

Integrated Education Section 10 Report



Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022
Department of Education Section 10 Report to be
laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly
April 2024

Contents

List of Abbreviations	4
Executive Summary	5
Section 1	6
Introduction	6
Background on the Integrated Education Act 2022	6
Section 2.....	8
Assessing and Monitoring Demand for Integrated Education	8
Research on demand for Integrated Education.....	8
Defining Demand.....	9
DE Approach	10
The number of schools by school type and management type, 2018/19- 2023/24	11
Pupils by school type and management type, 2023/24.....	12
Pupils in Integrated education ¹ , 2018/19 - 2023/24	13
Integrated Education provision by LGD	13
Additional survey material.....	14
Identifying gaps in existing integrated education provision.....	15
Meeting Demand for Integrated Education	18
Scope	18
Over subscription	18
Oversubscription for IE places at year 8 by LGD since 2018/19.....	19
School management type of 2nd preference for those pupils with a 1st preference of Integrated post primary Sept 2023	20
Modelling of Potential demand for Integrated Education considering conversion of unmet 1 st IE preferences to 2 nd preference	21
DE Action	22
Consultation with Sector Representatives	23
Section 3.....	24
DE performance of functions in respect of integrated education.....	24
Conclusion	26
Section 4.....	27
DE arrangements for oversight of its ALBs.....	27
Evidence Based Assurance and Accountability.....	28
Governance and Accountability Reviews (GARs)	29
Conclusion	30
Section 5.....	31

Progress in Integrated Education	31
DE assessment of the manner and extent to which other educational bodies have performed their functions in respect of integrated education.....	31
NICIE.....	31
EA	33
CSSC	34
Other ALBs.....	35
Section 6.....	36
Looking to the future	36
Successes and Failures in Respect of the Provision of Integrated Education	36
Extent to which the Purpose of Integrated Education has been Achieved.....	36
Conclusion	38
Appendix A.....	39
Over/Under subscription for integrated education school at post primary level 2023/24 ..	39
Appendix B	41
Working draft OBA Framework	41

List of Abbreviations

ALB	Arm's Length Bodies
APTIS	Association of Principals in Integrated Schools
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CnaG	Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
CSSC	Controlled Schools Support Council
DE	Department of Education ('the Department')
DP	Development Proposals
EA	Education Authority
EIEA	Excellence in Integrated Education Award
FETO	Fair Employment Treatment Order
GAR	Governance and Accountability Reviews
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated
GTCNI	General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland
IEF	Integrated Education Fund
IMIE	Irish Medium and Integrated Education
ISFA	Integrated Schools Finance Association
MCA	Middletown Centre for Autism
MSFM	Management Statement and Financial Memorandum
NDPB	Non-Governmental Public Body
NICIE	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
NILT	Northern Ireland Life and Times
NIO	Northern Ireland Office
OBA	Outcomes Based Approach
PfG	Programme for Government
YCNI	Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Executive Summary

This report provides an assessment of the performance of functions relating to integrated education in Northern Ireland during the reporting period, as required by Section 10 of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act). The report evaluates the performance of the Department of Education (DE) and other education bodies in respect of integrated education, as well as the levels of demand for and supply of integrated education. It identifies successes and challenges in respect of the provision of integrated education and attempts to assess the extent to which the purpose of integrated education has been achieved.

This report provides an update on the progress made in implementing the Act, as required under Section 10 of the Act, covering the following areas:

1. **Short Assessment:** An update on the progress made by DE in implementing the Act, including the implementation of the Action Plan, Development Proposals (DPs), and updates from Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) such as the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the Education Authority (EA).
2. **Data on Demand:** An analysis of the demand for integrated education in Northern Ireland, including the provision of integrated education as a percentage of the total number of schools and enrolment, a breakdown of integrated education provision by locality and phase, travel distance for integrated education and potential unmet demand.
3. **Delivering on the Vision for Integrated Education** creating, '*A vibrant and supported network of sustainable integrated schools providing high-quality integrated education*':
4. An assessment of the successes and failures in delivering the vision for integrated education, including input from sectoral bodies.

The report highlights areas where additional action is required to further the delivery of the vision for integrated education in Northern Ireland.

Section 1

Introduction

The report covers the period of two years following the Act's Royal Assent and subsequent intervals in line with the budget framing timetable, with a focus on the functions outlined in the Act and other relevant legislation. It aims to evaluate the extent to which DE and other education bodies have fulfilled their responsibilities in encouraging, facilitating and supporting integrated education, assess the levels of demand and supply, and outline the achievements and challenges in achieving the purpose of integrated education.

This is the first report covering the period April 2022 – April 2024.

Background on the Integrated Education Act 2022

The Act obtained Royal Assent on 26 April 2022 following its passage through the Assembly. All provisions, unless otherwise specified, came into force six months after the Act received Royal Assent - 26 October 2022.

The Act imposes a range of statutory requirements on DE to encourage, facilitate and now support integrated education.

The Act is structured to ensure a comprehensive approach to integrated education, with Section 5 providing a detailed legal definition of "support" for integrated education. This section mandates DE to identify, assess, monitor, and aim to meet the demand for integrated education by the provision of sufficient places in integrated schools.

Section 6 of the Act defines DEs general duties in relation to the development of integrated education including seeking information on parental preference and ascertaining demand.

Section 10 of the Act introduces a reporting requirement on the Department. This section mandates DE to prepare and lay before the Northern Ireland Assembly a report on the exercise of its functions under the Act at least once every three years. This report, known as the Section 10 Report, provides an overview of the progress made in supporting the development of integrated education.

The Section 10 Report must include information on the demand for integrated education, the steps taken by DE to meet this demand, and the provision of places in integrated schools.

In drafting this report, DE has engaged with relevant stakeholders, including the EA, NICIE, sectoral bodies, and other groups such as the Integrated Education Fund and

the Integrated AlumNI representing the interests of those involved in integrated education.

Section 2

Assessing and Monitoring Demand for Integrated Education

Effective planning for education provision requires a clear understanding of demand in a system that aims to reflect parental preferences for their children's education. An understanding of demand is central to this process as it determines the extent to which parents would prefer their children to be educated in the integrated sector.

The Act places a duty on the Department to assess, monitor and aim to meet demand for integrated education within the context of Area Planning and overall sustainability of the school estate, which must remain at the forefront of any considerations.

A consistent theme throughout the engagement process is the definition of demand for integrated education. The divergent opinions on what constitutes demand reflect the complexity of this issue.

While the Act does not provide a definition of demand for integrated education, Section 5 defines support in terms of identifying, assessing, monitoring, and aiming to meet the demand for integrated education provision within the context of Area Planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate. This includes monitoring the number and success of applications for integrated education and providing sufficient places in integrated schools to meet demand (Section 5(a) and (b)).

Section 6 of the Act broadly defines demand for integrated education as ascertaining the extent to which parents would prefer their children to be educated at grant-maintained integrated or controlled integrated schools rather than at schools that are not grant-maintained or controlled integrated schools. In recognition of this, DE is currently working to develop and agree on processes to assess and monitor demand for integrated education across Northern Ireland. This involves engaging with a range of stakeholders, including education partners, parents, and advocacy groups, to ensure a wide-ranging and balanced approach.

Research on demand for Integrated Education

While societal level survey data shows a high level of openness to considering integrated education, this inclination is not always reflected in school admission choices. This discrepancy may be due to a variety of factors, including the availability of integrated education options, the perceived quality of education provided, and the location of integrated schools.

This issue was identified and explored in a research report issued by the Integrated Education Fund (IEF), titled "Assessing Demand for Integrated Education in Northern

Ireland".¹ This report has informed DEs thinking around demand for integrated education and the process for identifying demand against uptake. DE worked in collaboration with the IEF who funded the above research on demand produced by ARK.

The ARK research report noted that demand for integrated education can be categorised in two parts; (i) societal level inclination towards integrated education, which reflects the general openness of parents and guardians when considering integrated education for their children, and (ii) parental preference made for school admission, which reflects the specific pragmatic choices that parents and guardians make when applying to schools.

Societal level survey data shows around two thirds of those surveyed are open to considering integrated education. However, this inclination is not borne out through school admission preferences. This disparity reflects the fact that parents consider a wide range of factors when expressing school admission preferences and their actual behaviour does not reflect that wider survey inclination.

The evidence from the ARK research report and findings from the ongoing Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey which has included questions on this issue in the past, notes that several other factors influence parental preferences. These include perceived quality of education, location, travel distance, child-care arrangements, attendance of siblings, family history in addition to the school's ethos.

