



Shared education briefing paper

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May 2019

Introduction

Shared education emerged as an instrument to encourage and support pupils from different backgrounds and sectors to engage with one another in the 1980s.

Over three decades, steps have been taken to progress shared education, culminating in the Shared Education Act in 2016. Over half of schools were involved in shared education partnerships in 2018.

Change has happened slowly, beginning with additions to the curriculum and the introduction of ‘cross-community’ contact initiatives. Over recent years the availability of significant funding, accompanied with a legal requirement for the Department of Education (DE) to ‘encourage, facilitate and promote’ shared education, has driven progress.

This briefing paper provides an overview of shared education, exploring its history and progress in Northern Ireland, policy and legislation, and an overview of funding.

The Controlled Schools’ Support Council (CSSC) has a power to encourage shared education in the controlled sector. CSSC’s progress in this area is reported on every six months to DE. To accompany this briefing paper, CSSC has published a series of interviews with controlled school principals about their school’s shared education project.

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A brief history of shared education in Northern Ireland

Shared education has developed in Northern Ireland since the 1980s. The timeline below sets out some of the key developments which have driven shared education.

Timeline of shared education – key dates:



1982 - The contribution of schools to community relations - Circular DENI 1982/21

In June 1982 a circular was issued to schools which stated that all school leadership and staff had a responsibility to ensure that children learnt about understanding and respecting differences, including differing customs and traditions.



1987 - Cross-community contact scheme

In 1987 the DE launched the cross-community contact scheme which aimed to foster positive cross-community relations. The scheme encouraged schools and youth groups to bring together children and young people from different community backgrounds.



1989 - Education for mutual understanding

In 1989 the themes of 'education for mutual understanding' and 'cultural heritage' were introduced to the formal school curriculum as part of the Education Reform Order (1989).



2005 - A shared future: The policy and strategy framework for good relations in Northern Ireland

'A shared future: the policy and strategy framework for good relations in Northern Ireland' made recommendations on education and how it should be delivered, namely:

- demonstrably promoting sharing in all levels of education
- developing opportunities for shared and inter-cultural education at all levels – nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary
- all schools should ensure through their policies, structures and syllabuses that pupils are consciously prepared for life in a diverse and inter-cultural society and world
- encouraging understanding of the complexity of our history
- preparing and training teachers to educate our children and young people to be effective and responsible members of a shared society

- providing further, higher and adult education in an open and integrated basis.



2006 - The Independent Strategic Review of Education

The report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education (also known as the Bain review) 'Schools for the Future: Funding, Strategy, Sharing' addressed the use of resources in education, the need for better strategic planning of the schools' estate, and the need for improved sharing and collaboration.



2007 - The Education Order 2007

The Education Order 2007 required schools to promote the development of young people as active citizens. As a result 'personal development and mutual understanding' (PDMU) was added to the primary curriculum and 'local and global citizenship' was included to the post-primary curriculum.



2008 – Review of DE's community relations policy

In June 2008, the Education Minister instigated a review of the community relations policy. The review concluded that community relations work was often seen as an add-on rather than an integral part of the curriculum.



2009 - Schools for the future: A policy for sustainable schools

The sustainable schools policy emphasised the need for new methods of collaboration and sharing in education.



2011 - Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy (CRED)

As a result of the 2008 review of DE's community relations policy an updated policy was introduced. In March 2011 the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education policy (CRED) was launched. The policy aimed 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. It also provided formal and non-formal education opportunities for pupils to build relationships with those from different backgrounds and traditions, within the resources available.



2011 - Programme for Government 2011-15

The Programme for Government (PfG) 2011-15 set targets for DE with respect to shared education:

- to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to advise on advancing shared education
- to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015, and
- to increase substantially the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

The Shared Education Signature Project was created under the Delivering Social Change framework, to help meet the PfG commitments on shared education.



2013 - Ministerial Advisory Group established

In 2013 the Minister of Education appointed a Ministerial Advisory Group to advise on the best way to take shared education forward in Northern Ireland. The independent report was issued in March 2013 detailing 20 recommendations to advance shared education.

