

Values & Ethos of Integrated Education





**The first Parent Steering Group for
Integrated Education 1972 – 1981**

**Extract from Letter by
Mrs Elizabeth Benton, May 1974**

“I don’t think we can talk about peace and reconciliation without talking about children – our children. They are our hope for the future - our citizens of tomorrow. But how can we become one community, one people when our children continue to grow up separately as well as being educated separately?”

We believe, that the children should mix together when the parents desire it and where better than in schools?”

Ulster parents break down a 50-year religious barrier

School of hope opens with a gun guard

A GROUP of youngsters who represent a ray of hope for Ulster went to school under armed guard yesterday.

The 28 Catholic and Protestant children were taking their places at the province's first integrated school for more than 50 years.

Police threw an armed cordon around Lagan College, which overlooks the banks of Belfast's River Lagan, because of fears that it would be picketed by Loyalist extremists opposed to the school's philosophy.

But their precautions proved unnecessary. There were no demonstrators as the pupils, all aged about 11, slipped into the school whose first home is a Scout hut.

It is the brainchild of an inter-denominational body called 'All Children Together,' who had hoped to begin the term with 60 pupils on the register.

Backing

Instead less than half that number turned up in the school's black, grey and white uniform.

Some of the pupils' families have shunned publicity, partly because of fear of intimidation. But yesterday others spoke warmly about the new venture.

Mrs Yvonne Gilmour, whose son Patrick attends the school, said: 'We chose it because we felt this was the only way my son could get to know Catholics and Protestants together.'

Parents are being encouraged to help in the running of the school — especially preparing meals and out-of-

By NOREEN ERSKINE

class activities. Mrs Gilmour, a freelance sewing consultant, plans to set up a clothes design club for the pupils.

Those who cannot afford the college's £600-a-year fees pay what they can—in some cases as little as £20.

The school does not yet receive Government funds, although it hopes to qualify within a few years.

It has already, however, won the backing of several charities.

One, the Rowntree Trust, is providing an index-linked £15,000 annual grant for the next three years to help cover the salaries of headmistress Mrs Sheila Greenfield and her staff of eight.

Mrs Greenfield, a 43-year-old history graduate, moved from Sheffield to Belfast with her husband and two children last year. Her pupils will be taught together for every subject except religious education.

Most Protestant school-children in Ulster attend schools managed and taught by Protestants while most Catholics attend church schools.



TOGETHERNESS . . . headmistress Sheila Greenfield with boys and girls, Catholics and Protestants

Lagan College secretary and treasurer Mr Tony Spencer said that Ulster opinion polls had shown that three quarters of adults wanted integrated schooling for children. 'It will work for those who want to make it work.'

Mrs Eleanor Bailey is sending her daughters, Clair and Elaine, to the school,

even though they have to change buses three times on the 20-mile journey from their home in Antrim.

Mrs Bailey said: 'Integrated education is very close to my heart. I feel this is one way my children can live in peace and harmony with others.'

She and her husband,

John, a fireman, had to make financial sacrifices. 'But we think this school is well worth it.'

The philosophy of Lagan College is summed up in a quotation made in 1826 by the former Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It appears on the front page of the college prospectus, and says:

'I do not know of any measures which would prepare the way for a better feeling in Ireland than uniting children at an early age and bringing them up in the same school, leading them to commune with one another, and to form these little intimacies and friendships, which often subsist through life.'

Day 1 at Lagan College— September 1981

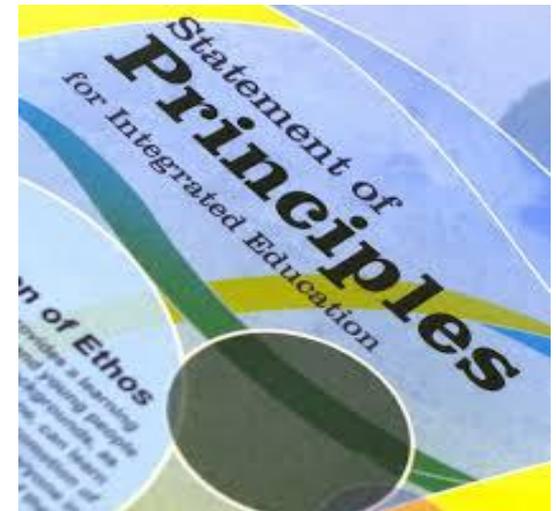


What is Integrated Education?