Defining Demand

To fully assess and measure demand it is important to identify and define it in a way that is understood by all stakeholders. In assessing demand for integrated education, DE will consider both elements of demand, namely Societal Demand and Behavioural Demand. These are defined as follows:

- *Societal Demand*

This is evidence of demand taken from a Northern Ireland wide survey of parents on their inclination towards Integrated Education and the factors they consider when expressing school preferences.

- *Behavioural Demand*

This is indicated by school preferences as expressed via the school admission system at entry to nursery, primary and post primary school.

¹ [policybrief25.pdf \(ark.ac.uk\)](#)

DE Approach

Assessing and monitoring demand for integrated education is a complex and ongoing process. DE is committed to developing and implementing robust processes to ensure that the provision of integrated education is responsive to the needs and preferences of parents and students in Northern Ireland.

DE obtained an excerpt of admissions-based data from EA via a data sharing agreement that provides pupil level information on admissions preferences and outcomes. The Department's Integrated Education Act Implementation Team, supported by colleagues from DE Statistics and Research Team, have prepared a range of analyses of this material.

No single metric provides a suitable measure of demand for integrated education, as research shows that demand is influenced by a variety of factors, including the availability of integrated education options, the perceived quality of education provided, and the location of integrated schools.

Therefore, to assess demand, DE has considered a range of metrics and measures, including the number of applications for integrated education, the preferences expressed by parents and guardians in school admission applications, and the availability and location of integrated schools.

The following tables provide a summary of the numbers of educational settings over the last six-year period, which reflect the number of schools for each school type including integrated education provision.

This is further broken down to provide statistics in relation to integrated education settings by local council district and further analysis of travel distance to schools.

The number of schools by school type and management type, 2018/19- 2023/24

School and management type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Nursery Schools						
Controlled	64	64	64	62	60	60
Catholic Maintained	31	31	31	31	31	31
Controlled Integrated	-	-	-	1	2	2
TOTAL	95	95	95	94	93	93
Primary Schools						
Controlled	365	361	360	355	354	351
Catholic Maintained ²	363	360	358	355	354	351
Other Maintained - Irish Medium	25	25	25	25	25	25
Other Maintained - Other	3	3	3	2	2	2
Controlled Integrated	22	22	22	24	24	25
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	23	23	23	23	23
TOTAL	801	794	791	784	782	777
Preparatory Departments⁴						
Controlled	1	1	1	1	1	1
Voluntary - Schools under Catholic Management	-	-	-	-	-	-
Voluntary - Schools under Other Management	11	11	11	11	11	11
TOTAL	12	12	12	12	12	12
Secondary (Non-Grammar) Schools						
Controlled	48	48	48	48	47	47
Catholic Maintained	60	57	57	56	56	56
Other Maintained - Irish Medium	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other Maintained - Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Controlled Integrated	5	5	5	5	6	6
Grant Maintained Integrated	15	15	15	15	15	15
TOTAL	130	127	127	126	126	126
Grammar Schools						
Controlled	16	16	16	16	16	16
Voluntary - Schools under Catholic Management	29	29	29	29	29	29
Voluntary - Schools under Other Management	21	21	21	21	21	21
TOTAL	66	66	66	66	66	66
Special Schools	39	39	39	39	39	39
Hospital Schools³	1	1	1	1	1	1
Independent Schools	14	14	15	14	14	14
All schools - GRAND TOTAL	1,146	1,136	1,134	1,124	1,121	1,116

1. These are part of grammar schools.

2. Catholic maintained total in 2019/20 includes a school that did not have any pupils enrolled on census day. In 2023/24, there were 2 Catholic maintained schools that did not have any pupils enrolled on census day and formally closed on 31 October 2023, and 1 school that had pupils but also closed on 31 October 2023.

3. Belfast Hospital school ceased to exist as a school from 19 February 2024 and became part of EOTAS, however it was still in operation on census day 2023.

Pupils by school type and management type, 2023/24

School and management type	Controlled	Catholic Maintained	Other Maintained	Controlled Integrated	Grant Maintained Integrated	Voluntary - Under Catholic Management	Voluntary - Under Other Management	Non Grant-Aided	Voluntary pre-school centres	Private pre-school centres	EOTAS Centres	Grand Total
<u>VOLUNTARY AND PRIVATE PRESCHOOLS – FUNDED PLACES</u>												
Playgroups - Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,757	249	-	6,006
Day Nurseries - Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	744	-	810
TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,823	993	-	6,816
<u>NURSERY</u>												
Nursery Schools - Full-time	2,336	1,588	-	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,985
Nursery Schools - Part-time	1,593	156	-	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,801
Nursery Classes - Full-time	2306	2422	290	77	131	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,226
Nursery Classes - Part-time	2268	1497	200	109	496	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,570
TOTAL	8,503	5,663	490	299	627	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,582
<u>PRIMARY</u>												
Reception	46	95	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160
Primary Schools (Year 1 - Year 7)	76,536	76,472	3,666	4,799	6565	-	-	-	-	-	-	168,038
Prep. Departments (Year 1- Year 7)	81	-	-	-	-	-	1348	-	-	-	-	1,429
TOTAL	76,663	76,567	3,666	4,818	6,565	-	1,348	-	-	-	-	169,627
<u>SECONDARY (Year 8 - Year 14)</u>												
Secondary (Non Grammar)	32190	41,699	1,265	4,439	10928	-	-	-	-	-	-	90,521
Grammar	14806	-	-	-	-	30,045	21,066	-	-	-	-	65,917
TOTAL	46,996	41,699	1,265	4,439	10,928	30,045	21,066	-	-	-	-	156,438
<u>SPECIAL</u>												
<u>Educated off site but not at school (EOTAS)</u>	6716	387	89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,192
<u>INDEPENDENT</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27	27
<u>INDEPENDENT</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	772	-	-	-	772
GRAND TOTAL	138,878	124,316	5,510	9,556	18,120	30,045	22,414	772	5,823	993	27	356,454

- Enrolments for special schools and EOTAS centres relate those where pupils are single registered to the school or are dual registered and the special school/EOTAS centre is recorded as the main school. Enrolments including these dual registered pupils are 6,952 for special schools and 535 for EOTAS centres. These additional pupils have been counted in another setting in the table above.
- Previous bulletins provided enrolments in hospital schools. These pupils have been counted in their "main" school.
- Figures include full time and part time pupils who are enrolled in nursery settings that are not part of PSEP but are rather in Specialist Provision for preschool aged pupils - [Pre-school education places](#)

Pupils in Integrated education¹, 2018/19 - 2023/24

School and management type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
NURSERY SCHOOLS	-	-	-	26	104	113
PRIMARY						
Nursery Classes - Full-time	214	213	266	211	210	208
Nursery Classes - Part-time	437	497	463	518	555	605
Reception	17	29	25	18	29	19
Year 1 - Year 7	10,449	10,547	10,640	11,167	11,162	11,364
TOTAL	11,117	11,286	11,394	11,914	11,956	12,196
SECONDARY (Year 8 - Year 14)						
Year 8 - Year 12	10,666	11,200	11,513	11,751	12,997	13,218
Sixth form ²	1,841	1,775	1,954	2,103	2,126	2,149
TOTAL	12,507	12,975	13,467	13,854	15,123	15,367
GRAND TOTAL	23,624	24,261	24,861	25,794	27,183	27,676

1. Figures include children attending Controlled Integrated schools and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools.
2. Sixth form figures are based solely on pupils studying A Level or equivalent qualifications.

