

## Children's Commissioner calls for education reform in Northern Ireland



NI Children's Commissioner Koulla Yiasouma

**The NI Children's Commissioner has made a strong statement of support for reforming the education system.**

Launching the Commission's position paper, *Educational Inequalities and Inclusion*, Koulla Yiasouma said in her blog

"Now is the time to set aside vested interests and design an education system that is based on the lessons of the last 50 years and the evidence concerning achieving the very best for all our children and young people. They deserve nothing less."

The NICCY paper cites repeated calls for change in the system in Northern Ireland from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and says

"The Committee recommended that government in Northern Ireland actively promote a fully integrated education system and carefully

monitor the provision of shared education, with the participation of children, in order to ensure that it facilitates social integration... NICCY will advocate for a fully integrated system of education where all children, inclusive of religion, race, ability or gender are educated together."

The position paper was followed by a report from the Commission on the cost to parents of sending children to school. With budget pressures weighing heavily throughout the system, schools are relying more and more on contributions from families. Yet, for many parents, the basic costs of uniforms, transport, sports equipment and educational trips present a challenge.

Beyond this, however, the paper looks at how much of the education budget in Northern Ireland finds its way to schools and concluded that the amount actually spent per pupil at school level is lower than elsewhere in the UK.

The paper points out that a higher proportion of education spending in NI goes to areas such as non-departmental public bodies and central administration. The Integrated Education Fund fully endorses the Commissioner's call for more of the funding allocated for education in Northern Ireland to be spent on direct education provision for children.



Koulla Yiasouma visited Spires IPS on 06 September to talk to pupils and meet the Rights Respecting Committee



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

IEF celebrates 25 years

Home at last for  
Drumlins IPS

Supporters bring drama  
to Millennium IPS

IFA selects ICD to  
nurture young stars

New-Bridge IC  
wins international  
peace prize

Hazelwood IC  
pioneers business  
partnership scheme



## More places in integrated education

**Recent announcements from the Department of Education have heralded growth for Mill Strand Integrated Primary School in Portrush, Integrated College Dungannon (ICD) and Slemish Integrated College.**

Slemish IC is delighted to be welcoming more new pupils than usual this term, after the Department approved the Ballymena school's development proposal. The college was established in 1996 and has been consistently over-subscribed. From this year onwards, Slemish IC will be able to admit an additional 20 pupils into Year 8 and increase

post-GCSE provision from 60 to 90 places. The school will also take the opportunity to offer a wider curriculum.

Mill Strand IPS marks its 30th birthday with an increase in places, admitting 58 children into P1. However, an application to double the school's nursery provision was turned down. The school currently offers 26 part-time nursery places and also runs a pre-school play group, supported by generous donations through the IEF.

Mill Strand IPS has been hoping for a new building for years and in 2016 heard it could go to the planning stage for a new school with the help of the Fresh Start



*Mill Strand IPS*

Agreement funding. The search is on for a suitable site in Portrush to accommodate the school's growing enrolment and offer modern facilities.

And there was good news for the Dungannon area with the announcement of more places from next September (2018). Admissions at Integrated College Dungannon will increase from 90 to 110 and the overall enrolment at the school will eventually grow to 700.

The expansion will help the college to retain additional pupils at sixth form. The IEF is proud to have supported ICD's growth and to have helped develop accommodation to meet the demand for integrated education in the Dungannon area.

Overall, 2017 has seen an additional 1,000 places approved by the Department of Education in response to calls to grow integrated education.



*Slemish College welcomes integrated education supporter Liam Neeson*

## Fresh Start at Drumlins IPS

Following a challenging 13-year wait in three different locations (and a series of mobile buildings) the Drumlins Integrated Primary School community was delighted to begin the new term in their £3m purpose-built school in the centre of Ballynahinch. Drumlins IPS is the first school completed

through the government's Fresh Start funding initiative and offers integrated education to those living in the greater Ballynahinch area in its bright new accommodation and state-of-the-art facilities. The IEF is proud to have worked along with many of our supporters to help Drumlins IPS with accommodation and resources over the years.