The Minister of Education responded to these recommendations in a statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly in October 2013 emphasising the importance of shared education.



2013 - 'Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy

The 'Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy was published in May 2013. It set out the Executive's plan to improve community relations and move towards a more united and shared society.

The strategy committed to enhance the quality and extent of shared education provision, ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience. It also pledged to create 10 shared educational campuses.

A number of funding streams were developed to assist with T:BUC delivery, including the good relations fund and the shared education campus programme (see the funding section for more information).



2014 – The Shared Education Signature Project established

£25 million was dedicated to the development of shared education projects in schools (see the funding section for more information).



2015 - Sharing Works: A Policy for Shared Education

“Sharing Works – A Policy for Shared Education” sets out the actions and interventions that underpin the development of shared education. It encourages education settings to go beyond the minimum core definition to address the needs of all pupil groups.

In November 2015 the Shared Education Bill was introduced into the Assembly.



2016 - Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Act makes legislative provision in relation to shared education. As well as providing a definition of the core minimum requirements of shared education, it places a duty on the DE and the Education Authority (EA) to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education. The Act also provides a power to relevant arms length bodies to encourage and facilitate shared education.

Also in 2016 new European peace funding, Peace IV, was launched including £35.29 million for shared education (see the funding section for more information).



2018 - Advancing shared education to the Northern Ireland Assembly

In May 2018 the first biennial report detailing progress on advancing shared education was laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with the Shared Education Act (NI) 2016.

Shared education policy

Preceding the Shared Education Act 2016 was “Sharing Works – A Policy for Shared Education” policy, published in 2015.

The policy sets out the actions and interventions needed to support the development of shared education. It contains 14 key actions¹:

Actions	Detail
Key Action 1:	Bring forward legislation: DE to bring forward a Shared Education Bill which will provide a statutory definition of shared education and provide a power to encourage and facilitate shared education.
Key Action 2:	Provide co-ordinated and effective support for practitioners: A commitment to ensure dedicated officers will be appointed within the EA with responsibility to encourage, facilitate and support shared education.
Key Action 3:	Develop self-assessment tools for practitioners: Responsibility on The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) to develop a shared education continuum model, which can be used by schools to self-evaluate in the delivery of shared education.
Key Action 4:	Provide funding support 2014-18: DE, in conjunction with funding from the Delivering Social Change project and Atlantic Philanthropies, established The Shared Education Signature Programme (SESP) funding stream to support shared education in schools. This funding focuses on schools that have already engaged in collaborative working. Funding of £25 million over four years was made available. DE also committed to work with the Special EU Programmes body to advise on how Peace IV funding can be used to support further the development of shared education in schools that have not yet engaged in shared education.
Key Action 6:	Develop innovative options for sharing: DE will develop innovative options for sharing. The Executive’s ‘Together: Building a United Community’ strategy includes a target to commence 10 new Shared Education Campuses in the next five years.
Key Action 7:	Provide capital investment to support schools sharing educational facilities: The Shared Education Campuses Programme is aimed at providing capital assistance to schools to facilitate shared education (on a cross community basis) by either providing new shared educational facilities, enhancing existing shared facilities or through shared education campuses.

¹ See <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Sharing%20Works%20A%20Policy%20for%20Shared%20Education%20Sept%202015.PDF> for more information.