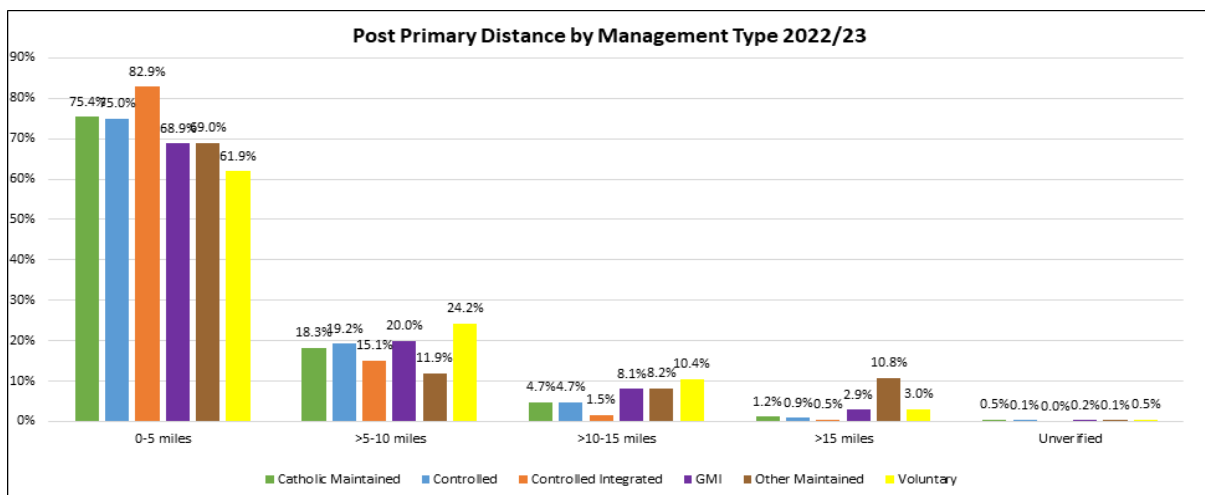
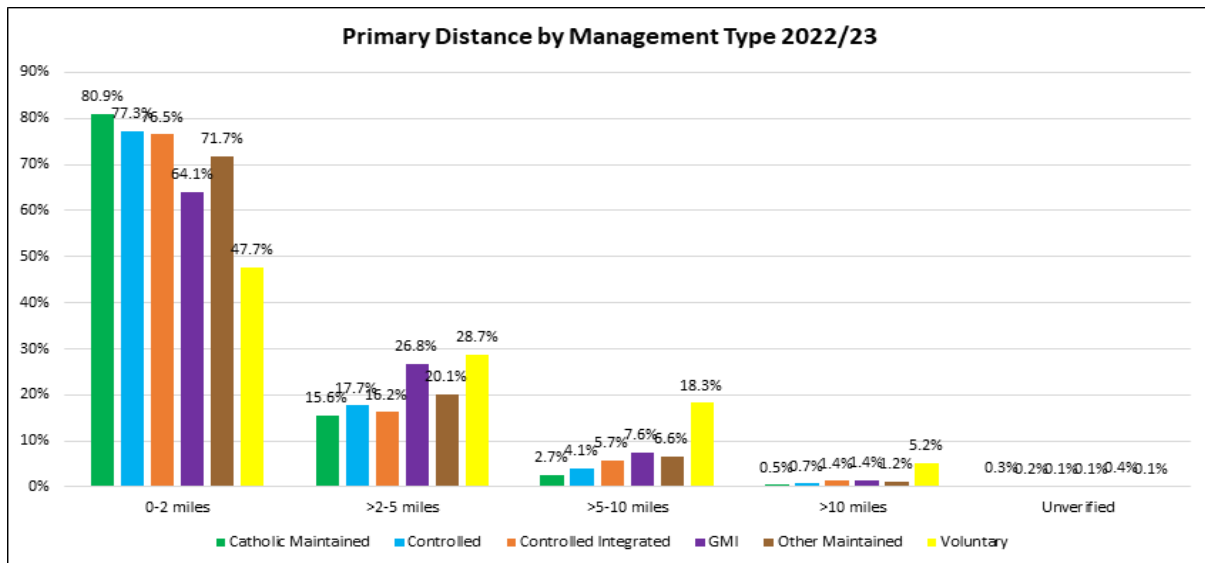
Integrated Education provision by LGD

	Nursery		Primary		Post-primary		Total	
	GMI	CI	GMI	CI	GMI	CI	GMI	CI
Antrim & Newtownabbey	-	-	1	5	-	3	1	8
Ards & North Down	-	1	-	5	1	1	1	7
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	-	-	3	-	1	1	4	1
Belfast	-	1	3	3	2	-	5	4
Causeway Coast & Glens	-	-	2	3	1	-	3	3
Derry City & Strabane	-	-	1	1	1	-	2	1
Fermanagh & Omagh	-	-	2	-	2	-	4	-
Lisburn & Castlereagh	-	-	3	1	1	1	4	2
Mid & East Antrim	-	-	3	3	2	-	5	3
Mid Ulster	-	-	3	0	2	-	5	-
Newry Mourne & Down	-	-	2	4	2	-	4	4
	-	2	23	25	15	6	38	33

Some key findings from our analysis includes:

- In terms of travel distance, all sectors at primary level – except for Voluntary – are broadly similar, with over 90% of pupils living within five miles of their primary school.
- A similar pattern is seen at post-primary with most schools having over 90% of pupils living within ten miles of their school.
- The Integrated sector sees 91% of pupils within ten miles of their school, although there is a difference between Controlled Integrated (98%) and Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) (89%).

- 98% of pupils who chose integrated education attended their first preference primary school, but only 77% were able to attend their first preference post-primary school.



Additional survey material

A suite of new questions relating to parental preference for integrated education and the factors underlying preferences expressed in school admission applications will form part of the 2024 NILT survey. This survey will provide valuable insights into parental inclination for integrated education at a societal level in Northern Ireland. The results will help to inform DEs approach to encourage, facilitate and support integrated education, ensuring that it is responsive to the needs and preferences of parents and students.

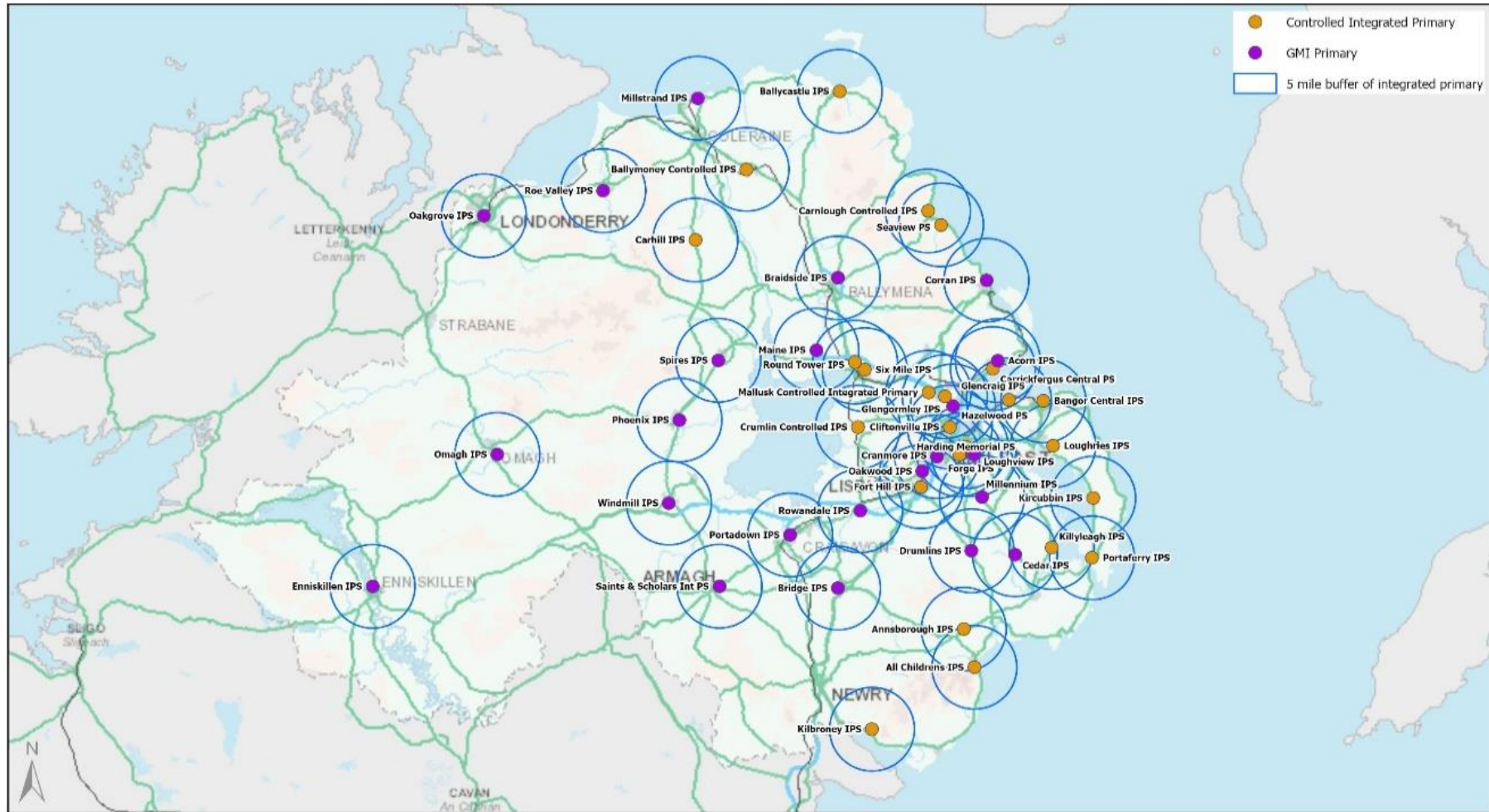
DE is committed to understanding and addressing the discrepancies between the high level of inclination towards integrated education as expressed in survey results and parental preference as expressed through admission decisions, ensuring that the

provision of integrated education aligns with actual demand from parents and students. This involves ongoing engagement with stakeholders, regular monitoring and assessment of demand, and a data informed approach to decision-making.