“Education together in school of children and young people drawn from the Protestant and Catholic traditions, with the aim of providing for them an excellent education that **gives recognition to and promotes the expression of these two main traditions.**”

The integrated school, while essentially Christian in character, **welcomes those of all faiths and none...** The core aim is to provide children and young people with a caring and **enhanced educational experience, thus empowering them as individuals to affect positive change in a shared society.**”

NICIE Statement of Principles (2008)



Underpinning principle:

bringing children of different social, cultural and faith backgrounds together, in a sustained shared learning environment, creates opportunities to develop understanding, respect and acceptance of each other's differences.



NICIE Statement of Principles

DNA of Integrated Education

4 core principles:

- ❖ **Equality**
- ❖ **Faith and Values**
- ❖ **Parental Involvement**
- ❖ **Social Responsibility**



EQUALITY

Each school aspires to an annual intake of 40:40:20 %

Board of **Governors** comprising at least 40% members from a perceived Catholic background and 40% from a perceived Protestant background

Active recruitment of **teachers** whose cultural or traditional background reflects that of existing or potential pupils



EQUALITY

Maintaining high academic and vocational standards **within an all-ability** framework and providing equal access to the curriculum for all its pupils

Supporting the personal and professional **development** of all **members of staff**, with particular emphasis on enhancing the integrated learning experience of each pupil

Ensuring all **policies** developed by the school reflect and respect the diversity within the school community

Taking a **democratic** approach to all **relationships** between pupils, staff, parents and governors



FAITH and VALUES

Pupils will **learn together** all that can reasonably be expected for them to learn together

Facilitate **specific provision** for Catholic pupils whose parents wish them to undergo **sacramental preparation**

Seek to acknowledge **religious and cultural celebrations** which are representative of other faiths

Encourage **religious and community leaders to visit** and participate in school
Pupils will be introduced to the ideas, beliefs and practices of the **major world religions and humanist philosophies**

Alternative provision will be made for those pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in any religious activities or classes

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Integrated school delivers the curriculum on an all-ability and inclusive basis:

Respects the **uniqueness of every pupil** and acknowledges their entitlement to personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development in the attainment of individual potential.

Pupils are encouraged to:

Understand and engage with non-violent means of **conflict resolution**

Demonstrate **mutual respect and understanding** towards others, and develop tolerance and trust of those who are different

Nurture **self- confidence** and **self-respect**

Appreciate the **interdependence** between society and the natural environment it inhabits



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The integrated school :

Delivers the **curriculum** in a way that reflects its particular ethos. Subjects and activities offered, and the resources complementing their delivery, should reflect the diversity within the school's own pupil population

Has a duty to be open its **relationships** with school, learning partnerships, churches and other local institutions

Should present itself to the wider community as a **shared civic space**



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Maintaining significant levels of **parental representation** on the BOG

Creating a **forum for parents** which cultivates and focuses parental support for the school

Establishes appropriate arrangements and procedures for individual and collective **communication** between parents and i) the principal
ii) other members of teaching staff, iii) the governing body

Ensuring that **parents** are made fully aware of the school's integrated **ethos**



Practitioners and highly committed parents developed anti-bias guidance materials

First document presented
1998/reprinted in 2002

**Redrafted manual &
accredited training 2008:**

‘ABC: Promoting an
Approach
to Education in Northern Ireland’

Recognised in CRED Policy (2011) as
an example of good practice in
teacher professional development

Updated edition - 2014



‘... Given the nature of our education system, children and young people need opportunities to learn about themselves and their culture, and about others and the similarities and differences..... They need to build positive relationships with young people from different backgrounds and to dispel negative perceptions and images about those who are different from them; the self-confidence to have pride in their own tradition; and the resilience to deal with intolerance or prejudice.’

Department of Education’s CRED Policy, 2011



Thinking behind the Anti-Bias Approach

Children arrive at school with established attitudes / beliefs

** some negative and biased

Environment and social conditioning may reinforce

** prejudice

** conventional wisdom about what is 'normal', 'good',
'positive'

** social inequalities

**Bias prevents young people from developing their full
potential**

** emotional ** intellectual ** psychological



ABC training realises potential of schools to:

acknowledge diversity
challenge bias / prejudice
promote equality / inclusion

How?

Exploring
** attitudes
** values
** behaviours & practices



Developing awareness of aspects of an anti-bias approach

Applying learning to own work context



Anti-Bias Practice

Staff:

Challenge bias / prejudice
and discrimination

Promote positive values around
diversity and equality

Engage in constructive dialogue

Monitor, review and adapt



Anti-bias in Education - the outcome

- **The child/young person:**
develops a confident/strong identity
as an individual and member of a
cultural group.
- develops skills to negotiate the day to day
natural discomfort, tensions, problems or
conflicts that can arise from difference.
- develops an ability to recognise bias and injustice.
- learns and practices a variety of ways to act in the face of bias
expressed by others
- Becomes an up-stander rather than a by-stander

