

NEWS FROM THE INTEGRATED EDUCATION MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

LEARNING TOGETHER

ISSUE 33 SPRING/SUMMER 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

**CARL FRAMPTON
AT ERNE IC**

**CARRICKFERGUS
PARENTS VOTE FOR
INTEGRATION**

**YOUNG INVENTOR
HEADS TO DUBAI**



Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Learning Together.

As usual, we have been busy since the last issue, raising funds to help continue our work, supporting schools through grants and events, promoting the possibility of transformation and continuing a conversation about our vision for the NI education system.

Integrated Education Month was celebrated in March and as you can see on p05 schools enjoyed exploring this year's theme: perspectives.

“we are delighted with the potential new additions to the family of integrated schools”

As you can see on the front cover, Erne Integrated College welcomed a special guest in the shape of NICIE patron Carl Frampton and his visit features on P07.

Many long-standing supporters of integrated education gathered at Down Royal Racecourse on 06 May (see page 12) and the IEF has also benefitted from two events in London: a comedy night (p07) and a St Patrick's Day dinner at the Baltic Exchange (p12).

And we are delighted with the potential new additions to the family of integrated schools; it's great to welcome new readers at Carrickfergus Central Primary, where parents have voted in support of becoming officially integrated. Interest in the process has never been higher and so, alongside a raft of development proposals for the growth of existing integrated schools, the prospect of offering more families the opportunity to access integrated education is very real.

I hope you enjoy the magazine.

Ken Cathcart,
Chair, IEF



PARENTS SAY YES!

Parents at Carrickfergus Central Primary School have voted overwhelmingly to take the school on the path to becoming officially integrated.

The school's principal and board took the step of balloting parents when they recognised the level of interest in integration among the school community. The vote (run by the Electoral Reform Services between 11 and 25 February 2019) showed 86% support for integration through the process known as "transformation."

Mr Ian Baxter, chairman of the Board of Governors and Mrs Nuala Hall, Principal, were delighted by the results. Mrs Hall said: "Carrickfergus Central Primary has always had an intake of pupils from all Christian denominations and other faiths as well as no faith and as such has been naturally integrated. We now have an opportunity to formalise this arrangement through transformation to controlled integrated status. The support we have received from parents, staff and members of the local community has been very encouraging."

Roisin Marshall, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), said she was delighted by the vote but not surprised: "We know there is an appetite for integrated

education among parents in Northern Ireland and this ballot underlines that in no uncertain terms. We look forward to supporting Carrickfergus Central as the school community explores the process of transformation and works together to further develop and strengthen its welcoming and inclusive ethos."

“We know there is an appetite for integrated education among parents in Northern Ireland”

NICIE and the IEF will support Carrickfergus Central PS as it progresses towards a development proposal to become integrated.

Interest in transformation to official integration has never been higher, with further parental ballots in the pipeline.

Parents around NI can express their support for their own school to become integrated on the Integrate My School platform: www.integratemyschool.com

NEW BUILD FOR MILLENNIUM IPS

There were celebrations and smiles in Millennium Integrated Primary School, Saintfield, when confirmation arrived that the school would get a new multi-million pound building, funded through the Fresh Start Agreement. The state-of-the-art facility will be built on the current school site. There will be 14 classrooms and it is hoped that construction work will start in spring 2020.

Millennium IPS has been providing integrated education since it opened with only 10 children in September 2000. The school's popularity led to the Department of Education granting double enrolment from 2013 and in September this year there will be 365 children in the primary school and 52 children in the nursery. The IEF is proud to have supported the school from its establishment and throughout its journey.

Welcoming the announcement, Principal Barry Corrigan said: "These are exciting



Principal Barry Corrigan (l) with teacher Marie Cooley and pupils (l-r) Oliver Taylor, Honor Scallon and Katie Jeffers.

times for integrated education in the Saintfield and Carryduff areas. We have been very fortunate to have a committed school community supporting us from our very foundation and the building of a new primary school with the nursery unit validates the unique work that is being done in Millennium.

"It is my vision to help design and create a school that is fit for the 21st Century and to meet the needs of all children in the 21st Century. I would like to be able to work with the staff and school family to create a legacy in a building that we can all be proud of."

MORE PLACES IN INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Priory Integrated College in Holywood has been granted an increase in pupil numbers starting from September 2019, with the approved enrolment growing from 500 to 600.

The statement from the Department of Education, on the success of the school's Development Proposal, notes the high demand for integrated education places in the area and adds:

"I am pleased to note that work is progressing on a business case for a new build for the school to be funded from "Fresh Start" capital. This project, when it comes to fruition, will hopefully provide greatly enhanced facilities for teaching and learning and the experience of students at the school."

Priory IC is a transformed integrated school and previously operated as Holywood High School. Since becoming integrated, the college has grown steadily with an over-subscription for Year 8 places in four of the past five years.

Alongside the development proposal for growth, Priory IC has been granted 23 additional places in Year 8 in September to help accommodate an increase this summer in the number of children leaving primary school in the area. Other integrated schools given additional places are Strangford IC on the Ards peninsula, Hazelwood IC in North Belfast (40 places each) and Lagan College in Castlereagh (20 additional places).

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR BRAIDSIDE IPNS

Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School in Ballymena welcomed some special visitors to the official 'First Sod Cutting' ceremony to mark the start of work on a new school. The ceremony on 04 January was led by Ken Cathcart, one of the founders of the school in 1989, who became the first Chair of the Board of Governors and who is now Chair of the Integrated Education Fund. Principal Julie McAuley, previous Principal Robert Scott, school governors, the contractors Glasgiven Contracts Ltd and the project managers WYG were also there. They were joined by some very excited pupils who are eagerly looking forward to the new school opening.

Principal Julie McAuley said: "This is a wonderful day for all those associated with Braidside over the last 30 years. We are really looking forward to having a school building which meets the needs of children, staff and parents for years to come. This building secures the future provision of integrated primary education in the area."