*Home at last: Drumlins IPS pupils are delighted with their new building*



*Meanwhile work officially began on a new school for Corran Integrated Primary School in June when IEF CEO Tina Merron joined Roisin Marshall, Chief Executive of NICIE, at the site. The work is due to be completed by summer 2018.*

## Editorial



IEF Chair, Ken Cathcart

**I am proud to be stepping into the role of IEF chair as the organisation celebrates 25 years of supporting and advocating for integrated education. A birthday is a great excuse to celebrate with friends and also to reflect on our work over a quarter of a century.**

Over the past 25 years integrated school places have grown massively – thanks to pioneering parents, committed campaigners and forward-looking schools. We have raised more than £20 million pounds from generous donors, and have helped grow the integrated education enrolment to more than 22,000.

There is still some way to go.

Whilst we have seen an increase of 1,000 integrated school places this year alone, there is no integrated school in Northern Ireland which has been established by government. Yet research repeatedly provides evidence of widespread support for integration, and the moral and economic imperatives for uniting the community at school level are clear.

The NI Commission for Children and Young People has echoed the call from the UNCRRC for a fully integrated education system and the Commission's position paper says this should be the ultimate goal of shared education. The IEF would fully support the call for education reform from NICCY.

Further, we would say the queries raised over education spending in the NICCY *Cost of Education* report deserve answers. Parents must be wondering why so little is spent at classroom level when schools budgets are under pressure.

I suspect that examination of the figures will expose a system which duplicates provision, is wasteful and overly bureaucratic. Parents and pupils want and deserve better.

We want to see a plan to progress towards a single system of education, which reduces the current level of waste and directs resources into improving the experience and outcomes of all pupils.

## Communities at the heart of the Fund's consultation

At the end of April, on behalf of all education bodies, the Education Authority (EA) published the first regional area plan for Northern Ireland's school provision: *Providing Pathways – Strategic Area Plan 2017-2020*.

The IEF believes that an area planning process should provide an opportunity to ensure parental choice is at the very heart of the education system. This, however, would depend on using a method of public consultation which reflects real parental demand rather than one which is rooted in the current way of delivering education and the structures behind it.

The IEF is working to develop a best practice model for researching opinion and sharing information within a community, regarding education provision in their area. So far, pilot projects have been carried out using independent researchers in Kilkeel and the Clogher Valley area. A team from Ulster University, alongside LucidTalk polling company, is currently working with communities in and around Carnlough and Glenarm to explore people's aspirations and needs for local primary education in that area.

The Fund is very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this research, and to the Open Society Foundations and Building Change Trust for their support.

## Peace, conflict and education discussed at IEF Stormont event

**Politicians joined academics and community and business leaders at Stormont on 20 September to discuss how education can contribute to building the peace and uniting the Northern Ireland community.**

Guests heard Professor Alan Smith, UNESCO Chair in Education at Ulster University, speak on "The role of education in post-conflict society".

The seminar, part of Community Relations and Cultural Awareness Week 2017, was hosted by the IEF and chaired by Peter Osborne, Chair of the Community Relations Council. Chris Lyttle MLA kindly sponsored the event.

Professor Smith's presentation drew on the UNICEF Education and Peacebuilding programme, which describes the essential building-blocks of a sustainable post-conflict society as Redistribution, Recognition, Representation and Reconciliation. These '4Rs' are used as reference points to examine how an education system is working in terms of peace-building.

Professor Tony Gallagher of Queen's University Belfast added his own reflections on the theme and there was an opportunity for the invited audience to consider and debate the issues raised.

Guests included education spokespeople (Peter Weir, DUP; Rosemary Barton, UUP; Clare Bailey, Green Party; Karen Mullan SF and Chris Lyttle APNI) as well as Kellie Armstrong MLA and a representative of the SDLP policy team.

*(l-r) Professor Tony Gallagher (QUB) Peter Osborne (CRC) and Professor Alan Smith (UU) at the Fund's seminar at Stormont*





### Green fingers building relationships at Shimna IC

Shimna Integrated College has been building links with their neighbours in Glen Fold. The project began with Shimna IC students helping the sheltered housing residents gain confidence in using iPads to research local history and "FaceTime" grandchildren. More recently, the students have built three large, accessible, raised beds at the Fold. They have been working with the Fold gardening group to plant autumn vegetables.

Shimna IC is committed to including intergenerational work as an essential part of integration and celebrating diversity.