Identifying gaps in existing integrated education provision

The maps below provide an illustration of the geographical spread of integrated education provision, with each map showing integrated education provision and a typical travel radius for each school.

Integrated Primary Schools : 5 Mile Radius



Supporting Information

Base mapping was derived from OSNI Fusion, NISRA/DENI School Census Datasets 22/23

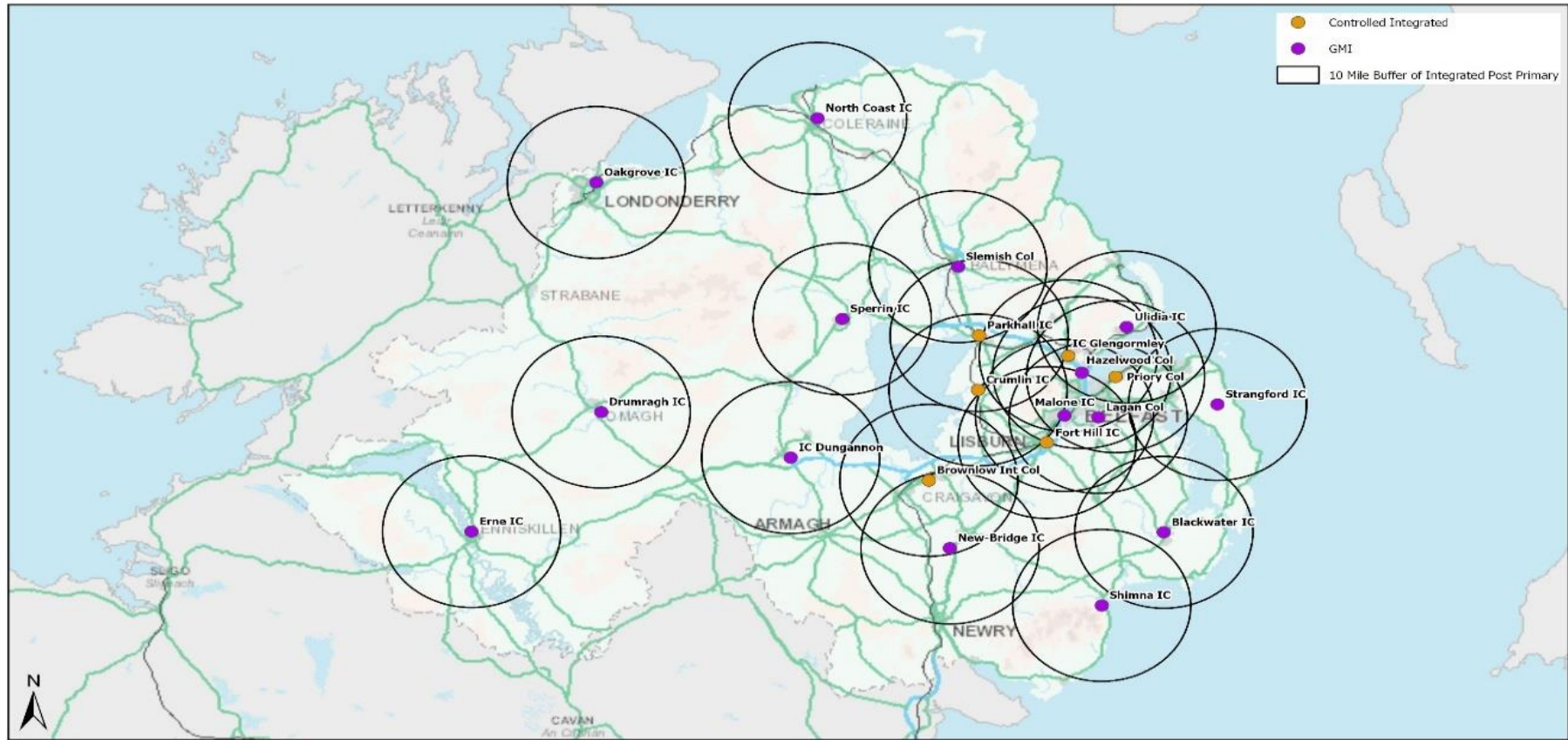


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Integrated Post Primary Schools 2022/23 : 10 Mile Radius



Supporting Information

Base mapping was derived from OSNI Fusion. Data used : NISRA/DENI School Census Datasets 22/23



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Meeting Demand for Integrated Education

Scope

Operational responsibility for Area Planning falls to EA and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) for controlled and maintained schools, and to the Board of Governors for all others. EA develop Area Plans, which set out proposals for the provision of education in a particular area, consider the demand for educational setting and integrated education, and analysing need taking account of numerous factors.

CCMS plays a similar role for Catholic Maintained Schools.

DEs ability to meet demand is therefore limited to overseeing the Area Planning process and providing strategic direction to planning authorities as they develop their plans.

Over subscription

Our analysis of over subscription data suggests that while there is broadly sufficient provision of integrated education at the primary school level to meet parental preference, the same cannot be said for post-primary provision. In some areas, there is a higher demand for integrated education provision than that which is currently available.

Our analysis indicates that there is demand for post-primary integrated education in excess of supply in six localities: Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Mid and East Antrim, and Newry and Mourne. This is evidenced by the over subscription of Hazlewood College, Lagan College, Strangford College, Parkhall Integrated College, Ulidia Integrated College & Slemish College, and Shimna Integrated College, respectively. **Appendix A** outlines over subscription data for the schools in the identified areas.

Oversubscription for IE places at year 8 by LGD since 2018/19
(data taken from EA admissions dataset by IEAIT)

		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24*
Antrim & Newtownabbey**	Available Year 8 Places	225	225	225	225	225	435
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	143 (-36.4%)	196 (-12.9%)	204 (-9.3%)	170 (-24.4%)	204 (-9.3%)	352 (-19.1%)
Ards & North Down	Available Year 8 Places	210	273	230	230	230	230
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	245 (16.7%)	262 (-4.0%)	262 (13.9%)	237 (3.0%)	298 (29.6%)	297 (29.1%)
Belfast	Available Year 8 Places	290	330	290	290	290	305
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	264 (-9.0%)	321 (-2.7%)	339 (16.9%)	263 (-9.3%)	339 (16.9%)	385 (26.2%)
Lisburn & Castlereagh	Available Year 8 Places	360	380	360	360	380	380
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	519 (44.2%)	549 (44.5%)	542 (50.6%)	436 (21.1%)	495 (30.3%)	463 (21.8%)
Mid & East Antrim	Available Year 8 Places	240	240	240	240	240	270
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	348 (45.0%)	351 (46.3%)	381 (58.8%)	319 (32.9%)	417 (73.8%)	414 (53.3%)
Newry Mourne & Down**	Available Year 8 Places	180	180	180	180	180	180
	1st Preference Applications (% over/under subscription)	111 (-38.3%)	116 (-35.6%)	152 (-15.3%)	101 (-43.9%)	121 (-32.8%)	150 (-16.7%)

*Increase in available spaces and first preference applications in Antrim and Newtownabbey due to Glengormley High School transforming to Integrated College Glengormley in September 2023. Parkhall IC is in fact oversubscribed by twelve

**While Antrim & Newtownabbey, and Newry Mourne & Down are not oversubscribed overall, they include individual schools that are, namely, Parkhall and Shimna respectively.

However, the extent to which the levels of oversubscription at the first preference stage (477 pupils) indicate a level of unmet demand for integrated education is open to interpretation. Admissions data for pupils with a first preference of integrated education shows that around 15% of parents who expressed a second preference go on to choose integrated education as their second preference, with almost 50% choosing a controlled school, 20% choosing a maintained school, and 10% choosing a voluntary school.

School management type of 2nd preference for those pupils with a 1st preference of Integrated post primary Sept 2023

No Second preference	245	9.4%
Controlled	1,246	47.6%
Voluntary	259	9.9%
Catholic Maintained	523	20.0%
Other Maintained	0	0.0%
Controlled Integrated	137	5.2%
GMI	205	7.8%
Total	2,615	100.0%
All Integrated	342	13.1%
All Integrated*	342	14.4%

*Pupils with no second preference removed from the total

Source: EA Admissions Portal

While some argue that the lack of suitable alternative integrated education provision within the six localities identified is a causal factor for the level of over subscription, others argue that there are a number of other factors influencing parental preference, such as level of over subscription in neighbouring integrated schools, the perceived quality of education in a given school, family traditions, pragmatic issues etc. Nonetheless, the level of over subscription in these localities suggests that some demand is unmet, and that demand is rising, albeit from a small base.

It is worth noting that the admissions process is influenced by the admissions criteria adopted by post-primary integrated schools. The Board of Governors of a grant-aided school is required by Article 16 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 to draw up criteria for selecting pupils for admission to the school. These criteria can include factors such as proximity to the school, previous or past attendance of siblings, random selection by initial letter of surname, named feeder schools, parish or other boundary areas, etc. Where schools are oversubscribed, they must apply their

admissions criteria to determine which pupils to admit. The Department does not have a role in this other than to offer guidance. It is important to note that many schools across Northern Ireland employ first preference criteria, which can and does skew parental preference during the admissions process.

Based on the analysis of oversubscription and data on parental preference from the admissions process, DE have developed some simple models to enable an assessment of integrated education demand. These models consider the impact of whether unmet first choices for integrated education provision would continue to seek integrated education were it available in their locality. The models are based on current applications data and do not take account of cross council movement of pupils. We have modelled three scenarios: 25%, 50%, and 75% of unmet first choice choosing an integrated school as their second preference. Based on this modelling, DE do not consider that there is sufficient evidence in these localities to support the creation of integrated education provision by way of a new school.

Modelling of Potential demand for Integrated Education considering conversion of unmet 1st IE preferences to 2nd preference

Year	Available Year 8 Places	1st Preference Applications	Over/Under Subscription	25% of Over Subscription	Potential Enrolment after 5 Years
Antrim & Newtownabbey	435	352	-83	-	-
Ards & North Down	230	297	67	17	85
Belfast	305	385	80	20	100
Lisburn & Castlereagh	380	463	83	21	105
Mid & East Antrim	240	417	177	45	225
Newry Mourne & Down	180	150	-30	-	-

Year	Available Year 8 Places	1st Preference Applications	Over/Under Subscription	50% of Over Subscription	Potential Enrolment after 5 Years
Antrim & Newtownabbey	435	352	-83	-	-
Ards & North Down	230	297	67	34	170
Belfast	305	385	80	40	200
Lisburn & Castlereagh	380	463	83	42	210
Mid & East Antrim	240	417	177	89	445
Newry Mourne & Down	180	150	-30	-	-

Year	Available Year 8 Places	1st Preference Applications	Over/Under Subscription	75% of Over Subscription	Potential Enrolment after 5 Years
Antrim & Newtownabbey	435	352	-83	-	-
Ards & North Down	230	297	67	51	255
Belfast	305	385	80	60	300
Lisburn & Castlereagh	380	463	83	63	315
Mid & East Antrim	240	417	177	135	675
Newry Mourne & Down	180	150	-30	-	-

DE would also note that parental preference (demand) within Lisburn and Castlereagh will also be impacted by the approval of Development Proposal 667 to establish a new non-selective, 11-18, co-educational GMI post-primary school in the Mid Down area with effect from 1 September 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter. The school will have an enrolment number of six hundred pupils and an admission number of one hundred pupils.

Therefore, DE anticipate that the expansion of existing integrated education provision and encouraging the transformation of other schools will be the primary routes available by which to, 'aim to meet demand'.

DE Action

DE will commission NICIE to engage with oversubscribed integrated schools and the EA in the six localities identified. The affected schools will be encouraged to review their enrolment numbers and school capacity and prepare and bring forward DPs to increase their enrolment numbers (if such changes are significant in nature). DE acknowledges that while this approach may partially address oversubscription issues, it is unlikely to resolve them in full.

DE will commission NICIE to issue a 'Call for Transformation' suggesting schools in the identified localities consider Transformation to integrated status to meet demand. The 'Call for Transformation' would commence in the autumn on conclusion of ongoing work to update the existing Transformation guidance.

A number of localities have been identified during our analysis where integrated education may not be provided in line with the rest of Northern Ireland. DE will commission NICIE to engage with local communities and prepare a report on whether there is sufficient interest to merit development of integrated provision and/or

encourage transformation along with any other actions to encourage and support integrated education in these localities.

DE recognises that the NILT survey does not provide information on demand at a local level, a requirement within section 5 of the Act. DE proposes to utilise the EA school admissions portal to seek permission from parents to conduct follow-up survey(s). This will provide a population of parents to survey, and doing so after the admission process will take participation outside of what is viewed by many parents as a high-stake decision process. This option would also likely be the most economical means of achieving this requirement.

DE commits to undertaking such a survey after the next school admissions process. DE will actively engage with stakeholders to develop this survey and ensure its effectiveness.

Consultation with Sector Representatives

As required by Section 3 of the Act, DE has consulted with NICIE, IEF, and the Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC) about these plans and, in general, there is broad support for these actions.

DE continue to engage with education partners, with ongoing discussions being held to achieve full participation, partnership, and support to schools in the affected localities.

Section 3

DE performance of functions in respect of integrated education

Since the commencement of the Act on 26 April 2022, DE has taken significant steps towards encouraging, facilitating and supporting integrated education in Northern Ireland.

- **Engagement with Education Partners:** DE has held six meetings of the Steering Group, four of the Working Group, and one combined workshop. Regular and ad hoc meetings with key stakeholders have also been conducted. These structures continue to be used to engage with education partners and ensure a collaborative approach to implementing the Action Plan.
- **Integrated Education Act Strategy and Action Plan:** As required by the legislation (Section 9(1))², a Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland³ and associated Action Plan⁴ was published on 26 April 2023. A consultation on the Action Plan was launched on 31 August and closed on 30 November 2023.⁵

The strategy provides a clear strategic direction for integrated education and the associated Action Plan committed DE to fifteen specific actions to deliver on the Vision for integrated education.

Progress has been made on all fifteen actions, with some completed and others ongoing. The Action Plan continues to be updated to reflect progress made and to set out the next steps.

- **Integrated Education Act Strategy & Action Plan Consultation:** An analysis report and commentary of the outcome of the public consultation was published on 29 February 2024.⁶ A total of 176 responses were received. Analysis shows broad support for the Strategy and Action Plan, with an acknowledgement that an updated strategy is required upon completion of implementation work.

It indicates a consensus among stakeholders on the importance of clear guidelines, practical support, appropriate levels of funding and effective consultation to encourage and support integrated education in Northern Ireland.

² [Integrated Education Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

³ [A Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://education-ni.gov.uk)

⁴ [Integrated Education Act Action Plan | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://education-ni.gov.uk)

⁵ [Consultation launched on the Integrated Education Strategy Action Plan | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://education-ni.gov.uk)

⁶ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/integrated-education-act-strategy-and-action-plan-analysis-report-outcome-public-consultation>

Stakeholders highlighted the need for collaboration, transparency, and compliance with legislation to ensure the successful implementation of the Act.

- **Assessment of Demand for Integrated Education:** DE is working with the Steering Group to produce an operational definition of demand for integrated education that is measurable and valid. This exercise involves assessing any current gaps in data and seeking solutions to address these. DE considers demand for integrated education in two parts:
 - societal level inclination towards integrated education and
 - parental preference made for school admission.

While societal level survey data shows around two-thirds of those surveyed are open to considering integrated education, this inclination is not reflected in school admission preferences. This discrepancy reflects the fact that parents consider a wide range of factors when making school admission decisions.

- **Outcomes-Based Approach (OBA) Framework:** OBA focusses on results and impact, not quantity or activity, and starts with the end in mind – What would success look like? An outcome framework incorporates a range of robust indicators, measures and milestones (targets) that will measure progress towards achieving these outcomes. Each organisation responsible for the delivery of the actions, measures and milestones will be identified and delivery of them will form part of existing organisational accountability arrangements.

Work to develop an OBA framework was initiated via a workshop in June 2023. Business Consultancy Services (the Department of Finance's internal consultancy service) was commissioned to support DE in taking this work forward. A day long workshop was held on 12 March 2024 with a follow up session on 22 March 2024 to develop an agreed fit for purpose framework to support delivery of the Act. The Department continues to engage with stakeholders to finalise the framework which will be a core element of a future strategy. The current draft of the framework is included at **Appendix B**.

In developing the OBA Framework, we have selected a set of high-level indicators that provide a strategic and accessible overview of progress towards each outcome. Additional indicators will be explored as the OBA Framework is further developed.