The sod-cutting was followed on 13 February by a visit from Derek Baker, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education, which is funding the new building through the Fresh Start programme.



IEF Chair Ken Cathcart joins teachers, parents, pupils and contractors as work begins at Braidside IPS.



Declan Kearney MLA at the round-table discussions with young people.

POLITICIANS RESPOND TO STRONG MESSAGES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

School students and members of youth organisations around Northern Ireland gathered in Belfast last November to tell Stormont politicians to *ListenUP!* and engage with their young people when developing policies. And the MLAs responded with a commitment to continue the conversation.

Around 80 young people met at the Rainbow Factory Studio in Belfast for an event hosted by Integrated AlumNI, which also brought together MLAs representing the five main Stormont parties. The politicians spent the first hour of the event listening to round-table discussions on issues such as education, mental health and flourishing communities before giving feedback on what they had heard.

MLAs attending *ListenUP!* were Kellie Armstrong and John Blair (Alliance), Paula Bradley DUP, Linda Dillon and Declan Kearney (Sinn Fein), Claire Hanna and Colin McGrath (SDLP), and Mike Nesbitt (UUP). Messages from the tables of young people included a wish to live in a Northern Ireland where "... voting is for parties because of their manifesto rather than religion". The MLAs were also told firmly: "Politicians need to listen and stop abusing petitions of concern to allow a real

democracy"; and an electronic poll showed massive support for an independent commission to review the education system in Northern Ireland.

The *ListenUP!* event was chaired by comic, playwright and actor Conor Keys and

guests were welcomed by Michael Lynch and Laura McCance of Integrated AlumNI.

The politicians attending signed a pledge that they would engage further with young people's groups and continue the conversation.



The *ListenUP!* event was followed by a report bringing together the comments and questions raised on the day. It was presented at Stormont by author Nancy Eaton (front row second from right), IEF representatives and AlumNI to politicians from five parties on 04 March.

PUPILS PREPARE FOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Former pupil and Green Party leader, Clare Bailey MLA meets current pupils at the event at Lagan College in April.

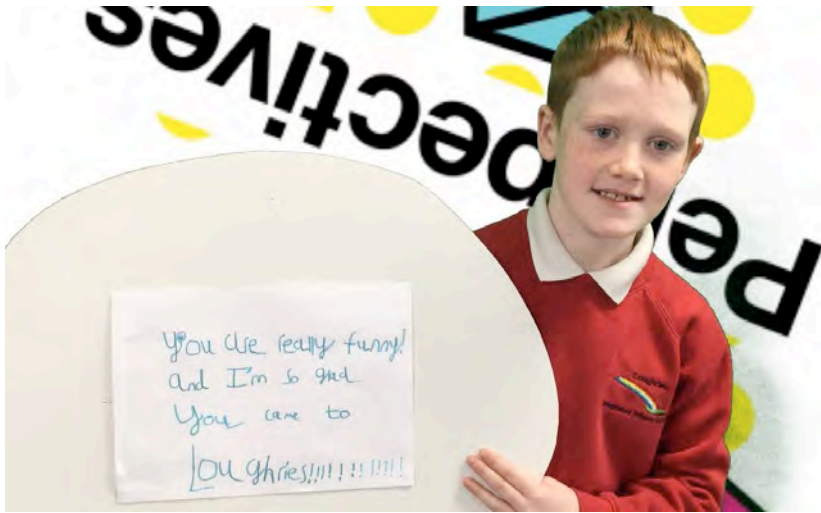


Politicians faced pupils at Lagan College, Belfast, on 10 April, when they were questioned on key issues chosen by the young people. Timed to raise awareness of the local government elections in May and held exactly 21 years after the publication of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, the event brought Kellie Armstrong (Alliance), Clare Bailey (Green Party), Colm Gildernew (Sinn Fein), John Kyle (PUP), Mike Nesbitt (UUP) and Derek McCallan (Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Government Association) to meet around 50 students from years 11-14. Lagan College hosted the conference with the support of the IEF, and broadcaster and journalist Jim Fitzpatrick chaired the event. The guests joined groups of young people for round-table discussions on climate change, mental health support and community divisions and then formed a panel to answer direct questions from the audience.

The students then voted in an electronic poll which found that 95% would, if they could, vote in the local council elections on 02 May.

CELEBRATING INTEGRATION

Integrated schools around NI marked Integrated Education Month in March with activities related to this year's theme, 'perspectives'.



Children at Loughries Integrated Primary School in Newtownards explored how we view ourselves and how others view us. The P5 pupils exchanged positive messages with each other and learned that we should sometimes take a moment to appreciate the things that make us special and the things that make those around us special.



During Integrated Education Month the pupils and staff of Roe Valley IPS in Limavady held a "Green Day". The school's Eco Stars team organised pupils, parents and staff to donate to the local community foodbank. Pupils – who came to school dressed in green – were delighted to welcome guests from the Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul to their assembly. The number of contributions received was fantastic and the school was assured that they will all be appreciated.



Oakgrove Integrated College in Derry/Londonderry invited pupils from local integrated schools to join them to explore 'perspectives'. Young people from Oakgrove IPS, Groarty IPS, Roe Valley IPS and North Coast IC attended. They were all delighted to welcome NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, Koulla Yiasouma, who commented "It's wonderful to hear from children how they share their values. A shared future for Northern Ireland can only be achieved by educating our children together."



At Brownlow Integrated College in Craigavon, students attended an extended assembly to introduce a new extra-curricular club. 'Kaleidoscope' has been established as a meeting space for all pupils and staff who are affected by LGBTQ+ issues or who want to understand them. Attendance at the first meeting of the club was very high, with pupils full of suggestions as to how things could move forward in the coming weeks.

Staff from integrated schools attended a three-day training course in the Anti-Bias Curriculum (ABC) delivered by NICIE and supported by the IEF, the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Open Society Foundations.



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION FOR MAY

Baroness May Blood MBE, Campaign Chair of the IEF, was special guest and keynote speaker at the annual breakfast hosted by the Irish American Partnership in Washington DC to mark the traditional “Women’s Christmas”. Nollaig na mBan is held each year in January throughout Ireland to celebrate women’s leadership within the family and the wider world. May was invited as a leader with a positive impact on her community and beyond. Norman Houston of the NI Bureau in Washington introduced May to the audience of Congresswomen and -men, community leaders and prominent business figures at the University Club in Washington. May told them about her life as a mill worker and trade unionist who went on to become a community activist, member of the NI Women’s Coalition, and peer in the House of Lords. She said she was “An ordinary person who has had quite extraordinary opportunities.”

Baroness Blood accepted a donation of \$10,000 on behalf of the IEF, and told the audience: “I want to thank you here today for your support for important projects



Baroness May Blood addressing the Nollaig na mBan breakfast in Washington DC.

in Ireland, North and South, and in particular for your continuing support for integrated education in Northern Ireland.”

May met several IEF friends and donors during her stay in Washington DC and

then travelled to New York where she enjoyed a reception hosted by our great friend John Fitzpatrick, Chair of the American Ireland Fund, and attended by high-profile supporters including Liam Neeson.

FRIENDS OF INTEGRATION

THE INTEGRATED EDUCATION MOVEMENT HAS LOST TWO GREAT FRIENDS RECENTLY, WITH THE DEATHS OF MARGARET KENNEDY LAST DECEMBER AND TOM NOBLE IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

Margaret Kennedy was crucial to the early days of the All Children Together (ACT) movement which led to the opening of Lagan College in 1981. She was a teacher herself and a committed member of the Church of Ireland – one of the earliest Protestants to join ACT. She was active in many early meetings with the church hierarchy as ACT sought support for the 1978 Education Act, which enabled schools to transform to integrated status.

On behalf of ACT, Margaret contributed to consultations on religious education and on peace-building and, along with Bill Brown, spoke to the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Dublin Castle in 1995.

Margaret served as Chair and then Director of ACT and continued throughout her life to actively and vocally support the growth of integrated education in NI, saying at one stage: “What more radical form of reconciliation could there be than educating children together,

Protestant and Catholic, in their formative years, with nurture and pastoral care from their respective clergy?” (letter published in the Irish Times and Irish News, Nov 1997).

Margaret Kennedy, with her husband John, was a great supporter of the IEF and made a valuable contribution to our work and to so many of our events over the years.

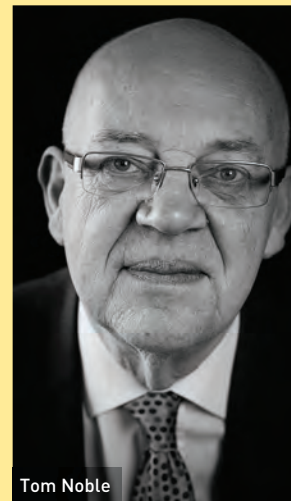


Margaret Kennedy

Tom Noble, founding Principal of Erne Integrated College, was a driving force behind the integrated education movement in Enniskillen. Tom, along with his dedicated staff, guided Erne IC from small beginnings to the flourishing school it is today.

Current Principal, Jimmy Jackson-Ware paid tribute to his predecessor: “Tom was driven by a sense of equity and justice and worked for the betterment of the whole community. Not only was he a proponent of integrated education – he was one of its visionaries. It is no exaggeration to say that without Tom’s energy, vision and industry, Erne Integrated College simply would not exist.”

On his retirement from Erne IC, Tom became a governor of Enniskillen Integrated Primary School and continued to support the growth of integrated education through work with NICIE.



Tom Noble



CARL CHAMPIONS INTEGRATION IN ENNISKILLEN

Boxer Carl “The Jackal” Frampton MBE delighted guests and students at Erne Integrated College, Enniskillen, in April when he officially opened the school’s Tom Noble Building named after the founding principal. The new facility houses a health and fitness suite as well as sporting and study facilities.

Carl, who famously became a three-times world champion over two weight

divisions, is a huge supporter of integrated education, and is an active patron of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE).

Carl said: “I am delighted to offer my support for integrated education and do whatever I can to support NICIE in their vital work to help bring more people together in Northern Ireland and make it a better place for all of us. It’s particularly

nice to be working with the schools and I’ve really enjoyed meeting everyone in Erne Integrated College today. I’ve been completely overwhelmed by the wonderful reception I’ve received here.”

Erne IC opened in 1994 and will celebrate its silver jubilee in September. As an integrated school, the college offers a wide range of sports including GAA, soccer, rugby, netball, swimming and rowing.

COMEDY STARS RAISE A LAUGH FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION

A top line-up of comedy performers joined forces in the London Irish Centre on 02 November to raise awareness and money for the Integrated Education Fund.

The show was hosted by comedian and actress Wendy Wason, and comedy stars Ed Byrne, Andrew Maxwell, Lou Sanders,

Luke McQueen and Alice Fraser all gave up their time in support of the Fund.

Wendy Wason said: “My husband, Stephen Hagan, is from Northern Ireland and is a long-standing supporter of integrated education there. After attending a couple of IEF events with him I knew I wanted to



Ed Byrne at the London Irish Centre.

do something to support their amazing work. Northern Ireland has made so much positive progress over recent years but we need to do what we can to support efforts to sustain and build on it. That’s why I’m so pleased to do my bit for the IEF.”

Commenting on the great line-up for the show, IEF Chief Executive Tina Merron said: “Thank you Ed, Andrew, Wendy, Luke, Alice and Lou for supporting our work and ‘standing up’ for what we do. It was a fantastic night out with a great cast and all the money raised will be supporting the growth of integrated education in Northern Ireland.”