### Scary winners announced at garden show

Congratulations to the scarecrow sculptors of Mill Strand Integrated Primary School, whose creation "Scaremaid" carried off the top award at Allianz Garden Show Ireland this year. "Scaremaid" took her place in Scarecrow Avenue with 16 others from integrated primaries at Antrim Castle Gardens in May this year.

The annual competition is run by Allianz in conjunction with the IEF.



Molly Moroney and Bill Norrett create a bit of drama at Millennium IPS

## Drama at Millennium IPS as special guests arrive from USA

**Children at Millennium Integrated Primary School enjoyed a special drama lesson in May, when Molly Moroney, a renowned actress and playwright, travelled from the USA to County Down. Molly and her husband, Bill Norrett, are generous and long-standing supporters of the IEF. They were welcomed to the school by the principal, Mary Roulston, and founding chair Christine Trueman.**

Molly led a masterclass in drama and was only too happy to share some of her skills and techniques with the delighted pupils.

Molly commented

"It was fabulous. Bill and I had a ball. The Millennium children were very engaging and confident."

Bill Norrett added

"Visiting Millennium was very satisfying. As soon as you walk in the door you feel the positivity and stimulating learning environment. Molly and I want to play our part in helping the IEF increase access to integrated education for the many parents that want it."

During their trip to Northern Ireland, the Norretts also met Baroness May Blood MBE, the IEF's Campaign Chair, who said

"It's very humbling when our supporters are prepared to travel such distances to see the work first-hand and actually get involved in a very practical way. It's friends like the Norretts that help keep integrated education moving forward."

## Ulster Bank joins Dolly Parton to support Cliftonville IPS

**The youngest pupils at Cliftonville Integrated Primary School are delighted that local bank workers are joining Dolly Parton in promoting a love of reading at their school.**

The Staff Charity Committee from Ulster Bank has stepped in to make sure that Cliftonville IPS can continue to operate the only Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Northern Ireland. The Imagination Library, founded by the singer, requires additional support from local communities to keep going. After initial seed-corn funding from the Carson Awards, a donation of £2,500 from Ulster Bank staff means 50 children will each receive a new book every month for the next two years, delivered to their homes.

Laura Calvin, who chairs the Charity Committee, met Nursery and P1 children at Cliftonville IPS in March and the pupils were delighted to have the chance to thank her.

After her visit, Laura said

"I received a lovely welcome from the school; it has a very friendly atmosphere. It was great to see the children in the nursery unit so interested in their reading and I enjoyed spending time with them all."



Laura Calvin (Ulster Bank) with young bookworms at Cliftonville IPS



The new signings at ICD with their coaches

## ICD kicks off new Irish FA training scheme

The Irish FA has chosen Integrated College Dungannon (ICD) as its partner in creating Northern Ireland's first football performance school.

The first intake will see twelve Year 8 pupils combine their academic studies with a programme of football coaching and development, including after-school training four times a week. The players have been selected through the IFA grassroots development programme.

The IFA aims to create six "Elite Performance Schools" by 2019, including programmes to nurture young female players.

Jim Magilton, IFA Elite Performance Director, said

"Through this new programme, players will significantly increase their contact time and the players will be better equipped to succeed in their football ambitions, while also being able to gain a solid education. I look forward to seeing these young footballers succeed both on the pitch and in the classroom."

Andrew Sleeth, ICD Principal, added "I am delighted that we are the first school to partner with the Irish FA on this innovative programme. This partnership will see us continue to deliver educationally while also having the Irish FA provide the highest standards of football coaching to these twelve pupils."

## School leaders are winners!

Congratulations to two integrated school principals who are officially leaders in their field.

Janice Marshall of Drumlins Integrated Primary School took the Primary School Teacher of the Year prize at the Ni4Kids Family Awards. She has been principal since Drumlins IPS opened in 2004 and her nomination comments included: 'She knows every parent and pupil by name and always puts the children first.'

The Ni4kids Family Awards were supported by Forestside and Action For Children.

Forestside Manager Lee Cutler commented

"Each year, Forestside is blown away by the incredible candidates put forward for Primary School Teacher of the Year. That said, this year's winner is exceptional. Janice Marshall is a clear winner in our eyes, and we are proud to be recognising her for this monumental achievement."

