

Democracy First <http://www.democracyfirst.co.uk/education.html>

Education

Commonsense

Ever since Martin McGuinness as Education Minister scrapped the 11+ our education sector has been in an uncertain and unsatisfactory position.

Democracy First does not come to the table with some ideological fix or replacement for our current system. Rather we seek to approach it from a common sense point of view.

In truth many parts of our education sector work very well vis-à-vis our grammar schools and many secondary schools as evidenced in our examination results compared to mainland UK. We do, however, know that Protestant boys in areas of deprivation fare much worse than their peers in Catholic Maintained schools. There are some political parties who favour the complete integration of education as a panacea for the division in society as well as being more cost effective and then there is the successful Dickson plan in Craigavon.

Democracy First believe that we should continue with the mix of education currently subject to the following:

- There needs to be a standardised regulated transfer process across the maintained and controlled sector - it is unacceptable that some children can face the prospect of up to five tests to enter a school of choice.
- In situations where a controlled and maintained school, in close proximity, be half full it is only logical to save costs. In such situations Democracy First favour an integrated solution subject to provision for appropriate religious instruction as demanded by parents.
- Provision of Integrated Education - where there is adequate parental demand and a shortage in existing school space in the local area.
- Significantly increased investment in those schools with poor outcomes both financial and in teaching staff with appropriate specialist skills
- Extension of sixth form provision across the secondary sector
- Maintenance of funding in real terms for all special school provision.