Key Action 8:	Develop effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements: DE in conjunction with arm's length bodies will require schools engaging in shared education programmes to outline specific plans and goals for shared education in their school development plans.
Key Action 9:	Develop the workforce: DE will, as part of a new teacher professional development strategy, ensure that this includes steps to provide teachers, from initial teacher education through to the most experienced teachers, with opportunities to learn together, including preparation for teaching through shared education.
Key Action 10:	Align educational policies: ETI to undertake independent reviews of current practice in relation to the delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Pre-School Education) • Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2) • Local and Global Citizenship (Key Stages 3 and 4) • The Curriculum Framework for Youth Work (Youth Service) • The Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy.
Key Action 11:	Support special schools and learning support centres: DE encourages active participation of pupils with special educational needs to engage in shared learning activities with their peers. Special schools will be encouraged to partner with other schools for shared education.
Key Action 12:	Promote engagement with parents, carers and wider community: The Department and the arm's length bodies will encourage schools and other educational establishments to ensure shared education supports, encourages, and enables the development of meaningful relationships with and between parents, caregivers and the wider community.
Key Action 13:	Promote engagement with children and young people: In advancing shared education, the Department and its arm's length bodies will encourage schools and other educational establishments to continue to develop meaningful ways of giving children and young people a voice and of listening and responding to their views.
Key Action 14:	Equality of opportunity and good relations: Schools and other educational institutions have an important role in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations. DE will consider the case for schools to be designated as 'public authorities' under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and thus to be required to comply with the statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

Many of the actions in the Sharing Works policy have been progressed, including the implementation of the Shared Education Act 2016, the advancement of support provided through the EA and the availability of self-evaluation tools by ETI. In addition, a significant amount of funding has been released to enable school partnerships to foster new and expand existing shared education projects.

Areas such as promoting engagement with parents, carers and the wider community, and changes to initial teacher training, are still at early stages.

While the EA was given the duty to 'encourage, facilitate and promote shared education' from its establishment in 2014, the same duty was not applicable to DE until the Shared Education Act passed into law in 2016.

The sharing works policy is driven forward by the Shared Education Act 2016, and the next section discusses the Act.

Shared Education Act (NI) 2016

Following the commitment for legislation in the Sharing Works policy, the Shared Education Act received royal assent in 2016.

The Shared Education Act defines shared education and its purpose. It also outlines the responsibilities of DE, EA and other arms-length bodies².

The core components that are regarded as the minimum essential for the delivery of shared education are outlined in the act as follows:

Shared education means the education together of:

- (a) those of different religious belief, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons; and
- (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant providers.

It defines the purpose of shared education as:

- (a) to deliver educational benefits to children and young persons
- (b) to promote the efficient and effective use of resources
- (c) to promote equality of opportunity
- (d) to promote good relations, and
- (e) to promote respect for identity, diversity and community cohesion.

The Act places duties on both DE and the EA to “encourage, facilitate and promote shared education”. Other bodies, including the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and sectoral bodies³ have power under the Act to encourage and facilitate shared education.

In addition DE was required to lay a report before the Northern Ireland Assembly no more than two years following the act’s Royal Assent which details the extent to which DE and EA have exercised their duty. The first report⁴ was published in May 2018 and will be required every two years thereafter.

² See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ni/2016/20>

³ The Act defines “sectoral body” as a body -

(a) which is recognised by the Department of Education as representing the interests of grant-aided schools of a particular description; and

(b) to which grants are paid under section 4 of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

⁴ DE (2018) Advancing shared education – report to the Northern Ireland Assembly, available at https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Shared%20Education%20-%20Report%20to%20Assembly%20May%202018_2.pdf.

Shared education funding

Resource funding

The first significant investment in shared education took place between 2007 and 2010. Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) invested in a pilot project with Queen’s University, Belfast. A total of 12 partnerships involving 65 schools and approximately 3,700 pupils were part of the first Shared Education Programme (SEP1).

SEP2 took place between 2010 and 2013. AP and IFI provided funds to Queen’s University; they also funded the Fermanagh Trust and the Northern Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) to deliver pilots in various areas. A total of 158 schools were involved in 54 partnerships, including approximately 35,800 pupils.

In 2014 the EA took over the work which had begun through SEP1 and SEP2 through the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Programme (DSC SESP). More recently, in 2016 European Peace Funding (Peace IV) included significant support for shared education.