Malone College are delighted that Maire Thompson has made it to the final of the Pearson



Janice Marshall shares her award with P7 pupils at Drumlins IPS

'UK Headteacher of the Year Award' - one of only two finalists out of almost 200 entrants. The judges visited Malone College and met students, staff, members of the local community and Miss Thompson herself. She was presented with a silver award and told her vision and leadership had taken her through to the final.

The final ceremony is filmed by the BBC and broadcast on 29 October on BBC 2 as *Britain's Classroom Heroes*.

## Stiff Little Fingers still backing the alternative

The IEF is, as ever, grateful to our friends Jake Burns, Ali McMordie, Steve Grantley, and Ian McCallum – otherwise known as Belfast punk band, Stiff Little Fingers. They have been supporting the IEF for years, including helping us to fundraise through their tour this year.

So a massive thank you to all the fans of Stiff Little Fingers, north and south and from further afield, who donated almost £2,000 to the Integrated Education Fund during their two sell-out shows in Belfast and Dublin and also during their highly successful tour of the USA. Thank you to everyone who helped with the bucket collection, too!



Spreading the word and collecting cash at the Stiff Little Fingers show in Belfast in August

## NICIE diversity training

In March 2017 a group of teachers, teaching assistants and leaders from integrated schools took a three-day anti-bias training course, delivered by NICIE (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education) and funded by the IEF (through a grant from the Open Society Foundation). The benefits of the training were confirmed through comments such as "I am going back to school with new eyes. It has actually given me the confidence again to deal with those sensitive or controversial issues that come up."



## Actors join alumni to highlight the importance of integration

Stars including actors Adrian Dunbar and Stephen Hagan gathered at a reception generously hosted by David and Sophie Montgomery in June to mark the 25th anniversary of the IEF.

Members of the Integrated AlumNI organisation joined IEF Campaign Chair Baroness May Blood MBE and other high-profile guests at the media executive's Kensington home.



Lord Alf Dubs, host David Montgomery and IEF supporters Sue and Brian Dickie



Actor Adrian Dunbar addresses guests

Adrian Dunbar, who has enjoyed recent successes on TV in *Broken* and *Line of Duty*, addressed the gathering and said everyone there was united by a motivation to put something back into the world where they grew up.

He added

“I always wondered how come we spend millions and millions of pounds separating children at the age of five, to then spend millions trying to tell them that they are the same at the age of 16. There are thousands of organisations that are funded to try to bring children together when actually all that money could be going into an integrated education system.”

David Montgomery commented that the politicians needed to recognise integrated education as the most effective, collective act of reconciliation:

“The public get it. The business community gets it. Making available integrated education will create the greatest legacy for peace, embedding the means for Northern Ireland to reach its true potential.”

## Celebrating Mayor Girvan's successful charity campaign

The IEF was honoured to be selected as one of the Ards and North Down Mayor's charities for 2016-2017, along with the RNLI and Samaritans.



(l-r) Paul and Catherine Caskey, Alderman Deborah Girvan, Baroness May Blood, Amber McClenaghan and Brian Small

Alderman Deborah Girvan, whose term as Mayor ended in June, worked hard alongside council staff and the charities throughout her year in office to raise more than £24,000. The team organised street collections, coffee mornings, a clay pigeon shoot, a quiz night, a bridge tournament and a concert.

The charity drive ended with a glamorous ball at the Clondeboye Lodge Hotel on 27

May. IEF Campaign Chair Baroness May Blood, directors and staff from the IEF and NICIE, and representatives of integrated schools enjoyed the occasion and took the opportunity to thank Mayor Girvan for her support.

The evening began with a fantastic performance from Priory Integrated College's choir. Raffle prizes generously

donated by IEF supporters included a three-night stay at Castle Leslie, a signed Ulster Rugby Ball, Chateau de la Ligne wine and a meal for two at Belfast's Fitzwilliam Hotel.

Among the guests were governors of Loughries Integrated Primary School, one of the most recent to become formally integrated after a campaign by parents.



The choir at Priory Integrated College

# A quarter of a century of uniting children in schools

The IEF gathered friends and supporters together at the Europa Hotel in Belfast on 07 October to celebrate 25 years of supporting integrated education in Northern Ireland. Past and present pupils joined high-profile guests at a gala evening opened by the harmonies of the Hazelwood Integrated College choir, and hosted by news broadcaster Maxine Mawhinney.