Comedy fans should keep an eye on the IEF website for exciting news about another “Stand Up for Integrated Education” show in Belfast later this year.



Standing: Lou Sanders, Ed Byrne, Wendy Wason and Luke McQueen.
Front: Andrew Maxwell and Alice Fraser.



Back row: Roisin Marshall (NICIE), Maria Rogan (Parenting NI), Bill Fletcher (Principal) and Jill Caskey and Tina Merron (IEF) with pupils at Cliftonville IPS.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS SUPPORTING INTEGRATION

Many parents tell us they want an integrated education for their children. To ensure that more parents are aware that it is possible for schools to become integrated with parents' support, a new booklet has been produced by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and the IEF: *Integration Works – A Short Guide to Integrated Education*.

The booklet demonstrates the key role parents play in the process of 'transforming' a school to integrated status. The publication was launched in February at Cliftonville Integrated Primary School, which became integrated 10 years ago.

Last year the Department of Education published a guidance document on integrated education for school leaders around Northern Ireland, and the new booklet has been welcomed by Parenting NI.

You can download a copy at www.ief.org.uk or for further information contact Jill Caskey on (028) 9069 4099 / Jill@ief.org.uk.

SHARING THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSFORMATION

Following the publication last year of the Department of Education document *Integration Works*, which presents guidance and information for schools considering becoming integrated, NICIE and the IEF held an information event in March for schools in Belfast.

Representatives of two nursery schools, six primary schools and four post-primaries gathered at Clifton House to learn more about the process of "transformation", which is the legal process for a school to become integrated.

The event provided an opportunity to ask any questions and to hear presentations by representatives of schools who have already become integrated or who have started the process of transformation towards integrated status.

WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY...

As part of the IEF's outreach and engagement activity, the Fund hosted a conference on 07 February entitled 'Education: We All Have a Role to Play' in Riddel Hall, Belfast. Participants and speakers were keen to discuss challenges and best practice in relation to education in our society. We were delighted that a broad range of organisations was represented, including community, statutory and education bodies.

At the start of the event, participants were asked to list some of the key issues in education today and the many responses included funding; mental health; segregation; underachievement; inequality; disadvantage; special needs; reconciliation; selection; politics; exam pressures; and bullying. However, the conversations during the event highlighted

that although there are many challenges facing the education system, there are also plenty of opportunities to improve the situation.

The speakers covered a broad range of topics, including the importance of addressing mental health issues among our young people, encouraging and celebrating diversity in schools, involving parents in conversations about their children's education and also increasing reciprocal engagement between schools and local communities to achieve the best outcomes for our children.

The IEF is very grateful to the contributors who supported the conference: Baroness May Blood, Dr Dirk Schubotz (QUB/ARK), Mairead McCafferty (NICCY), Eileen Chan-Hu (CRAICNI), Katrina Murphy and

Eimear McKeown (New-Bridge Integrated College), Jayne Thompson (ParentKind) and Charmain Jones (Rural Community Network) and would also like to thank Peter Osborne (Community Relations Council) who expertly chaired the event.



Peter Osborne of the Community Relations Council chairs the IEF conference at Riddel Hall.

EXCELLENTLY INTEGRATED!

Two schools have been proud to receive the Excellence in Integrated Education Award (EIEA) this year: Cranmore Integrated Primary School in Belfast and Integrated College Dungannon (ICD).



Jacqueline Nesbitt (ICD Vice-Chair), Roisin Marshall (CEO, NICIE), Louise Burke (Head of Integration at ICD), Andrew Sleeth (ICD Principal) and Colin Holmes (ICD Vice Principal).

At ICD, Jacqueline Nesbitt, Vice Chair of the board of governors, along with Principal Andrew Sleeth and Head of Integration Louise Burke, accepted the award on behalf of the College from Roisin Marshall, Chief Executive of NICIE.

Assessors for the award visited the College over three days and met staff, students, parents and governors, as well as visiting classes and reviewing data to show how the college met the requirements of the award. The assessment visits followed a long process of thorough self-evaluation to benchmark the college's position regarding realising their integrated vision.

Cranmore Integrated Primary School in South-West Belfast has also been celebrating; it received the Excellence in Integrated Education Award as it marked 25 years since its foundation.



Roisin Marshall presents the EIEA at Cranmore IPS.

LEARNING AT WINDMILL IPS GAINS AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION



Head of Windmill Integrated Nursery Kierna Corr learns from pre-school children in Ismir, Turkey.

Pupils at Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery have been benefitting from an international project bringing new ideas into the classroom. The school is involved in schemes backed by the British Council and funded by Erasmus Plus.

Staff in the nursery and foundation stage have been travelling to partner schools in Spain and Iceland to learn new ways to help children with English as an additional language and have explored how movement and play can support numeracy and literacy activities. The Windmill IPS team had

the opportunity to share practice from their own classrooms and learn more from colleagues across Europe. The benefits of this experience are already being seen at Windmill IPS.

In December, three members of staff travelled to Turkey to discuss music teaching and shared some maths ideas from their own classrooms. Windmill IPS will in turn host visitors from the partner schools this year. The school is already planning for more staff to take part in more courses across Europe in the near future.

BLACKWATER IC CELEBRATES WITH MAY



Baroness May Blood with students at Blackwater IC.

A special assembly took place on 13 March to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the opening of Blackwater Integrated College.

Baroness May Blood of Blackwatertown – IEF Campaign Chair - was the school's special guest, as the school is named in honour of her amazing work for integrated education.

Speaking at the assembly, Principal Stephen Taylor said: "Blackwater's journey over the last 10 years has been challenging at times but also very rewarding and we are looking forward with great optimism to the future for all our students. Many of the original staff from 2008 are still here at the college, and it is testament to all their hard work that so much has been achieved over the past ten years. We have also had fantastic support from the Integrated Education Fund, through initiatives such as the Carson Bursaries, and we are delighted to welcome Baroness Blood here today."

