

Strategic Plan 2022–2025

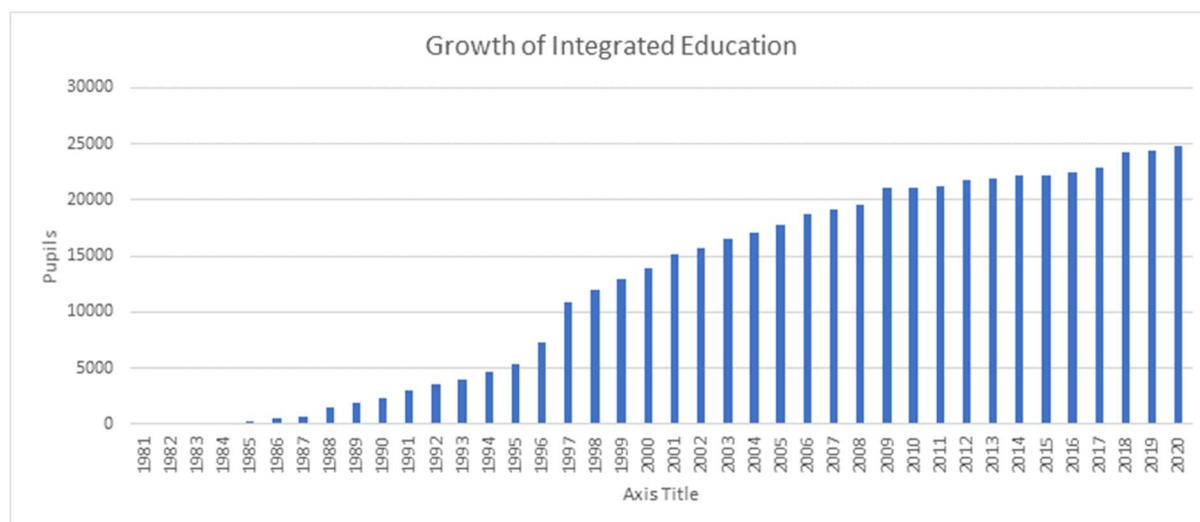
Introduction

This new strategic plan aims to further promote, grow, and support existing integrated schools; increase the opportunities for children to be educated together; and influence the wider educational system to see the educational, societal, and economic benefits in addressing and meeting the demand for Integrated Education.

This plan aligns with DE Priorities, the Programme for Government and the Children and Young People’s Strategy (appendix 1.)

NICIE believe that Integrated Education is the biggest, most sustainable, and most cost-effective community relations project that exists in Northern Ireland in its contribution to tackling division in our society. Presently almost 25,000 children are experiencing Integrated Education in 68 schools, that is, 7.3 % of the school going population and 6% of the number of schools in NI.

Since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, the number of children and young people in Integrated schools has doubled.



Integrated Education in the Northern Ireland context is about proactively and intentionally educating children from the two main traditional backgrounds (Catholic and Protestant) along with children of other cultures, beliefs, and communities together in one school, all day. The adults within the school communities including staff, governors, parents, and wider family circle also experience the community relations impacts. Integrated Education aims to prepare children and young people for a diverse world at a genuine and meaningful level.

There is consistent evidence that the majority of parents¹ in Northern Ireland want an integrated experience for their children. In particular, NICIE want to encourage parents and the wider public to influence their chosen school to develop an integrated ethos and for the school to consider Transforming to integrated status.

NICIE wants to work strategically to ensure that there is a network of sustainable Integrated schools across Northern Ireland.

Integrated Education deliberately and intentionally brings together children and adults in the one school community. The public in NI understand that Integrated Education is about educating children and young people from perceived Protestant and Catholic together with those from other beliefs, cultures, and communities.

For over forty years, Integrated Education practice has been refined and shared among the now established 68 Integrated schools. Many schools in NI have diverse populations but not all schools in NI have a significant number of both students from Protestant and Catholic traditions (shorthand for perceived community background.)