The glamorous celebration saw *The Voice* star David Jackson and Fiona O’Kane perform to a rapturous response, especially from people from their old school - Malone College. The 320 guests also enjoyed comedy from Tim McGarry and a set from jazz singer Victoria Geelan, who was one of the first pupils at Omagh Integrated Primary School.

The ballroom at the Europa was stunningly decorated for the occasion by Christine Trueman and the Fund was very fortunate in benefitting from a range of generous prizes which were expertly auctioned by Ian Wilson.

Campaign Chair Baroness May Blood thanked everyone who helped raise funds and who raised voices to progress the IEF’s work supporting integrated schools and campaigning for education reform.

For more on the event and our picture gallery from the night, go to [www.ief.org.uk](http://www.ief.org.uk)

*Singers from Hazelwood IC choir*



*Tim McGarry*



*Victoria Geelan and band*



*David Jackson and Fiona O’Kane*



*Baroness May Blood and Maxine Mawhinney ready to open the ball*



## Speaking Personally

**Beth McDaniel, from New-Bridge Integrated College, was a finalist in this year's "Junk Kouture" competition, which showcases school students designing fashion using recycled materials. Beth, whose work was supported by a Carson Bursary through the IEF, was thrilled to be part of the event in Dublin in April:**

When I arrived at the 3 Arena, the butterflies started to kick in: I was really going to be on stage, performing in my own design in front of 6,000 people!! I thoroughly enjoyed the whole day: I got to experience the excitement of showbiz and the drama of being backstage. I made new friends from all over the island of Ireland. The highlight of the day was definitely getting into my Lady Fibonacci character backstage with my make-up

artist, Rachel Gallagher and my hair stylist, Luca St. Clair.

'Lady Fibonacci' has been inspired by my interest in nature, its colours and textures. The Fibonacci sequence on my design has been made from recycled card and sweet papers and represents the universal growth pattern formed in the spiral. The dress also uses lace and cotton pieces taken from old shirts and blouses. The headpiece is actually radiator covers which have been embellished with tissue and sawdust. The bodice is made from offcuts found around the recycle bins at home and the art room in school. The wires used to create the arm decoration are recycled from old sketchbooks.

I have come to the conclusion that being pricked by needles, burnt by hair curlers, and getting glitter in my eye was all worth it in the end, as the feeling I got on stage was unforgettable; I was ecstatic!

If I could take something from this experience, it would be that you can make your dreams a reality if you put yourself out there and grasp opportunities like this one.



## Winning school leads the way in a divided community

**New-Bridge Integrated College has been awarded the Evens Prize for Peace Education 2017 – the first winner in the UK or on the island of Ireland since the award scheme was established in 2011. For this year’s prize, the Evens Foundation looked for strategies implemented in secondary schools for dealing with ‘hot topics’ in a constructive way.**

According to the international jury of experts, New-Bridge IC developed an impressive and strongly embedded approach which is easily transferable to other countries and contexts.

The college was recognised for working in what the jury describes as “the polarised education system in Northern Ireland” and for extending the integrated ethos to address other aspects of diversity such as the range of social and cultural backgrounds and mixed abilities in the school. New-Bridge IC was also commended for the way the ethos is expressed across all elements of the curriculum.

New-Bridge IC will receive a cash award of €25,000, at a prize-giving ceremony in London in November.



Teacher Andy Edgar of the school CRED team with New-Bridge IC students

## Giant of civil rights inspires Oakgrove IC

**The Reverend Jesse Jackson inspired students at Oakgrove Integrated College in June, when he visited the school before performing the official opening of the new Museum of Free Derry.**

The school’s foyer includes a symbol of a dove with the words of Martin Luther King:

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

Oakgrove IC principal, Jill Markham, introduced the special guest as a co-campaigner and friend of King’s.

In his address to the pupils, Jesse Jackson encouraged them to see how walls provide a barrier, and that the world needs to have bridges. He held up examples of people throughout history who reached across perceived barriers to stand up for others. In his unique style, Reverend Jackson had students join him in repeating mantras such as “I am somebody”; “Respect Me, Don’t Neglect Me, Protect Me”; and “Keep Hope Alive.”

Students were thrilled that Reverend Jackson also took the time to speak to many of the young people individually.