GUESTS LISTEN AS STUDENTS PRAISE WELLNESS PROJECT

Students and staff at Slemish Integrated College, Ballymena, were pleased to welcome Baroness May Blood (IEF Campaign Chair) and Sir Bruce Robinson of the Irish American Partnership (IAP) to the school on 14 February. The guests officially opened the college's new 'wellness' room which was funded by their respective organisations. A former science store has been transformed thanks to generous donations totalling £8000 and Baroness Blood and Sir Bruce were interested to see how the money has been spent. With soundproofing, a kitchen and comfortable furnishings, the room is a welcoming and relaxing space.



Standing: Thomas McGuinness, Noelle Monaghan, Taylor Moxon, Sir Bruce Robinson, Jemma Caitlin, Julia Millar and Emma Shaw, teacher. Seated: Jessica McKendry and Baroness May Blood.

The College has developed a strategy to help students 'find their voice' and a group sat down with the visitors in the new wellness room to talk about how they can access support from a drop-in listening service when struggling with everyday challenges. This is supported by the College's 'listening lady', Noelle Monaghan.

Baroness Blood discussed the importance of sharing and being listened to and she praised students who have the courage

to take the initiative to talk about their worries.

The College strategy to encourage students to 'find their voice' is also working to build students' capacity and confidence. May and Sir Bruce went on to meet a number of Sixth Form students, sharing inspirational stories about how one voice can make a difference through various platforms including radio and TV broadcasts and events such as last year's *ListenUP!* hosted by Integrated AlumNI.



Congratulations to Cherith Harkness at Six Mile Integrated Primary School in Antrim, who has been named NI Primary School Teacher of the Year by Primary Times magazine.

Mrs Harkness has been a teacher at Six Mile IPS for ten years and is the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator and Literacy Co-ordinator. She has worked extremely hard to create an excellent scheme of work and learning environment, with the pupils' progress in literacy proving that her ideas and dedication produce results.

Cherith Harkness



Speeding motorists have been given the choice of accepting a fine or facing a 'Kids Court' at Phoenix Integrated Primary School in Cookstown. Drivers caught exceeding the 30mph limit outside the school were given the option of facing a panel of pupils who challenged their driving and also quizzed them on road safety. The aim of the project is to change driver behaviour and it is hoped the pupils will also remember the "slower is safer" message when they are old enough to get behind the wheel.

CHILDREN REAP REWARDS FOR SCARECROWS



Children from Ballycastle IPS enjoy their morning at CAFRE.

Winners from the 2018 scarecrow competition at Allianz Garden Show Ireland last May gathered at the Greenmount Campus of CAFRE in Antrim in November to celebrate their success and collect some green prizes. Winning schools were given saplings for their grounds and everyone who joined the award ceremony got the chance to plant up a trough of colourful cyclamen to take back to school with them. Prizes were kindly donated by CAFRE.

There were 15 scarecrows entered into the competition for integrated primary schools in May 2018, with Scary Mary from Ballycastle Integrated Primary School taking overall 'Best in Show' title.

Sad to say, the Allianz Garden Show Ireland is taking a break in 2019 so the IEF has not organised a scarecrow contest this spring; congratulations and thanks to all the integrated primary schools who have helped to make the competition such a colourful success over the years.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? TRACKING DOWN SOME PAST PUPILS...

My name is Piera Cirefice. I studied at Shimna Integrated College, in Newcastle, Co. Down and I am currently working as a freelance illustrator over in Cambridgeshire. Art has always played a key role in my life growing up, and it was my favourite subject, so once I left education, I knew it was a career I wanted to pursue.



Piera Cirefice

My favourite memories from Shimna IC involve the people at the school; it was such a small school everyone worked together and there was a great sense of community! Grabbing an ice-cream and sitting down by the beach at lunch time, with the views of the Mourne mountains in the background, during my A-Levels was also a highlight. I have less fond memories of the morning starts...and maths!

The fact that I went to an integrated school in Northern Ireland meant I could carry that ethos with me, and it stands to be one of the most valuable lessons I have learnt: that we are all equal, no matter what background we come from and everyone deserves to be treated the same and with respect. Having stepped out of that education system, I realise just how rare and lucky I was to grow and learn in such an understanding and progressive environment. I have a lot to thank Shimna for!

I've continued to learn since leaving school. I took the jump to live in New Zealand for a while after graduating University, which really pushed me out of my comfort zone. I'm proud of that, but also of starting my own business as a creative and establishing my craft in the last two years. I've worked very hard to get to this stage.

One thing I wished I'd learned earlier is how important self-care is and that it is not a self-indulgent practice! Only when you are truly happy and content with yourself can you let that joy spill out of your cup and overflow to share with others.

<http://www.pieracirefice.co.uk/>

GUEST COLUMN

ROISIN MARSHALL CEO NORTHERN IRELAND COUNCIL FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION (NICIE)



Since the Drumragh IC judicial review judgment in 2014, we have witnessed significant growth across many integrated schools with more than 20 development proposals approved for increased enrolments - and there are more applications in the pipeline.

An important advance last year was the Department of Education's publication of new guidance, *Integration Works*, to support schools wishing to consider transformation to integrated status. Since then we have experienced a notable increase in interest from schools across all sectors wanting to find out more about the process.

One of these schools, Carrickfergus Central Primary School, recently announced a successful parental ballot to transform to integrated status.

This increasing demand for integrated education is a testament to the success of all our 65 existing integrated schools and the hard work of their school leaders and staff. There are more school ballots in the pipeline.

We are delighted that more schools are considering becoming officially integrated, offering even more parents the opportunity to access integrated school places. However, we also appreciate that any new transformation may bring challenges to existing integrated schools. NICIE and the Association of Principal Teachers in Integrated Schools (APTIS) would like to hear from you if you would like to discuss any aspects of the continuing growth of integrated provision.