Figure 1: Dedicated resource funding streams for shared education

Delivering social change signature project for shared education (DSC SESP)	Peace IV shared education programme (CASE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education Authority led (including contribution from Atlantic Philanthropies, DE and The Executive Office.• £25 million• December 2014 – June 2019• Targeted at schools with prior experience of shared education.• Application process open to eligible partnerships.• 3 main streams:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared education through school partnership• Teacher professional learning.• Network for shared schools improvement.	<p>Two consortia appointed to deliver the programme. A total of €35.3m allocated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. €28.9 million (plus €2 million for centrally commissioned projects)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led by EA and ROI• September 2017 – March 2022.• 2 cohorts (cohort two closed in May 2018)• Targeted at schools with no/limited experience of shared education• Primary and post primary.2. ‘Sharing from the Start’<ul style="list-style-type: none">• €4.3 million• Led by Early Years, Fermanagh Trust and National Childhood Network• 2017-2021• Applications closed• Aimed at pre-school sector in NI and cross boarder communities.

By March 2018, 583 schools and early years settings were involved in 254 shared education partnerships funded by DSC SESP and Peace IV⁵.

Figure 2: Level of participation in DSC SESP and Peace IV between May 2016 and March 2018⁶

Phase	Schools			Pupils		
	9 May 2016	31 Mar 2018	Change	9 May 2016	31 Mar 2018	Change
DSC SESP						
Pre-school	16	16	0	1642	1676	34
Primary Schools	206	246	40	8978	29673	20695
Post-primary Schools	86	99	13	6296	17376	11080
Special Schools	5	10	5	53	428	375
Sub-total	313	371	58	16969	49153	32184
Peace IV						
Pre-school	0	51	51	0	1411	1411
Primary Schools	0	150	150	0	8207	8207
Post-primary Schools	0	10	10	0	268	268
Special Schools	0	1	1	0	10	10
Sub-total	0	212	212	0	9896	9896
OVERALL TOTAL	313	583	270	16969	59049	42080

Capital funding

In 2013 the Together Building a United Community strategy (T:BUC) was launched. To assist with the strategy's delivery a number of funding streams were also developed such as the shared education campus programme.

Five projects have been identified to date, in Limavady, Ballycastle, Moy, Brookeborough and Duneane/Moneynick.

The third call for applications ran between September 2016 and January 2017. The decisions on these projects will be made subject to the release of Fresh Start Agreement capital funds.

⁵ DE (2018) Advancing shared education – report to the Northern Ireland Assembly, available at https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Shared%20Education%20-%20Report%20to%20Assembly%20May%202018_2.pdf.

⁶ Source as above.

In the autumn budget 2018, Chancellor Phillip Hammond confirmed that £300million will be made available⁷.

Figure 3: Dedicated capital funding for shared education

Strule shared education campus	T:BUC shared education campuses programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work began in 2013, however is not expected to be complete until 2022. • £170 million (plus £140 million from the UK Government, announced 19 June 2018) • Loreto Grammar School, Omagh Academy Grammar School, Sacred Heart College, Omagh High School, Christian Brothers and Arvalee School and Resource Centre will all be located on the site. 	<p>Jointly operated between EA and CCMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened early 2014 • Headline action under the T:BUC strategy • Provided through the fresh start agreement • £59 million per year until March 2026 for shared and integrated schools. <p>Calls 1 and 2 identified five projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limavady – St Mary’s HS and Limavady HS • Ballycastle – Ballycastle HS and Cross and Passion College • Moy – Moy regional controlled school and St John’s PS • Brookesbrough – St Mary’s PS and Brookesbrough PS • Duneane/Moneynick – Duneane PS and Moneynick PS <p>Call 3 – September 2016 – January 2017</p>

The Strule Education Campus will bring around 4,000 pupils together from five controlled maintained and voluntary post-primary schools and one special school in Omagh. To date only the Arvalee School and Resource centre is on site (since September 2016).

Good relations funding

Though T:BUC a number of funding streams exist, including the camps programme and the central good relations fund. Schools can apply for this funding to advance shared education projects for their pupils.

⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/66-million-for-shared-and-integrated-education-in-northern-ireland>.

Regarding the T:BUC camps programme, to date over 200 camps have received funding for young people between 11 and 19 years old.