## Amazing peace initiative gets royal approval



Hollie Ramsey from Slemish IC with (l) Dr Christopher Moran and HRH Prince Harry

**Students from integrated colleges joined other young peace-builders to meet HRH Prince Harry and to celebrate their work on the “Amazing the Space” programme on 07 September.**

Erne and Slemish Integrated Colleges have served as local hubs for the programme, which is sponsored by Co-operation Ireland. “Amazing the Space” is a youth-led peacebuilding initiative that empowers young people across Northern Ireland to become ambassadors for peace in their own areas, promoting cross-community collaboration and celebrating diversity.

At the MAC theatre in Belfast, Prince Harry heard that more than 5000 young people are now involved in the programme. His Royal Highness presented pupils from 10 schools

with specially-framed editions of peace pledges they had drawn up.

Hollie Ramsey represented Slemish College and met up with students from other schools who had worked together at the Slemish College hub.



Erne IC students Steven Murray and Trinity Creighton make the news on UTV

## Hazelwood IC business partnership leads the way



Mark McClintock of Deloitte welcomes the students to the opening workshop at Hazelwood Integrated College

### Sixth-form students at Hazelwood Integrated College now have more course options, with the launch of the College's Internship Programme – a first in Northern Ireland.

The school has teamed up with businesses to offer 22 work placements. The founder businesses are Deloitte, O'Hare and McGovern; Danske Bank; Clayton Hotel Group; and the Now Project. More than 30 students applied for the programme, submitting a CV and preparing a presentation for the interview stage.

Jill Nesbitt, the internship co-ordinator, said

"As the world of work changes rapidly so too must career paths.

The advantage and experience that a place on our Internship Programme will provide for our students will be invaluable! We plan to increase the number of businesses involved which will mean more students can be offered a position in the future."

The programme began in September and runs each Wednesday from 1pm to 5pm for six months. Students will work closely with industry staff on specific projects, gaining an overview of the business and developing skills for the future.

## All Children's IPS explores difference and diversity

Everyone at All Children's Integrated Primary School has been able to explore diversity and unity through workshops and trips, thanks to the IEF's TRUST programme.

The TRUST grants, funded through the Pears Foundation, support integrated schools in their work to develop their ethos and embed integration in every aspect of school life.

The activities at All Children's IPS included learning Polish dance, trying out African drumming and working on Chinese crafts. P7 pupils visited sites in Belfast which hold significance for particular groups, and P4 pupils went to the War Memorial Museum and met survivors of the Belfast blitz.

The children have really enjoyed every aspect of the project, learning more about the diverse world they live in. Staff also commented on the value of the activities. The projects led to a series of assemblies, led by the pupils and open to parents, to show and explain what had been learnt.



All Children's IPS P4 pupils heard personal stories of the Belfast blitz

## Winning teamwork unites Carrickfergus with Madagascar

Teamwork has proved a winning strategy for pupils at Ulidia Integrated College and their partners at a school in Madagascar. Their joint article on the production and consumption of coffee won the International



Ruth Van Ry with Ulidia journalists

Collaboration category of the YRE (Young Reporters for the Environment) contest. Ruth Van Ry, Eco-Schools Coordinator, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, visited the college to present the award.

The article will be published in the Huffington Post and can also be read on the YRE website [www.yre.global](http://www.yre.global)

## Hazelwood's legal eagle set to soar with Allen & Overy

Rachel Fitzsimons from Hazelwood Integrated College spent the summer working with law firm Allen and Overy after her part in the Bar Mock Trials prompted the company to offer a traineeship. Rachel is now in Year 14 at Hazelwood IC and, if all goes to plan, Allen and Overy will put her through university and help her on the way to becoming a solicitor.

Allen & Overy is a founding member of PRIME, the professional organization creating opportunities for those wishing to join the legal profession. Hazelwood IC Bar Mock Trials team was funded through the IEF by the Citizenship Foundation.



## Millennium IPS are GAA winners

It was with enormous pride and a huge sense of accomplishment that Millennium Integrated Primary School accepted a prestigious *Irish News* award for the promotion of Gaelic games. This is the first time the award has gone to an integrated school.

Skills have been developed at Millennium IPS over the last six years through after-school sessions and with the help of external coaches during PE lessons. Teachers without Gaelic football experience were also inspired to learn the game and undertake coaching responsibilities.