It is a tribute to our schools that many have already shown support for others who are exploring transformation, or who have embarked on the journey to integrated status. This shows the scale of support for developing integrated provision in response to the evident demand.

NEW YEAR HONOURS

Congratulations to IEF Director Mary Roulston who has been awarded an MBE for her services to education. Mary, who was founding Principal of Millennium Integrated Primary School in Carryduff, was named in the New Year Honours list.

Millennium IPS opened in September 2000 with 10 Primary 1 children. Mary led the school for 17 years until her retirement in September 2017, by which time the school had grown to an enrolment of 322 children with a further 53 children in the nursery.

The Fund also extends congratulations to Deirdre Houston, founding governor at Maine IPS, who receives an OBE for services to integrated education in Randalstown. Deirdre was instrumental



Mary Roulston

in establishing Maine IPS which opened in 2003, and worked tirelessly to develop the pre-school facility. She still serves on the school's board.



Richard Kirkpatrick, Dorothee Wagner, Baroness May Blood, Maureen Glassey, Tim McGarry and Alvin Patterson.

IEF IS ON TO A WINNER

Friends of the IEF gathered at Down Royal Racecourse on May 06 to enjoy lunch, entertainment, good company and the odd flutter on the horses – and to raise money for the Fund’s work supporting integrated schools around NI.

Guests arrived in the spring sunshine and were welcomed by IEF Campaign Chair Baroness May Blood, who outlined the Fund’s recent progress and future plans, highlighting the ‘Integrate My School’ programme which informs parents how to initiate the change to integrated status for their child’s school. She said: “The IEF has backed integrated education for more than 25 years and there is more to come. Unfortunately, we do have to keep nagging our politicians and reminding them that integrated education is a core commitment of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. Integrated education is a safe bet and a sure winner for Northern Ireland.”

After a cocktail reception, guests were served a delicious lunch before UTV’s Pamela Ballantyne arrived to share some tips for the races.

Thanks go to Neil Shawcross for donating a stunning painting for auction, to Terry Cross for supplying wine, to all those who generously gave ballot prizes and to the ever-sharp Tim McGarry who supplied edgy and satirical comedy to entertain the crowd. The Fund is grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of the day.

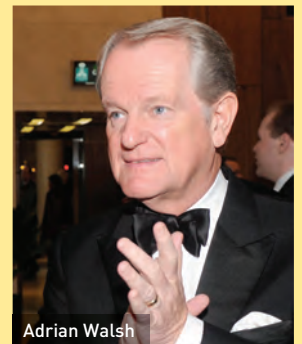


Freya Collins from Forge IPS helping out at Down Royal.



ST PATRICK’S DAY GIFT TO THE IEF

The IEF was delighted to be the beneficiary of the Baltic Exchange Irish Society’s St Patrick’s Day dinner this year, held at The Brewery in London. IEF Director Chris Lynas and Head of Campaign Paul Caskey were privileged to represent the Fund at this event, which raised donations of almost £4,000. This was no doubt largely down to the generous participation of comedian and long-term friend of the IEF, Adrian Walsh, who gave his services free of charge and entertained guests with his wonderful



Adrian Walsh

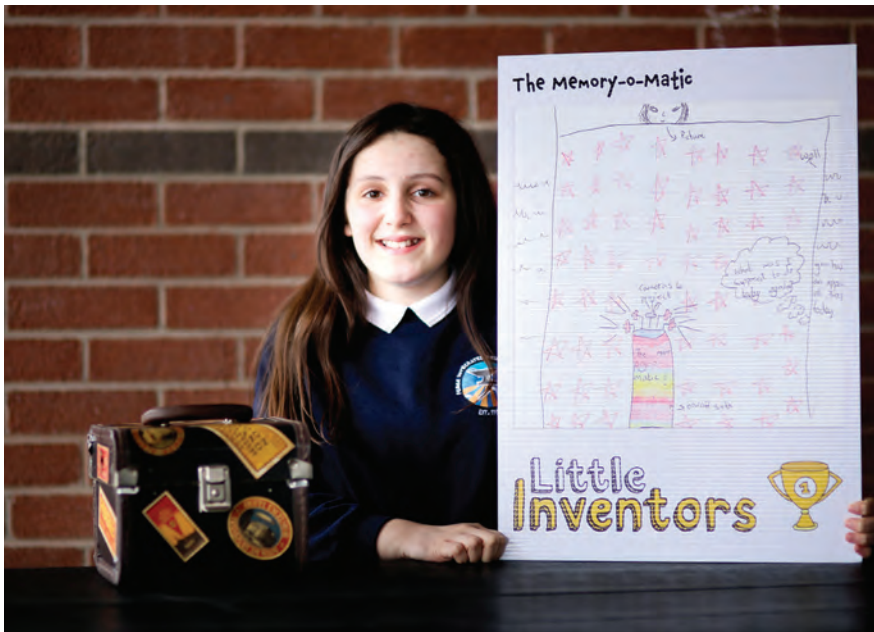
humour. The IEF is also grateful for the continued support of Nigel Herdman, who has been a key member of the Irish Society for many years and a vocal advocate for our work.



SCHOOLS SUPPORT THE FUND

Thanks to all the pupils and staff who wore odd socks to school during March to raise money to support the IEF’s work. Participants make a small donation to join in and celebrate difference in a colourful, fun way. Pictured are children from Killyleagh Integrated Primary School toeing the line for integrated education.

“LITTLE INVENTOR” ROSA FLIES TO DUBAI



Rosa Holmes, from Forge Integrated Primary School in south Belfast, was invited to see her invention on display at the Sharjah Biennial Children's Festival in the United Arab Emirates in March as part of the "Little Inventors" project. She travelled to Dubai with her parents.

“ I thought it would be nice to have a machine that can project a picture of the person you have loved ”

Following the death of her grandmother, Rosa was inspired to create the 'Memory-o-Matic'. She tells the story in her own words: *I thought it would be nice to have*

a machine that can project a picture of the person you have loved, play a song that reminds you of happier times, or retell a story you would like to hear again. It can be programmed to remind you what appointments you have, where you've left your keys, or call someone if you need them.

As soon as me, Mum and Dad stepped off the 7-hour flight, we felt the heat hit our faces; it felt so nice. "You would never get that sort of weather in Belfast," I thought.

The next morning it was 25°C and we were going on a tour of Sharjah (where we were staying). Our tour guide was Prof. Dr. Norman (a retired zoologist). He might well be the nicest person I have ever met; he was just so funny and down to earth.

The first thing we did was go to the Islamic Civilisation Museum which showed 1500 years of Islamic science and art. I saw a

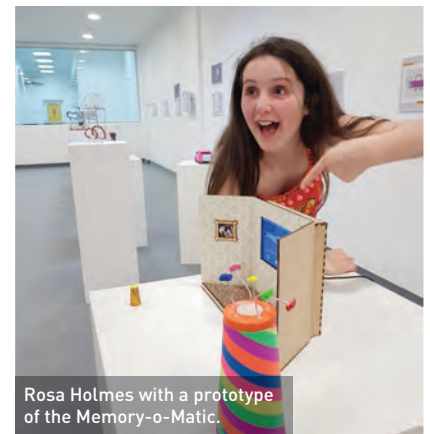
music box designed 1000 years ago and many other beautiful historic things.

After the museum we went to Al Noor Island (the island of light) a very small piece of land in one of the lagoons. We went into the butterfly house - the butterflies were so colourful and big - and there was a 35 million-year-old tree!

For lunch we had a big buffet full of Arabic salads, meats and pastry which were shared between us in the Arabic fashion. I thought all the food was delicious but my favourite was the bread (although the camel was nice too!)

The next morning, we woke up really early because we were going into the desert (which was 35°C that day) for dune bashing, sand boarding and camel riding. The dune bashing was an amazing experience. Whilst we were doing sand boarding, I spotted a scorpion. I loved camel riding, I felt so tall...

When we got to the Sharjah Children's Biennial, where Little Inventors had set up, my invention looked amazing, then they awarded me a certificate and loads of little souvenirs. Thank you, Little Inventors!



Rosa Holmes with a prototype of the Memory-o-Matic.

STRANGFORD IC STUDENTS LOOKING TO A DIGITAL FUTURE

Ten Year 10 students from Strangford Integrated College travelled with mTech.Academy to visit the 'Mobile World' youth conference in Barcelona in February. They were part of a group of 100 students from ten schools across Northern Ireland invited to the conference. The four-day event offered a wide range of educational exhibits, live theatre shows, interactive workshops, and lectures. The students enjoyed plenty of practical activities and also gained insights into the role of technology in their education, future careers and everyday life. MTech.Academy works with industry to develop education which combines technology and creativity.



The Strangford IC team in Barcelona.

BROWNLOW IC WELCOMES RUGBY STAR TO LAUNCH PEACE PROJECT

Ulster and Ireland rugby star Jacob Stockdale chose Brownlow Integrated College, Craigavon, to launch a new Peace IV cross-community sports project in conjunction with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

Jacob took the time to speak with Brownlow IC pupils on rugby in general and specifically about his career, which includes 50 Ulster caps and 12 tries in 14 Ireland caps. The 2018 Six Nations 'Player of the Year' answered questions from the pupils and spent a long time taking photos and signing autographs. He also took in a



tour of the school including the college's new sensory room.

Jacob Stockdale was at Brownlow IC to introduce the 'Building Positive Relations through Sport' project, spearheaded by Lurgan Rugby, Football and Cricket Club and funded by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's PEACE IV Programme.

The project focuses on sport – particularly rugby, Gaelic football and cricket – as a vehicle for engagement and education

among children and young people from areas that have experienced division and social inequality.

The project will see Lurgan RFC Club work alongside local GAA clubs to provide access to shared sports sessions, events and festivals, as well as training and education in a range of community relations activities. The aim is to create the foundations for more extensive peace and reconciliation work within the wider community which Brownlow Integrated College is well-placed to support.

EXCEPTIONAL CARE AT HAZELWOOD IC



Derek Baker (left) with Hazelwood IC students Drusilla Larkin and Lee McCoy along with Principal Maire Thompson (far right) and other members of staff at the Derrytrasna Awards ceremony.

Congratulations are due to Hazelwood Integrated College in North Belfast as the latest integrated school to win a Derrytrasna Award. This scheme celebrates school communities who show exceptional pastoral care for the emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and their families and is run by the Department of Education and the Public Health Agency.

Hazelwood IC was nominated by a parent for the quality of pastoral care they provided for her son who is supported by the Additional Educational Needs Department.

Visiting Hazelwood IC in February, Derek Baker, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education, had talked to students about the support available and commented that the school's in-house social workers were an important addition, offering young people someone they can feel comfortable talking to.

STADIUM VISITS SHOW WHAT UNITES ACROSS THE DIVIDE

In January and February 2019, 28 pupils from Blackwater Integrated College in Downpatrick visited the headquarters of both the Irish Football Association (IFA) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) to discover what similarities exist between the two main sporting traditions in Northern Ireland.

The visits, which were funded through the IEF's Trust Programme, enabled pupils and staff to access and accept other perspectives. Sport has a wonderful ability to bring communities together; however, in Northern Ireland, because some sports are so closely linked to cultural traditions it can become a real point of conflict.

In most cases it was the first time Blackwater IC pupils from a Catholic background had visited Windsor Park and, similarly, for most of the pupils from a Protestant background it was their first venture to Croke Park.