Figure 4: Overview of T:BUC good relations funding

T:BUC Camps Programme	T:BUC Good Relations Funding Programmes
<p>A headline action in the T:BUC strategy.</p> <p>Each camp must be run on a cross community basis.</p> <p>Applications are invited from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered youth organisations • Bona fide voluntary and community organisations including (churches, sports groups, art groups) • Schools • Regional organisations • District Councils <p>Young people taking part are aged between 11 and 19 years.</p> <p>2016/17: 104 camps received funding 2018/19: 131 camps received funding</p>	<p>Supports time-bound projects which contribute to the promotion of good relations.</p> <p>Various funding streams available including the Central Good Relations Fund and the District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP).</p> <p>The Central Good Relations Fund is a small central scheme designed to distribute funding in year.</p> <p>All successful project and small grant applicants under the 2018/19 funding programme will be required to deliver projects by 31 March 2019.</p> <p>The District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) aims of to improve relations between and within District Council areas and to support local solutions to local good relations issues.</p>

Shared education in the controlled sector

As a sectoral body, CSSC has a power to encourage and facilitate shared education in the controlled sector. This work involves raising awareness of shared education funding amongst schools. CSSC's School Support Officers have successfully assisted a number of schools in achieving funding to run shared education programmes. CSSC's progress in this area is reported on every six months to DE.

There are 559 schools in the controlled sector (2017/18 figures). In March 2018, 267 controlled schools were involved in shared education delivery through the DSC SESP and Peace IV programmes⁸.

Many more schools are involved in shared education through other funding streams including T:BUC.

Across the sector a wide range of shared education projects exist, many partnerships are longstanding having developed over many years, others are relatively new and fledgling. To accompany this briefing paper CSSC has discussed shared education with principals from across the sector at different stages of their shared education journey.

Interviews include the principals from Knocknagoney and Garvagh Primary Schools which are at the beginning of their sharing experience, to Cookstown Primary and Edenderry Nursery which have been involved in shared education projects for many years.

We also spoke to Antrim Grammar school which is part of the 19 school 'Moving Forward Together' project; Moy Primary School which is one of the five school partnerships progressing towards a shared campus; and Ardavalee Special School and Resource Centre, the first school to be placed on the Strule site.

Each of the interviews have been compiled into one booklet which gives a flavour of shared education from across the sector.

⁸ DE (2018) Advancing shared education – report to the Northern Ireland Assembly, available at https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Shared%20Education%20-%20Report%20to%20Assembly%20May%202018_2.pdf, p29.

Conclusion

Over the last number of years shared education has become an integral part of school life in Northern Ireland. The implementation of policy, legislation, available funding and the will of schools to become involved has moulded the landscape which exists today.

The School Omnibus Survey 2018 showed that in the 2017/18 academic year 63% of schools said that they had partnered in shared education with another school⁹. The 'Advancing shared education' report indicated that in March 2018, 583 schools (approximately 51%) and over 59,000 pupils were involved in shared education partnerships through the Shared Education Signature Project and Peace IV funds. Around 12% of schools involved in shared education partnerships are therefore resourced by other funding streams, such as T:BUC, or may self-fund the projects.

For some school partnerships sharing is an integral part of school practice. However other schools are only beginning their shared education journey, or have not yet embarked on any aspect of sharing.

By its nature shared education fosters respect and understanding between cultures. Pupils from different schools and backgrounds come together to learn, interact and engage. Many of the early projects took place outside schools and contact was often brief. Today's shared education projects are mostly based on regular contact, such as programmes of shared lessons, taught in schools by pupils' teachers. There is greater opportunity for friendships to form between pupils, but also school staff who work together to plan and deliver the projects in many cases. While some projects tackle the topics of identity and culture, often the contact pupils have with one another is a learning experience in itself.

Many school leaders acknowledge that without funding they would have been unable to begin a shared education project and if funding were to cease they would find it difficult to continue the work which has begun. The continuation of funding is essential to ensure that projects can continue and others can develop.

⁹ DE (2018) School Omnibus Survey 2018, available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/School%20Omnibus%20Survey%20Report%202018.pdf>, p7.