According to DE (Department of Education) statistics, 143 (14.4%) schools out of the 996 have at least 10% of the minority community. Sixty of this number are Integrated schools. Only 83 other schools (8.3%) in the Grammar and Primary sector have this level of mixing or more. In 287 schools, there are no pupils from the other main tradition.

Integrated Education has evolved over the last 40 years and has developed practice on how to enable children and adults in school communities to learn, play and develop positive intergroup relations together daily². NICIE would welcome the opportunity to share the learning and practices including the NICIE training suite and the Quality Framework for Excellence in Integrated Education³ as widely as possible.

Integrated schools are very conscious of the mix in their pupil, staff and governor bodies and intentionally decide how to best use that diversity within the school calendar (events celebrated), curriculum, assemblies, guests, participation in Community events and so on. Integrated schools' market themselves to all communities that they are proactively, and intentionally, ensuring equal respect for both major traditions as well as those of other beliefs, cultures, and communities. Integrated Education enables sharing of the one school and in this COVID era, this model does not depend on moving large numbers of children from one school to another.

By adopting and refining an integrated ethos, using the tried and tested methodologies developed over the last 40 years by Integrated Education, school communities that decide to become more Integrated, should be supported to do so thus over time resulting in more mixing of students and adults (staff, governors, and parents) from

¹ <https://view.publitas.com/integrated-education-fund/northern-ireland-attitudinal-poll-2018-summary-report/page/1>

² [NICIE Online Training Programme 2021-2022 | Integrated Education Northern Ireland](#)

³ [Excellence in Integrated Education – EIEA | Integrated Education Northern Ireland \(nicie.org\)](#)

Catholic and Protestant perceived backgrounds in individual schools. NICIE strongly believe that the Independent Review of Education should develop recommendations that are pro-active in this regard, through either legislation or policy. If left to chance there is little evidence to suggest schools will become more diverse in relation to governance, staff, and pupil intake. There is public support for Integrated Education, yet the system still relies generally on individuals and school communities to initiate Transformation or develop a new Integrated school.

A wealth of experience of integration in practice exists within the current staff team in NICIE and the wider Integrated schools. NICIE want to demonstrate those practices more widely including marketing and public relations; admissions criteria; governance; leadership; recruitment; Teacher Professional Learning and whole staff training and development of the Integrated ethos through the Quality Framework of Excellence in Integrated Education Award (EIEA). This also includes Anti-Bias approaches to education as well as policies and processes for recruitment of staff and governors and admissions criteria.

NICIE recognises the genuine intention of other school sectors to welcome and be inclusive of children and young people from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds in the one school. However, NICIE think that there should be more acknowledgement of the limited mixing in individual schools in Northern Ireland and NICIE want to develop and implement a strategic plan to assess, identify and meet the demand for Integrated Education over the next 3 years.

NICIE look forward to partnering with DE and EA in planning for and implementing the Integrated Education Act 2022.

Our Vision

A society where children are educated together.

- confident to express their own identity and culture; and
- respectful of, and prepared to engage with, the identity and culture of others.

Our Mission

To promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland through Integrated Education

Core Values

We believe that:

Integration

Educating Protestant and Catholic children and those of other beliefs, cultures, and

communities together in one school all day everyday provides an inclusive learning environment and prepares them for adult life. Integrated education is crucial in creating a shared forward-looking society.

Respect

Everyone is of equal worth and value and entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to feel respected and safe in their own identity.

Diversity

Differences add to the richness of society and deserve to be celebrated. We can learn much from those of different backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures.

Forward-looking

To achieve our vision of sustainable peace and reconciliation, NICIE will always be forward-looking and forward-thinking, providing transformational leadership in helping change society for the better.