Financial Support: An additional £50,000 has been set aside to support the implementation of the Act, supplementing the existing £20,000 transformation budget. At present we consider this funding sufficient to implement the Act though it will be kept under review.

- **Advice to Policy Leads:** Advice was provided to all policy leads on 26 October 2022 on the implications of the Act.
- **Consultation and Engagement Protocol:** DE has developed a draft consultation and engagement protocol in support of its requirement to consult as set out in Section 3 of the Act and its duty under Section 7. This document has been agreed with the steering group and the sectoral bodies and has been issued as guidance for DE officials. Consultation arrangements for Development Proposals have been amended to ensure these requirements are met.
- **Review of Existing Processes:** DE has reviewed its existing internal processes and procedures relating to the development of new schools and ensured that due regard is given to its duties under the Act. DE officials are aware of the requirements of the Act when considering a new school.
- **Publication of an Integrated Education Strategy:** A Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland⁷ and associated Action Plan⁸ was published on 26 April 2023
- **Review of Integration Works:** DE has commenced a review of Integration Works. A Working Group is in place, including relevant stakeholders, and a principals' group has been established to draw on school experiences of using the guidance.
- **Access to EA Services:** EA has confirmed that all controlled integrated schools have access to all EA services. GMI schools have access to a significant range of EA services.

Conclusion

These actions demonstrate consistent and continued progress in implementing the Act and encouraging, facilitating and supporting integrated education in Northern Ireland. DE continues to work closely with education partners and key stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the Act.

⁷ [A Strategy for Integrated Education in Northern Ireland | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/strategy)

⁸ [Integrated Education Act Action Plan | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/action-plan)

Section 4

DE arrangements for oversight of its ALBs

DEs oversight arrangements are in place to ensure that the Minister/Department has the required assurances that the DE ALBs are:

- Contributing to the delivery of relevant Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes.
- Meeting Ministerial priorities and statutory responsibilities.
- Adhering to all Departmental policies and strategies.
- Operating effective governance and accountability controls, including the appropriate use of public funds in delivering collective outcomes. This includes delivery of their obligations under the Act.

The arrangements apply to seven of DE Executive ALBs that are currently constitutedⁱ:

- the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA),
- CCMS,
- EA,
- the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI),
- the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI),
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG),
- Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA) and
- NICIE.

Each of these bodies has:

- a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum (MSFM) (or a Partnership Agreement where applicable), signed by both the Chief Executive and the Departmental Accounting Officer; and
- a Chief Executive who has been formally designated as an Accounting Officer by the Departmental Accounting Officer.

DE relies on evidence when:

- seeking assurance from ALBs;
- holding ALBs to account;
- discharging its sponsorship role; and
- providing assurance to the Minister regarding the performance of its ALBs.

In practice, DE discharges its sponsorship responsibility through:

- the exchange, scrutiny and agreement of formal planning, assurance, performance and other documentation;
- a range of formal and informal meetings where DE is represented at senior management level and/or by lead policy teams and/or sponsorship teams; and

- ongoing exchanges with each ALB by senior management, by sponsor teams and by lead policy teams.

ALBs are accountable for their performance throughout the year, for which DE must exercise proportionate oversight. This ensures that activities and resources across DE and its ALBs are appropriately aligned and contribute most effectively to delivering successful outcomes for all children and young people. Annual Business Plans are therefore agreed with and approved by DE. ALBs must provide regular performance reports and, where required, other documentation demonstrating progress against business plan actions and performance measures.

ALBs also provide assurance as to the ongoing effectiveness of their systems of internal control. In addition, existing arrangements provide for individual assessments to be carried out on ALB Board Chairs, Board Members and Chief Executives.

Executive and Ministerial priorities are communicated to all ALBs primarily through the publication of the Executive's PfG; Every CHILD, the Department's Corporate Plan; the Children and Young People's Strategy and other relevant strategies/policies.

DE communicates its requirements to ALBs primarily through its policies and strategies. These are often underpinned by legislation, standards, guidance and circulars, which are mainly developed or signed off by the Department for use within its ALBs.

ALBs are held to account by their Boards and DE for delivering against their priorities, commitments, actions and performance measures included in their published Corporate and Business Plans. The content of these plans must reflect the priorities etc. communicated to them by DE and the final plans must be approved both by the ALB Board and by the Department/Minister. There are normally two such planning documents:

- a Corporate Plan (multi-year and potentially aligned to the PfG and/or Every CHILD timeframe); and
- an annual Business Plan

Evidence Based Assurance and Accountability

DE relies on evidence when:

- seeking assurance from ALBs;
- holding ALBs to account;
- discharging its sponsorship role; and
- providing assurance to the Minister regarding the performance of its ALBs.

In practice, DE discharges its sponsorship responsibility through:

- the exchange, scrutiny and agreement of formal planning, assurance, performance and other documentation;
- a range of formal and informal meetings where DE is represented at senior management level and/or by lead policy teams and/or sponsorship teams; and
- ongoing exchanges with each ALB by senior management, by sponsor teams and by lead policy teams.

ALBs are accountable for their performance throughout the year, for which DE must exercise proportionate oversight. This ensures that activities and resources across DE and its ALBs are appropriately aligned and contribute most effectively to delivering successful outcomes for all children and young people.

DE provides ALBs with a generic action for inclusion in their annual Business Plans, which requires them to support DE in fulfilling its statutory duty to encourage, facilitate and support the development of integrated education and to provide DE with an annual report, when requested, setting out how they have met this requirement. The EA's Business Plan sets out a more specific action, or actions, along with associated measures in relation to integrated education.

ALBs also provide assurance as to the ongoing effectiveness of their systems of internal control. In addition, existing arrangements provide for individual assessments to be carried out on ALB Board Chairs, Board Members and Chief Executives.

The Corporate Services & Governance Directorate report to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and the DE Board as required on the sponsorship of ALBs, including an overview of the Governance and Accountability Reviews (GARs) and Governance Statements.

DE Internal Audit Team annually audit aspects of the Department's governance and accountability arrangements. DE Finance Directorate report to ARAC on ALBs progress in completing their Annual Report and Accounts as well as progress on addressing recommendations in the Northern Ireland Audit Office Reports to Those Charged With Governance.

Assurance and accountability are ongoing and are not confined to the Departmental Accounting Officer-led formal GARs. All engagements or meetings with ALBs attended by DE staff contribute to the Department's discharge of its sponsorship role.

Governance and Accountability Reviews (GARs)

The performance of the Department's ALBs must be monitored appropriately to ensure that they are delivering against their priorities, commitments and objectives. Formal

GAR meetings, led by the Departmental Accounting Officer (or designated deputy as applicable), are held with each ALB.

The purpose of these meetings is both to seek assurance on ALB systems of internal control and to hold ALBs to account for their performance against PfG and DE priorities/outcomes. These provide an opportunity to recognise achievements/progress and seek assurance from ALBs on corrective action, where plans are not being achieved.

Conclusion

DE operates an extensive and structured system of oversight and governance of all its ALBs and takes assurance from these systems and processes in ensuring delivery of its policy directions and statutory obligations. During the period of this report, no significant governance issues were identified that have an impact on our assessment of compliance with the Act and delivery of its statutory obligations by our ALBs.

Section 5

Progress in Integrated Education

DE assessment of the manner and extent to which other educational bodies have performed their functions in respect of integrated education.

DE has been actively engaging with education bodies to ensure the effective execution of their functions in respect of integrated education.

DE commissioned input from the ALBs to request an update on progress and to assess the extent of how these bodies have met their statutory requirements as specified by the Act. Based on this material DE has made the following assessment.

NICIE

NICIE is DEs primary ALB charged with encouraging facilitating and promoting integrated education.

Under Article 64(2) of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, DE funds NICIE to encourage and promote integrated education. In 2022/23 this funding amounted to £618k and in 2023/24 it amounted to £630k which included support for contractual pay pressures.

In addition to bi-annual GAR meetings with the Permanent Secretary, the Sponsor Team - the Irish Medium and Integrated Education (IMIE) team - conducts regular Governance meetings with NICIE throughout the year. IMIE ensures all Governance support is provided, including liaising and, where necessary, seeking advice on Business Cases and Post Project Evaluation requirements, as well as managing the monthly draw down of grant in aid and associated monitoring arrangements. The Department's Education and Governance team supports NICIE in its annual Business Planning and Risk Management framework.

DE Finance teams, and Economic Advisory Unit, also provide scrutiny and advice on a range of matters raised by NICIE, both routine and atypical. During the last two years support from across these teams has enabled NICIE to prepare a robust Business Case for moving offices which received approval from the Department of Finance, a requirement for such cases. The office move was completed summer 2023. This enables NICIE to operate out of modern, fit for purpose accommodation to deliver its business objectives to encourage and promote integrated education.

DE has a strong working relationship with NICIE and work in partnership with them to achieve delivery of our shared objectives. DE consider that NICIE effectively discharges its duties and obligations within the resources it has available.

Since commencement of the Act:

- NICIE has supported schools seeking to transform to integrated status by providing advice, guidance, and resources. In the last year, eight schools have completed

ballots of their parental body, asking them whether they want their school to submit a proposal to become an integrated school. NICIE has also worked in collaboration with the EA and the IEF to support nine schools to submit their Cases for Change and Transformation Plans for Development Proposals to Transform to integrated status.

- NICIE has supported the development of new integrated schools. In this year, EA's Area Planning Team have provided initial draft Cases for Change for Governors of sustainable schools' that are seeking to Transform. NICIE has also supported Bridge Integrated Primary School to submit a DP for the establishment of a Nursery Unit and EA (as the schools' Managing Authority) submitted a proposal for Cliftonville Integrated Primary School, also in relation to the establishment of a Nursery Unit.
- NICIE has worked to develop ethos in integrated schools and support them to achieve the Excellence in Integrated Education Award (EIEA). In 2023-24, three schools achieved renewal of their EIEA, and three schools gained the Award for the first time. NICIE has also continued collaborative work with EA (Shared Education and Sectoral Support Team) to develop a Framework for Integrated Education, which is a self-evaluation tool that supports schools on their Integration journey.
- NICIE has facilitated eighty-one sessions, with over 1,900 participants, promoting and developing awareness of integrated education and the integrated ethos. These sessions include information and/or ethos development sessions to stakeholders in schools exploring and/or on the legal journey of school Transformation to integrated status, exploration of ethos and/or the EIEA and/or Anti-Bias in Education, and sessions to other audiences, international and local, relating to integrated education, the integrated ethos, anti-bias in education and recent legislative developments.
- NICIE has worked in collaboration with EA and the CSSC in the setting up of a joint Ethos Support Group to work with the interim Board of Governors and the Principals of the existing schools to support the development of the integrated ethos in the new school in the Causeway area of County Antrim. NICIE has also continued to support the Mid-Down steering group in their journey to create a new school in the mid-Down area.
- NICIE has facilitated forums to share learning. The NICIE Teachers' Committee has met five times, engaging twenty-two integrated schools in the process. The Association of Principals in Integrated Schools (APTIS) has continued to be active this year with NICIE's support, hosting two conferences and two meetings, in which senior leaders from most Integrated schools participated. The Vice-Principals' Forum, the Early Years' Forum, the Integrated Schools Finance Association (ISFA), and the GMI consultative forum have also met this year.
- NICIE has performed its functions in respect of integrated education by supporting school transformations, new integrated schools, ethos development, promotion

and development of integrated education, collaboration, and facilitating forums to share learning.

EA

In addition to funding NICIE, DE funds the EA - which now also has its own statutory duties towards integrated education under the Act - and the CSSC, which provides support for all controlled schools, including controlled integrated schools.

DE has continued to pay for parental ballots, which are required under Articles 69, 70 and 91 of the 1989 Order, for schools considering transforming to either grant maintained or controlled integrated status.

Further funding support is provided to schools for up to five years post-transformation. This is used as a contribution for costs associated with transformation such as reviewing curricular provision and textbooks; in the music and sports played; in the marketing, advertising/branding costs; in designating a specific transformation coordinator.

In 2022/23 there were six schools eligible for this support funding which totaled £20k, and in 2023/24 there were seven schools eligible for this support funding which totaled £23k. This budget, whilst small, was protected during a period of significant budget pressures.

DE also provides guidance for schools considering transforming to integrated status “Integration Works” and is in the process of reviewing it. This work is done in conjunction with DE education partners who in turn work with schools on the ground. This support has received positive feedback from schools that have successfully transformed.

DE has a strong working relationship with EA and works in partnership with them to achieve delivery of our shared objectives. DE considers that EA effectively discharges its duties and obligations within the resources it has available. DE would highlight that since commencement of the Act, EA has taken several actions to encourage, facilitate and support the development of integrated education, in line with the statutory requirements outlined in the Act.

- EA has established governance structures and assurance systems to support its statutory duties associated with the Act. EA Officers supporting the Integrated sector are responsible for developing an annual Strategic Plan, which is scrutinised and agreed upon by the Strategic Planning & Policy Committee. The Head of Shared Education & Sectoral Support also provides biannual reports to the Performance and Engagement Committee to highlight the workstreams undertaken to encourage, facilitate, and support integrated education.

- To support schools exploring integrated education, EA has provided information and support at several events, including NICIE/IEF information events and meetings with Boards of Governors. EA has also supported schools through the three phases of transformation, in collaboration with NICIE. As of March 2024, one school is in Phase 1, fourteen schools are in Phase 2, and seven schools are in Phase 3 of the transformation process.
- EA has established a partnership between the Shared Education and Area Planning Team to ensure alignment of strategic and operational issues. This partnership has resulted in the development of new processes and practices to produce Case for Change for sustainable transforming schools, in collaboration with Sectoral Support and NICIE.
- To provide resources and information to support the development of integrated education, EA has developed an Integrated Education Hub. The Hub shares key information on the Transformation Process and shares examples of practice within schools that have taken this journey. A post-primary case study of the Integrated College Glengormley's transformation journey has been created and shared, as well as a primary case study from Seaview Integrated Primary School focusing on their transformation journey. Examples of Integration in Practice have also been uploaded to the Hub.
- EA has made progress on developing a Framework for Integrated Education, in partnership with NICIE, with several meetings taking place with school-based practitioners and a timeline for consultation developed. EA has also established a Fair Employment Treatment Order (FETO) Working Group, which includes representatives from NICIE, to provide advice and guidance on the implementation of legislation.
- To support integrated schools, EA provides a wide range of support in line with its wider statutory duties to different types of schools. This includes providing advice and guidance on financial management, funding allocations, and reporting to principals and governors. The Equality & Human Rights Unit also provides advice and guidance to schools on equality issues and organizes sign language interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing parents in schools, including Integrated, upon request.
- EA has made significant progress in encouraging, facilitating and supporting the development of integrated education, in line with the statutory requirements outlined in the Act. EA continue to work in partnership with schools, NICIE, and other stakeholders to further advance the development of integrated education.

CSSC

CSSC is the sectoral support body for controlled schools in Northern Ireland. CSSC is not a Departmental ALB or NDPB. It is a non-statutory body, classified as part of the private sector (Company Limited by Guarantee). It is grant funded under section 4 of the Education Act (NI) 2014, which provides for DE to pay grants to any body which is recognised by DE as representing the interests of controlled schools, or any body

which is recognised by DE as representing grant-aided schools of any other description.

CSSC has been actively performing its functions in respect to integrated education in Northern Ireland and DE consider that CSSC effectively discharges its duties and obligations within the resources it has available. We would highlight that since commencement of the Act it supports 49% of schools, including thirty-two controlled integrated schools, making it a significant body in Northern Ireland's education sector. CSSC is recognised by DE as an appropriate Advisory Body in line with Section 3 of the Act

- CSSC has been involved in various activities to support integrated education. These include participating in Review of Integration Works, representing the interests of controlled integrated schools, engaging with NICIE, and providing written and oral evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry into integrated education in Northern Ireland (2024).
- CSSC also attends and contributes to various meetings and workshops related to integrated education, including those of the DE Integrated Education Strategy Group, DE Integrated Education Working Group, and DE Integrated Education OBA Workshops. It also plays an active part in EA cross directorate group supporting integrated education.
- CSSC has also noted that other organizations such as NICIE and the IEF have received supplementary funding from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to support their work on integration. This suggests that CSSC could potentially benefit from similar support to enhance its capacity to perform its functions in respect of integrated education.

Other ALBs

Based on the information provided, each of DEs ALB have been actively involved in the Integrated Education Act Steering Group since March 2023. Their focus is on monitoring the implications of the interpretation and application of the Act for their sector or organisation.

Each has been regularly participating in meetings of the Integrated Education Act Steering Group, with meetings attended in March, April, September, and November of 2023.

In addition to these meetings, all ALBs have been making ongoing contributions at OBA Workshops on the Act. These contributions aim to inform the work of the Steering Group.

Section 6

Looking to the future

Successes and Failures in Respect of the Provision of Integrated Education

DE has achieved notable successes in respect of the provision of integrated education. These include the transformation of schools to integrated status and the allocation of additional financial resources to support delivery of the Act. There has been significant positive work and engagement from stakeholders in supporting implementation of the Act, developing the initial Integrated Education Strategy and Action Plan and the vision within that of creating:

‘A vibrant and supported network of sustainable integrated schools providing high-quality integrated education’.

However, there have also been areas where improvements are needed, notably:

- Several areas/localities where demand for integrated education exceeded local provision.
- The consultation on the Action Plan highlighted some areas in the strategy and action plan that could be further developed.
- There were only modest numbers of participants who took part in the public consultation and action will be needed to improve overall engagement around integrated education.

Extent to which the Purpose of Integrated Education has been Achieved

The purpose of integrated education as outlined within the Act is:

- to deliver educational benefits to children and young persons;
- to promote awareness and appreciation of human rights;
- to promote equality of opportunity;
- to promote good relations; and
- to promote respect for identity, diversity and community cohesion

DE has taken a number of actions to achieve this purpose, including engaging with education bodies, monitoring levels of demand for and supply of integrated education, and asking NICIE to engage with the affected schools and others in the locality with a view to addressing demand. However, there is still some work to be done to fully achieve the purpose of integrated education, particularly in oversubscribed localities and areas where integrated education is not provided in

line with the rest of Northern Ireland. DE remains committed to working with education partners to achieve this purpose.

It is difficult to assess how the purpose of education as defined within the Act has been delivered. DE recognise the good work of NICIE, EA and CSSC in supporting schools transforming to integrated status, helping to develop ethos in integrated schools and supporting them to achieve the EIEA and the role of Education and Training Inspectorate in considering ethos. DE is committed to developing a process to provide assurance as to how the purpose of education is being delivered.

Updating the Strategy

The Integrated Education Act Strategy and Action Plan will now be revised to reflect the assessment within this report and to implement the OBA framework (see draft at Appendix B) developed by DE with the assistance of stakeholders.

Conclusion

Implementing the provisions of the Act is a priority for DE, and considerable progress has been made since the commencement of the Act, notably on defining and taking action to meet demand for integrated education. Plans are in train to address oversubscription in certain localities and a lack of provision in others.

DE remains committed to working with education partners to achieve the purpose of integrated education and to ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality education that facilitates reconciliation and mutual understanding. The detail outlined in this report provides a framework for continued progress in implementing the provisions of the Act in Northern Ireland.

Appendix A

Over/Under subscription for integrated education school at post primary level 2023/24

Antrim & Newtownabbey					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Parkhall Integrated College	865	1,054	150	162	12
Crumlin Integrated College	400	248	75	34	-41
Integrated College Glengormley	1,250	1,084	210	156	-54
	2,515	2,386	435	352	-83

Integrated College Glengormley gives priority, in the event of a tie at each stage in the admissions criteria, to applicants who place the school at a higher preference, with preference one taking precedence over preference two, and so on.

Ards & North Down					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Strangford Integrated College	760	883	130	204	74
Priory Integrated College	600	716	100	93	-7
	1,360	1,599	230	297	67

Strangford Integrated College has a 1st preference criterion for admissions through All-Ability Pathway.

Belfast					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Hazelwood College	1,010	1,095	175	245	70
Malone Integrated College	800	783	130	140	10
	1,810	1,878	305	385	80

Hazelwood Integrated College has a 1st or 2nd preference criterion.

Lisburn & Castlereagh					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Lagan College	1,300	1,475	220	365	145
Fort Hill Integrated College	850	913	160	98	-62
	2,150	2,388	380	463	83

Lagan College gives priority, in the event of a tie at each stage in the admissions criteria, to applicants who place the school as first preference.

Mid & East Antrim					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Slemish Integrated College	880	1,029	160	254	94
Ulidia Integrated College	620	697	110	160	50
	1,500	1,726	270	414	144

Slemish Integrated College has a 1st preference requirement the majority of criteria.

Ulidia Integrated College has a 1st preference criterion for admissions as the last stage of admissions process before using randomised selection of letters of surname.

Newry Mourne & Down					
	Approved Enrolment	Actual Enrolment	Approved Year 8 Admissions	Year 8 1st Preference Applications	Over/(under) subscription
Shimna Integrated College	620	682	100	122	22
Blackwater Integrated College	400	275	80	28	-52
	1,020	957	180	150	-30

Shimna Integrated College has a 1st preference criterion.

Appendix B

Working draft OBA Framework

This draft remains under consideration by the Integrated Education Act implementation groups

What: Priority Outcomes	How: Activities	Who: Responsibility	When:	Evidence of success: SMART Indicators Measures and/or benchmarks
1. A planned network of sustainable Integrated schools to meet the demand of parental preference.	A1 A Identify, through DE Census Data, schools that have a religious, socio economic and different abilities mix. A1 B Engage with these schools to identify, understand, and seek to address any barriers to Integrated Education.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate and SRT NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	School Census: % of Protestant and Catholic pupils attending each school. Identify schools that have equal proportions of pupils from both religious backgrounds, socio economic backgrounds and different abilities/ meeting population mix of locality.
	A2. Develop an agreed process to assess demand for Integrated Education (as expressed by parental preference recorded in the EA admissions portal).	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate through governance structures	Commenced 1-3 years.	No. and % of Integrated schools oversubscribed as identified by EA the admissions portal
	A3. Establish/research/develop criteria to assess wider societal demand for Integrated Education.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate through governance structures. EA.	Commenced 1-3 years.	Identification of geographical areas where there is limited or no Integrated Education provision. % of parents with a preference for Integrated Education taken from NILT survey results
	A4 Baseline currently sustainable schools against the DE sustainable school's policy and criteria (Integrated Education and others).	Sustainable Schools Policy and Planning Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	Identify sustainable schools working with Area Planning using measurable criteria

	A5. Research the factors considered by parents and guardians when making school admission choices.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate through governance structures. NICIE	Commenced 2-5 years.	Use admissions portal to identify population to survey at a later stage following admission process to identify reasons for admissions preferences. NILT.
	A6. Research the current education pathways within Integrated schools to identify gaps in provision and take steps to address.	NICIE Sustainable Schools Policy and Planning Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	Analysis of existing EA admissions portal data to examine current pathways
	A7. Ensure there is appropriate guidance available for schools who wish to transform.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	Integration Works transformation guidance is currently under review.
2. Create a better understanding of Integrated Education (3 -19) pathway	A8. Carry out research on the extent of public knowledge of Integrated Education.	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	Research required to establish baseline of knowledge. Following A10 actions additional research to measure improvement or otherwise.
	A9. Develop a program of activities to develop a better understanding of Integrated Education and others (Pre-school, Primary, and Post Primary).	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	Work with consultative partners and press office.
3. Quality Integrated Education	A10. Develop a self-evaluation framework tool for consideration of the quality and ethos of Integrated Education being delivered in integrated schools.	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	Work with ETI to develop framework.
	A11. Ensure Integrated schools are supported appropriately following the self-evaluation process and can provide assurance as to their delivery of Integrated Education.	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	Provision of support for schools through this process.
	A12. Ensure delivery of a quality in Integrated Education award system.	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	Accreditation system through NICIE.
	A13. Utilise ETI staff and experience for the assessment of Integrated schools.	ETI	Commenced 1-3 years.	Part of the inspection process.

4. Provide equality of access to Integrated Education	A14. Ensure Integrated Education has appropriate access to services and that professional learning programmes are available to leaders and teachers within Integrated Education.	EA	Commenced 1-3 years.	%age of integrated schools access EA services
	A15. Aim to meet demand for Integrated Education by providing an accessible sustainable educational pathway in each locality.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	%age of IE first preferences met compared to NI average by phase Average travelling distance to an IE school by phase compared to Northern Ireland average
	A16. Consider the impact of admissions criteria on equality of access to Integrated Education.	Sustainable Schools Policy and Planning Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	Delivery of a DE policy paper by XXX
5. Contribute to making NI a more inclusive society.	A17. Work effectively with other NI Departments and ALBs (CYP strategy).	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate	Commenced 1-3 years.	Tracking of NILT good relations data
	A18. Ensure Integrated schools contribute to collaborating and sharing good practice through appropriate networks.	NICIE	Commenced 1-3 years.	%age of integrated schools engaged in Shared education programmes %age of integrated schools engaged in other partnership programmes
	A19. Research the impact of Integrated Education on society over time.	Collaboration and Climate Change Directorate NICIE/IEF?? SRT	Commenced 2-5 years.	Longitudinal survey required.

ⁱ YCNI not currently active