In each visit, the pupils had a guided tour of the stadium and they gained new respect for the effort and determination demanded of the players no matter what their sport.

The Trust Programme grants, supported by the Pears Foundation, help integrated schools to develop their ethos and embed integration in every aspect of school life.



Blackwater IC visitors at Windsor Park.

RUGBY WINNERS AT ERNE IC

Following their unbeaten record in the Ulster Qualifying matches in October, Erne Integrated College's Girls U15 rugby team represented Ulster in the All Ireland Finals day in Dublin in November, where they met the two best teams from each of the four provinces.

Victories over Leinster champions King's Hospital from Dublin and Connacht Champions Clifden Community College meant they reached the Plate final.

In the final they met Munster team St Anne's Community School from Co. Limerick. The two teams were evenly matched and were tied 2 tries a piece when the final hooter sounded. In extra time, St. Anne's looked to be finishing the stronger but the Fermanagh girls showed exceptionally committed and heroic defence to keep the Limerick side from scoring. They eventually turned the ball over and swept down the pitch with a series of strong carries, clinical clear-outs and accurate passes to score in the corner! The jubilant Erne IC team were presented with their trophy and medals by the Irish Women's Rugby 7s Captain Lucy Mulhall.

The team's achievements were recognised when they were presented with the *Fermanagh Herald's* School Team of the Year Award at a glitzy ceremony in February.



MEDALS FOR TOM AND CHARLIE

Tom McSherry and Charlie Lennon, who are in Year 8 at New-Bridge Integrated College in Loughbrickland, shone in the NI Schools Acrobatic Gymnastics Championship on 03 March.

Tom and Charlie, pictured with Principal Anne Anderson, won gold medals in the U14 pairs floor competition. Charlie also gained gold in the U14 tumbling competition. Charlie and Tom are delighted to be named Northern Ireland Champions.



CARA IS A BUSKING STAR



Cara Skilling, a Year 12 student at Strangford Integrated College, was first runner-up in the 16-18 year old category in the 'Beyond Busk' competition run by Belfast City Council, Ulster University and Young at Art Events. Belfast's first youth busking competition, which ran in February, was developed to showcase the best of young talent in music, arts and street performance and Cara had to pass an audition

to take part. Judges were "very impressed" with Cara's performance and praised her "exceptional musicality and originality". She won vouchers for Dawson's Music and Cinemagic and got to perform at St Anne's Cathedral on Saturday 09 March as part of the Young at Art festival.



The Lagan College team.

INTEGRATED COLLEGES BATTLE FOR GAA TITLE

Lagan College clinched their first-ever Ulster Schools GAA title when their Years 11 and 12 Gaelic football team won the JJ Reilly cup in December. Lagan met Drumragh Integrated College from Omagh in another first – an all-integrated final. Lagan had come through group games undefeated against Edmund Rice College, New-Bridge Integrated College and St Mary's CBS in Belfast. They then beat St Patrick's Academy Lisburn in the semi-final to face Drumragh IC who had won the title two years earlier. Coach Gary Connolly was especially proud as many of the Lagan team had not played Gaelic football before joining the school.

BRIDGE IPS PUPIL IS FILM REVIEWER OF THE YEAR

Staff and pupils from Bridge Integrated Primary School in Banbridge cheered loudly at the *Into Film* awards in Leicester Square on 04 March when their Film Club colleague Frankie Lynch was named Film Reviewer of the Year. *Into Film* has nearly 9000 film clubs UK-wide and there are more than 200,000 film reviewers operating under the *Into Film* umbrella.

Frankie was up against children much older and more experienced in terms of creative writing and film criticism. However, it was clear that the judges appreciated the amount of effort and enthusiasm Frankie puts into his work. He has published more than 60 online reviews and particular mention was made of his reviews of *He Named Me Malala* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, which had each won 'review of the week'.

Frankie received his award from film critic Rhianna Dhillon and BAFTA-winning film director Michael Pearce. Frankie made his acceptance speech in front of an audience of Film Club members from around the UK and celebrities including Jason Isaacs, David Walliams, Eddie Redmayne, Andy Serkis, Hugh Bonneville, Luke Evans and Lily James. He thanked his school, *Into Film* and teacher Paul Scowcroft who organizes the Bridge IPS Film Club.

Bridge IPS Film Club had four award nominations in total. The school's debut feature, *The Time Trike*, was shortlisted for Best Film in the 11 years and under category. Their trip to London for the glamorous ceremony was supported by a grant from the Carson Awards scheme through the IEF.

A very proud Paul Scowcroft said: "There is now a great appetite to build on the success of our first movie and develop several more. All the children want to get involved in moviemaking and we shall be working on opening avenues for them to get projects up and running."



Frankie Lynch with Michael Pearce and Rhianna Dhillon.

AUTHOR DRAWS A CROWD AT MAINE IPS



Nick Sharratt with young readers at Maine IPS.

Children at Maine Integrated Primary School in Randalstown had a fantastic day of creativity when the celebrated author and illustrator, Nick Sharratt, visited the school last November. Nick involved all 120 pupils in reading, writing and drawing workshops as part of an initiative between BookTrust NI and Belfast International Airport. BookTrust is the charity dedicated to getting children reading to support language skills, creativity and personal development.

Julian Costelloe, Principal at Maine IPS said: "We are so delighted to have an author of Nick's stature visit the school and work with the children. All of the children had a fantastic

day and gained inspiration from seeing Nick in person and listening to him speak. For us, anything that sparks their interest in reading and illustration is a bonus and Nick's visit has certainly done that!"

Nick Sharratt said he had really enjoyed his visit to Maine IPS: "We celebrated books and reading and there was plenty of drawing too, with some terrific illustrations from everyone, including the teachers!"

The event at Maine IPS was sparked by an idea from one of Belfast International Airport's fire crew commanders, Chris Graffin, who is also a parent at the school.