As an integrated school, Millennium IPS has found Gaelic football to be highly inclusive and a great way to develop physical skills and overall fitness for children with varying needs and abilities. More than



Millennium IPS teacher Brendan Donnelly with (l) GAA Ulster provincial secretary Brian McEvoy and (r) Thomas Hawkins, Irish News Sports Editor (Photo Hugh Russell at the Irish News)

60 children join the after-school sessions and the school is particularly proud that many past pupils continue with GAA after leaving Millennium IPS.

The award was presented to teacher Brendan Donnelly and four team members at a special lunch ceremony in Belfast in May.



## Netball stars

Everyone is very proud of the netball team at Millennium Integrated Primary School and their coach Rory Gardner for winning the NI Primary Netball Championship.

Millennium IPS is now busy preparing to host the 2018 finals as well as working hard to try and repeat their success.



## All-Ireland winners

Congratulations to the Lagan College basketball team who won the All Ireland Schools Under 15s Cup in May. The players travelled to Dublin where they came through the semi-finals to face Our Ladies College Castleblayney for the top position. The Lagan College team stormed home with a 40-18 points victory and brought the cup to Belfast. Congratulations to all the players and to coaches Mr Connolly and Mr Murray.



## Parents pushed over the edge!!

A group of 23 parents, staff and friends of Corran Integrated Primary School reached new heights when they climbed to the top of the Europa Hotel in Belfast – before abseiling down again, in a stunt to raise funds to buy digital devices for the school.



## Ulster cup champions!

Sperrin Integrated College won the Year 8 Oisín McGrath Cup in June, the first integrated school to win an Ulster Schools GAA title at this level.

In the final against a gritty St Mary's CBS team, Sperrin led by three points at the break, and showed unerring skill and determination to push on and win by 6:04 to 0:04 at the final whistle. When captain Darragh Rocks and the team brought the Oisín McGrath home, there were great scenes of jubilation by the pupils, staff and Principal Mrs Heron who paid tribute to the work of the coaches and PE department as well as to the talent and commitment of the players.

## Sophie is a smash hit at table tennis

Malone College's great reputation for producing high quality table tennis players has been further enhanced by the achievements of pupil Sophie Earley.

Sophie won gold in both the Irish Under 15 and Under 18 Championships, which is an astonishing feat given that she is in Year 8 and only 11 years old. Sophie is evidently destined for great things in the world of table tennis.



## Parents say “Integrate My School”

Parents around Northern Ireland have been delighted to hear that they have the potential to bring integrated education to their own local school.

Through the *Integrate My School* campaign, the IEF is working with NICIE and the Department of Education to raise awareness that schools in Northern Ireland can opt to become officially integrated, if parents want it.

Research has shown that most parents would like their school to become integrated. And the good news is that this is a possibility for most schools in Northern Ireland – and parents can help make this happen.

Government policy is that any school apart from Special Schools and Hospital Schools can embark on this path, and if 20% of parents at a school call for it, then the possibility will be explored.

The IEF has created a website [www.integratemyschool.com](http://www.integratemyschool.com) so that parents can register confidentially their support for their school to become integrated. And if there is a strong response in any area, the IEF and NICIE will begin a conversation in that community about developing integrated education locally.

Our information stands at this year’s Belfast Mela, the Fermanagh Show, and festivals around Northern Ireland have already attracted a lot of interest.



Interviewed for the community television network, NTV, Principal Jason Milligan said transforming Killyleagh Primary School to an officially integrated school last year was a great move for the whole community: “There is a sense of pride and ownership at Killyleagh IPS. To any school considering the move, I would say ‘Go for it!’ You have to work to bring people along with you, but it has been worth it for everyone.”

### “We integrated our school”: Carhill IPS celebrates their anniversary with the local community

Carhill Integrated Primary School shared their 25th anniversary celebrations with the wider community in March, taking to the streets of Garvagh to share the occasion and strengthen local relationships.

The school began the move to become formally integrated a quarter of a century ago. The pupils marked the milestone by walking through Main Street, giving out token gifts which celebrated diversity and mutual understanding as they went.

They also met key community figures including the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Council, Alderman Maura Hickey.

The walkers and their friends and guests were then welcomed to the Garvagh Main Street Presbyterian Church Hall by elder Hans Clyde for refreshments.

