spectrum, no matter how far along the track we get, still requires a ground-up initiative. The integrated sector still has the facility and the capacity to grow from the ground up, but we are saying that we, equally, have the right to exist. It is not a case of one or the other; it is a case of everybody having a space and respecting that space.
3365. **Mr Lunn:** I could not agree more.
3366. **Father Bartlett:** There are two things. On the issue of anti-Catholicism, I made that comment in the context of somebody asking me about secularism and a secular trend in education generally. I made the point that, sometimes, it can be a mask for a subtle form of anti-faith and, sometimes anti-Catholicism specifically. I was very careful to point out that that is not representative of the general sweep or, indeed, necessarily of integrated schools. However, it is as part of the wider argument that you sometimes get that. I have experienced that very clearly, consistently and directly, so I do not resilie from the fundamental claim that I am making.
3367. On the specific point about the legislation, we suggest that, if there is going to be a legislative duty on the Department, it should be precisely around sharing. We have said that it may not be the best thing to put it in legislation, but, if it is going to be there, it should be a duty to sharing rather than a narrow form of the spectrum of possibilities that work and have some verifiable impact in terms of this objective. What you have at the moment is bizarre situations arising where CCMS is being asked at the moment, for example, how it intends to promote integrated education, which completely ignores the fact that it is not there to promote any sector. You get these bizarre things happening. Also, it helps to build this culture that some are more equal than others in terms of the Department's education provision.
3368. We fully support the idea that any sector that is embryonic needs to be supported, encouraged and facilitated, and there need to be honest ways of trying to establish parental views and so on in that context. We support that, but we are just saying that, at this point, we challenge the idea that that duty should still exist.
3369. **Mr Lunn:** Frankly, I cannot see the difference. The obligation to facilitate and encourage is —
3370. **Father Bartlett:** Integrated education.
3371. **Mr Lunn:** — entirely subject to parental choice. It requires the parents of children at an existing school or a group of parents, who act quite bravely at

times, to make a decision to try to set up a new integrated school. There have been precious few of them in recent years.

3372. **Father Bartlett:** Is it not the case that the integrated education movement is claiming that the Department is failing in its duty precisely on the basis of that —
3373. **Mr Lunn:** Well, absolutely. There have been many instances where the Department —
3374. **Father Bartlett:** We would prefer to see a more —
3375. **Mr J Clarke:** The purpose of having the integrated sector is that that sector should be creating the conditions, not the Department or CCMS or anybody else. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that that sector has the right to do that, but it should not necessarily be at the expense of someone else giving up their school. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education has a much greater facility on this than we have to encourage people to want to have an integrated school in their community and to move that forward. It is entitled to do that but, as Tim has pointed out, if we interpret Judge Treacy's ruling in a particular way, CCMS and, indeed, the boards have an obligation now to promote integrated schools when we do not have an obligation to promote our own schools. We can advocate for them but not promote them.
3376. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your time. I am perhaps more anxious about you having to leave on time than you were. Thank you very much. Members found that to be a particularly interesting session.



## 18 March 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

### Witnesses:

Ms Iris Barker	<i>Brookeborough</i>
Mr Dermot Finlay	<i>Shared Education</i>
Ms Hazel Gardiner	<i>Partnership</i>
Ms Mary Hampsey	

### 3377. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

We have with us today Hazel Gardiner, the principal of Brookeborough Controlled Primary School; Dermot Finlay, the principal of St Mary's Primary School, Brookeborough; Iris Barker from the Western Education and Library Board (WELB); and Mary Hampsey from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).

3378. Good afternoon. You are all very welcome. I apologise for the delay. I know that you were in the Public Gallery, so you were able to hear what was being said previously, and that might have been informative. Thank you very much for waiting. I ask to you make an opening statement. Members will then follow up with some questions.

3379. **Ms Hazel Gardiner (Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership):** Good afternoon, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on our shared education programme. I am the principal of the controlled school, and I will talk about our school experiences of shared education to date. My colleague Dermot Finlay, the principal of St Mary's, will tell you about our current shared education programmes and our plans for the future.

3380. Our two schools, which are situated in the village of Brookeborough, serve the surrounding rural area. Brookeborough is in the most deprived 6% of super output areas (SOAs) when it comes to proximity to services. The schools are just a short walk apart — less than 10 minutes. Our current enrolment is 119 pupils — 66 in the controlled school and 53 in St Mary's — and each school has three teachers, including us. Our schools reflect the community in which we serve, with over one third of pupils qualifying for free school meals and St Mary's receiving extended schools funding. The two schools have enjoyed an excellent relationship for over 40 years, going back to the 1970s. We have participated in education for mutual understanding (EMU), cross-community contact schemes and a local cross-border, cross-community scheme with schools in County Sligo called the Riverbrooke project. Those projects involved the children working together, although mainly on trips away from the school. However, they included residentials in Magilligan Field Centre and the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, and it was most unusual that schools were able to do that in the 1970s. In a sense, our schools have been working together long before the phrase "shared education" was coined. All those activities continued through challenging times. I was a young teacher in the school in 1987 when the then principal lost his mother-in-law and father-in-law in the Remembrance Day bombing. Both schools in Brookeborough have had parents, pupils and children who suffered and were personally affected. Even since then, when politically sensitive issues are reported in the media, it has the potential to affect the dynamic of the partnership, but the commitment and strength of our partnership has enabled us to overcome those challenges. The two schools maintained and developed

- linkages, and today we stand on the threshold of a shared campus for our children and the community. If Brookeborough can do that, other divided communities can do it also.
3381. In the past six years, through funding and support from the Fermanagh Trust, the children have enjoyed shared lessons across the curriculum. Those have included joint classes on respecting difference and the undertaking of a major history project where the primary 6 children from the two schools interviewed local people and looked at little country schools that were closed. They found out that those schools had been integrated all those years ago. They also performed a self-penned drama for the public called 'Racism Ruins Lives', and there are shared classes in gymnastics, ICT and art, to name but a few.
3382. One of the difference between the old community relations programmes and the Fermanagh Trust shared education programme is that all children are spending regular — indeed, weekly — time in each other's schools from P1 to P7, working and playing together. That has resulted in them being more comfortable in each other's company and being appreciative of their cultural differences and personal similarities, and it has allowed for friendships to be formed.
3383. As well as societal benefits, there are obvious educational benefits from all of that. However, we want to stress that shared education has not diluted our separate cultures: we both have a strong identity. Support from the Ulster-Scots Agency has enabled the school that I am in to work on the flagship programme, where we celebrate culture through dance, music and drama. In fact, last Friday, Trina Somerville, the director of education and language at the Ulster-Scots Agency, attended a performance of Dan Gordon's play 'The Boat Factory' in the school. St Mary's also has a strong cultural identity, which is celebrated through sport, music and language.
3384. Through shared education, we also learn about each other's cultures, and we have shared performances and activities. For example, as recently as yesterday, our schools were involved in Project St Patrick in Enniskillen. Over the past few years, we have jointly entered choral speaking in the Fermanagh Feis, winning on one occasion. The children have played rugby together, and, at one of the Project St Patrick parades in Enniskillen, they performed Scottish and Irish dancing at the same time.
3385. For our teachers, we have hosted joint training. Through the Fermanagh Trust programme, there has been training in good practice, partnership-building and the Rural Respecting Difference programme. The teachers plan together, which is particularly useful in small schools, where it is possible to feel quite isolated. We have organised our staff through shared education, which has allowed us to decompound combined year groups, which, again, has obvious educational benefits for the children. Each school now has access to the skills of six teachers. In the autumn term, our P3 children from the two schools were brought together to be taught science by one of my teachers, who is doing an ENTHUSE award at the minute and has a particular interest in science. That is making use of her skill.
3386. We organise joint training and workshops for parents; for example, Internet safety, which is done by the PSNI, the Rural Respecting Difference programme and reading strategies. Although we have separate parent-teacher associations, the two have come together and worked together, most recently to bring the parents, grandparents and children together in the village to plant bulbs to improve the environment.
3387. Our two boards of governors have had several joint meetings, and those began at the time of the first area plans. They then formed a joint subcommittee, which has met several times. The Western Board and CCMS joined that subcommittee and attended several



- meetings as we prepared to submit an application for the shared campus.
3388. I will now hand over to Dermot, who will tell you a little bit about the current plans and those for the future.
3389. **Mr Dermot Finlay (Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership):** Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to come up to talk to you. I have had the pleasure of meeting some of you on previous visits to Stormont and down in Fermanagh when you visited Enniskillen.
3390. The Committee will be aware that the WELB and CCMS have submitted a proposal to the Department of Education for a shared campus in Brookeborough. For more detail on the level of sharing that we are doing, the table in the briefing paper provides an illustration of the sharing at pupil and teacher level that we have planned through the shared education signature project. We applied for that recently.
3391. It can be seen that 100% of our children take part in shared activities, providing regular and sustained contact. Through the three-year signature project for shared education, we plan to deliver shared activities and to decompound combined year groups, both of which will have huge educational benefits for the children. We are also sharing a teacher in the project. The value of our shared education was acknowledged by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in our recent inspections in 2011 and 2013. The ETI said that the children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences and that there were many examples in the school of very good collaborative work on shared education. The synergy of sharing not only complements the joint learning and teaching but raises the individual provision of each school. The richness of our shared past and the proposal for a shared campus has developed naturally over the years owing to the high level of sharing between the two schools over four decades, which Hazel talked about.
3392. The Brookeborough shared campus has immense potential to enhance and develop a shared future for the local community. The proposal for the shared campus was a community-based decision to sustain primary education in Brookeborough for both sections of the community. It is, as the Minister of Education asked for, a bottom-up, local solution that meets local needs.
3393. A series of meetings was held with parents and governors, initially separately and then jointly. The Fermanagh Trust facilitated a community survey in March 2014, which was distributed to parents, staff, Churches and members of the wider community, and the outcome was overwhelming, with 93% of the community supporting a shared campus. The campus has the support of all political parties on Fermanagh District Council, and, at a recent meeting in February 2015 with the First Minister, the deputy First Minister and Arlene Foster, we received a tremendously positive and enthusiastic response to our proposal for the shared campus. The deputy First Minister, during Question Time at the start of March, described the Brookeborough initiative and our leadership as inspirational.
3394. The sharing that we are involved in will widen and deepen within the shared campus. Shared campuses are about building united communities, and that is what we want to do. Thank you very much.
3395. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much, and thank you for coming to meet us this afternoon.
3396. For the record, can you explain what the shared campus will look like and the practicalities that will be involved?
3397. **Mr Finlay:** If I had a fantastic diagram, I would be able to show you exactly what it will look like. The concept is that our two schools will be on the one site and in the one building. We are suggesting not two new schools but one build where —

3398. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Sorry to cut across you, but does that mean that you will have a project similar to the one in the Moy?
3399. **Ms H Gardiner:** Yes.
3400. **Mr Finlay:** It is similar, yes. There will be one building on a shared campus site, with classrooms that my school will occupy and classrooms that Hazel's school will occupy. There will be two distinct schools: St Mary's and Brookeborough Controlled. There will also be parts of the building that we will share, including the playground, the lunch hall and a classroom in which shared activities can take place.
3401. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You will no doubt be aware of some of the criticism that the Moy project has received. How do you view that criticism?
3402. **Mr Finlay:** Which criticism are you thinking of?
3403. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There are criticisms around the fact that you have two sets of children going through the front door and then being separated.
3404. **Mr Finlay:** Yes, when I first heard about the Moy through the media, which I am sure you have all been subjected to at some point, I thought that it was a strange design and pattern as well. We visited some schools in Glasgow that had the shared campus model, and, once I saw it in practice, it became clear to me that it was a reality. If you are talking about the depiction of left and right and blue and green, as you see on the television, that is oversimplified and naive and understates the whole case. I will draw on an example from my school. When the children are in the playground, the P4 and P5 pupils come and line up and the P6 and P7 pupils come and line up. They go left and right, into their classrooms. Some mornings, depending on activities, the P4 pupils go off to the left and the P5, P6 and P7 pupils go off to the right, with me. Primary 1, 2 and 3 pupils are in a totally different part of the school. That is not divisive; it is just the natural organisation of any school.
3405. In fact, the shared campus that Hazel and I will hopefully succeed in getting will increase the contact that the children have. They will be in the playground in the morning, they will have lunch together and they will have planned curricular activities, so they will see much more of each other. I worked in a large school in England where 500 pupils lined up and went through many doors. However, they were all still part of the same school. The depiction of children lining up and going off here and there is naive and oversimplified.
3406. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** From a wider community perspective, how has the proposal been received in Brookeborough and beyond?
3407. **Mr Finlay:** The proposal has received overwhelming support. I said one time at a public meeting that I did not want to take St Mary's in one direction, only to look over my shoulder and find that there was nobody else behind me. In fact, we are responding to the community, and we said so to Minister O'Dowd. We told him that the people in Brookeborough were asked whether they would consider a shared campus for the sustainability of education in the community, and that they said yes, overwhelmingly.
3408. **Ms H Gardiner:** We presented various options to parents at the beginning of area planning. We looked at integrated and shared models, and we talked about all the different possibilities. As Dermot says, the parents felt that this was the way forward in our area.
3409. **Mr Finlay:** Hazel and I said as well that the length of time in which there has been sharing in Brookeborough is unique when compared with other areas of the country. This did not happen overnight. I have been in Brookeborough for 11 years, while Hazel has been there a bit longer. We have got to know each other and work with each other. We are comfortable in each other's company, and, as a result, so too are our staff and

- parents. I see Hazel's children regularly, and she is up in my school as well. It has been a long time coming and has been an organic process.
3410. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have to be commended for the work that you have been doing. It is a reflection on you. Those of us who do not represent areas such as yours probably do not understand the difficulties that there are in border areas in particular, and you have to be congratulated for that.
3411. **Mr Finlay:** Well, I am a blow-in, you see. I grew up in west Belfast so, for me, being in Fermanagh was an education in itself. *[Laughter.]* As Hazel commented, different parts of the country were affected by the Troubles in different ways, and, if you lived in Belfast or Derry, you thought they were happening just there. When I moved to Fermanagh, I realised that there were situations and that people were touched by the Troubles there as well. Forty years is a long time, and things have moved on. Change comes, although it comes slowly. The people of Brookeborough are on the threshold and asking the Government to consider a shared campus for the community.
3412. **Ms H Gardiner:** The community sees huge benefit as well, because there is currently no neutral venue in Brookeborough for community events. To have something like that on the shared campus would be very worthwhile.
3413. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** For you, the only barrier at this stage to moving forward with the project is financial.
3414. **Mr Finlay:** Absolutely. If the Department of Education says yes to us in June, there should be no problem at all. I am sure that it will.
3415. **Ms Iris Barker (Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership):** The outline business case was submitted to the Department of Education on 30 January this year. We expect an outcome from the Department before the end of June. We are hoping that it will be a positive result and that we will move to the full business case, for submission later in the year.
3416. **Mr Craig:** Dermot, I listened with interest to what CCMS had to say earlier about its whole concept of shared provision, and I get the impression that, if everything goes well for you, we are going to see this worked out.
3417. What I struggle with — I struggle with this, because I do not come from a Catholic-maintained background and therefore have no idea what it means in reality — is the fact that Tim Bartlett explained that, with the Catholic teaching certificate, every teacher is basically an RE teacher. Given my background, that is a bit of a strange concept. I asked this daft question: can you not share classes if you are struggling for numbers in a particular class? That is perhaps the next logical progression of the shared model. There was a hint that something is going on between the Churches in the background to get around the Catholic teaching certificate issue. Do you foresee that ultimately coming about in this model if everything goes well and there is a fair wind?
3418. **Mr Finlay:** First, as a teacher, I always say that there is no such thing as a daft question. *[Laughter.]* The Catholic teaching certificate is, I understand, open to anyone to do. There are universities and teacher-training colleges, at which anyone can access a teacher-training certificate for religion, and that means that he or she is competent in teaching the Catholic religion.
3419. We are already teaching the children in classes together through planned delivery of the curriculum. In the outline plan in our briefing paper, we cover things such as personal development and mutual understanding (PD&MU), which is a key factor in reconciliation and getting children to learn together. We have extended that to science and maths. We are and will be two separate schools, and we will have our own subjects and teaching, but, planned

- within that, there will be time with the children. Hazel's children spent a whole day at my school last month being taught together, and they put together a DVD for the proposal. There are times when that can be done. It is fair to say that we have been doing it for a long time.
3420. We have applied for a signature project as well. Wednesday mornings are given over to shared education so that the two schools can come together. That is across the school, and 100% of the children take part, as do staff. Within the next year or two, we see that extending to the whole of Wednesday. In fact, the contact is widening and deepening. When I first met Hazel, we were involved in EMU, but we perhaps met for a day, went on a trip and then came back. The children sometimes sat on the bus. They sat on one side and we sat on the other side, and we got on the bus on the left and the others got on the bus on the right. We had lunch together over there. It was well meant and well planned, and the Speedwell Trust did great work with the children, but they then all went back to their own school. The contact has intensified and is more regular and more natural, in that the children actually now know each other. I make the old joke, and will do so again, that, when I go into Hazel's school, I make my own coffee or tea. We do not stand on ceremony any more. We know each other quite well, and the children do as well. If I see them around Brookeborough, they will wave over and say, "Hello, Master Finlay". I am not some person whom they do not really know. They have had contact with me. You talked about being in the classroom together. We are doing that already and intend to increase it.
3421. **Ms H Gardiner:** It is great to be able to use the expertise and skills of staff and to have six teachers. If somebody specialises in music, maths, science or whatever, we will be able to tap into that.
3422. **Mr Craig:** I look at it as having shared resources. When I talk about "resources", I mean teachers, because all of that reduces your overheads. You are telling me that you are already there, or are at least close to it.
3423. **Mr Finlay:** Absolutely.
3424. **Mr Rogers:** You are a breath of fresh air, and thanks for sharing your journey with us. What is the nursery or preschool provision like in the area?
3425. **Ms H Gardiner:** There is the Playstation in Brookeborough, which is cross-community. Children meet in the station house. That was initiated by the Brookeborough and District Community Development Association. The children are there for a year or two and then have been separating.
3426. **Ms Barker:** It is a voluntary playgroup and acts as a feeder for both primary schools at the moment. We hope that, as we go through the process of moving to full business case, we will engage with the playgroup. We and the schools have engaged with the playgroup with a view to moving it to the site as well. The difference is that it is a voluntary playgroup, so it has to secure funding from alternative sources. However, we are happy to engage with a view to including the playgroup on the new site.
3427. **Mr Finlay:** The playgroup has wholeheartedly asked whether it can be part of the campus. We have children in our school — in fact, Arlene Foster's child was an example — who know each other from playgroup, go off to their separate schools and then meet up during shared education. The shared education project that the Fermanagh Trust funded over the past six years was an opportunity for those children to rekindle friendships and say, "I remember you". It was a positive thing, and, according to some children in my P7 class, they are now seeing each other outside school as a direct result of shared education, because they have got to know each other.
3428. **Mr Rogers:** To go back to the beginning of the journey, was it sharing out of necessity? Did that play a part?
3429. **Mr Finlay:** Hazel's school is 50 years old, while mine is a little bit older at 75

- years. We had celebrations recently to mark those anniversaries. We did a joint play through shared education about memories at school. Some parents fed in memories, and one was of trips to the Causeway safari park. I am just about old enough to remember the Causeway safari park, and I am sure that some of you are too young to remember, so it was going on even then.
3430. It was done not out of financial necessity but for community relations. Hazel can talk more about that, because she was there before I was.
3431. **Ms H Gardiner:** The two principals at the time were very committed to it, which was amazing at that time. I sometimes accompanied them on residential for three or four days at a time, and you could see friendships forming. That is going back to the 1980s.
3432. **Mr Rogers:** What was your biggest challenge on the journey?
3433. **Mr Finlay:** Money. It is always resources. The Fermanagh Trust's projects were invaluable, because it provided the funding. Without that, we could not have done a lot of what we did.
3434. Hazel touched on the hearts and minds of people. When things pop up in the media, you realise that sometimes you have to be aware of the sensitivities of the past, because they can still come back to haunt us. Every now and again, you think, "Oh, hang on, will what's going on elsewhere affect us?". People are at different stages on that journey and of acceptance. I am not saying it has all been a bed of roses, with everyone flying the flag for shared education. People have different opinions, but the people of Brookeborough are wholeheartedly saying to us that this makes sense. They have a pride in their community. People have said to me, "Who's going to want to live in a village with no schools?".
3435. I have seen tremendous change in Brookeborough. I am there just over 10 years. There was no pharmacy when I first came. Little restaurants and cafes have opened up, and, as I said, the pharmacy is there now. The two schools are an integral part of the village. They are pivotal. If you take those two schools out of the village, you rip the heart out of it.
3436. The people of Brookeborough are coming at this from a community point of view, not from a Protestant or Catholic point of view. Hazel and I have children and families in our schools from mixed marriages as well, who then know each other through cousins, friends and relatives. We are not talking about Hazel's school being over there and mine being here; there is a linkage that has been there for a long time.
3437. To go back to what you asked about when it started, a teacher involved in the history project told me that, many years ago, she used to give another teacher at St Mary's a lift. They shared the journey and then started sharing resources. Mary is an ex-teacher, so she will know what I mean about the resources. They were sharing resources, and you are talking about 35 or 40 years ago. It was happening even then.
3438. **Mr Rogers:** Thank you. I wish you all the best on your journey.
3439. **Mr Finlay:** Thank you, Seán.
3440. **Mr Rogers:** An important plus that you alluded to is that it is also about revitalising rural communities. Without a school, we cannot do that.
3441. **Mr Kinahan:** That is wonderful to hear. Congratulations on where you have got to. Just before you came in, we were asking CCMS and NICCE about how we can get change. The shared education Bill is coming through, and I wonder what advice you have for us at this end. We hear, all the way through, that it should be done bottom-up, and yet here we are, about to put something in top-down. What would you like to see us do with the shared education Bill to make things happen more easily for you and for those embarking on the same journey?
3442. **Mr Finlay:** Off the top of my head, funding. Hazel is whispering that to

- me. It is all about the money, isn't it? I would tell you to listen to people like us and the Moy. I have to be frank: we are not the only schools doing shared education; we are pioneers in some ways, but other schools are doing great work. The integrated sector, Trevor, has done great work over the years, and I have a lot of respect for it. You have to listen to the people who are doing it. I had my reservations about a shared campus. I was appointed to St Mary's, Brookeborough; it is my school, and I am very proud of it: "Leave me alone, please; I am happy with things. Give me back the two teachers that I had six years ago". However, things change, and I now think that a shared campus in Brookeborough is the best thing for Brookeborough, long after I am gone, looking at society and the future when these children are our age.
3443. I would honestly tell you to talk to people. There is shared education all over Fermanagh, and the Committee was talking to people in Fermanagh. It might not suit everywhere, and it might not be possible everywhere right now, but who is to say that it cannot work in future? Talk to people, including parents. Sometimes, people come to talk to people like Hazel and me, and the teachers. Talk to the parents and, ultimately, the children. Listen to their voices, because some of the children coming through our schools do not have the hang-ups; they have grown up in different times. You talk about the Troubles and they say "What?". The Troubles are on my daughter's history curriculum at secondary school. It is history, but it still has a legacy.
3444. **Ms H Gardiner:** Training is also very important for governors, staff and parents. The Fermanagh Trust ran training in partnership building, good relations and respecting difference programmes. That is very important because, as we said, everybody is coming from a different point. Some issues are difficult to deal with in a shared class, so training is very important.
3445. **Mr Finlay:** And do not rush it.
3446. **Ms Barker:** The pressures facing primary and post-primary schools, given the funding and the pressures therein with the Department of Education's sustainable schools policy, focused the minds of small rural schools, particularly in the Western Board area, where there is a very high percentage of rural schools.
3447. Where you have two primary schools, with 66 pupils and 53 pupils, those pressures help to focus minds, and the shared education campus programme was something that they could see, given their history of sharing, would be a lifeline. The work of both schools has been fundamental to that.
3448. **Mr Lunn:** I suppose, in the light of some of the unkind things that I have said about the Moy proposal, that you might expect some hostility, but there is none. I have met you both before, and the sharing that you have done beyond the curricular requirements is very impressive. I imagine that many of your pupils, between the two schools, already know one another quite well.
3449. I wanted to ask about logistics for a start, because I am ashamed to say that I have never been to Brookeborough —
3450. **Ms H Gardiner:** That is terrible.  
*[Laughter.]*
3451. **Mr Lunn:** The sign on the road flashed past. I would like to go, so there's a hint for you. How far away is the next nearest school in each of your sectors?
3452. **Ms H Gardiner:** About five miles.
3453. **Mr Lunn:** And where is that?
3454. **Mr Finlay:** If you do not know the geography, there is Tempo, Brookeborough, Lisnaskea, Fivemiletown, which is in a different board, and Maguiresbridge.
3455. **Ms H Gardiner:** All within roughly five miles.
3456. **Mr Lunn:** I have been to all those places; I do not know how I missed Brookeborough. *[Laughter.]* I just wanted to get the layout.

3457. Hazel, you said that there had been a full consultation with the parents, as you would expect, and that the integrated model was one of the considerations that you put to them. Did you involve the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)?
3458. **Ms H Gardiner:** No, not at that meeting; it was a parent meeting during area planning. One of the things that you need to remember is that there was an attempt to open an integrated school in Fivemiletown, which is five miles away, and it closed after a couple of years. Some of those children are now with us.
3459. **Mr Lunn:** Did the parents get to express an opinion about the possibility of one school rather than two joined together?
3460. **Ms H Gardiner:** The message came across at both meetings that each sector wanted to maintain its own culture and identity; they wanted to share and work together but keep a separate identity.
3461. **Mr Finlay:** To touch on what Jim Clarke from CCMS said, I am not in the business of promoting a form of education; I am the principal of a school. What Hazel and I engaged in were meetings with our parents separately in response to area planning, which was looking at a local or parish-based solution. They were given a range of options and spoken to very honestly. As Hazel said, there was an integrated school in the Clogher Valley and it closed.
3462. Parents say that they are very happy with Brookeborough controlled schools and with St Mary's; they want the two schools to carry on, and the shared campus allows for that sustainability. It is about what you have all commented on today: mutual respect and understanding. It is about being able to say, "I am this, and I am quite proud of it. You are that, and you are proud of that". The old adage from the 1970s is, "I'm OK; you're OK". It is about living together, the two schools existing on a site and sharing and increasing that sharing for the benefit of the children.
- Jonathan said that we are all coming at the same thing: it is about the education and social benefits of the children and about building a united community.
3463. **Mr Lunn:** Will you continue to have two boards of governors?
3464. **Mr Finlay:** We have our boards of governors —
3465. **Mr Lunn:** I think that you said that you had a joint committee.
3466. **Mr Finlay:** There will be a joint board of governors. There is a joint committee at the minute.
3467. **Mr Lunn:** You will obviously continue to have two principals.
3468. **Ms Mary Hampsey (Brookeborough Shared Education Partnership):** There will be two boards of governors but a joint committee with people from each board. That is the plan.
3469. **Mr Lunn:** I wish you well. That might seem odd in light of what I think about the Moy, but this sounds different to me. My hope for the Moy, which, from talking to the people there, I think will take an awful long time to materialise —
3470. **Mr Finlay:** Some of the Moy staff and governors came to Enniskillen for a public meeting at which we talked to parents from both schools about the different models and the Moy. They spoke about their experience, and I must compliment them. I found them really inspirational. The work that they have done is tremendous. When I first saw it on the news, I remember thinking, "What?". However, it goes back to what I said to Danny: you have to talk to people and listen to them, as they are living the experience. The people of the Moy have voted for that and want it to happen. I found the Moy people inspirational.
3471. **Mr Lunn:** Fair enough. They voted for it by not a very big margin, but that is OK. I think that the first point that the Moy needs to get to is where you are at the moment; you are miles ahead of them. Beyond that, my hope and expectation for both schemes is that they will end up with one school.

3472. **Mr Finlay:** Can I have that in writing, Trevor?
3473. **Mr Lunn:** It is the only logical outcome. When you have that level of sharing, cooperation, mutual respect, understanding and affection, it has to go that way. Whether it takes five years or 25 years, I certainly hope that that is what happens. In the meantime, fair play: get on with it.
3474. **Mr Finlay:** Thank you.
3475. **Ms Hampsey:** I am quite new to shared education in Northern Ireland. I was principal of a large Catholic maintained primary school in Dungannon. Mr McCausland came down on a couple of occasions, and I hope that we were one of the inclusive schools that he talked about rather than one of the others. We have, as I said, adopted two different cultures, two different faiths in that school as well.
3476. As someone who has also had experience of working with schools in the controlled sector, it amazes me how much work goes on that is not made public. I was not aware of the level of sharing anywhere until I came to Brookeborough. There is another example involving Moneynick and Duneane. I am amazed at the level of sharing there; they acted off their own bat just because they were eager to take people forward.
3477. Having worked with the board in both sectors, it amazes me how much there is in common; there is little difference, really, when you are in either school. Children are the same; teaching is the same; inspections are the same; and parents want the same thing. The only differences that I can see are faith differences to do with scripture or whatever. The only real difference is the sacramental liturgies. We had Protestant children and children from mixed marriages in our school, and there was never a problem. Some Protestant children came to watch the children make their first communion; they were at the party, too. It was just enlightening.
3478. We should focus on what people have in common not on their differences, because sometimes we create difference. No matter what the Christian religion — I am sure that the same is true of Islam and Buddhism — there are two tenets: love God and love your neighbour as yourself. That is the ethos of any school that I have been in in Northern Ireland. Treat people as you would like to be treated; respect yourself; respect God; and respect others. That is what it boils down to, so we should not get hung up on differences.
3479. I think that your role may be to encourage people who wish to do this. CCMS asked me to work as an associate for it on this topic, and I have been amazed at the example of these people, who take it to the nth degree. We had the community relations, equality and diversity programme (CRED); we had shared education; we went away together; we were in one another's schools, but not to the extent that these people share daily and weekly.
3480. I do not think that it can be imposed from above; it has to be nurtured. We worked in integrated schools, too, and there was never any problem; we all got on wonderfully well.
3481. **Mr Lunn:** It does not really solve the problem of composite classes in your two schools, does it?
3482. **Mr Finlay:** Not totally, but the shared campus and what we are doing now allows us to de-composite. To a certain degree, composite classes work; it is when you get a problem with, say, primary 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 when they cross key stages. I worked extensively in schools where they were one year group, and even in that you would have differentiation. Composite classes often raise standards, as the younger children are extended and challenged. However, the model that we have now allows us to de-composite classes — our school is only down the road. You have never been to Brookeborough, Trevor, so you do not know.



3483. **Ms Gardiner:** You will have to rectify that.
3484. **Mr Finlay:** We will have to rectify that. It is a short walk, but a short walk with children becomes a longer walk, and organisation is the problem. If we were on a campus, it would be easier to organise things so that we do not have to worry about the inclement weather in the winter and getting younger children on buses. The shared campus would allow us to de-composite further and, as Hazel said earlier, utilise the expertise of six teachers, as opposed to three and three.
3485. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Thank you. I have had the opportunity to discuss this with you. I do not think that anybody round this table, or round any other table, would question the sharing, and the enhanced sharing, that has gone on between the two schools. I am particularly interested, given the cooperation, enhanced sharing and the bottom-up approach, why the initial process for T:BUC was unsuccessful. More to the point, have lessons been learned? Are there assurances? I am interested because it is being heralded as a model, which you have described very articulately today. What happened at the first round of Together: Building a United Community?
3486. **Ms Barker:** Are you referring to the fact that it did not go through the first expression of interest?
3487. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** Yes.
3488. **Ms Barker:** There was a wee bit of confusion in the first expression of interest. Department of Education officials seemed to read into the proposal that the two schools were looking for a four-classroom school each or two separate buildings. It was for that reason that the Department asked for further clarification. It asked that the CCMS and the Western Board take forward an outline business case and met both the managing authorities and the schools and their chairs to make it clear that they had to provide value for money and that there had to be economies of scale through sharing in one building rather than two, since, because of the sustainable schools policy, both schools would not qualify for a new four-classroom school. The proposal was therefore revised, and we have made it very clear in the outline business case that it is one building to be shared by both schools, and that there are economies of scale and a number of benefits from sharing facilities.
3489. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** This is not by any stretch of the imagination a criticism of your work, but I am interested in why — I would have thought that the Department would have identified that from the get-go.
3490. **Ms Hampsey:** It just seemed to be a misinterpretation based on the way it was written.
3491. **Mr Finlay:** That is why I hesitated when Michelle asked me what this looked like. I am not sure how people misinterpreted it. I would never be daft enough to say, “Let us build two new schools.” That would not be sustainable. It is one building and one school that we share. That is why, as Iris points out, it was initially misunderstood, and we did not get through. The Department, however, has acknowledged that; it recognises that now.
3492. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** But it is absolutely pinned down now in the outline case and the developing business plan.
3493. **Mr Finlay:** Absolutely.
3494. **Ms Barker:** The very first line is that the proposal is for a shared campus, a single site, a single building for two schools.
3495. **Ms Hampsey:** We wrote it as clearly as that.
3496. **Mr Finlay:** The deputy First Minister was very surprised to hear that as well. There was no room for clarification. When the proposal went through, they took it at face value. We never got a phone call to ask if it was two

- schools; but I am not pointing the finger or placing blame: I do not know who was responsible. There was a misunderstanding.
3497. **Ms Maeve McLaughlin:** But it is absolutely clear now.
3498. **Ms Barker:** Very clear.
3499. **Mr McCausland:** What I have to say are more observations than questions. First, I think that you are taking forward a very interesting project, a very good initiative. The principle is to take things incrementally — to start with what people want, what people can cope with, what will work at this time. What might happen five years from now, or 25 years from now, goodness only knows. We deal with the thing as it is, rather than trying to force it.
3500. **Mr Finlay:** Agreed.
3501. **Mr McCausland:** The other thing was the practical sharing between the schools; that is very good. I was interested, because I have asked this question at other presentations. It is hugely important that children come together, given the cultural differences between communities, on a basis of equality, respecting other traditions and, then, seeing what can be done together. I thought of an interesting example of one school in which there is a tradition of Irish dancing, and in another, a tradition of Scottish dancing. When the two come together, they can put on a performance together, as we saw in Belfast at the musical performances involving St Patrick's and the Boys' Model. I am interested in whether you have any comments to make on the importance of cultural confidence in children as they come together.
3502. **Mr Finlay:** I totally agree. It is an absolute; we come in as equal partners. As I say, it is about mutual respect. Children go to sporting events. For example, my children have played rugby; Hazel's children have played Gaelic football. There is music, and we have had plays together. Drama is another example of how to bring children together. We had Irish dancing and Scottish dancing, and the dancers helped one another and learned from one another. We also entered the Fermanagh Feis and choral verse speaking together — they had to change the rules slightly, because they had never had a partnership enter before. Thankfully, we won that year; but we went in under Brookeborough shared partnership.
3503. There are many aspects. It is up to us, as the leaders of the school, with the parents and the governors, to make sure that it is planned and not ad hoc, and that one culture, sport or language is not promoted above the other. That is about being sensible and being pragmatic and knowing your children and your parents, and knowing each other and having a planned approach.
3504. **Mr McCausland:** I remember the visit to Mrs Hampsey's school; they do great scones. [*Laughter.*]
3505. **Ms Hampsey:** I am not there now, Nelson, so I do not know what they are like.
3506. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You tend to find that in primary schools.
3507. **Mrs Overend:** It has been good to hear your stories. It sounds very good. I want to play devil's advocate: when you talked about doing shared education projects, you referred to the money problem. If you were to turn that on its head, and if you had a shared education campus and you had six teachers for the number of children that you had, do you think that there would be progression? Would you be forced to integrate further to reduce costs further and economies of scale?
3508. **Mr Finlay:** First, we are not integrating —
3509. **Mrs Overend:** I know that you are not; I understand completely what you are doing. I am just thinking down the line and whether you will be forced to think about that further.
3510. **Mr Finlay:** If I backtrack to what I said to Danny, it is about education and training, and Hazel talked about training as well. I have never had a negative

- comment about the shared campus from the community that I live in in the wider area. I have had people misunderstand the concept. They say, “You are amalgamating, you are all in together, sure you are integrated”. Lay people, even people in the education sector, can misunderstand the terminology. We are not integrating, but the sharing will be increased, because we are on the same site. We cannot increase it totally, because then it will end up being an integrated school, but we have to manage the level of sharing.
3511. **Mrs Overend:** That is what I was wondering. Do you think that it will come down the line and that you will be forced to look at that?
3512. **Mr Finlay:** If it happens naturally; I do not like the idea of forcing anything on any parent, teacher or board of governors. I heard the witnesses from CCMS say that it is about parental choice. If you force anything, it will not work; eventually people will go against it if it is not what they want. We are saying that, through time, the natural progression for Brookeborough has been to arrive at a shared campus. When we move into the shared campus, that can be heightened, and we have planned for that in the signatory project where we are extending the shared education from the morning to the whole day. There will be other activities, perhaps after-school activities. We already have a range of things, such as the parent association meeting. I would prefer to see it happening naturally, but I do not have a crystal ball. If you had asked me 15 years ago whether I would be talking about shared education, I would not have known, so I do not know where I will be in the next 15 years.
3513. **Ms Barker:** It is all to do with sustainability. What we hope, both from a managing authority point of view and from the schools’ point of view, is that the brand new shared campus will have state-of-the-art facilities, and we hope that it will be attractive to parents to send their children there; therefore, that will ensure sustainability in the future. We would not be pushed into any cost-cutting exercises.
3514. **Mrs Overend:** I was just trying to play devil’s advocate, but I wish you well.
3515. **Ms Hampsey:** Trevor referred to the delay in getting things up and running in Moy. That is absolutely not the fault of Moy primary or Moy controlled school. It is because of the bureaucracy and the stages that they have to go through, and a project group is working on it at the minute. It is certainly no fault of the schools or the boards or governors; it is just that it takes time. They received approval in June, and they are now putting in the full business case. It takes time; it is not that there is any delay. There is a time when things are right. Sometimes, if things stall, take time and sit, the impetus is lost. It would be a terrible tragedy if that happened.
3516. **Ms Barker:** It is not a simple matter of getting a site to build a school to accommodate all the children; governance and accountability arrangements have to be put in place, there has to be a memorandum of understanding between the two managing authorities, and a service-level agreement for the use of the facilities. As Mary said —
3517. **Ms Hampsey:** A lot of red tape is preventing them from getting together.
3518. **Mr Lunn:** In your CCMS role, has a decision been made about St Mary’s and Fivemiletown Primary School?
3519. **Ms Hampsey:** My role is only really shared education; it is to support the schools that wish to go forward with their plans at this time. That is my brief. I am a grandmother now two days a week, and I do this part-time, and I really am enjoying it. As I said, I am really impressed by the people whom I have met and their commitment.
3520. **Mr Lunn:** That was to prove that I do go to Fermanagh and that I have been to Fivemiletown.
3521. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for presenting to us this morning. I wish you well with your project.



## 29 April 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Andrew Bell	<i>Department of Education</i>
Mrs Faustina Graham	<i>Education</i>
Mr Paul McAlister	<i>Education and Training Inspectorate</i>

#### 3522. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome the following officials: Faustina Graham, who is the director of collaborative education and practice at the Department of Education (DE); Paul McAlister, who is the assistant chief inspector in the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI); and Andrew Bell, who is the head of the shared education and community relations team at DE. Good morning.

#### 3523. **Mrs Faustina Graham (Department of Education):** Good morning.

#### 3524. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

Can I ask you to make an opening statement? Members will follow with questions.

#### 3525. **Mrs Graham:** Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Committee on the review of the community relations, equality and diversity in education policy (CRED), the Minister's decision to end the CRED earmarked funding and the way forward.

#### 3526. It may be helpful to begin by reminding members of the aim of the CRED policy, which is to contribute to improving relations between communities by educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect

for others. Importantly, the policy was designed to underpin and support existing curricular requirements. In particular, those are personal development and mutual understanding at primary level and learning for life and work at post-primary level, as well as the general curricular aims of developing young people as individuals and as contributors to society.

3527. Earmarked funding of almost £5 million has been provided over the four years since the policy was introduced in 2011. That funding was largely allocated to capacity building of the education workforce and also to the development and dissemination of resources for CRED and good practice in CRED-related work.

3528. As part of the normal policymaking cycle, a review of the policy commenced in September 2014. The review confirmed that significant progress has been made. Over 2,000 school leaders, governors, Youth Service managers, teachers and youth workers attended awareness-raising sessions over that period. In excess of 4,000 teachers and youth workers have been trained to improve their knowledge and skills related to CRED issues. A quarter of all principals have engaged in training on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. Over the last two years, almost 800 schools and youth organisations received advice and support in implementing their CRED policies. During the same period, 810 programmes were delivered, involving approximately 25,000 young people. Guidance has been developed that is supported by a dedicated website that provides a one-stop shop for practitioners, including case studies, resources and support materials. A review of those CRED resources identified a significant range of good resources that cover all the section 75 groups, including teaching plans

- and materials that teachers and youth workers can access and use.
3529. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy included a series of focus groups with teachers, youth workers and young people, together with the commissioning of a module in the young life and times survey. The evidence indicates that the majority of young people experienced CRED activities and that good provision is effective in changing attitudes. Last year, as part of the review process, the Department commissioned the Education and Training Inspectorate to undertake a formal review of the CRED policy. Work was undertaken over the autumn term, and the report was published on 25 February 2015. That evaluation was positive and demonstrated that implementation of the policy has been largely effective. Practice in most of the schools and youth organisations that were visited was effective. Indeed, the majority of the taught sessions that were observed were evaluated as being “very good” or “better”.
3530. The report has also made a number of recommendations for further embedding CRED in the curriculum. Those include ensuring that the rights of the child underpin practice; CRED is embedded in a strategic overview of all policies and developed further through Priorities for Youth; and the development of shared education is referenced in light of emerging research and practice. The report additionally recommended that the Department continue to support the personal and professional development of staff and governors in schools and youth organisations to promote and embed CRED and also for the Department to foster more effective links with other Departments and agencies to support schools further and youth organisations in working in their local communities.
3531. The Committee will be aware that, as part of the action to address pressures on the extremely challenging 2015-16 education budget, the Minister has now ended earmarked CRED funding. Prior to making his decision, a full equality impact assessment (EQIA) was carried out, which was the subject of a public consultation that closed on 6 March. In publishing its equality impact assessment, the Department identified the potential impact of ending earmarked CRED funding on certain section 75 groups, specifically persons of different religious belief, racial groups, sexual orientation and persons with a disability and persons without. However, a number of mitigating factors were identified to address potential adverse effects on those groups.
3532. I will turn to the public consultation, to which 23 responses were received. Respondents identified impacts on similar groups to those that I outlined. A number of respondents were not content with the mitigations outlined by the Department. In particular, respondents expressed concern that disability, sexual orientation and race would not be the primary foci in the shared education signature project. Some responses highlighted concerns on the potential negative impact on the youth sector and, in particular, the skills capacity in the voluntary youth sector.
3533. Following consideration of the outcomes of the public consultation, the Minister decided that, on balance, there were sufficient mitigating actions to justify his proposal to end earmarked CRED funding as part of the challenging 2015-16 budget. Those mitigating factors include the focus on protecting front-line services as far as possible; the fact that earmarked funding for CRED was intended to support the initial implementation of the CRED policy; and the fact that the curriculum requires schools and youth groups to address community relations, equality, diversity and inclusion.
3534. The decision to end earmarked funding does not mean the withdrawal of the policy, which will remain in place. The advancement of shared education, including the provision of funding, will allow educational settings to continue to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction between young people from different community backgrounds. School and youth organisations continue to be required to adhere to the policy

- aims and objectives, utilising their mainstream funding to deliver curricular requirements. The Department expects the Education Authority and the Youth Council to continue to support the implementation of the CRED policy and to minimise any potential negative impact on the particular needs of those of differing sexual orientation, racial group and disability.
3535. I will now turn to the way forward. Officials are working to revise the CRED policy to take particular account of the findings of the ETI evaluation and the ending of earmarked funding. It is envisaged that the core of the policy will remain unchanged but that the associated actions will be updated to reflect the mainstreaming of that work. In revising the policy, we will explore the synergies with shared education to ensure that the good work observed by inspectors is built on and continues to make a significant difference. Naturally, we will offer to brief the Committee on the revised policy once that work has progressed.
3536. I trust that that has provided the Committee with the CRED review findings, the rationale for the Minister's decision to mainstream CRED work and our plans to update the current policy to build on the successes that have already been achieved.
3537. We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions that members might have.
3538. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you for the briefing. Essentially, you are saying that the reason that it is being withdrawn is purely as a result of funding.
3539. **Mrs Graham:** Yes, it is the challenging budget. To protect front-line services, difficult decisions had to be made, and this is one of them.
3540. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It is recognised that the policy was working and benefiting a substantial number of young people in our society.
3541. **Mrs Graham:** There is no intention on the part of the Department that that should change. The point of the policy and the additional money that was allocated to it — the earmarked funding — was to ensure that schools and youth settings had the opportunity to look carefully at CRED requirements. It is an integral part of the curriculum, so there has been that requirement since the introduction of the curriculum in 2007. It was to enhance that at the beginning of the process, and now that it is to be embedded in the curriculum, it will continue, irrespective of funding.
3542. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** The funding gave structure to the programme, which will now be lost, so how will you ensure that there is a structure that can be measured?
3543. **Mrs Graham:** As I said, we are in the process of looking at the way forward. It is important for us to take a considered view of that. It was timely that the policy was due for review in 2014, which meant that we looked actively at the outworkings of the policy and what was successful at that point. The most important part of the review was the Education and Training Inspectorate's evaluation, because, with the ETI recommendations — I touched on some of them, but, as I am sure that you are aware, there is a great deal more detail in the report — that allows us to do exactly what you are saying: to shape how it will move forward for schools and youth organisations while making it clear to the Education Authority and the Youth Council that the expectation is there and that the fact that money was earmarked in that way does not mean that those structures should disappear or that a change or modification of those structures cannot take place, depending on what resources allow.
3544. **Mr Andrew Bell (Department of Education):** The funding was there for a very specific purpose, and it followed on from the previous review of the community relations schemes, from where the CRED policy evolved, following an ETI evaluation. That funding was specifically for capacity building and the dissemination of good practice. The previous review identified that teachers were telling us that, although they

- recognised that it was in the curriculum, they did not have the capacity or skills to deliver it, which is why we put in funding for capacity building. Over the period, the focus of the funding was on that. Faustina outlined the figures. Significant numbers of educators — teachers, principals and youth workers — have been trained and given those skills so that they can address those issues. The funding was for very specific purposes. The Minister is now mainstreaming that, in light of budget reductions. The capacity that has been built in the system, in schools and in youth organisations will mainstream that work through their existing funding.
3545. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I can see that it might be easier to mainstream in a school setting, but it might be more challenging in a youth organisation, particularly those in the uniform sector, which rely very much on volunteers. Over time, there is a large turnover of volunteers, who will also require capacity building. How will you ensure that that is not lost in that sector?
3546. **Mr A Bell:** We have asked the Youth Council in particular, through its existing funding, to make sure that it addresses that issue. It is also a key element of Priorities for Youth. It mentions that CRED is a specific issue addressed in Priorities for Youth. As regional plans are taken forward, the Department will expect associated work to be delivered.
3547. The youth sector view CRED as being integral to its work. It is delivered through the joined in equity, diversity and interdependence (JEDI) work, which very much drives how youth work is taken forward. The issue of volunteers has always been difficult to address, and, even during the period of this policy when we were funding, it was difficult to address the training needs of youth volunteers because of the way in which they operate and the fact that you are asking people to give up more time from their volunteer work to be trained. The Youth Council is looking at that, and we will continue to work with the youth sector and, indeed, the statutory youth organisations covered by the Education Authority to try to ensure that those issues are addressed.
3548. **Mr Rogers:** You are very welcome. I will go back to what you said, Faustina, about CRED largely being effective? We talk about budget implications and so on. Were there any concerns about the quality of delivery, the quality of projects, the range of provision and the level of rigorous assessment in schools and youth clubs?
3549. **Mrs Graham:** Sorry, in what way?
3550. **Mr Rogers:** In stopping the funding of the project.
3551. **Mrs Graham:** As you know, with any work in schools, there will always be variation. The evaluation was very much about looking at what was best practice and also accepting that we have not completed the journey of a uniform approach across the education system to the implementation of the CRED working. There will always be that requirement to upskill people. As schools progress in this work, once the training has been delivered, we can see increasing sophistication in the rigorous evaluation of what schools can do. However, people are at different starting points, and it often depends on the whole-school approach to evaluation generally. All those things come into play in the evaluation.
3552. **Mr Rogers:** Surely it is hard to separate the protection of front-line services from that. You said:  
*“good provision is effective in changing attitudes”.*
3553. Surely meaningful interaction between our young people from different backgrounds is essential if those attitudes are to be changed. Is that not one of the front-line aims of education in Northern Ireland?
3554. **Mrs Graham:** Absolutely. As Andrew said, a difficult decision had to be made in very challenging circumstances. That is the decision that has been made. I was trying to say earlier that ETI’s work



- indicates that the Department has a good basis of recommendations on which to revise the policy and point a way towards embedding it in the curriculum in a sustained way. That is important. As you know, whether it is £1.1 million, as it is in this instance, or £10 million, the money does not always make the difference. Money is very welcome, but what makes the difference are the people working and contributing who see the response and reaction of the young people whom they are working with. That will ultimately make the difference. It is incumbent on us to do the best job that we can in light of the fact that the decision has been made to end the funding. Good information is coming back from the evaluation and review, which will allow us to begin to do that. As I said, we will very happily come back to brief you on what we can do in response, but we are not at that point yet.
3555. **Mr Rogers:** One of the shames is that some great practice will possibly not now be disseminated. Is it really down to financial reasons that the Department is not able to put in place a more structured and funded support for the programme?
3556. **Mrs Graham:** As we discussed, up to now, there was quite a structured support for the programme. The money not being there does not mean that those things will all be lost. That would create a dependency culture as opposed to empowering our schools, the Education Authority and the Youth Council to do the work. We are looking generally, and certainly in teacher professional development, at empowering people to create a self-sustaining system. We cannot have a system that is entirely dependent on money — welcome as it is. I would never not want money to come into the education system, but, when people have engaged — I listed the statistics for the people who have been trained — there is a cascading effect across a school. When those leaders have been trained, and teachers and youth workers have taken forward work in their school, it allows that to grow exponentially. That was the intention of the original funding.
3557. **Mr McCausland:** Your submission references one of the ETI recommendations:
- “the rights of the child as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ... should be more central to the outworking of CRED in policy and practice.”*
3558. When I checked through the document on the Internet, there were no references to rights other than that recommendation. It would be helpful if you could explain to me how rights have not been more central in the past and how you envisage that they would be more central in future.
3559. **Mr Paul McAlister (Education and Training Inspectorate):** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child gives a common platform for that work right across Northern Ireland. It is important for teachers who are just starting out with that work to see it in a broader context. Some articles automatically link with article 2 on non-discrimination: article 12 relates to respect for the views of a child; article 23 relates to children with disabilities; article 28 relates to a child’s right to education and what that should mean; article 29 relates to the goals of education provided for the child; and article 31 relates to leisure, play and culture. Those articles provide a very good backdrop that can be taken in common by schools in all sorts of situations across Northern Ireland that serve children from all sorts of backgrounds. It means that there is a clear understanding on the part of the teachers and management, including governors, of what CRED means for the children in their school. It also means that the parents can have confidence in what the school is providing against that backdrop.
3560. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you for that. The Department is absolutely clear, then, that, because the United Kingdom has signed up to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Education Department should follow through on that.

3561. **Mr A Bell:** The CRED policy actually references the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
3562. **Mr McCausland:** I appreciate that, but I am just asking whether, generally, it is the Department's position that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be followed through on.
3563. **Mr A Bell:** We have referenced it in the policy. Therefore, by default, we are acknowledging the fact —
3564. **Mr McCausland:** Thank you. I appreciate that very much.
3565. Secondly, you mentioned awareness-raising training for governors that has been held in the past. Do you envisage similar awareness-raising sessions for governors in future? I understand that there is a cost to such projects but an awareness-raising session for governors is not really expensive in comparative terms. Do you envisage awareness-raising for governors and others on the general area of CRED, which would include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?
3566. **Mr A Bell:** The governor training was in response to identified needs. At that stage, we worked with the boards to identify all training needs. Governor training needs came up, and quite a number of governors received training. The way in which we envisage it going forward is that, if there are other identified needs, we will look to the Education Authority to work with governors on how those needs should be addressed. However, CRED is already specifically referenced in the governors' handbook. If there are continued needs, we will need to look to see how those should be addressed.
3567. **Mr McCausland:** Is there much in the governors' handbook about it?
3568. **Mr A Bell:** There is a section on CRED in the governors' handbook.
3569. **Mr McCausland:** Is it six lines or six pages?
3570. **Mr A Bell:** It has been a while since I looked at it, so I cannot tell you off the top of my head.
3571. **Mr McCausland:** I am sure that we can get a copy.
3572. **Mr A Bell:** It is definitely referenced; we were quite keen on that. One of the commitments made in the policy was to look at other areas that would support it. The governors' handbook was one of the areas that we looked at.
3573. **Mr McCausland:** Finally, how do you view the issue of race? When the UK Government are responding to international conventions on racial issues, they interpret that legally as relating to an ethnic group. Therefore, it does not necessarily mean colour or nationality; it could be an ethnic group within the United Kingdom. There is there a legal basis for the definition that they use. Do you have a particular definition of race that you use?
3574. **Mr P McAlister:** As a teacher many years ago, I attended a course in Corrymeela called Meeting the Other Side as a Partner in Education. One phrase that has stuck with me since then is "free to be". A key concept conveyed at that course was that, when you come through the door of a school, it does not matter who you are. If you are a girl who wants to play football, you are free to be. If you have ginger hair or no hair, you are free to be. That was continually reinforced throughout the course. In relation to race, if a person sees themselves as from Slovakia, Afghanistan, or whatever country, and sees that as their identity, that should be respected. They should be encouraged to have self-respect for that identity, how they see themselves, and other people should respect them for that.
3575. **Mr McCausland:** I appreciate that entirely. I am dealing more with the fact that different ethnicities within the United Kingdom, whether it is Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Ulster or whatever, are seen as race under the legal basis that is used. Is that how it is understood here as well?

3576. **Mr A Bell:** Do not forget that the CRED policy and, indeed, the curriculum aim to address issues that are faced by communities. We know from the PSNI hate crime statistics, for example, that it is very often the newcomer communities here who are affected by that. What schools are encouraged to do under this policy is to look at the issues that are facing the young people who they are dealing with in their communities, and address those issues. Given that the indications are that most of the issues that we face in this society are around newcomer groups, that is what schools have been addressing through us.
3577. **Mr McCausland:** I will not pursue the matter; I will just make the observation that, if we look at section 75, we see that the definition of race at a UK-wide level has a legal basis set down in the courts. It is important that that is kept in mind when looking at racial issues here, because indigenous ethnicities are also covered by it.
3578. **Mr P McAlister:** The real thrust of this is about mutual understanding. In the Key Stage 1, 2, and 3 curricula, which are available from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), mutual understanding is pointed out as a key element. Personal understanding is also part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. It is really important that children coming into our schools from whatever countries, home or abroad, feel free to be, as they consider themselves, in terms of race or ethnicity and it should be no barrier to their education.
3579. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr McCausland has talked about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF has a Rights Respecting Schools programme, which a number of our schools are involved in. Can I ask for your comments on that? Are you supportive of that programme and look to help fund schools to be part of it?
3580. **Mr A Bell:** The schools that have chosen to do that have, as far as I am aware, funded it largely from their own resources. The Department is certainly content with Rights Respecting Schools. A number of schools have gone down that route, but there is not currently a specific funding stream to fund it. Schools have funded it largely through the mainstream budgets.
3581. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** How effective has that programme been? Have you given any consideration to that?
3582. **Mr A Bell:** I have not looked at that programme in enormous detail, but the feedback that we have had from working with officers from the boards who were working with schools is that it is a very effective programme in relation to CRED issues.
3583. **Mrs Graham:** The feedback that I have heard is only anecdotal in the sense of what we have picked up on in inspection; we have never done a formal evaluation of it. However, the requirement on all schools is around accessing the pupil voice. That is probably at the more sophisticated end of helping young people to look at their rights. Going back to what Mr McCausland said, the debates that our older pupils can have around definitions and what is legal is the type of thing that can happen in that situation. The direction of travel of Rights Respecting Schools is certainly something that we see positively, but there has not been any formal evaluation of that work.
3584. **Mr P McAlister:** The inspectorate does not promote one particular way of working, but we have had examples. Although, as Faustina says, we have not done a formal evaluation of it, inspectors have cited it in various situations and said that it has worked particularly effectively for the children. However, as I said, we have not taken a complete overview of it.
3585. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you. I remind members and those in the Public Gallery to ensure that your mobile phone is switched off. There seems to be some interference with the recording.
3586. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you for your presentation. It seems that it is purely a funding

decision to terminate the programme. I appreciate the Department's difficulties at the moment; times are tight. However, a pattern seems to be developing of good programmes being terminated, and you wonder about the cost in human terms. If somebody had come along two years ago and given the opinion that the CRED programme was not working very well and that there was no need for it, the Department would have defended it as an excellent programme and so would the ETI, I think, on the basis of what I read here. Now there is no money, and it has to go. You change tack and say, "Well, there are other ways to deliver this, and all the good practice hasn't been lost; it will all cascade down through the system. In particular, we're going to involve the Youth Council", which appears to be facing the chop, frankly.

3587. I wonder where all this will end. I have seen it recently with language tuition in primary schools, if I can make that comparison. That is an excellent scheme, which is highly valued and recommended. Any authority you might speak to across Europe and beyond thinks that it is a terrific thing to encourage young children when they are capable of picking up a language easily to learn a second language, but we are not going to fund it any more. The Minister says that is OK because schools can use their surplus budgets. That is what he came out with in the House recently. I think that he was able to point to two schools that might be in a position to do that. Going back to your comment about the Youth Council, is it not a fact that it is also under threat, so it may not be valid to say that you will be able to utilise its expertise in this area?

3588. **Mr A Bell:** The Youth Council is still in existence and, under this year's funding, we have indicated that we expect it, certainly as long as it remains — it is not our side that is dealing with that — to deliver against the CRED policy. If a decision is taken at some stage that it is not to remain, we will continue to work with whoever deals with organisations in the voluntary youth sector to ensure that the policy is addressed. The Minister's

position on funding is that he has taken every action to protect front-line services. He has stated that it is simply not possible to protect everything and that, when we are faced with a £97.6 million funding gap, it is inevitable that some issues will have to be addressed in a different way, which is what we are aiming to do through the CRED policy. The CRED policy will remain in place; the challenge for us is to find ways to ensure that the good work is not lost.

3589. **Mr Lunn:** That is fair enough but, looking at it in the round, it seems that some programmes are being sacrificed that are not, in the overall scheme of things, particularly expensive and that have received very good reports over the years. They are not being reduced; they are being cut out. Suddenly, from being a terrific programme that is well worth spending £1.2 million a year on, it is not needed any more. The language programme, at £600,000 not even upwards of £1 million is doing so much good for young children in the opinion of most of us, but it is not going to be cut to £400,000; it is going to be cut out. As usual, I do not have a particular question for you.

3590. **Mr A Bell:** The Minister's view on that is that he believes that there are sufficient mitigating actions to avoid losing all the good work that has taken place and that, when we are looking at reviewing and revising the policy, we will try to bring those issues to the fore through the policy. We want to build on the good experience. I know that somebody else mentioned that maybe we would lose that experience. We have tried to capture that as much as possible through the website and the case study materials. There has been really good practice and, in some cases, that good practice does not cost an awful lot; people's attitudes are the main issue. One of the schools that responded to the consultation flagged up the fact that, while the money was welcomed, it was not the driving force for doing that work. In that response, they stated that, irrespective of whether funding was provided, they would continue to

- deliver this. Those attitudes really make a difference.
3591. I was involved in the consultation when we were introducing the CRED policy, and some of the respondents told us at that stage that the budget was reduced and there was a lot of concern about how much they could deliver. However, some respondents said that money was not the answer to everything and that it was about attitudes. That is what we have sought to do with the earmarked funding, which was there with a view, in the longer term, to try to mainstream this work within schools, and that is what the focus has been. Even going forward, the policy was due for review. I have been working towards this review over the last year before all the issues became clear around the current budgets, and the view was that the funding would be used in a different way moving forward, because we felt that we had addressed the capacity building and we had addressed dissemination. That was the information that was coming back through surveys.
3592. **Mr Lunn:** Their anticipation was that there would still be funding there, although you might use it in a different way.
3593. **Mr A Bell:** If funding is there, we would —
3594. **Mr Lunn:** But there is no funding.
3595. **Mr A Bell:** If funding is there, we would find a way to use it so that it would be good value for money and would drive forward the issues. The fact is that, because of the budget situation and the Minister deciding that there are sufficient mitigating factors, we do not want to lose that work. That is the key message: we do not want to lose this work, and we want to drive it forward. We have to find other ways to do that within existing funding.
3596. **Mr Lunn:** When was the review to be completed?
3597. **Mr A Bell:** We commissioned the inspectorate, and its review was to finish around Christmas, with the report coming out in January, which is what happened. We then looked to update the policy but, in light of the budget decisions, we deferred that until we worked through those. Obviously, until the full public consultation was undertaken on the equality impact assessment, we could not make final decisions. Now that that has worked through, we are starting to look at revising the policy. As we have seen, the core of the policy does not change. The policy was a core policy, plus a number of actions. The actions that were associated with the policy at that stage took account of the fact that funding was available. We will be looking at those actions and seeing what alternative actions we can put in place to access, as far as possible, mainstream funding to make sure that we do not lose the aims of the policy. The Department has also committed to continue to monitor the work going forward, so we will continue to see whether there are factors that have not been identified either by us or through the public consultation.
3598. **Mr Lunn:** You are going to continue, without funding, work that required funding until now.
3599. **Mr A Bell:** As I said, the funding was specifically to address the capacity-building issues and the dissemination of good practice and materials, and that was largely addressed. That was the general conclusion, irrespective of the budget issues that then arose.
3600. **Mrs Overend:** Continuing on that point, the Chair referred to the uniformed organisations and the turnover of volunteers. Obviously, the same goes for schools; there needs to be continual training for existing and new teachers. Have you had discussions with the teacher training colleges, for instance, about this?
3601. **Mr A Bell:** We have worked with the teacher education institutions through some of the other programmes that we deliver, particularly the International Fund for Ireland sharing in education programmes. We worked on a couple of programmes with the teacher education institutions: one with the University of

- Ulster, and one through a combined project with Stranmillis and St Mary's. Those addressed issues around shared education, in particular. One of the aims of shared education is reconciliation. In those programmes, we have encouraged them to look at how they train new teachers to ensure that that skill continues to be addressed at that level as new teachers come through.
3602. **Mrs Overend:** OK. I want to go over what you said. You are looking at it, but it has not been implemented as yet. What stage are we at?
3603. **Mrs Graham:** Paul showed you the curriculum overview. All the things that we are talking about in CRED are contained in the curriculum. There is a statutory requirement for schools to deliver that. We would like to get to a point at which a CRED policy is not required because it is so integral to the curriculum. The same applies to our teacher education colleges. They are preparing young people to come into the system to deliver their curriculum. Therefore, the expectation is there also. The luxury of additional funding is something that is always welcomed, but good practitioners — be they in teacher education or in schools or youth organisations — will not be stopped from delivering what they see as being required of them. It is great if a teacher has 20 or 25 pupils, as opposed to 30. Your job is then easier in a sense, but it will not change what you do. We have talked to teacher-training educators about the shared education agenda and the possibility of working collaboratively and designing programmes that would address the issue.
3604. When I was working in the ETI and looking at the evaluation of the former programmes for best practice, we were seeing schools going way beyond the reconciliation issues, even in those programmes, and dealing with the broader section 75 issues. Therefore, we have developing good practice in our schools, our youth organisations and our teacher-training institutions. The difficult job that we face now is to find low-cost and no-cost ways — if that is what you want to call them — of supporting our schools and teacher trainers to continue to let that work grow. I am not underestimating the difficulty of that, but that is what we have to do. That is what we need to do, as everyone needs that support.
3605. **Mrs Overend:** Andrew said that some of the respondents said that they wanted to do the work even if there was not funding, but we can depend on the goodwill of teachers for only so long before somebody breaks down at some stage. Your paper states that it is anticipated that Peace IV funding will be available for something like this. Can you tell me more about that and about the timing of it?
3606. **Mr A Bell:** Peace IV is currently with the European Commission, so the Special EU Programmes Body is waiting for the European Commission to come back to it on that. The most recent indication that we had was that it is likely to be later in the year before it will get a response from the Commission. That was mentioned as one of the mitigating factors. Although the core funding was around capacity-building issues and the dissemination of good practice for CRED funding, we also encouraged the boards. They put in the CRED enhancement scheme, where schools could apply for funding. The policy encourages the thinking that the delivery of subjects such as learning for life and personal development and mutual understanding is not just about theory but about young people getting the opportunity to engage with other young people from different community backgrounds. I suppose that the key issue with the shared education funding, including the shared education funding to be available under the Peace thematic area, is that it will allow those types of opportunities to continue to happen. Schools will be able to bring together young people from different community backgrounds. That is the key. It is one of the mitigating factors but not the only one.
3607. **Mr P McAlister:** May I come in on teacher education? We found CRED to be most effective where that good

- practice was being modelled by the professionals — either the youth leaders or the teachers — through the ethos of respect, and so on, and the degree to which they promoted sharing.
3608. I welcome your raising teacher education. There is an opportunity for the various organisations that provide it to model that sharing for the whole education community and to increase the amount of interaction and experiential learning that student teachers have.
3609. **Mrs Overend:** I am also thinking about monitoring the success of ongoing community relations in the schools, and so on, through CRED. If that moves into the curriculum, how will it be monitored? Will there be specific monitoring of how those relationships develop?
3610. **Mr A Bell:** In the response to public consultation on the EQIA, we indicated that the inspectors will look at CRED issues in schools, which they are doing at the moment. They will continue to do that. CRED is about attitudinal change, so one key factor that we used was the young life and times survey. We commission that every other year. The latest version is due to be published in May. It was done in 2014, so we are due to repeat it in 2016. That will allow us to continue to monitor the impact of the CRED work that is happening in schools on the attitudes of young people. We will look very closely at the results, given the implications around the fact that we no longer have the earmarked funding available to make sure that schools are continuing to deliver CRED.
3611. **Mrs Graham:** One other thing in the ETI report — I say this to spare Paul's blushes — is a recommendation that the ETI made for itself, which is to look at the whole concept of self-evaluation. That is one thing that I think that we will look at in the review of the policy. There are CRED indicators that can be used for the self-evaluative process, so the ETI has recommended that those be integrated into its Together Towards Improvement self-evaluation tool. That in itself allows schools to begin to see the integration of CRED. They have had the opportunity to look at it as a separate set of indicators, but this will allow them to see it as holistic to the self-evaluation process that they will undertake.
3612. Furthermore, the ETI recommended that it become part and parcel of the inspection process, and that has already started to happen. At the minute, the ETI is looking at identifying good practice, and within shared education in particular. Rather than immediately looking at what is good and what is not so good, it is trying to cite where the practice is really good and can be built on, in order to encourage people while we are still on that developmental journey. That, again, was in the detail of that report, which I obviously would not have referred to in the briefing.
3613. **Mr P McAlister:** I am grateful to you for raising that, Faustina. One thing that we are quite adamant about is that there should be no compromise on high-quality education when bringing people together. It has to be good education that children experience, as well as the sharing. As to the good educational outcomes, what we want for the children is really the test of what is provided. We see good educational outcomes as being one element of academic outcomes, through learning, as well as the reconciliation outcomes or the mutual understanding outcomes. However, they should come together in a really good experience for the learner.
3614. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No one else has indicated to ask a question, so, to conclude, I want to ask what your timescale for updating the policy is.
3615. **Mrs Graham:** We do not have a specific timescale as yet. We are turning our attention to that just now, so I would say probably before the end of the summer. Andrew?
3616. **Mr A Bell:** We have already given some thought to it and have looked at the core of the policy, which we know is unlikely to change. We will then look at the actions. It is a matter of trying

to balance things, because my team is also leading on all the shared education work in the legislation. Our aim is to move the policy forward as quickly as we can. The core of the policy does not change. As I said, change will be around the actions associated with it. The fact that the core of the policy is unlikely to change means that it should still apply to schools at present. As Faustina said, we do not, unfortunately, have a specific aim yet, but we will have one within the current year. I do not know whether it will be done by the end of the summer, but I do have somebody working on it at the moment.

3617. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
Will there be a further consultation?
3618. **Mrs Graham:** On foot of the ETI report — this is why I am even saying about there not being a specific aim or deadline — we have to have face-to-face conversations with practitioners, the Education Authority and the Youth Council. It is not a case of us saying, “This is what you must do” in a prescriptive way; rather, it is about working collaboratively with all the education stakeholders, taking into account that we are where we are and that the money is not there. It is also not a case of us saying, “We’re going to write all these wonderful things and require you to do them”. It is really about working in practical terms. If we can do that and build consensus on how we support each other to deliver on the CRED policy, we will be in a better place. The first step for us, before we would even look at a wider consultation, is to have those frank face-to-face discussions to see what is possible and to inform our thinking. It should not be our thinking alone that determines what the end product of the policy will be.
3619. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
Obviously, the timescale is important, because the removal of the funding means that there is now a void.
3620. **Mrs Graham:** Yes, I appreciate that.
3621. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
We look forward to hearing back from you on that.
3622. **Mrs Graham:** Absolutely.
3623. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**  
Thank you very much.



## 29 April 2015

### Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers  
 Mr Pat Sheehan

### Witnesses:

Mr Andrew Bell *Department of*  
 Mrs Faustina Graham *Education*  
 Dr Suzanne Kingon

#### 3624. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):**

I welcome Suzanne Kingon, who joins Faustina and Andrew. I ask you to open with a statement, and Committee members will then ask questions.

3625. **Mrs Faustina Graham (Department of Education):** We turn now to the subject of the recently published circular on jointly managed schools, about which you asked to be briefed. Suzanne has joined us because she worked closely with Andrew and me on the development of the circular.

3626. Members may recall that we spoke briefly about ongoing work to develop guidance on establishing a jointly managed school when we appeared before the Committee last July. I am pleased to say that the work has now concluded, and the jointly managed schools circular was published earlier this month.

3627. In developing the guidance, we worked closely with the Catholic trustees and Transferor Representatives' Council, which were supportive of the concept, given that some communities had already expressed an interest in exploring it further. The definition that we have agreed for a "jointly managed school" is a:

*"grant-aided school, providing shared education with a Christian ethos, with Trustee*

*representation agreed by the Transferor churches and the Catholic Church".*

3628. As set out in the guidance, such schools will be managed by a board of governors, with balanced representation from both main communities.

3629. It is most likely that a jointly managed school will be established as a result of the amalgamation of former controlled and Catholic-maintained schools. In such cases, development proposals will be required to close the existing grant-aided schools and establish a new jointly managed school. Jointly managed, however, is not a new management type. Rather, it is envisaged that those schools will develop within the existing legislative framework, having a voluntary maintained management classification. The circular outlines the development proposal process. More detailed advice is provided in the Department's recently updated development proposal guidance.

3630. The proposed school must be viable in the longer term against the criteria set out in the Department's sustainable schools policy. The development proposal will require the widespread support of the local community that the school will serve. The proposal should also take account of the area-planning context, and it should consequently be developed in consultation with the relevant planning authorities. The board of governors should be reflective of the Protestant and Catholic religious traditions and be constituted through local agreement. It is expected that the ethos will be within a Christian framework, respecting the religious ethos of both the Catholic and transferor Churches, with neither predominant. The ethos arrangement for worship and the approach to religious education must be agreed prior to bringing forward any proposal. The transferors and Catholic trustees are confident that such arrangements can be locally

- agreed and practicably implemented. For practical purposes, it is preferable that a formal body, such as a trust, be established following the approval of any development proposal. Trustees would be appointed through a deed of appointment and be the school's legal representatives. The board of governors would be the employer of teachers for such schools, while the Education Authority would be the employer for all non-teaching staff.
3631. The Department is engaged in a review of home-to-school transport. Until that work is completed, jointly managed schools will be classified as being within both controlled and other voluntary, and Catholic maintained, and, within those categories, they will reflect the origin of the original schools. That is designed to support local children attending their nearest school, while recognising parental preference. It is also reflective of the prerequisite need for widespread community support. For that reason, it will have minimal impact on the existing transport eligibility of pupils in an area, while nevertheless protecting the position of the existing integrated sector, in line with the Department's statutory duty for that sector. Similarly, arrangements for temporary variation have been designed to avoid a situation in which a jointly managed school would be considered as an alternative for a child who requested a place in any other sector. Naturally, the Department will keep those initial classifications under review as the schools are established, to ensure that any potentially negative impact is minimised.
3632. In developing the circular, we have responded to community interest as straightforwardly as possible within the existing legislative and policy framework. To conclude, a jointly managed school offers a real and viable alternative to communities, and we believe that, with the backing of local communities, the model has the significant potential to provide effective local provision for children and young people. We are happy to take questions.
3633. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much. Why has it taken so long to get to the stage of having this model before us?
3634. **Mr Andrew Bell (Department of Education):** We have been in negotiation with the Catholic trustees and the transferors, and it was important that they were on board. There was no point in bringing it forward until all the issues were addressed. That process took time, because, as we worked through what most people thought was a relatively straightforward process, there were many anomalies around transport, temporary variation and ownership issues, all of which had to be addressed, and that took time. As we worked through them as a group, every time that we thought that we had got to a position, another issue was raised. It was important for the guidance that those issues were addressed to everybody's satisfaction, because, without the support of the transferors and trustees, it would be difficult to implement those schools.
3635. Equally, from the point of view of the schools, we wanted to make sure that we had covered as many of the issues as we were able to identify during the process. The guidance recognises that it is a new concept, that other issues may arise and that we will address them as we go forward. Certainly, we now have a pretty comprehensive set, covering all the issues identified to date.
3636. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** How do you view those schools in the light of the Drumragh judgement?
3637. **Mrs Graham:** Time will tell, in a sense. What we have tried to do in the guidance is to be as flexible and broad as possible, with the key aim being that no child is disadvantaged in any way. There are things in the Drumragh judgement that create ambiguities, leaving this open to interpretation. The important thing for us at this point is to ensure that we move the process forward. That is therefore a consideration for another time, I suppose, and we would like to think that we could build consensus

again around the issue in order to reach a resolution. One of the issues, as Andrew said, is the technicalities and the complexities, such that there are no straightforward comparisons of like with like. It really is not that way, and that leaves a degree of ambiguity. Suzanne may wish to add something on the technical side.

3638. **Dr Suzanne Kingon (Department of Education):** Obviously, these are not integrated schools in the technical sense under Part VI of and schedules 5 and 6 to the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. These are maintained schools as defined by article 2 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. There are therefore important legal differences in the composition of the board of governors, the ownership, and so on. To go back to our treatment of the schools under article 64 of the 1989 Order, there is some ambiguity, as Faustina said. What we have done in developing the guidance is to make sure that the position of existing integrated schools in the transport policy and the temporary variation (TV) policy is in no way compromised. That has been an important consideration. The transport classification and the TV categorisation for those new schools does not overlap with the existing position of established integrated schools.

3639. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Article 64(1) places a duty on 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.”*

3640. That is exactly what the proposal is doing, and it is under that piece of legislation that the protections are given to the integrated sector as we currently know it. Therefore, what really is the difference?

3641. **Dr Kingon:** In his judgement, Justice Treacy stated that the education of Catholics and Protestants together was not enough; it has to be at the same school, without a predominant

ethos of one religion and with a balanced representation on the board of governors. The other thing that he went on to say was:

*“Article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 applies only to integrated education as a standalone concept within the confines of part VI of the 1989 Order.”*

3642. Part VI of the 1989 Order spells out the constitution of grant-maintained and controlled integrated schools, so that is where a little bit of ambiguity comes into the judgement. What we are saying is that, if we were to categorically place those schools under article 64 and say that they are integrated before any are established, we may disadvantage children who are currently attending an established integrated school, which we have no desire to do through this concept. For example, if we categorised them as integrated for transport purposes, a child who lived within statutory walking distance of one of those schools who was currently getting transport assistance to an established integrated school would no longer be entitled to that. That child would be disadvantaged.

3643. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I think that we are dancing on the head of a pin here. What Faustina said in her opening remarks about a balanced board of governors, with neither the Protestant nor Catholic religion predominating, is exactly what Suzanne said when taking about integrated education.

3644. **Mrs Graham:** I think that that is why there is ambiguity there.

3645. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I am not really sure what the difference is, yet the integrated sector is still going to be regarded as having a privileged position over these schools.

3646. **Mr A Bell:** This was driven by a desire from communities. If you recall, after the ministerial advisory group report was published, the Minister had a period of civic debate, during which communities could bring forward innovative ideas for him to look at. That is where this originates. It is very much

- a bottom-up approach. It has come from communities that are aware of their options with integrated education. The big difference, I suppose, is that, in these schools, representatives of the Catholic and transferor Churches will have a formal role in the governance and, indeed, management. Therefore, that is one of the key differences. The fact that it is being driven from the communities, which, for whatever reason, felt that integrated education was not the approach that their community wanted to adopt, means that this offers an alternative option with this type of school.
3647. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** There may a key difference in the governance, but the practicalities of it are that it is still educating Protestant and Roman Catholic children together.
3648. **Dr Kingon:** None of the schools has been established yet, and the Department will look at how article 64 potentially applies to these schools as development proposals come forward and the schools are established. We will keep under review how article 64 applies to these schools.
3649. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will open the session up to members, and I will come back to some questions.
3650. **Mr Lunn:** Chair, I was interested to see you asking questions that I was going to ask. You are perfectly entitled to, but it was just a surprise. “Dancing on the head of a pin” just about describes it correctly.
3651. If a parent in any area you like was keen to send their child to an integrated school — in poll after poll, they indicate that they would like to if there was one available — and if this thing gathers legs and it works out that there will be jointly managed Church schools available, I would have thought that most parents would be happy with that option. It is Protestants and Catholics being educated together under one roof. It is not a Moy or a Brookeborough situation; it is children being educated together with a non-partisan board. Fair enough, Suzanne, you may say that it is established under different legislation and so on, but it is actually the same thing, so I could not do other than to welcome it.
3652. You talked about the Catholic trustees. Where does the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) stand on this? On the basis of what it has said in recent visits to the Committee, it would be absolutely opposed to this. What view have you had from CCMS?
3653. **Dr Kingon:** Obviously, we worked closely with the trustees on this and they fed back throughout the process. CCMS formally commented on the guidance, and there was no indication from it of any objection to the content.
3654. **Mr Lunn:** The representatives of CCMS have been to see us on two occasions recently, and they have lambasted the integrated sector and the special status that they appear to think it has. I cannot work that out personally. They also laid out their remit, which is perfectly simple from their point of view. It is only one sentence: it is to open, maintain and close Catholic schools. That is it. It does not include amalgamations. In fact, CCMS set its face very strongly against amalgamations. Here, however, we have a situation that I welcome, where the Catholic trustees appear to be joining in with this with some enthusiasm.
3655. **Mr A Bell:** All I can say is that we have worked with CCMS through some of this with representatives, with the boards, at that stage, and now, obviously, with the Education Authority, and we have not encountered any problems in discussions around schools or communities that are interested in this.
3656. **Mr Lunn:** Well, maybe the light is beginning to dawn even in the dark recesses of CCMS.
3657. You talked about the Drumragh judgement, Suzanne. It probably has a bit to go yet. It was left a bit vague, but we now have the judgement on Drumragh Integrated College. It is not for me to pre-empt what might happen, but there may be further clarification.

- Whatever clarification Judge Treacy might come up with, it still points to the fact that the suggestion that has now come out of the blue and under the radar from the two Church bodies is, pretty much, an integrated solution. There you are again: find a question.
3658. **Mr A Bell:** I should clarify that we have worked with the transferors and the trustees, but the origin of this is from communities themselves. That is a key element; it has not been driven by the Churches, the transferors or the Department but by communities, and we have responded to that. To be fair, the transferors and trustees have been very open in working with us around the concept. The fact that there are communities that are keen on this, which is obviously at the upper end of shared education, as are the integrated schools, is a good thing.
3659. **Mr Lunn:** One of you mentioned shared education in your presentation, but this is not shared education. Shared education is not the coming together of Protestant and Catholic children under one roof and one school with a joint, non-partisan board. It is completely different. Some people are horrified by the word “integrated”, but this is actually what it is.
3660. **Dr Kingon:** A lot of the schools and communities that are interested in this evolved from partnership through shared education and the building and forging of those relationships within the communities. As Andrew said, this is a further form of it — the next step on the ladder. As Andrew said, communities have expressed an interest. The Department has provided the guidance in order to give that option and to give clarity around how you would go about doing that. It is for communities to decide whether they have an integrated option, a jointly managed option or the existing controlled or maintained schools. It is for communities, within the context of area planning, to come forward with those proposals.
3661. **Mr A Bell:** It was also a very specific commitment in the draft policy, which has gone to public consultation as well, that we would look at different structural issues, and that is specifically mentioned in the shared education policy.
3662. **Mr Lunn:** Sorry to labour it, Chair, but do tell me what the difference is. The concept of transformation to integrated status also comes from the bottom up. It needs the parents and the governors, who are sometimes a bit hard to convince that that is the way to go, but it is community-driven. This is going to be community-driven, and it is going to be driven to the same end solution, which is set out in the Drumragh judgement. I do not know why you are making other than a technical difference in terms of the past legislation and regulations under which certain sectors were set up.
3663. **Dr Kingon:** It is more than just a technical difference. There are quite a number of day-to-day running differences as well between those schools and a grant-maintained integrated school.
3664. **Mr Lunn:** Tell me what they are.
3665. **Dr Kingon:** I have a list of things. The employer of teachers is different; the funding authority is different; the owners of the estates are different; the responsibility for rates, for landlord maintenance, for running a non-teaching payroll and for purchasing an invoice are all different. There is a long list of practicalities in those schools that are very different to those in grant-maintained integrated schools.
3666. **Mrs Graham:** We have tried to put that together, even for ourselves, in a straightforward way, and we would be happy to send that to you, because it is quite technical in that way. You have to keep reading and re-reading it to get the logistics of it.
3667. **Mr Lunn:** Those are the words I used — “technical differences”. In terms of the classroom, if it works out the way it is conceived, it will be the same as an integrated school. It will effectively be based on an integrated model, without the particular legal status. It has a slightly different legal status, but it has the same result.

3668. **Mrs Graham:** We are trying to be cautious until a school is actually established, because that is your view, and you will be well aware that other people have a different view that may focus on the technicalities of it. What we think is most important is that we actually encourage and support the schools to work with the community to establish the school, which is something different and something new. That may have all of the elements that you have described, and, if it leads to the question that you are asking, which is whether there is any difference, I think that would be a healthy discussion for us to have as a whole community, further along the road, when a school is actually established.
3669. What we are doing here is looking at something that is not in place yet. There is no development proposal for one of those schools. It was hugely important that the transferors and the Catholic Church felt that it was a relationship of trust that was building up, that we were being very open with them, that so many of the barriers, as Andrew said, were technical, that where there was a will there was way and that we would find ways to support the guidance reaching fruition. The fact that we have got to that stage is where we are now and we cannot go any further until we actually have a development proposal to establish these schools. From our perspective, it is not being awkward. We are trying to be practical and realistic in the circumstances in which we all find ourselves while encouraging the development of schools.
3670. **Mr Lunn:** You said that it was my view and that I was entitled to it. That view has been expressed elsewhere round this table today by people who do not necessarily share my view on integrated education. I will not go on about it.
3671. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I may have slightly different concerns, and my emphasis might be slightly different, Trevor.
3672. **Mr Lunn:** OK, Chair, but you did mention, “dancing on the head of a pin”. Frankly, I will just —
3673. **Dr Kingon:** I think that it is important to recognise, though, that school ownership, for example, while it may be a technical issue, is an important issue for some key stakeholders in the process.
3674. **Mr Lunn:** We will see. If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is normally a duck.
3675. **Mr A Bell:** The key thing here is that communities now have a choice. For communities that wish to go for an integrated school, that choice is still open to them. To communities that, for whatever reason, do not feel that they are ready for an integrated school, this offers an alternative choice for them to bring young people together and educate them together. That is what communities have told us. That is the origin of this. We have responded to what communities are telling us.
3676. **Mrs Graham:** It is guidance, and we will keep it under review. We have tried to get to this point. We are pleased that we have got to this stage, but until we get a development proposal, we cannot really test this any further.
3677. **Mr Rogers:** Thanks again. I just want to follow on from Trevor’s point. Do you foresee the situation where jointly managed schools could transfer to integrated status?
3678. **Dr Kingon:** It would, obviously, require a further development proposal to become an integrated school under article 89, but there is nothing to preclude a maintained school from transforming to become an integrated school.
3679. **Mr Rogers:** OK. Could you clarify this for me? Is there any legal protection for the Christian ethos in controlled schools?
3680. **Dr Kingon:** The legislation that relates to controlled schools states that they must provide non-denominational Christian education. That is what controlled schools provide.
3681. **Mr Rogers:** If there is a jointly managed school, would there then be a legal protection for the Christian ethos? Faustina, you said that you would need

- the governors to work out the Christian ethos between them. Is there a legal protection for the Christian ethos in a jointly managed school?
3682. **Mrs Graham:** The development proposal would not be brought until that had been agreed. The guidance that I read for you states that that would have to be agreed by both schools before they would bring the development proposal forward. That protection would be there in the sense of consensus between both parties. That would be decided before the development proposal was actually brought to the Department. If that is done beforehand, the protection is there. If a development proposal were approved with no agreement on how that Christian ethos would operate, that would be much more complex and difficult. Again, it is a case of local agreement by the contributing parties, who would decide in advance.
3683. **Dr Kingon:** It is also important to remember that four ninths of the board of governors will be trustee representatives. The guidance stipulates that in looking at a development proposal, we expect the trustee representatives to be split between the transferring Churches and the Catholic Church. A strong Christian element would be built into the board of governors and the management of the school.
3684. **Mr Rogers:** Maybe this is a very simple question, but will a jointly managed school always be a Protestant one and a Catholic one coming together? Is there any possibility of a maintained school, a CCMS school and a grammar school with a different set of trustees coming together as a jointly managed school?
3685. **Dr Kingon:** At present, the technicalities of the guidance that we have put forward, as it is being called, are specific to controlled and maintained schools coming together. If other schools or communities were interested in working towards this type of management, obviously the Department would work with them on a case-by-case basis.
3686. **Mr McCausland:** I have just two questions. With regard to demonstrating community support, or, indeed, if someone wanted to demonstrate community opposition to a proposal, how would that be done?
3687. **Dr Kingon:** The statutory development proposal process includes a pre-consultation period and a full eight-week public consultation period, which allows all views and objections to be forwarded to the Minister and included in the submission to the Minister. In the pre-consultation — *[Interruption.]*
3688. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Can you hold for a second —
3689. **The Committee Clerk:** Sorry about that. We will just get that drilling switched off. The renovations to the Building are nearly finished. We have asked them not to do that during Committee meetings.
3690. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It seems to have stopped.
3691. **Dr Kingon:** Obviously, there would have to be consultation at the early part of the development proposal process. Before a proposal is brought forward, there will have to be consultation with the whole school community of each of the schools involved.
3692. **Mr McCausland:** What about the wider community, for example, if someone has children but they are not at the school yet?
3693. **Dr Kingon:** As I said, there will be a full public consultation that everybody can engage with, and the proposer will have a number of meetings across the community before it is published.
3694. **Mr A Bell:** The Department will look for that wider community support, because we know that if you do not have that, parents will vote with their feet and move to other schools, and the last thing that we want to do is create schools that are unsustainable. That is why that widespread community support is —
3695. **Mr McCausland:** The second question is this: we live in a world very different today from what it was some years ago, and, in the Protestant community, there

- is a very wide range of denominations. I think that there are about six different types of Presbyterians in Northern Ireland. I am thinking of the Presbyterian tradition alone. If you have a controlled school with the transferors and the Roman Catholic school and the trustees coming together into a single school, there might be people from some of the Churches involved, where their ministers might be sitting as transferors, or others who feel that that is not the thing for them. I am just concerned to get some clarity around the arrangements. If someone's child is going to a controlled school and the decision is taken to move in this direction, would they get free transport to another controlled school some distance away if they felt that was not the choice? In other words, is that a different category for transport?
3696. **Dr Kingon:** It would depend on so many individual circumstances. If they lived within statutory walking distance of any school, obviously they would not get transport assistance to it.
3697. **Mr McCausland:** I will simplify the thing. I am thinking, for the sake of argument, of some little village somewhere, where you are quite a few miles from the next village and the next school. If the schools were to come together in a particular village, and, presumably, the children in that village at the moment can walk to the school, but if they were to go to a school four miles away —
3698. **Dr Kingon:** In a scenario where a child lives within statutory walking distance of a jointly managed school, they would not receive transport assistance to go to another controlled or maintained school outside statutory walking distance.
3699. **Mr McCausland:** So, parents who, for religious reasons, felt that that school was inappropriate for their child would not have the option of sending them to a school —
3700. **Dr Kingon:** They would have the option —
3701. **Mr McCausland:** — without having to pay for the extra transport themselves.
3702. **Dr Kingon:** They would not get transport assistance if they lived within statutory walking distance of it.
3703. **Mr A Bell:** That is why it is key that there is widespread community support for these schools.
3704. **Mr McCausland:** But if the controlled school closed in the village, they would get the transport costs to the next village four miles away.
3705. **Dr Kingon:** If there was no other controlled option within statutory walking distance.
3706. **Mr McCausland:** I am assuming that, yes.
3707. **Mr McCausland:** Has the position of parents who may not wish their children to attend a school of that type been factored in?
3708. **Dr Kingon:** Yes. We did a very detailed analysis of all the transport options for the schools and have taken into account all the different —
3709. **Mr McCausland:** If the two schools came together as a single integrated school, would the parents whose children had previously attended the controlled school get free transport to the next village?
3710. **Dr Kingon:** The two schools cannot come together as an integrated school.
3711. **Mr McCausland:** If the two schools closed or something of that nature happened and the controlled school in the village disappeared, would the pupils get free transport?
3712. **Dr Kingon:** If there was an integrated school within statutory walking distance of their home and they wanted to go to a controlled school outside statutory walking distance of their home, they would get transport assistance.
3713. **Mr McCausland:** In effect, for those parents, there could be a disadvantage in that scenario.
3714. **Dr Kingon:** For every scenario we looked at the pros and the cons and the numbers likely to be affected. We



- took that all into account. The answer to the question is, yes, if a child lives within statutory walking distance of the school, they will not receive transport assistance. You also have to consider that only 10% of primary school children receive transport entitlement. We are talking about a small group of people.
3715. **Mrs Overend:** Is there going to be a minimum enrolment level for the schools in these categories?
3716. **Dr Kingon:** All the development proposals are looked at on a case-by-case basis. They are looked at within the framework and context of the sustainable schools policy and all six viability indicators in that policy. That includes enrolment as well as quality of education, links with the community and accessibility to other provision. There is never a situation, in any school, in which the Department does not have a cut-off whereby it would not follow that. That would be the case with these schools as well. It is within the wider context of the sustainable schools policy.
3717. **Mrs Overend:** Are they assessed individually rather than together?
3718. **Dr Kingon:** The development proposal for the new school will indicate the proposed enrolment for the new school. It would be that proposed enrolment that would be taken into account for the new school, once both schools are closed.
3719. **Mrs Overend:** Would there be a level set for both schools? One might be much bigger than the other: is that taken into consideration?
3720. **Dr Kingon:** The new school will have its own approved enrolment. What we have said in the guidance is that only in exceptional circumstances would we expect that to be higher than the combined enrolment of the two existing schools. We would probably expect it to be in line with the combined enrolment. If there is a lot of surplus capacity in both schools — if both schools are only half-full — we would be looking to say, “Well, actually, in bringing forward a proposal for enrolment, you may want to look at reducing that surplus capacity”.
- The new school would be looked at as a new school, not with the attitude that one school has this enrolment and the other school has that enrolment. It is the new school and the likelihood of the school achieving that enrolment that is proposed.
3721. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I just want to refer to the legal protection for the Christian ethos. There is no legal protection for Christian ethos in controlled schools because it must be non-denominational, is that correct?
3722. **Mr A Bell:** Well it is Christian ethos. It is undenominational Christian.
3723. **Dr Kingon:** It is undenominational Christian instruction.
3724. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Is there a legal protection on that?
3725. **Dr Kingon:** It says that a controlled school must provide it.
3726. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Is it the same provision for integrated?
3727. **Dr Kingon:** I am not sure, to be honest. We will have to come back to you about the exact legislation governing integrated schools.
3728. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Following on from that, what would the nature of the legal protection be in relation to Christian ethos for the jointly managed schools? That clarification would be useful, as well as the differences, technical or otherwise, between jointly managed schools, church schools and integrated schools.
3729. **Mrs Graham:** We would be happy to share that with you.
3730. **The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** No one else has indicated that they want to speak at this juncture. We will return to this, I imagine. Thank you very much for your time this morning.
3731. **Mrs Graham:** Thank you.
3732. **Mr A Bell:** Thank you.
- 3733.



# 13 May 2015

**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Peter Weir (Chairperson)  
 Mr Jonathan Craig  
 Mr Chris Hazzard  
 Mr Trevor Lunn  
 Mr Nelson McCausland  
 Mr Robin Newton  
 Mrs Sandra Overend  
 Mr Seán Rogers

**Witnesses:**

Mr Andrew Bell                      *Department of*  
 Mrs Faustina Graham              *Education*  
 Dr Suzanne Kingon

3734. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** I welcome the officials who are joining us: Faustina Graham, who is director of collaborative education and practice; Andrew Bell, head of shared education and the community relations team; and Suzanne Kingon, head of the Irish-medium and integrated team. I remind you that this session is being recorded by Hansard.
3735. There will be a wide range of questions. It would be helpful to the Department if the Committee could draw its thoughts together on this, and we will have that with you reasonably soon, but I invite you to make your opening statement.
3736. **Mrs Faustina Graham (Department of Education):** Thank you, Chair. I welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on the outcome of the public consultation on the Sharing Works policy for shared education and on the draft Bill. I hope also to provide further clarification and update members on progress made since we last briefed the Committee in January.
3737. As members are aware, the policy sets out a comprehensive framework for the future development of shared education, building on the research, consultation and recommendations of the ministerial advisory group. The policy contains 14 overarching actions that will support the advancement of shared education. It sets out plans to define, encourage and facilitate shared education through legislation and also support structures to fund, develop and embed sharing throughout the system.
3738. An eight-week consultation was undertaken on both the draft policy and Bill from 5 January to 6 March. Sixty seven organisations responded. For the most part, consultation responses were supportive and did not raise significant objections or major issues with the draft policy or Bill. Some comments that we received reflected misperceptions or incorrect assumptions as to how shared education will be advanced. We found that these proved extremely useful in directing us to where amending wording would provide clarity and avoid potential ambiguity.
3739. The most common issue raised related to the relationship between integrated and shared education. Integrated education provides for:
- “the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils.”*
3740. That is the wording of article 64 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. In the context of this inquiry, I would like to record the Department’s recognition of the significant contribution of the integrated sector in educating children from different community backgrounds together over the past 30 years. The Department remains fully committed and alive to the proactive implementation of its statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education under article 64.
3741. Shared education aims to improve educational outcomes, including reconciliation outcomes, through inter-school collaboration. Mutual understanding, citizenship and cultural understanding are key

- areas in our curriculum and provide explicit opportunities to address community relations, reconciliation, equality, diversity and human rights. Consequently, it is important to say that we see reconciliation outcomes as integral to and interdependent with educational outcomes and not as something separate, irrespective of the educational context or setting. Therefore, it is not a question of either/ or with regards to integrated education and shared education.
3742. Integrated and shared education will have complementary roles in contributing to the development of a more tolerant, diverse, pluralist and shared society here. Nevertheless, amendments have been made to the policy to explicitly reference and to set in context the Department's statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education and also to reinforce the opportunity to learn from the integrated sector's experience in developing and deepening an inclusive ethos.
3743. More broadly, refinements to the policy include: changes to terminology to remove any misconception that shared education is only relevant to schools and pupils and clarification that it is inclusive of youth and early years settings; explicit reference to children from different religious backgrounds in the policy description; more explicit reference to the role of sectoral support bodies; strengthening the section on the role of special schools and learning support centres; and further clarification of the role of wider communities in advancing shared education.
3744. Ensuring that practitioners have the right skills has been a common thread in evidence presented to the Committee, and we fully endorse that view. The Delivering Social Change (DSC) shared education signature project, for example, includes provision for teacher training. In the spirit of sharing, we have invited stakeholders to collaborate to bring forward proposals for a capacity-building strategy for teachers.
3745. Again, in response to feedback, reference has also been added to the section in the policy that sets the policy within the wider legislative context to reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other relevant human rights legislation.
3746. The Shared Education Bill will provide a legislative definition, providing the Department and relevant arm's-length bodies with the power to encourage and facilitate shared education. As this is very much a developing area, and given its wide scope, this power will provide necessary flexibility as we seek to further develop and embed shared education. Again, the proposed legislative power is complementary to and in no way undermines or supersedes the Department's statutory duty to integrated education.
3747. The draft Bill defines shared education as:
- “ the education together of (a) those of different religious belief or political opinion, and (b) those who are experiencing significant socio-economic deprivation and those who are not”.*
3748. Some respondents, including some schools, identified practical difficulties in referencing “political opinion” and the word “significant” with regard to “socio-economic” status in clause 2 of the draft Bill. Upon further reflection, the Department has removed both from the wording of the Bill. That leaves us with the definition of shared education as:
- “the education together of those of different religious belief and socio-economic background”.*
3749. There was some suggestion also that all section 75 groups should be specified in the legislative definition. In reality, this would set very challenging demands on the mix of children and young people that would be required to meet the definition. For example, including gender would have implications for partnerships of single-sex schools, and it is neither practical nor desirable for organisations to identify the sexual orientation of children and young people.

- The legislative definition is underpinned by the policy description, which encourages educational settings to work to maximise the education together of those from all section 75 groups, as far as is practically possible.
3750. In relation to that description, the ministerial advisory group said in its 2013 report:
- “In taking into account a wide range of evidence submitted, the Ministerial Advisory Group endorses the broadened definition of ‘shared education’ provided in the Minister’s terms of reference.”*
3751. This definition, then, is the one that is reflected in the policy.
3752. There has been progress since we last briefed the Committee. Applications under the first call of the DSC shared education funding were approved for 32 partnerships comprising 72 schools. A further 10 partnerships consisting of 27 schools have been invited to refine and resubmit their applications. A second call for applications closes this month. Schools will be advised of the outcome prior to the end of the academic year to allow planning for implementation to commence. A project coordinator and a team of shared education development officers are now in place to support schools through the application process and in embedding shared education.
3753. The ministerial advisory group recommended a shared education premium within the common funding formula. As there are advantages and disadvantages to this approach, the Minister has committed to using the experience from the DSC project to determine the best mechanism for funding and mainstreaming any additional costs.
3754. Building the capacity of organisations to develop collaborative working where there is no history of partnerships between those schools will be addressed through the work that we have undertaken with the Special EU Programmes Body. The design of the shared education thematic area within Peace IV will recognise that organisations that have not yet engaged in sharing need a different type of support.
3755. The Minister has clearly articulated his vision for the future of shared education. It is a vision for vibrant, self-improving education communities, delivering educational benefits to learners, encouraging the efficient and effective use of resources and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity, and community cohesion. We believe that the shared education policy and Bill provide a coherent framework to achieve this vision. We welcome the opportunity to answer any of your questions.
3756. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Thank you for those opening comments. Obviously, the Committee has been conducting an inquiry. I think that we have had 25 evidence sessions so far. It has given us the opportunity for a number of school visits, and I think that it is important to place on record at this stage that, as a Committee, we have been impressed by the quality and standard of the formal and informal contacts that are already there in terms of both improvement of educational attainment and community relations.
3757. You mentioned the either/or situation earlier, and I will take that in a slightly different context. One area that the Committee has been concerned about is the discontinuation of funding for community relations, equality and diversity (CRED). Particularly given the Life and Times survey and the very positive findings of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) review into CRED, we will be asking you quite a few questions. If it comes down to either CRED or shared education, I suppose that there will be a concern that CRED schemes are often a prerequisite, an initial stepping stone, for school communities prior to meaningful shared education. First, can you comment on the situation regarding CRED?
3758. **Mrs Graham:** We came to the Committee two weeks ago and talked about the situation with regard to CRED.

- Obviously, the funding has stopped. Now, as part of the review process for the policy, which was under way anyway before the funding stopped, we hope to look very carefully at all of the recommendations from the Education and Training Inspectorate report and use that as a platform to move forward. We are where we are with the funding, but the whole thrust of the funding for CRED was directed towards capacity building for the system. I think that the outworkings from the ETI review demonstrate that significant capacity has been built, and it is now about how we manage to take that forward without the additional funding that we had.
3759. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Does that mean that the door is closed on future funding for CRED, or will the ETI review lead to elements of that being reinstated?
3760. **Mr Andrew Bell (Department of Education):** In ending the earmarked funding, which, as Faustina said, was for a specific purpose, the Minister has indicated that the CRED policy will remain and that the CRED work will be mainstreamed. Schools, boards and the Youth Council will be expected to deliver CRED through their mainstream funding. The earmarked funding was there because the previous review of community relations schemes had identified issues, particularly around capacity building and sharing good experience. That all happened through the earmarked funding. Essentially, CRED will remain. It should continue to be delivered through existing funding. Indeed, we have identified that, for the Education Authority and the Youth Council, there is an expectation to address CRED within their existing budgets.
3761. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** The Committee will want to keep a close eye on that because we have all seen situations in different Departments where, if something is mainstreamed, that can either be a good thing by making it a key component of everything that is done, or, alternatively, it can be a code for it disappearing altogether. Mainstreaming can be a euphemism for the death of a particular project, so we want to see how that operates in practice. We have a fairly wide range of questions, and the first couple of questions will come from Chris.
3762. **Mr Hazzard:** Thanks for the report. I want to start off by asking a few questions around integrated education. Time and time again, we see in surveys and newspaper reports a very high demand for integrated education, yet, when we look at school places and where that demand is eventually met, the figures never tally. We are not seeing the growth of integrated education that some of these surveys suggest. Why is that the case?
3763. **Mrs Graham:** I think that it is hard to know in the sense that, ultimately, the demand for integrated education has to come from communities. I think that it is about how those communities respond to wanting to have integrated education in their schools. The important thing for us is that, in the absence of the growth of the integrated sector, we cannot afford to stand still on the issue of community cohesion and building a better future for children and young people. We have seen that slowing down, and it certainly does not mean that nothing can be done about the growth of the integrated sector. That is obviously something we can work on with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). We are working with it on its business-planning process for the next year, as it has now become an NDPB. The whole thrust of change in the education sector, without that kind of certainty about how organisations will move forward, has probably caused a bit of a hiatus. We will certainly be looking at that carefully with them.
3764. **Mr Hazzard:** If I am picking this up right, you seem to suggest that it nearly needs to be a voluntary move from the community to embrace integrated education, but the Department has a legislative duty to encourage and facilitate it.
3765. **Mrs Graham:** Yes.

3766. **Mr Hazzard:** Does the Department not need to be doing more? For example, if you had waited for communities in America to voluntarily desegregate, we would probably still be waiting now. Does the Department need to do more when it comes to integrated education?
3767. **Dr Suzanne Kingon (Department of Education):** The Department funds NICIE to provide a support role to communities that wish to take forward the integrated option. There is a variety of paths by which communities can embrace the integrated option. One is through the establishment of a grant-maintained integrated school. The other is transformation of existing schools. There are different avenues open, and the Department provides support to schools that have indicated a wish to transform and to schools post-transformation. Members may be aware that the Minister is considering the need for, and the scope of, a potential future review of integrated education.
3768. **Mr Hazzard:** You mentioned NICIE, which is obviously not a statutory planning organisation on behalf of integrated education, whereas the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) could perhaps be described as such for the Catholic schools and the education and library boards, as they were, for controlled schools. You could argue that no one was formally planning for the growth of integrated education. Critics of the Department will say that you have a duty to encourage and facilitate the growth of integrated education but are not doing that.
3769. **Dr Kingon:** NICIE is represented at all levels throughout the area-planning process, from the area-planning steering group, local working groups etc. There is very much an onus on both the Education Authority and CCMS to work closely with NICIE in the planning of the schools estate.
3770. **Mr Hazzard:** OK, so is that situation failing? Is NICIE failing? Is the Department failing? We are not seeing growth. No matter what we do here, and no matter how much we talk about what is happening, we are not seeing the growth of integrated education that public support would tend to indicate. What is not working?
3771. **Mrs Graham:** There is a role for NICIE as we move forward. For the Department to be prescriptive is not the way to ensure that integrated education grows. Every piece of evidence I have ever read that tells people what is good for them and is prescriptive is not going to change things. We have to win hearts and minds. There is something that all of us can do, working together, around how we access — more creatively perhaps — community support for the growth of integrated education.
3772. We have used methods that are not necessarily tried and tested. You can use a questionnaire, for example, as you say, and people can suggest that that is not as strong or robust as it could be. We will be working with NICIE and we also have a meeting set up with the integrated education fund to look at whether to look at if there are more creative ways to access the community support that is actually there.
3773. The separate bit, as Suzanne has said, is the area planning process, looking at the whole transformation process. In the Department, we hope to look again at the transformation policy in relation to encouraging and facilitating. If the Minister, in considering the scope of a review of integrated education, looks at that, that would allow us to look at a process that has been in place for some time and would probably benefit from a second look.
3774. **Mr Hazzard:** Finally, again going back to the duty, it is arguable that the area-planning process has encouraged or facilitated integrated education. To what extent will this new shared education facilitate and encourage integrated education?
3775. **Mrs Graham:** We have spoken, at other appearances before the Committee, about the view that integrated education sits at the top end of a continuum of sharing, where you have a fully integrated model in a school. What we

- are looking at, with shared education, is the opportunities, which I mentioned in the briefing, for inter-school collaboration. That may, in time, lead to schools seeing that they have more in common than they have differences when it comes to working collaboratively — and perhaps becoming one school in some instances — particularly around efficient and effective use of resources. That has to be a decision that comes from the schools in particular and from the governors and communities with which they work.
3776. I made reference to the concept of working with communities. One of the key aspects of the shared education programme is the role of the school in the community. In education terms, generally, it has always been a key part of what is expected of a school. For example, given the bids that came in under the DSC programme, it has probably been the weakest part of the existing action plans. Everything seems to suggest that we in education are not as strong as we could be at every level when it comes to community engagement. We have tried in lots of ways. We have looked at ways to encourage parents in particular to become part of the school process, and very often people feel welcomed into the school, but I think that we have not maximised the potential of how our schools can truly engage with communities. That may be of its time in a sense. What do we need for the 21st century to fully engage communities in their schools and vice versa? Certainly the action plans that we have seen indicate that there is something there that we can work on, in the same way in which, as said, we hope to work with NICIE. If we say it is about community engagement, we have to ensure that the community engagement is meaningful.
3777. **Mr Hazzard:** Is that a particular piece of work going on at the minute? You are looking at the engagement and how —
3778. **Mrs Graham:** With shared education it is a key part. Each of the partnerships has four areas to look at, all of which are linked to the key pillars of Every School
- a Good School, one of which is the school in its community. Therefore, if the partnerships are working together, and the schools are working together, there is the expectation that they will also work with the community.
3779. Each partnership, in designing the action plan, is trying to move forward along the continuum. The education and training expectorate has identified the continuum in four stages. They need to move along that continuum to demonstrate success in the programme.
3780. There is a huge amount of learning that we should be able to accrue across the shared education programme that will have application to all schools, never mind the schools that are involved in the programme. That is when we can begin to get serious about how we engage, to the optimum, with the community that each school is situated in.
3781. **Mr Hazzard:** One final point, on the duty again. Some witnesses have said that it is time for the duty to go. Some have said that it needs to be bolstered. Where do you think we need to be going with the duty?
3782. **Mrs Graham:** As far as we are concerned, the duty is there and we are committed to being proactive in its implementation. That is the duty that is there, and it is the duty that the Department will continue to fulfil.
3783. **Mr Lunn:** Thank you for your presentation. I will be on the tack that you would expect. Faustina, you said in your presentation that the Department remains fully committed to supporting the integrated sector. Apart from funding NICIE, can you give us any example of something proactive that the Department has done to fulfil its obligation to encourage integrated education?
3784. **Mrs Graham:** Internally, in the Department, we have looked carefully across the Department. The Minister has asked that we do exactly what you say: ensure that we encourage and facilitate both integrated and Irish-medium education, because we have



- a statutory duty there too. Over the last year, we have conducted internal workshops in the Department for all of the senior officials. You cannot underestimate the fact that we fund NICIE. The Department's statutory duty is to encourage and facilitate. NICIE's work is to promote the integrated sector. We have a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate.
3785. **Mr A Bell:** When developing policies, we look at where we can support it: for example, other schools see the transport policy and temporary variation policy as being more generous towards the integrated sector, but we are taking into account that statutory duty through policy development.
3786. **Mr Lunn:** I fancy that Justice Treacy gave you a considerable shove when he made his ruling on Irish-medium transport policy.
3787. It is all very well to say that you have conducted internal exercises, presumably to make sure that everybody in the Department understands what the obligation is. I still do not see what you have done externally to encourage integrated education. Has the Department ever done anything by way of information output through schools or to communities that would make people like me, who might be slightly sceptical, think that it is proactively trying to encourage integrated education?
3788. **Dr Kingon:** We recently updated the Department's website so that integrated education figures on the home page.
3789. **Mr Lunn:** Is that for the first time?
3790. **Dr Kingon:** It has always been on the website, but there is now a quick link to it on the front page for the first time.
3791. The Department has provided funding to support transformed schools for the first five years after transformation. The statutory development proposal process underpins area planning. In considering all development proposals, the Department infuses the consideration of the statutory duty. As Faustina said earlier, the Minister is considering a potential review of integrated education.
- Part of any review of the transformation process will look at how we can make that a more publicly known and accessible process.
3792. **Mr Lunn:** That is exactly what I am talking about. I will not bore you with the dictionary definition of encourage, but we all understand what it means. It obviously involves proactivity. It is good that you are finally putting something on the web page and, internally, instructing all your staff that integrated education exists, but have you ever explained to schools the current process of transformation? I know that it is under review, but has the Department ever made any attempt, through outreach, to explain to schools that it is an available option for them? Do you just leave it to NICIE? While I am at it, how much money does NICIE get?
3793. **Dr Kingon:** The Department has produced a transformation pack for schools, which was provided to all grant-aided schools. It explains how to access, and the operation of, the transformation process. It is called 'Transformation: An Information Pack for Schools'.
3794. **Mr Lunn:** When was that done?
3795. **Dr Kingon:** I would need to find out the date and come back to you.
3796. **Mr Lunn:** Was it in the 1970s or the 2000s? I do not remember it.
3797. **Dr Kingon:** I think that the last time that it was updated was probably 2009.
3798. **Mr Lunn:** What amount of funding does NICIE get?
3799. **Mrs Graham:** Around £650,000.
3800. **Mr Lunn:** Is that before the cut or after?
3801. **Mrs Graham:** After the cut.
3802. **Mr Lunn:** I have £600,000 written down, so I will not argue with you. *[Laughter.]* It is what you might call a drop in the ocean.
3803. **Mrs Graham:** It was about £700,000 before the cut.

3804. **Mr Lunn:** I cannot argue about the need for cuts at the moment, but I suppose that it depends on what the priorities are.
3805. What do you say to the accusation, which the Committee heard in the course of the review, that the area planning arrangements require the other sectors to authorise growth in the integrated sector? Do you agree with that? Do you agree with the suggestion that provision for integrated education has never been increased in an area plan as a consequence of parental demand?
3806. **Mrs Graham:** Sorry, I lost the second bit of that.
3807. **Mr Lunn:** The provision for integrated education as a consequence of parental demand never seems to be built into the considerations under area planning.
3808. **Dr Kingon:** We are not from the area planning side of the Department. Colleagues there may be better able to answer your queries. However, NICIE has an integral role in all levels of the area planning process. The Department is keen to ensure that the Education Authority and CCMS work closely with NICIE in developing plans for the integrated sector.
3809. **Mr Lunn:** Do you think that the current area planning rules — the needs model and the various considerations — work in favour of or against integrated education, or would you say that they are neutral?
3810. **Dr Kingon:** I do not think that any of us at the table would profess to being experts on the details of the needs model.
3811. **Mrs Graham:** It is fair to say that Justice Treacy did not say that there was a problem with the needs model. Rather, it is that the needs model has to be applied sensibly. It is not meant to be hard and fast. It is indicative of what might happen and how populations will grow or change. Like Suzanne, I say this as someone who does not work in that area: the important thing in area planning, I think, is the range of information that the Department looks at and provides to the Minister to inform his decision. Ultimately, the decision will be the Minister's, and it will be based on all the information that comes in. There is a very clear process that allows people to opt in to the various consultation processes along the way. I think that that process is very comprehensive. Of course, anyone is free to give you their view, but I think that the Department has a very comprehensive process in place for making decisions on development proposals.
3812. **Mr Lunn:** I do not have it here, but Judge Treacy criticised the needs model. In simple terms, he said that it currently involves projections of the need for the maintained and controlled sectors but not the integrated sector. I know that you will say that you are not experts in area planning, but that is more or less what it says, which indicates to me something not far short of discrimination against the integrated sector.
3813. **Mrs Graham:** I do not have it in front of me either, but that is not my interpretation of what Justice Treacy said about the needs model.
3814. **Mr Lunn:** Fair enough.
3815. **Mrs Graham:** I cannot not say that my interpretation is different from what you said. Like you, I cannot be authoritative, but that is not my interpretation or recollection of what the judgement said.
3816. **Mr Lunn:** OK, I will leave it at that.
3817. **Mr Rogers:** According to the Department, there seem to be few material differences between integrated schools and jointly managed schools. If that is the case, why do we need jointly managed schools?
3818. **Dr Kingon:** The interest came from communities interested in exploring the option of jointly managed schools, whereby a school would be organically linked to both the Catholic Church and the transferring churches through the composition of the school trustees and boards of governors. A number of communities were interested in

- exploring that. The Department then worked with the transferors and trustees to develop guidance for communities that may wish to consider this option.
3819. **Mr A Bell:** There are more similarities than differences, but the differences make jointly managed schools more acceptable to some communities. When the Committee heard evidence from CCMS and the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education, they set out clearly that they value the legal protection of ownership by the trustees, and the property guarantees. They also said that they place value on the fundamental values of a shared common good, reconciliation and peace, which they said were central to Christianity, being protected in law. The Catholic trustees and the transferors have said that they are willing to collaborate on the basis of protecting the Christian ethos that both value. So, crucially for jointly managed schools, the transferors and the Catholic trustees are content with the legislation. We talked last time about the differences between the set-up of a jointly managed school and an integrated one. They see that as a key point and a key issue in moving the whole thing forward. From that point of view, it is very much a bottom-up approach and an issue that I think may well make a significant difference in having a more integrated system that is not necessarily of integrated status. Some have referred to it as the difference between a capital “I” and a small “i”.
3820. **Mr Rogers:** You say that Christianity would be more protected in law. Will you clarify the Department’s position? Will the Christian ethos have better legal protection in jointly managed schools than in the integrated or controlled sectors?
3821. **Mr A Bell:** The trustees and transferors in a jointly managed school will agree the make-up of the board of governors. They will agree certain places between them. Since the board of governors sets the ethos for the school, it follows that the expectation is that the ethos will be Christian.
3822. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** To some extent, the point being made is that, in practice, people from different sectors would be there to provide that practical protection, but maybe you will drill down into the better legal protection.
3823. **Mr A Bell:** From their evidence, I think that they had thought about the fact that yes, that can happen in other schools. However, the key difference is that it does not necessarily have that legal protection. In my reading of what they said to the Committee, that seems to be one of the key principles that they —
3824. **Mr Rogers:** So, jointly managed schools will not have better protection of the Christian ethos than controlled or integrated schools.
3825. **Mr A Bell:** Well, from what —
3826. **Mr Rogers:** I am talking about from the Department’s point of view.
3827. **Dr Kingon:** It may be worth separating ethos from the legal position on the provision of collective worship and religious education. The provision of collective worship and religious education for all schools is set out in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. It makes provision for daily collective worship at controlled, grant-maintained and — as amended in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 — integrated schools. There is legal protection in statute for the provision of religious education and collective worship at all schools.
3828. Andrew is making the point that we would expect, as set out in our circular, a formal memorandum of agreement between the Catholic trustees and the transferors in a jointly managed school on its future ethos, arrangements for religious education etc. Also, both churches will be trustees of the school and, therefore, on the board of governors. Stakeholders feel that this gives additional protection to the Christian ethos and the individual ethos of each church.
3829. **Mr Rogers:** Yes, but, although there is a memorandum, there is really no further

- legal protection for the Christian ethos in a jointly managed school.
3830. **Dr Kingon:** School ethos is not prescribed in law, but it is very important. There are legal differences in the constitution of the schools, through the boards of governors, which can be perceived as an additional legal protection, if you follow me.
3831. **Mr Rogers:** Yes.
3832. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Trevor wanted to come in on that point.
3833. **Mr Lunn:** It is just a quick addition. It is heartening to see that trustees and transferors managed to agree on something like this. Is CCMS agreement needed for such a school to be set up?
3834. **Dr Kingon:** We talked about that last time, when we said that CCMS had full sight of the draft guidance. The circular expects the development proposal to close the existing maintained school. If the amalgamation is of a controlled and a maintained school, it will, of course, be put forward by CCMS. Working in conjunction with the Education Authority, CCMS would submit the development proposal to establish the new jointly managed school.
3835. **Mrs Graham:** CCMS, in its presentation to the Committee, made the distinction that it was not like NICIE. It is there not to promote Catholic education but to manage the school estate that is already in place. In my reading of the evidence to the Committee, there was that distinction, so it is not the case that the decision would come from the Church working with the transferors.
3836. **Mr A Bell:** When we met communities that expressed an interest in this, the boards and CCMS were involved. Both have been very willing to explore the issues with those communities.
3837. **Mr Lunn:** That is lovely CCMS-speak for “push it down the pipe”, frankly. It seems to me that the CCMS will, should they want to exercise it, have a blocking role. It may be making the right noises now, but, if you look at its recent history,
- it has, as far as I can remember, only ever acceded to one amalgamation with a controlled school, and that was Clintyclay Primary School. The Minister has challenged the result of the judicial review, so I really do not know where we go with that, but I am curious to know whether CCMS, separately from the Catholic trustees, has a legal right to block. In its evidence to us, Faustina, it did not only say that it managed the sector; it said that its remit was to open, close and maintain Catholic schools.
3838. **Mr Rogers:** We are all aware of the mix in schools. We have many schools that are highly mixed or “super-mixed”, as we call it. What has the Department done to promote that natural integration in schools across the North?
3839. **Mr A Bell:** With some of the schemes that we had in the past, such as the community relations schemes, that has been a natural consequence. We hope that shared education will further drive that work forward.
3840. **Mr Rogers:** Has the Department done any studies on super-mixed schools to see what makes them tick?
3841. **Mr A Bell:** I am not aware of any particular studies. I was managing agent for the International Fund for Ireland, and it had asked us to do some work on what made certain schools more acceptable to both communities than others. I know that the general feeling at that stage was that creating and making schools neutral spaces is what would drive us forward. During the work that we did on behalf of the fund, we visited a number of schools that have been very successful in attracting pupils from both communities, and what became very obvious very quickly was that it was not about creating neutral spaces; it was about those schools being more acceptable to their communities. Very often, it was parents who were making the choice because they saw that these schools produced better academic outcomes. That was part of the reason for sending their children there.

3842. I was struck by what I was told by one Catholic maintained school that we visited. It explained that it had always had a leavers' mass. When it tried to make it more ecumenical, the Protestant pupils said, "No, there is a long history at this school of having this mass." It was the pupils who asked the school to do it in the same way as it had always done it. That was quite an interesting perspective. That is as much as we have done by way of a study.
3843. **Mr Rogers:** I find that disappointing. It would have been important had the Department gone more deeply into that, because this goes much deeper than a leaving mass or leaving service. What schools do not understand, particularly the super-mixed schools that are doing really well, is that they cannot now avail themselves of shared education funding because, to do so, they would have to link with another school.
3844. **Mrs Graham:** Why would they object to working collaboratively with another school? What would be the problem with that? If they are doing well, it would be an encouragement to another school to gain and benefit from their experience. I do not understand why, if you have an ethos of sharing in your school, you would not want to work collaboratively with another school.
3845. **Mr Rogers:** I do not think that there is a problem with that, but why should they be penalised? They do super work in sharing across the social divide, the academic divide and everything else. They are doing fantastically well, but, whether maintained, controlled or integrated, they see that they are being penalised because they have to link with another school rather than being rewarded. Why can that good practice not be rewarded? It goes back to my earlier point that the Department should have done an in-depth study of what makes super-mixed schools really tick.
3846. **Mr A Bell:** Do not forget that the aim of shared education is to improve educational outcomes, including reconciliation outcomes. Part of that is based on research that shows that, when schools collaborate, they can improve educational outcomes, and, if they do it on a cross-community basis, reconciliation outcomes. While those super-mixed schools may have a good mix of communities, a very good school will have the opportunity to work with another school to raise its level. They can also learn from other schools.
3847. Last time, we talked about the framework devised by the Education and Training Inspectorate, which is a four-level model. In the first phase of the Delivering Social Change signature project, we targeted schools that had already been involved in considerable sharing. Among that first set of applications, no school was at the top level of that model, which suggests that all schools have an opportunity to benefit and raise educational outcomes by working collaboratively.
3848. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** I guess that there is a slightly separate point, which Seán has been making. I do not think that any of those schools will object to sharing and will probably be fairly proactive. However, there have been specific attempts to set up schools, some of which have been very successful, others less so. In my area, a number of schools have reached this position organically. In looking at the experience of those schools and trying to learn lessons from them, a more proactive approach to the exploration of information may be useful.
3849. **Mr A Bell:** You need to go back to the fact that the Minister, through the ministerial advisory group, has recognised that there are additional costs in sharing. From our five years' experience of running 22 strategic projects across the Province, which included 500-odd schools, we know that the main sharing costs are for transport and teacher substitute cover for planning purposes — aligning timetables etc — and for when a teacher goes with pupils to another school. That is where the Delivering Social Change signature funding is targeted. Sharing within your school means that you do not need to do that planning, and you do not have

- the additional costs for transport and substitute cover.
3850. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** We are talking at cross purposes. No one is saying that, from that point of view, we are looking at additional funding. We are saying that a number of schools have achieved certain things organically. Maybe they did not set out to do that, and maybe it was because of particular circumstances in the area. I am a little concerned that, from the broader departmental point of view, there does not seem to be the curiosity to explore what is happening in those schools to see whether there are useful lessons. It might well be that such exploration might find individual circumstances that are not transferable. Whatever is being done in shared education, those schools need to be looked at to ensure that the full information is pulled together.
3851. **Mrs Graham:** That is a totally valid point. It is important to say that everything is of its time. To have shone a light at different points in time on some of the schools that you talked about might not have been helpful. We are now in a place where some of the organic things that have happened over time can be celebrated. Over the next period, the whole concept of the work that is done under shared education will be to look at precisely the things that you are talking about. What is it that makes the difference? The truth is that we do not know, but we hope to get to that stage by the end of the four years on which we are embarking. We are looking right across the spectrum at schools under the Delivering Social Change programme that have a history of sharing. I feel very strongly that it is hugely important for the schools that Mr Rogers talked about to engage in the programme. Everything in education is about building communities of good practice; no school should be in isolation. Where there is good practice and it can be shared, it should be. Equally, we are in a learning phase with regard to what will allow us to get to a point, hopefully at the end of this four-year process, where we begin to see what we have described as a concept-shared education as something that is integral to every school and part and parcel of what they do.
3852. I spoke earlier about some of the explicit references in our curriculum that would lend themselves to shared education. We did not necessarily have the time to provide professional development to our teachers as part of this programme or to evaluate in the way that you described. I am really hopeful that, as part of the journey, we will find out the answers to the very questions that you pose this morning as part of the process. That was the concept of engaging the Education and Training Inspectorate right at the beginning of this process in the design and development, rather than just coming along as evaluators at the end, to accrue all the learning that will influence the system by the end of the four-year period. Your points are well made.
3853. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Seán, do you want to raise the issue of Drumragh?
3854. **Mr Rogers:** I want to ask Andrew a question. You talked about timetabling, which is a major problem. I noticed that some of the earlier projects involved schools adjacent to one another, whether in Limavady or Ballycastle or Moy. What consideration has been given to the rural White Paper, so that all our young people have the same access to shared education and so on, particularly in rural areas? Northern Ireland is so rural, and it really is not feasible in some cases to link two schools because of the distance. It is OK if they are a few hundred yards apart or in an urban environment. Sceptics would say that this will lead to the urbanisation of our education system; the rural school will be a thing of the past. A link with another school brings so many benefits, but it also brings more funding in, and that is crucial at the moment. What is your comment on that?
3855. **Mr A Bell:** I can only point to the examples over the last five years involving rural schools, particularly in what was the North Eastern Board area, now the north-eastern region. Yes, it

- can be more challenging; there is no doubt about that. In Fermanagh, schools have very successfully collaborated, and I know that the Committee has taken witness statements from those groups. The evidence is that it was more challenging, but it will work. There is also the use of technology and IT to link schools up, which we are keen to explore. Schools linked up using technology, as well as face-to-face contact, through the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) programme. That gives an additional element to the joined-up approach, although we would always advocate face-to-face work.
3856. **Mrs Graham:** Certainly, listening to principals of schools, particularly post-primary schools, involved in the IFI projects, there is, as you say, the added worry of losing class time because of transport issues. In the consultation we had feedback from young people on some of the concerns that they have about that as well. I have found principals to be very honest about embarking on the IFI programmes and feeling exactly as you said: “We are getting extra funding here, but this will be so complex that we will struggle with it”. It is about working through those problems and finding solutions to them. The only thing that we can do is try. We see what has happened in some schools where those issues have been overcome, but they have not been overcome easily.
3857. I think that it has been the case over a three-year period that the first year has been quite difficult, in the second people have begun to get some sense that it is possible, and moving into the third year they think that it is something worth fighting for. When you see those outcomes from mixes of schools, it is something that would also encourage us to keep pushing at the boundaries of that as well, while not, at any point, ever sacrificing the educational quality of a school. Where a school knows what it can deliver on its own in terms of educational quality for its pupils, that should not be compromised in any way. First and foremost, the duty is to ensure that young people get the best possible education, but we have seen how people have described the benefits that have accrued at the end of a process, while they themselves have been extremely fearful and extremely cautious at the beginning.
3858. **Mr A Bell:** It is probably worth saying that there are good examples — people who have been through the process and done it; therefore, we can point people to those who have experience. The Education Authority has development officers working with individual schools. If schools are having difficulties in that area, we would expect the Education Authority to make that known to us. We will then look at the issues and the barriers and how they can be overcome.
3859. **Mr Craig:** What are the guidelines on minority community representation in integrated education? More importantly, how many schools with the title “integrated” actually meet those criteria?
3860. **Dr Kingon:** The criteria for a newly transformed school are that, in the first year, it will achieve 10%, working towards 30% from the minority community, and the criteria for grant-maintained integrated schools are that they will work towards 30%. Obviously, for certain schools and certain communities, those targets have not been achieved. The schools continue to work to achieve those targets. I think that there is a recognition that, in some communities, those targets may not be achieved, certainly in the short-to-medium term.
3861. **Mr Craig:** I am interested to hear you say “short-to-medium term”. What is the definition of that?
3862. **Dr Kingon:** Certainly, within the next five years it seems unlikely that a number of schools will meet the 30% target.
3863. **Mr Craig:** If they do not meet the target in 15 years, what happens to them?
3864. **Dr Kingon:** The Department will work closely with the schools to try to ensure that they get the appropriate community balance.

3865. **Mr Craig:** So what happens to them?
3866. **Dr Kingon:** In what sense?
3867. **Mr Craig:** If they never meet the target, what happens?
3868. **Dr Kingon:** There is no question of the Department removing funding from those schools or —
3869. **Mr Craig:** Thanks for the honesty. So absolutely nothing happens. At least that is clarification.
3870. **Mrs Graham:** I think, to be fair —
3871. **Mr Craig:** Sorry; I have got the answer.
3872. How many schools not called “integrated” actually meet those criteria?
3873. **Dr Kingon:** There is much more to integrated status than simply the religious intake. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education takes forward an awful lot of work on the ethos of those schools. There are also important legal distinctions on the composition of the boards of governors and other aspects of school provision. There are important aspects of integrated provision that are much more than just a numbers game about minority population at the school.
3874. **Mr Craig:** Suzanne, do you know the number of schools not in the integrated sector that meet those criteria?
3875. **Dr Kingon:** In terms of the 30%? We could certainly find that out.
3876. **Mr Craig:** Not only the religious breakdown of pupils. Plenty of schools meet those criteria in the make-up of the board of governors as well. Have we any idea what that is?
3877. **Mrs Graham:** We have that information in the Department, but we could not say off the top of our head here today.
3878. **Mr Craig:** However, you would agree that a number of schools meet those criteria but do not call themselves “integrated”.
3879. **Mrs Graham:** Yes, I would say that there are a number, but that is, as Suzanne said, in terms of religious balance as opposed to ethos.
3880. **Mr Craig:** There is also a growing issue of pupils and individuals not wanting to tag themselves as either one or other community. Those figures are growing generally across the board. Will there be any change in those artificial criteria to allow for that?
3881. **Dr Kingon:** As we said earlier, the Minister is considering both the need for and the scope of a future review of integrated education.
3882. **Mr Craig:** Will it be reviewed, then?
3883. **Dr Kingon:** As I have said, the Minister is considering both the need for a review and its scope, and whether it will encompass the areas that you have alluded to.
3884. **Mr Craig:** Fair enough.
3885. **Mr Lunn:** I heard what you said about how the qualification for an integrated school applies at the start and in the early years of that school, whether it is a transformation or a new school. I think that Jonathan is suggesting that they should lose their integrated status if they cannot comply. There is really no reason for that. Would you agree with me that integrated schools are far more likely to take ethnic minorities, for instance? I was in one recently that has just taken in four or six Somalian children who, I venture to suggest, would not have been taken by any other school in the area, because it was a secondary school and they had no primary education whatsoever, nor had they any English.
3886. **Dr Kingon:** I could cite examples of schools —
3887. **Mr Lunn:** There is far more to it than just the Protestant/Catholic balance. Jonathan quite rightly cites examples of very good schools that do not have integrated labels but which are effectively integrated. The one that we always to come back to, Chairman, is Methodist College, which would not strictly qualify, at the moment, if it



- applied for integrated status because it has only 25% minority, but it has 55% non-Protestant. So it is a silly argument. It is exactly as you say, Suzanne: it is all about ethos, approach and balance —. I am going to make a speech, and I do not mean to.
3888. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** To be fair, Trevor, there are an awful lot of questions to get through, so if we could avoid speeches it would be helpful.
3889. **Mr Lunn:** You would agree with me about the approach.
3890. **Mrs Graham:** It would be unfair to say that we have many schools that would be unwilling to take in children who have not had a previous education. That would be unfair, and I want to correct that. It is not only the integrated sector that will accept pupils who have a disadvantaged background in any way. That is my experience.
3891. **Dr Kingon:** Under open enrolment policy, schools will accept the pupils who apply if there are surplus places and capacity at the school. A point to make is that the majority of integrated schools have achieved the 30% target.
3892. **Mr Craig:** Fair enough.
3893. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Trevor, while you have the floor, do you want to deal with the issue of special schools and integration?
3894. **Mr Lunn:** Why is the Department so heart set against giving special schools integrated status?
3895. **Mrs Graham:** I do not think that the Department has a view that special schools should not have integrated status; it is the way that special schools are constituted. They see themselves as naturally, organically integrated, as we said earlier. Therefore, there is not the need for something called “integrated status” for those special schools.
3896. **Mr Lunn:** If one of them applies for integrated status from here on, would the Department be minded to allow it if it satisfied the criteria for an integrated school?
3897. **Dr Kingon:** We will come back to you with the detail on that. My understanding is that, at the minute, legislation prohibits a special school from becoming an integrated school. However, I would like to come back to you to confirm that.
3898. **Mr Lunn:** That is fair enough. You can come back and confirm that, Suzanne. I wonder whether that is correct. Why on earth would legislation prohibit such a transformation? If that is the rule, that is the rule. The logic would interest me. Why?
3899. **Dr Kingon:** We will come back to you about that position.
3900. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Can I ask a couple of questions about definitions? You gave a good reason why, from a practical point of view, widening shared education into all the section 75 groups would not be practical. People’s general perception, when we talk about shared education, is about across the religious divide. Obviously, that is clearly catered for. However, within that definition, you have also talked about socio-economic deprivation. To clarify, from the point of view of the qualification of shared education, if you had two schools in exactly the same sector, one from a fairly affluent area with children from a very affluent socio-economic background and the other from a more deprived area, with a virtually identical religious mix and being single identity, would that count in the definition of shared education if there were collaboration between those two schools?
3901. **Mrs Graham:** Where both schools have the same community background?
3902. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Yes. In the controlled sector, if you were talking about primary-school level and mixing a very affluent controlled primary school with 95%-plus of children from the broader Protestant/unionist community with a controlled primary school with 95%-plus of children from the Protestant/unionist community but much more deprived, does that count under this as shared education? To a certain extent,

- is that getting away from the notion? I would have thought that the driver behind this was particularly to, largely speaking, cross the community divide.
3903. **Dr Kingon:** There are a couple of points to make. The legislative definition is religious background and socio-economic. It is not “or”; it is “and”.
3904. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** So, effectively, it is both boxes in that regard.
3905. **Dr Kingon:** Having said that, there may be circumstances where schools of the same management type have different religious backgrounds, given the eccentricities of the system. In terms of applications to individual programmes, the Department will look carefully at everything case by case. However, the legislative definition is religious education “and” socio-economic, not “or”.
3906. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Is there a pecking order? For example, if a maintained school from a socially deprived background wanted to have a level of shared education and looked across a motorway or whatever and wanted to have a level of link with a controlled school also from a socially deprived background, is the lack of social mobility or status in that going to be a barrier to that being funded as shared education?
3907. **Dr Kingon:** In the Delivering Social Change project, we looked at all the applications case by case, and it is safe to say that the applications that we have received to date can all demonstrate a reasonable degree of social mixing. That issue has not arisen.
3908. The main thing is that we do not want to be prescriptive. We do not want to say, “This is only about this type of school and this type of school” because our system has so many eccentricities. There are controlled schools with majority Catholic populations. In Delivering Social Change, we have indicated that, in the majority of cases, we expect it to be schools of different management types cooperating.
3909. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Obviously, one of the issues that were raised by evidence from the Speedwell Trust was whole-school sharing. What assurances can we get that, whenever we are looking at it, we do not get simply tokenism in sharing; that it is not a question of ticking half a dozen boxes to show some level of activity. That would be almost like building up the brownie points and getting the badge as opposed to the notion that the shared-education activity should be based on a whole-school organisational involvement.
3910. **Dr Kingon:** In the Delivering Social Change signature project, the ETI has developed a shared-education continuum. At the beginning of the process, partnerships evaluate where they are in that process. The thrust of the project is that, in four key areas, they will develop their relationships. We expect to see an increase in the quantum of sharing, which is the number of year groups participating in the shared-education project, and the range of curricular areas that the sharing is in. That is built into the planning of the project.
3911. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** As part of that, it is really where the end game is in each of those. It may be that you are starting off with a limited level of direct involvement —
3912. **Dr Kingon:** Absolutely.
3913. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** — but, so long as there is a clear —
3914. **Dr Kingon:** There is a very clearly articulated —
3915. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** — pathway to sharing.
3916. **Mr A Bell:** The schools have to provide an action plan as part of their application as to how they are going to move. That action plan is looked at by the project board that approves the applications as to whether it believes that that is sufficient to get the school from where it says it is to where it aims to be.

3917. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** This is the final question I want to ask in connection with this. I appreciate that this does not relate to the post-primary sector. Particularly when people look at the significance of early years and particularly if we look at sharing from the point of view of community relations and academic achievement, to what extent will you reflect the need for sharing at early years in the obligations of the Bill?
3918. **Mr A Bell:** Early years are covered in the policy and in the Bill. As regards actual programmes, the Delivering Social Change programme targets schools specifically, but we have been working with the Special EU Programmes Body on the shared education thematic area for Peace IV. Peace IV will extend to schools that have not currently shared, as well as to early years and the youth sector. Indeed, we have asked the Education and Training Inspectorate for a continuing model specifically for the early years sector that ties in. In fact, they completed it just in the last couple of days, and I still have to look in detail at it. We have also asked them to do something similar for the youth sector, so that we have continuing models that are more appropriate to those individual sectors.
3919. **Mr McCausland:** You had a consultation process on the forthcoming legislation, but it says on page 131 that the number of attendees at the public meetings was small. How many meeting were there and how many people attended? What does “small” mean?
3920. **Mr A Bell:** We held three consultation events, one in Armagh, one in Belfast and one in Derry/Londonderry. There were probably fewer than 10 at each event. We catered for as many as wanted to come, but those were the numbers that turned up.
3921. **Mr McCausland:** You say fewer than 10; that could be two or nine. I would be interested to hear just how small the numbers were. We are told that there is evidence of huge demand for more integration and sharing, so it is surprising that across the whole of Northern Ireland you could not even get 30 people to turn up.
3922. **Mr A Bell:** As you know, the process is that we advertise public events fairly widely, and it is up to individuals —
3923. **Mr McCausland:** I appreciate that. What does it say that so few people did turn up?
3924. **Mr A Bell:** The events were held in the evening to facilitate as many people as possible who wished to attend. It is asking them to come out in the evening —
3925. **Mr McCausland:** If you are passionate about something, you will turn up.
3926. **Mr A Bell:** Absolutely, and those who did turn up were very passionate.
3927. **Mr McCausland:** It is just that there were not many of them.
3928. **Mr A Bell:** There were not many of them. Others used the questionnaire.
3929. **Mr McCausland:** Would it be possible to have the exact figures for each of the three events?
3930. **Mr A Bell:** Yes.
3931. **Mr McCausland:** I was reading John O’ Dowd’s ministerial foreword to the policy, and there is a line in it that I do not understand. He says:
- “My vision for the future of shared education is one of vibrant, self-improving education communities delivering educational benefits to learners, encouraging the efficient and effective use of resources”*
3932. — that is fine —
- “promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity”.*
3933. What does “equality of identity” mean?
3934. **Mr A Bell:** That is about people from different communities, who identify with a different community or who are from a different background coming together. It is equality across communities.
3935. **Mr McCausland:** Is it well expressed, though, if it is not clear? Does “equality

- of identity” refer to religious or cultural identity? What sort of identity?
3936. **Mr A Bell:** We are trying to be as inclusive as possible, and it is open to those of different identities to come together to fulfil —
3937. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Is there a difference between inclusive and vague?
3938. **Mr McCausland:** It is also incoherent.
3939. **Mr A Bell:** The only thing that I can say is that nobody raised it as an issue during the public consultation. You are the first person to do that.
3940. **Mr McCausland:** I think that there are certain things in life that people approach with a sort of glowing generosity where maybe they do not like to say those things. I can understand respect for diversity and community cohesion, but I think that the term “equality of identity” is meaningless. It needs to be much more specific and spelt out. I can understand that there is an attempt to get something that reads well with a lot of little phrases of about three or four words, but I stress that identity is multi-layered and it is many different things. It is a core issue in Northern Ireland and, if it is being mentioned in there, it is important that it is mentioned properly. I would like that to be relayed back.
3941. The other bit there — Jonathan Craig touched on it — is a recognised integrated school that is trying to reach the criteria. I think that I know the answer to this before asking: what about the school that has reached the criteria at some point but then slides away back because, for some reason or another, people from one community or another community walk away? I assume that that school also retains its integrated status.
3942. **Dr Kingon:** The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education works closely with those schools to help them to promote the integrated ethos. As part of the school development plan of an integrated school, the Department expects there to be significant emphasis on the integrated ethos and promoting the integrated ethos in the school.
3943. **Mr McCausland:** Do you have a graph for each school that shows how they are doing in terms of reaching those criteria?
3944. **Dr Kingon:** Yes; we do not have a graph, but we certainly monitor the figures.
3945. **Mr McCausland:** You would know whether a particular school was —
3946. **Dr Kingon:** I certainly have the figures. I might not know just off the top of my head, but yes.
3947. **Mr McCausland:** Even if one community almost entirely walked away from the school, it would still retain its status. The money would not be withdrawn.
3948. **Dr Kingon:** It is important to distinguish between funding for a grant-aided school and integrated status. Integrated status is bestowed through a development proposal process. It is statutory; it is in law. Once that is assumed through the development proposal process, it can only be taken away again via the development proposal process, which would have to come from the managing authority of the school. It would determine whether it wished to change its status to a management type of school.
3949. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** I think that Jonathan wants to come in on that one.
3950. **Mr Craig:** I have a supplementary to Nelson’s question. You have said a fascinating thing, Suzanne, because we all know how it is done. You call a meeting of the parents, and 51% of them have to agree to integrated status. Some of the decisions that have been made to go integrated have been extremely close. I am aware of one school where, really, that decision was made by three parents, and that was a school of several hundred pupils — and even more parents, for that matter. Are you aware of that process ever being kicked off for a school that has never met the other criteria set out in the definition of integrated?

3951. **Dr Kingon:** The ballot for parents is part of the statutory transformation process, so that ballot almost begins a process. The ballot of parents has to get the 51% that you talked about before a statutory development proposal can be published for transformation to integrated status. As part of the statutory transformation process, there will be a pre-consultation and a full public consultation on the proposal. At the end of the two-month statutory consultation, the Minister will make his decision based on all the pertinent facts. The school then becomes a controlled integrated or a grant-maintained integrated school in law, and that is the process. The parental ballot allows the school to go forward with publishing the proposal. It is not the end of the process. In looking at a development proposal for transformation, one of the factors that the Minister will look at is the community balance in the school and the community balance in the surrounding area and the likelihood that the school may, in future, achieve the community balance.
3952. **Mr Craig:** But, as my colleague quite rightly pointed out, Suzanne, if the balance is never achieved, but, more importantly, if local community support for the school actually lessens because of the integrated status, what mechanism is there, or what triggers the mechanism, to revisit the integrated status? I do not believe there is anything.
3953. **Dr Kingon:** It is a matter for the individual managing authority to consider the status of the school. As I said, it can only be reversed through another development proposal.
3954. **Mr McCausland:** If they did reverse, what would be the implications for the school financially?
3955. **Dr Kingon:** There would be no significant implications for the school financially in terms of its LMS budget. As I said earlier, some transformed schools get a very small amount of funding from the Department. The LMS budget is per pupil and would be unaffected.
3956. **Mr McCausland:** Finally, it seems to me that the process is somewhat fraudulent, in that the status does not get removed even though there are criteria there. The criteria are meaningless, in a sense.
3957. **Dr Kingon:** In looking at the proposal, the Minister will carefully take into account —
3958. **Mr McCausland:** I mean, five years, 10 years or 15 years on they become meaningless if the school either has never achieved the criteria or has achieved them and then slid back and fallen out.
3959. **Mrs Graham:** I think that we have to be careful here. We are reverting back to the concept of integrated education meaning just a balance of religion, as opposed to — as Suzanne articulated earlier — the whole concept of ethos. Every school will aspire to a particular ethos, whatever that is, depending on what the governors set as the ethos of the school. The truth of the matter is that we have integrated schools, controlled schools and maintained schools that do not actually fulfil the ethos that they aspire to. In any of those situations, what becomes important is what the school is doing in the round in order to meet the needs of its pupils.
3960. In terms of the five-year process, as you said, obviously inspection will come along to all schools at some point in time and will look very carefully at ethos. Unfortunately we do have schools where we have found the ethos to be unsatisfactory, horrifying as that may seem. For any school, if the ethos is not being fulfilled, that is irrespective of the numbers and the religious balance. All of the other elements around moral, spiritual and ethical education of children and young people are what come into play in ethos, and that is what has to be looked at. We have had lengthy discussions around that whole concept and we have to look at it in the round, particularly with regard to the integrated sector. The fact that a school aspires to achieve that does not mean that it always will. In those situations,

whatever the issue, that school has to be supported in order to allow it to realise that ethos again. That is the important thing for the children and young people.

3961. **Mr Newton:** I thank the members for coming this morning. I will just ask you a few short questions around the shared education programmes themselves. You will be aware of Sir Robert Salisbury's comments around shared education programmes and his thoughts that educational improvement should be the first step, but that that should be quickly followed by improvements in reconciliation between communities, and that he would measure the success of shared education in those two ways. How does the Department suggest that shared education should be measured? Is that likely to be tied in with any funding mechanism that would be offered?

3962. **Mrs Graham:** The important thing in looking at shared education was for us in the Department to try to learn and benefit from what has happened in the past by analysing what worked and did not work in previous programmes. The key concept in shared education is ensuring that it is totally focused on the Northern Ireland curriculum. I saw Sir Bob's comments and, to me, they were very much in keeping with what I have said this morning. He was very clear that educational improvement is always, first and foremost, really important in a school. That is what it is there for and, obviously, that is the aim of the Department. He also saw, as I have said this morning, no tension between the concept of educational standards, as I call it, and reconciliation outcomes. At times, there has been a suggestion that the two things are separate. Integral to our curriculum are the thinking skills and personal capabilities, the attitudes and dispositions, and the subject areas that I talked to you about this morning — citizenship, learning for life and work, and PDMU in the primary curriculum. Earlier, you made a comment about lip service. In the past, we have seen programmes which have been interesting but quite

superficial. There is something for all schools in ensuring that they can see what the value of this is for them. They are busy; they are doing a lot of things; they are trying to get through all of the programmes that they have. How is this going to be valuable to them, their principal and the pupils? Ensuring that all of those programmes are very definitely curriculum-based helps people to see that this is about improving both educational standards and reconciliation, and that both of those things are educational outcomes. We are trying to educate our young people to achieve highly, obviously, but also to be contributors to society in the future and to be contributors to the economy.

3963. The concept of measuring reconciliation outcomes is one that we have all struggled with. We have worked on this, and, certainly, the Education and Training Inspectorate, in designing the work that it has done for evaluation, is working very closely with Queen's in looking at how we actually get at the heart of measuring this, as opposed to hoping that it is all going to work out. There is probably no one else who has done any more detailed work than what we have done here. I think that we are at the cutting edge of looking at how we measure progression when it comes to the concept of reconciliation and, obviously, respecting difference, tolerance and all of those things.

3964. We started the process of articulating how progression is achieved in the evaluation of the IFI project that Andrew has talked about. I think that we made good progress in doing that, but we are not there yet. That is something that we will, hopefully, gain from and learn from by way of interacting with all of the schools and, ultimately, the youth and early years organisations over the next period.

3965. **Mr Newton:** You have agreed that the educational end, and success in that field, is fairly easily measured. Reconciliation is a bit more difficult to measure. How would funding be tied into a measure that is fairly nebulous at times?

3966. **Mrs Graham:** Andrew and Suzanne have referred to the application process that has been put in place for the DSC programme. It is about schools demonstrating how they are going to work together and set targets for themselves over a period. The continuum that ETI has developed is looking at the various stages of improving educational standards and reconciliation outcomes. That, at the minute, is a guide that allows schools to look at where they think they are at the moment. That will be tested by ETI on its baseline visits to the schools, when it will ask, “Is this an accurate self-reflection of where you are at?” and “Where is the evidence to demonstrate that?”. Over the course of the four years, each school will demonstrate how it has progressed. Along the way, ETI will refine that continuum in order to make those performance indicators sharper and clearer for everyone and something that all schools can use over that time. We already have indicators under the CRED policy for looking at community involvement. Beginning to combine all of those things and looking at what is the best of those should give us a more rounded product.
3967. **Mr A Bell:** It is probably worth saying that overlaying that level that Faustina is talking about, at the project level, the business case has identified three measures that Queen’s, which has done a lot of work around this measurement and reconciliation, has come up with. They are across good friendship, positive action tendencies and inter-group anxiety. So we have very clear measures for the Delivering Social Change signature project that we will expect to be moving, and we set out targets for those. Part of the difficulty is that we need to make sure that this work does not become a bureaucratic overhead for schools and that it is understandable to teachers. We have asked the inspectorate, over the four-year period, to consider other measures that we can use. As Faustina said, we are at the forefront of work to make that measurement easier, so that people are not trying to understand what cross-group friendship means, or positive action tendencies, or inter-group anxiety.
3968. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** That is quite important from the point of view of the burden it would place on schools. We have all seen, I am sure, whether in education or in other sectors, that, if you have projects which are effectively getting funded, quite often the money goes to the organisation that can produce the best paper copy — the best form-fillers — rather than necessarily where the greatest need is. Adopting criteria and conditions that are clear and understandable to people will be of significance; it is not just the person who can fit the most jargon into a particular application form.
3969. **Mr A Bell:** Do not forget that, through the Education Authority, we have put development officers in place to work with schools, and part of their role is working with schools through the application process. All schools, for example, in both the first and second tranches have attended workshops on the whole application process. Development officers will work with individual schools to try and overcome that problem, because as you say, some schools are better at filling out forms than others, and we do not want anybody penalised because of that.
3970. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** It is the same with any sort of funding application.
3971. **Mr A Bell:** Absolutely.
3972. **Mr Newton:** I just want to build on the point that Peter has raised. In evidence to the Committee there was a strong feeling that there needed to be support for building shared education — not just professional support to the teacher directly involved, but more widely to the board of governors and the parents. Am I right in thinking that the Department has accepted that training and support will be provided, and if so, what form will that take?
3973. **Mr A Bell:** That is the work that Faustina referred to in her opening statement around a capacity-building strategy.

That strategy will cover all those areas: teachers, schools, types of support and how to deal with parents. All those issues will be covered. We are working with those in the area and have invited them, as Faustina said in her opening statement, to bring forward a proposal on how best to achieve that. There are already a number of programmes out there, but the last thing we want to see is everybody doing this in a very piecemeal fashion. We want a very strategic approach. That is what we tried to achieve through the IFI programmes, which resulted in programmes such as the CREDIT programme at Stranmillis and St Mary's coming to fruition, which was very well accepted by teachers. The Committee heard that referenced in a number of previous witness statements. We are very much seeking that strategic approach.

3974. **Mr Newton:** I take up a point that Nelson made earlier about the cultural certainty of schools participating in these programmes. The phrase "capacity building" is often used. I am never sure what it actually means, either in this context or in others. How would capacity building address the cultural certainty or cultural identity of pupils?

3975. **Mrs Graham:** The capacity building that Andrew referred to — apologies if that sounds like educational jargon — is professional learning for teachers. It is about providing training that allows them first and foremost to address their own bias and what they perceive to be difficult issues in interacting with children and young people in the same forum. For example, we talked about section 75 this morning. A skilful teacher will be able to handle the cross-community issues and any other issues around identity that a young person might bring — they will seldom have only one issue — in a safe forum, first and foremost, as those young people deal with all of the challenges that they have. So the capacity-building focus is first on us as adults. Very often what we see is that it is we, the adults, who bring more problems and are less open to all the things that we are considering

here regarding the future than our children and young people. Equally, if those children and young people are not taught in a condition and a situation in which such openness about who they want to be and who they feel they are, there can be more damage than progress. It is about teachers exploring the various identities that they feel that they bring and, ultimately, from the Department's perspective, the approaches that teachers will use to work with children and young people and their experiences in training mirroring what we expect to see in the Northern Ireland curriculum. We should see all the things that we expect in the curriculum in teacher education as well, and all the issues that we have talked about today are in our curriculum. We are talking about tolerance, empathy, a respect for difference and being able to articulate your concerns clearly.

3976. I am sure that you are aware that we have examples of the schools or children that Sir Bob talked about. There was, in fact, a young woman in a school who had not contributed at all in an entire day. That is quite shocking, but it happens. We need to ensure that our young people can be articulate in expressing their views, whatever those views are, without necessarily causing offence but still being confident in expressing them. Our teachers also need to be able to do that. Sometimes, particularly in a teaching situation, people will avoid things that may in any way suggest conflict rather than addressing them, because they are worried that they might do more damage than good. We have to equip our teachers with the skills to feel confident and comfortable about doing precisely that.

3977. **Mr A Bell:** Before I worked in the Department, my post was in training. A general definition of capacity building is: what skills do you require to deliver something? In this case, the definition is: what skills do you require to deliver shared education? You then do a needs analysis to see what skills are out there and identify where the gaps are. The capacity-building strategy is simply about how to address those gaps. What is the



- strategy for addressing those gaps to get from where you are now to where you want to be?
3978. **Mr Newton:** Faustina, my question is on the Minister for Employment and Learning's role in the teaching of the skills for the new intake of students at Stranmillis or St Mary's. What changes are there in their teaching programmes to include shared education and skills? What are the knowledge gaps, as Andrew outlined them?
3979. **Mrs Graham:** It is important to say that, particularly across the IFI programmes, a number of courses were introduced for teachers through our teacher training colleges.
3980. **Mr Newton:** Are you telling me that changes are now in place in their curricula?
3981. **Mrs Graham:** In initial teacher education?
3982. **Mr Newton:** Yes.
3983. **Mrs Graham:** As Andrew said, we have asked the educational stakeholders, working collaboratively, to bring forward their ideas to us. I will be attending the Committee to talk about teacher education in a few weeks' time. It is important that all our teacher educators work collaboratively. It is not a case of everyone doing something different or separately. We have asked for that work to be done so that it will be an agreed strategy, and I like to think that that will definitely impact initial teacher education. As you recognise, that is not our responsibility as such.
3984. **Mr McCausland:** I accept that it is not your responsibility, but the two things are utterly and totally inseparable. There are two factors: a psychological factor and a practical factor. The psychological factor is that, quite often, people have come from a socio-economically deprived background, done well, become teachers and moved on. How do they relate to the community that they initially came from? Do they turn their back on it, or do they retain some affinity? The practical factor is that, in many of those socio-economically disadvantaged areas, I do not know anybody who plays the recorder, but I know an awful lot of people who play the B-flat flute. So what instrument is taught in schools? What affinity with and interest in it do the children have? Cultural issues are at the heart of this, which is why the identity of culture, which we discussed earlier, needs to be teased out and honestly answered. For years, people have shied away from the issue. There is a cultural confidence and assurance in certain sectors that is only starting to come into the controlled sector in particular. Some schools are doing really good work. We need to push and promote that, and that is where teacher training and —  
[Inaudible.]
3985. **Mr A Bell:** Sorry, to address that point: it is probably worth mentioning an addition to what you have previously seen. Following public consultation, we have picked that up in the policy. The Department has a commitment to liaise with higher education institutions and other relevant education providers on aligning their approaches to professional learning for shared education practitioners. So we have recognised —
3986. **Mr McCausland:** What paragraph is that?
3987. **Mr A Bell:** This is a new paragraph under key action 9, "Develop the Workforce". It has gone into the policy as a result of the public consultation, so it is now specified.
3988. **Mrs Overend:** Thank you very much for attending and for bearing with us through all our questions. I will pick up on a few earlier points. You talked about the highly important role that schools' actions have in the community. How is that measured? Is it how the school building is used or how students participate in the community? Is there a measurement of that? Do you have certain set criteria, or is it done case by case?
3989. **Mr A Bell:** That is made clear under community connections in the shared education framework that ETI has

- developed and is continuing to develop. It outlines that, in the early stage of sharing, we would very much expect engagement with parents in the wider community. As you move through, it builds, and indicators of what should be done are given at each stage. The basic level is “defining” schools at a very early stage. They then move to the “developing” stage, and community connections will build to do more work in the community. By the time they reach the top level of “embedding”, we expect schools to have good connections with the community; parents to be well aware of what the shared education programmes are doing; schools to be using community resources; and, when possible, bringing in people from the community with experience of different areas — for example, if history is being taught, there may be people with a recent experience.
3990. There are all those levels, and the school should also be aware of what is happening in the community. The curriculum sets out minimum standards, but one thing that we want schools to do is to take those standards and apply them to that group of children and young people as well as possible. If they understand what those children and young people face in their local community, they can better address that. It is all those levels, and maybe that answers your question.
3991. **Mrs Overend:** It is interesting to hear those details. Thank you. Another question occurred to me during our discussion. Has the Department looked at other policies, such as the entitlement framework, that may work against the ideal of promoting shared education? The shared partnership in Magherafelt in my area promotes all schools working together, but people back off and want to deliver subjects on their own because of the entitlement framework.
3992. **Dr Kingon:** Our experience of the applications process has been that schools being initially paired with each other through area learning communities has helped them to deliver on the entitlement framework requirement, because those schools may not have been able to deliver on their own. Some of these partnerships have come through strongly in the applications to shared education. That experience of collaboration and cooperation with another school and the practical difficulties that that can sometimes entail in timetabling and so on is a good basis from which to go forward with shared education. We do not see any particular tension there at all.
3993. **Mr A Bell:** As we have developed the policy, we have looked to other policies in the Department. Obviously, there is a suite of policies, so this needs to fit with others. Part of the work we do is to try to identify whether there are contradictions or difficulties or whether another policy is working against what we are trying to do. That would have been part of the policy development route that we went down.
3994. **Mrs Overend:** The Department’s stats identify that 24% of schools are not involved in sharing. In order to ensure wider and non-tokenistic participation, does the Department believe that a legal obligation is required for schools to be involved in shared education?
3995. **Mr A Bell:** The experience that we have built up over a number of years and all the research indicate that you need community support. If we started obliging communities to go down that route, you are going against that. We know from our knowledge in this area in this Province that, once you start forcing people to do things, that is when people will walk away from the position. We want to encourage and facilitate shared education as opposed to imposing it on communities.
3996. **Mrs Overend:** In respect of employment practices in schools, the Minister suggested that section 75 obligations might be extended to all schools but that a public consultation would be required. Will the Department comment on whether it believes that a legal obligation might be usefully placed on schools to promote good relations

- and perhaps normalise employment practices in schools?
3997. **Mr A Bell:** That was one of the recommendations from the ministerial advisory group report. That group did a lot of work and a very widespread consultation process before coming up with that. That happens in other jurisdictions. There were a lot of concerns in some of your previous sessions about the bureaucracy that would be involved. Other jurisdictions have what is sometimes referred to as an “equality-lite” scheme for schools. It is light on bureaucracy as opposed to light in ensuring that they meet the groups. There are other ways to move that forward, and we would want to explore this area as part of that. OFMDFM is in the lead on that process. The Minister has written to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to ask for their views initially about moving this forward.
3998. **Mrs Overend:** When did he write to them?
3999. **Mr A Bell:** He wrote to them a number of months back.
4000. **Mrs Overend:** What is “a number”? Twelve? Twenty-four?
4001. **Mr A Bell:** I do not know the exact date off the top of my head, but it is probably more than six months ago.
4002. **Mrs Overend:** That is a reasonable amount of time in which to have expected a response.
4003. You might find that some schools will amalgamate because of school numbers or will work more closely together because of the risk of closure. Do you look on that favourably?
4004. **Mr A Bell:** Again, there are criteria, particularly for the Delivering Social Change signature project. As we work down through the policy level, we set out more detailed criteria in the individual programmes that deliver that policy. The criteria in the Delivering Social Change signature project state that, first, schools must be sustainable. When they come together for the shared educational experience, the expectation is that they are doing it for the right reasons. That is one reason why they have to set that out in their action plans. Each school individually self-assesses against the continuum model, and they then work as a partnership to see where it sits. We have made the process fairly robust while not being too bureaucratic for schools to follow so that we avoid the situations that you are talking about, where they are coming at it from the point of view that it allows them to continue to exist as a school.
4005. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** I have a couple of final questions. Drumragh and Methodist College highlighted their individual circumstances. They are concerned that shared education, according to the definition, cannot really happen in a single site or school. Why is there a requirement for more than one school to be involved?
4006. **Mr A Bell:** It goes back to what I said earlier about the dual aims of improving educational outcomes and, as part of that, reconciliation outcomes. There is a lot of international evidence that, when a school collaborates with another school, it can raise standards. It is based on that evidence. A very good school can raise the standards of other schools and share with them how it has reached that standard.
4007. **Mrs Graham:** You referred to two schools that I am not familiar with. I do not know what those two schools are doing. However, we would have to ask questions. If someone is saying that they are doing all these things but is unwilling to work with somebody else, it raises questions.
4008. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Although I was not here when that evidence was given, to be fair, it is maybe somewhat pejorative to say that they are unwilling to do that. They are saying that they are providing a particular setting in which communities are mixing.
4009. **Mrs Graham:** That is great.

4010. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** They are simply asking why they are being excluded from that as opposed to —
4011. **Mrs Graham:** We need those schools to participate. The very fact they are doing those things makes it all the more important that they participate. As Andrew said, whether it is educational attainment, reconciliation outcomes or both, a stronger school that works with another school that is in need of support, needs to improve and recognises that need will pull up what is happening in that school. Hopefully, the stronger school will be able to take credit for the support that it provides.
4012. **Dr Kingon:** If you look at the practicalities of the Delivering Social Change programme, you will see that the funding that is available is to assist with transport and provide substitute cover. Andrew referred to that. It is funding to facilitate inter-school collaboration, which is recognised as having additional costs over and above a school's LMS budget. A school on its own will not incur those types of cost in the very good work that it is doing by itself.
4013. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Trevor, you have a final question on the Moy situation and the shared campus.
4014. **Mr Lunn:** I am not going to go down to the Moy again. The question was about the measurement of education and the societal benefit of shared education schemes. You have answered it at least three times, so you are off the hook.
4015. **Mrs Graham:** Thank you.
4016. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** On that note, I thank you for your evidence. There are a couple of issues that we could clear up. It may be useful for the witnesses to hear this. This is a two-stage process. An inquiry report will be drafted for debate, if we can get agreement on it, before the summer recess. We are also acutely aware that the Department hopes to take the legislative situation to the Executive, and we are keen to help with that. Given the time frame, I made a suggestion earlier. Members should email Peter with any thoughts, and we could give an initial view to the Department. The aim is to get something drafted next week so that we can give our initial view — one or two pages — to the Department.
4017. **The Committee Clerk:** This is about the Bill, Chair.
4018. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Yes. It is specifically about the Bill.
4019. **Mrs Graham:** That would be helpful.
4020. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** Hopefully, we can then agree a line and get it to the Department. That would be useful for next week's meeting.
4021. **Mr McCausland:** I am thinking about that phrase "equality of identity". There is a lot to be said for the old Community Relations Council model: equality, diversity and interdependence. It is the three-legged stool. It is a simple way of expressing what is in there.
4022. **The Chairperson (Mr Weir):** If members have any thoughts, I ask them to send them to the Clerk so that we can have something drafted for next week. Hopefully, we might be able to agree something, but maybe that is the naivety of the honeymoon period.
4023. Thank you for your forbearance. We have had two hours' worth, so there is a lot of meat on this, and I suspect that this may be stage one of a number of stages.





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ISBN 978-0-339-60590-9



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