Strategic Priorities (specific Action statements) 2022-2025

1. Promote Integrated Education

Promote Integrated Education to create measurable change in awareness and understanding, leading to an increase in demand for Integrated schools

2. Grow Integrated Education

Support the growth and development of Integrated Education to be an accessible option in all geographical areas in Northern Ireland

3. Support Integrated Education

Support the development of the Integrated Ethos to help governors and leaders to advance sustainable and exemplary Integrated and Transforming schools

1. Promote Integrated Education

Strategic Priority 1 Action Plan

Promote Integrated Education to create measurable change in awareness and understanding, leading to an increase in demand for Integrated schools

What do we want to have happen? Outcome: (In achieving this strategic priority, what difference will we be making in our environment?)	What steps will we take? (Actions)	When? Where? (Start/End)	RAG rating
1 a) Integrated Education is well understood across NI	1.1 Developing a 3-year communications strategy with an annual plan – public / parents/politicians	Start April 2022 End August 2022	
	1.2 Myth busting and fact sharing campaign	Start August 2021 Ends June 2023	
	1.3 Ensure Communications Strategy is resourced	Start January 2022 End June 2022	

	1.4 Collating a baseline, knowing the landscape, expertise, time, research (lucid poll etc.) Public meetings / Conversation with DE re promotion, / Relationship building with Community and Voluntary sector /Politicians, EA CEO EA Chair CCMS/CSTS, CSSC /TRC Strategic meeting with frank conversations enabling action to happen.	Start June 2022 End December 2022	
	1.5 New branding launch and roll out	Start January 2022 End March 2023	
	1.6 Develop relationship with EA Officers / Board at EA	Start June 2022 End March 2023	
	1.7 Build relationships with Parents (businesses / voters)	Start April 2022 End March 2023	
	1.8 Build relationship with Business sector	Start April 2023 End April 2024	
1 b)	1.9 Clarify with DE the role of NICIE in promoting IE	Start April 2022 End September 2022	
NICIE relationship with partners is complementary and coordinated with an overarching common purpose	1.10 Bringing the IEF and NICIE Boards together – discussing our ‘Purpose’, sharing common ground, building relationship	Start January 2022	

		End December 2022	
	1.11 Develop contribution of Ambassadors for IE	Start April 2022 End September 2022	

2. Grow Integrated Education

Strategic Priority 2 Action Plan

Support the growth and development of Integrated Education to be an accessible option in all geographical areas in Northern Ireland

What do we want to have happen? Outcome: (In achieving this strategic priority, what difference will we be making in our environment?)	What steps will we take? (Actions)	When? Where? (Start/End)	RAG rating
<p>2 A Strategic Plan based on information and evidence gathered to assess, identify, and meet the demand for Integrated Education in all phases in all geographical areas in NI</p>	<p>2.1 Baseline data report to develop the Strategic Plan for development of IE where provision is available and where it is not in partnership with DE and EA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrolment trends • identification of available places • first preferences, • actions agreed on Strategic Area Plan • assess and identify demand for IE through Parental and Community engagement, (in partnership with IEF), 	<p>Start January 2022 End March 2023</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify schools with sustainability issues/ • identify schools that are sustainable at Pre-School/Nursery, Primary and Post Primary Level • Get access to and use heat map from UU • Settlement size • Census data 		
	2.2 Identify any other data required and communicate clearly to DE if any issues with accessing any of the data.	Start April 2022 End September 2022	
	2.3 Identify extra Human Resources/ extra budget required and seek same	Start April 2022 End December 2022	
	2.4 Assess and identify areas where demand exists through liaising with DE, EA and IEF community/parental engagement, with micro polls/ public Meetings/ community conversations	Start April 2022 End September 2022	
	2.5 Identify partners who can support and build collaborative relationships to help implement the strategic plan	Start April 2022 Ends March 2023	
	2.6 A planning document agreed with DE and EA	Start September 2022	

		End August 2023	
	2.7 Influence wider policy context, including via Independent Review of Education Participate in the development of any review of policy or legislation that is required	Start April 2022 End June 2023	
	2.8 Clarify role of NICIE in Implementation of plan	Start September 2023 End March 2025	
	2.9 Continue to provide evidence of demand for IE to DE/EA where appropriate	Start September 2022 End March 2025	

3 Support Integrated Education

Strategic Outcome 3 Action Plan

Support the development of the Integrated Ethos to help governors and leaders to advance sustainable and exemplary Integrated and Transforming schools

What do we want to have happen? Outcome: (In achieving this strategic priority, what difference will we be making in our environment?)	What steps will we take? (Actions)	When? Where? (Start/End)	RAG rating
3 NICIE encourage quality of Integrated Education by supporting schools to be stronger in their integrated ethos and thus the experience for those involved	3.1 Increase capacity with a pool of dedicated EIEA Assessors	Start April 2022- end December 2022	

	3.2 Create and share Case Studies of the situation and benefits of interventions based on evidence gathered during self-evaluation process	Start September 2022 End June 2023	
	3.3 Assess effectiveness of training suite (evaluation) to meet the needs of the participants to support a quality Integrated Ethos	Start January 2023 End June 2023	
	3.4 EIEA –test the extent to which this creates a ‘virtuous circle’ whereby a stronger ethos supports sustainability	Starts September 2023 Ends June 2024	
	3.5 Review of Statement of Principles (not done since 2007)	Start September 2024 Ends June 2025	
	3.6 Access to and engagement with Governors of Integrated schools via a contact list that is reviewed annually	Start September 2023 Ends March 2024	
	3.7 N of high-quality Training and Development in Anti-Bias Approaches to Education courses delivered	Start March 2022 Ends March 2023	

Appendix 1

Links to DE Priorities, the Programme for Government and the Children and Young People's Strategy

DE Strategic Priorities
<p>Make learning accessible to all</p> <p>We give all children and young people access to pre-school, school, and youth education provision</p>
<p>2. Improve the quality of learning for our children & young people</p> <p>We ensure that education provision is of a high quality and supports learning and progression</p>
<p>3. Look after our children & young people</p> <p>We support and promote positive physical and emotional health and wellbeing and support high-quality affordable childcare</p>
<p>4. Support those who need more help with learning</p> <p>Working with health & education partners, we deliver high quality services for children & young people, including those with Special Educational Needs</p>
<p>5. Improve the learning environment</p> <p>We promote equality of opportunity, respect for others, good relations and inclusivity and we provide modern, sustainable educational settings which are fit-for-purpose and facilitate shared learning</p>
<p>6. Tackle Disadvantage and Underachievement</p> <p>We improve developmental and learning outcomes for all children & young people, with a particular focus on those who are underachieving, at risk of underachieving, or disadvantaged</p>
<p>7. Support and develop our education workforce</p> <p>We develop and deploy teachers, other education professionals and support staff effectively, promoting high standards and leadership and improving health & wellbeing</p>
<p>8. Effectively manage, review, and transform our education system</p> <p>We deliver our corporate governance and finance responsibilities while seeking to improve efficiency, increase sustainability and introduce new ways of learning</p>

Draft Outcomes (these are not numbered in the PfG)	Key Priority Areas requiring DE input
Our children and young people have the best start in life	<p>Access to Education</p> <p>Addressing resourcing pressures, taking a strategic approach to area planning i.e., ensuring all have access to fit for purpose schools and supporting our education sector, including integrated and shared education. (DE, DOF)</p>
	<p>Tackling Sectarianism, Respect, and Identity</p>

	<p>Tackling the issues of the past and ending sectarianism. Promoting and protecting the rights of individuals to ensure different values and identities are respected and welcomed in society. (TEO, DFC, DOJ, DE)</p>
Everyone feels safe – we all respect the law and each other	<p>Tackling Sectarianism, Building Respect, and Identity Supporting safe and resilient communities, building respect for cultural identities and rights of individuals, providing integrated and shared education, tackling sectarianism, ending paramilitary activity, and addressing the harm and vulnerabilities caused by it. (DOJ, DE, TEO, DFC)</p>
People want to live, work, and visit here	<p>Tackling Sectarianism, Respect, and Identity Supporting safe and resilient communities, building respect for cultural identities and rights of individuals, providing shared/integrated education, tackling sectarianism, ending paramilitary activity. (DOJ, DE, TEO, DFC)</p>

Children and Young People’s Strategy Outcomes

(in support of the Children’s Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015)

1	Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy
2	Children and young people enjoy play and leisure
3	Children and young people learn and achieve
4	Children and young people live in safety and stability
5	Children and Young People experience economic and environmental well-being
6	Children and young people make a positive contribution to society
7	Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights
8	Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted