

Setbacks, Funding, and Growth!



Friendship blossoms at Oakwood Integrated Primary

Welcome to the first issue of Learning Together, the new joint newsletter from the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). The newsletter will aim to bring everyone up to date on a quarterly basis with major developments in the integrated movement including what's happening in Schools, Parent Groups, Fundraising, Grants and Policy.

Despite the recent announcement that the government has refused funding for four integrated school proposals, Integrated Education continues to expand. Rowallane IC, the proposed integrated second level school for the Saintfield/Carryduff area, and Clogher Valley IPS, the proposed primary school for the Fivemiletown area have been offered independent funding from the IEF to open in September 2006. The Moira/Hillsborough parent group will receive financial support to work towards a new school for their area for another year. Lir IPS, Ballycastle, independently funded by the IEF for the past two years, was turned down by the Department of Education.

"The government's decision has been a devastating blow, not only to the parents who have campaigned tirelessly to provide an Integrated Education for their children, but also to staff at both NICIE and the IEF," explained Deborah Girvan, Communications and Lobbying Manager for the integrated movement. "The main reasons cited by the Minister, Angela Smith, for the controversial decision was that there are too many surplus places in the proposed areas and the impact that a new school would have on local schools' enrolments.

Rejecting this reasoning, David Heyworth, Chair of the IEF argued: 'This is simply not acceptable, spare places in local segregated schools must not be allowed to veto parental choice for integration where there is great demand and no local option.'

Congratulations are extended to five more schools which have undergone successful parental transformation ballots in recent months - Crumlin High School, Tyrella PS, Ballycastle PS, Collone PS (Armagh) and Knockbreda PS - and we wish them every success on their transformation journey. Combined with the two new schools, there will be 64 integrated schools from September 2006. In addition, a new parent group has formed in East Belfast. Strabane, Antrim, Limavady and Ballymoney continue their quest for an integrated provision in their respective areas.

"Even though demand for Integrated Education is at an all time high, tough times are ahead", concluded Deborah Girvan. "The Review of Public Administration (RPA), along with 'A Shared Future' policy, the demographic downturn and cash strapped education budgets, will test the mettle of us all. However, the will and spirit of parents, a legacy started by the pioneering parents of Lagan 25 years ago, will give us the resolve and inspiration to fight on and challenge the status quo!"

in this issue



US Philanthropy Award for Baroness Blood

Washington Trip

Lord Chancellor Gives Boost to Integrated Education Campaign

Shared Future Art Exhibition

Millward Brown Ulster Survey

Parent Groups

IEF Commits £750,000

Integrated Education Week

If you have any stories that you would like included in future Integrated Education newsletters then please contact Philip O'Sullivan at NICIE or Sam Fitzsimmons at IEF

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News in Brief



Irish Embassy, London
The Ambassador of Ireland and his wife Mrs Dáithí O'Ceallaigh hosted a reception in the Irish

Embassy, London on Wednesday 17th May for many London supporters to the Integrated Education Campaign. Ray O'Rourke was the special guest of honour for the evening and it was our pleasure to have the opportunity to thank him for his and Laing O'Rourke's outstanding contribution to our Fund during the last five years.

US Embassy event at Winfield House, London

The Ambassador of the United States of America and his wife Mrs. Robert H. Tuttle graciously hosted a reception in support of Integrated Education in their private residence at Winfield House, Regents Park, London. The invited guests included influential business figures, donors, and supporters from Great Britain, Northern Ireland and America. This special evening is a further indication of the American Administration's strong endorsement of the importance of Integrated Education to the future of Northern Ireland.

A Day at the Races

Enjoy a great afternoon out at Down Royal Racecourse which has brought the "Sport of Kings" to generations of people in Ulster since the 17th Century. Down Royal Race Day and Luncheon will be held on the 1st September 2006. If you're a fan of the races, why not come along to this fantastic afternoon and help raise funds for the IEF.

Companies are being invited to take up sponsorship and hospitality packages for the event. Contact Northern Ireland Campaign Manager Brian Small at 028 9033 0031.

Frank Carson Celebrity Golf

One of the most exciting upcoming fundraising events to take place this year will be the Frank Carson Celebrity Golf Classic on the 28th September at Royal Belfast Golf Club. A star studded cabaret evening at the Culloden Hotel will round off the event which has already generated massive interest from friends and supporters of Integrated Education.



Kevin and Brinda Curley present Baroness Blood with a cheque for \$25,000

US Philanthropy Award for Baroness Blood

Baroness May Blood MBE flew out to Texas to receive a prestigious Philanthropy Award for her leadership and contribution to the Integrated Education Fund. Baroness Blood was inducted into the Philanthropy World magazine Hall of Fame at the 9th Annual Philanthropy Gala and Induction Ceremony at the Fairmont Hotel, Dallas. The event was supported by our friends in the Texan Chapter of the American Ireland Fund.

Bob Hopkins, Founder and President of Philanthropy World, said: "This award is in recognition of Baroness Blood's work and commitment to Integrated Education and its immeasurable impact on peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. We hope that this recognition of her leadership will inspire others to become more involved in their communities and realize that one person can make a powerful difference."

During the trip Kevin and Brinda Curley presented Baroness Blood with a cheque for \$25,000 from the 2006 Dallas Shamrock Shoot-out Golf Tournament which will directly support the establishment of a Nurture Room for children with special educational needs at Cranmore IPS.

St Patrick's Week in Washington

Once again Integrated Education was a major theme of St Patrick's Week Celebrations in Washington this year. NICIE CEO, Michael Wardlow, began the week by addressing the United States Institute for Peace in a panel discussion on the government's 'Shared Future' policy, sharing the platform with Duncan Morrow of the Community Relations Council, Nigel Hamilton of the Northern Ireland Office and also Mitchell Reiss, the US Special Envoy on Northern Ireland Affairs.

Later in the week the American Ireland Fund Annual Gala took place where stalwart supporter and impassioned advocate of Integrated Education, Jack McDonnell was honoured with the Irish Peace and Culture Award for his role in the development and growth of Integrated Education.

Receiving his award he reflected on his growing interest in reconciliation issues after his son had spent some time studying in Belfast only to be shunned by his host family after they discovered he was a Catholic in their Protestant home.



Kingsley Aikins, President and Chief Executive Officer of the World-wide Ireland Funds, Jack McDonnell and George Moore

Representing the integrated movement at the event was Baroness May Blood, Paul Caskey and Michael Wardlow. Commenting on the award, Baroness May Blood said: "Jack and Jackie McDonnell have made a magnificent contribution to those parents who want the right for an Integrated Education for their children. Their support for Lir and also Maine and Oakwood Integrated Primary Schools has proved invaluable."

Our thanks also go out to the US Administration and all the many individuals and organizations for their hospitality and ongoing support and encouragement during the visit.

I'd like to congratulate Jack McDonnell and thank him for all his work."

Shared Future Art Exhibition

The first large-scale exhibition to bring together the work of over 70 young artists from integrated schools across Northern Ireland was hailed as a great success by Internationally acclaimed artist Nicola Russell who launched the exhibition at the ARTTANK Gallery, Lisburn Road, Belfast in February.

The overall exhibition awards went to New-Bridge Integrated College and Loughview Integrated Primary School with ten individual awards sponsored by the Jaffa family.

The success of the exhibition owes a great deal to Jenny Simons, Head of Art and Design, Ulidia Integrated College, the Jaffa family, the Esme Mitchell Trust, Tesco and Jas Mooney for their generous help and support.



Internationally renowned artist Nicola Russell with Sarah Melville-Watson, Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast



Christine Harpur, Baroness Blood, Geraldine Tigchelaar and Anne Odling-Smee



Curators of the Shared Future Art Exhibition, ArtTank Gallery Adam and Bernard Jaffe and Jenny Simons, Head of Art at Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus



Cora and Rosie Alexander, Glencraig Controlled Integrated School, Craigavad



Emma Donnelly, Malone Integrated College, Belfast



Leo McGowan (5) and family, Millennium Integrated Primary School, Carryduff

Survey Shows 71% Support for Transformation

Decline in pupil numbers and the need to take a more strategic review of the schools estate has been the hot topic in the education news in Northern Ireland. A new piece of independent research, conducted by Millward Brown Ulster, points towards one way of addressing the 50,000 spare places in our schools.

A range of people who have children, were asked whether or not they would support their local school changing status to become an integrated school. Despite only 21% of respondents having children who attended an integrated school, an overwhelming 71% indicated that they would support this option being pursued.

The Millward Brown Ulster survey indicates that the public knows very little about the option of transforming their local school to integrated status. Only 5% of respondents knew that by simply taking a parental vote they could initiate the process.

25th Anniversary

Events to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Integrated Education are well underway. A series of year-long activities will take place including:

- a launch at Lagan IC, the first integrated school, in September 2006
- a historical touring exhibition which will visit 12 libraries across Northern Ireland
- a Gala Dinner, Saturday 3rd March 2007, Armagh City Hotel.

'We are particularly keen to get in touch with past parents who started integrated schools,' explained Deborah Girvan, Communications and Lobbying Manager, 'and we would encourage those parents to get in contact with NICIE'.

Further information will appear in the next edition of the news letter but in the meantime, if you want more information, please visit www.nicie.org or contact Philip O'Sullivan on 028 9023 6200.

Policy Update



The implementation of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) continues. NICIE has now been asked to make representations to a number of working groups led by the Department for Education (DE).

The Secretary of State, Peter Hain, has mentioned Integrated Education positively in his April 25th statement on A Shared Future. 'Integrated Education is one important model but there will be other ways of sharing. Our ultimate aim must be to ensure that we are integrating educational provision across the board more effectively.' While welcome, it is our opinion that such rhetoric needs to be turned into government policy.

David Russell, Policy Officer for the Communications and Lobbying Team produced a paper on Shared Education which was presented to the UNESCO centre at the University of Ulster in April. The paper was also a focus of discussion at the Community Relations Council Policy conference on April 26th. Representatives of DE, the transferors and Catholic schools were present. The paper was also used at a recent meeting with the Secretary of State and its recommendations will be forwarded to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and DE for consideration in the strategic planning of A Shared Future.

Independent Research

NICIE welcomes the publication of Bernie Hayes, Ian McAllister and Lizanne Dowd's research "In search of middle ground: Integrated Education and Northern Ireland politics" as part of the increasing body of evidence which supports the value and positive impact of Integrated Education on young people who have experienced the system.

The results of the report "add weight to the studies which have shown that integrated schools can and do have an impact on the outlook of the pupils which attend them", by suggesting "that attendance at a formally or informally integrated school has some positive long-term benefits in promoting a less sectarian outlook".

Parent Groups – Update



Limavady

The Limavady Integrated College Steering Group have worked enthusiastically to capture interest through awareness raising events, such as the Valentine Fair, held in February, in the Gorteen House Hotel.

They are currently actively engaged in exploring opportunities for integrated provision in the Limavady area with other parents.

Moira/Hillsborough

The Rowandale IPS Steering Group, undeterred by the decision of the Minister to refuse funding, continue to apply pressure for integrated primary provision in their area. They hope to consolidate support, and inspire more parents to become involved in their activities. Recently a parents information evening was held in 'The Four Trees' in Moira.

Saintfield/Carryduff

The development proposal for Rowallane Integrated College was not given ministerial approval by the Department of Education. However, they have been delighted by the financial pledge by the IEF to support their efforts to see the school opened in September 2006. And the story doesn't end there...Rowallane has appointed it's first Principal, Dr Olwen Griffith and the new teachers for the start of the new term.

Strabane

The Strabane group held a Fun Day in March which was very well attended. The group is gaining further momentum in the Strabane area and all concerned are working very hard at awareness raising.

Clogher Valley

The group was very disappointed to have their development proposal for the school turned down by the Department of Education as there is no integrated

primary provision within 20 miles of the Valley. However, they have been delighted by the financial package by the IEF to support their efforts to see the school opened in September 2006.

Steering group members have continued to work hard at hosting events both for parents and children to keep parents up to date with developments as they unfold. A suitable temporary site has been identified in Fivemiletown and they have appointed their principal, Clare Meehan.

Antrim

The group was constituted in the autumn and have been working hard to raise awareness of their project for a second level integrated college in the Antrim area.

They had their first family event on Easter Saturday, at the gardens of Clotworthy Arts Centre for a well attended and much enjoyed Easter Egg Hunt. A pub quiz took place in the Cova Bar in Antrim in May.

To date the group has more than 170 expression of interest forms completed and forms continue to come through steadily. This is very encouraging for the group and a very positive indication of the support for second level integrated provision in Antrim.

Ballymoney

The Ballymoney Steering Group has been together since February this year. Having formed their Limited Company, they are now in the process of putting together a programme of events to raise awareness in the Ballymoney area.

The group has also sent Transformation letters to all of the local primary schools inviting them to consider an integrated future but to date they have not had any positive response.



US Consul General Dean Pittman with IEF Governor Jan O'Neill joins two of the first pupils enrolled at Rowallane Integrated College.

IEF Commit £750,000

The Integrated Education Fund announced financial support of over £750,000 to establish Integrated Education provision in both the Clogher Valley and the Saintfield areas and confirmed continued financial support for the campaign by a group of parents in Moira/Hillsborough for an Integrated Primary School in their area.

The decision to pledge funding was reached after an intense consultation period with parents, key donors and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and follows on from the controversial decision by Education Minister, Angela Smith, not to give Conditional Approval to the Development Proposals submitted by the parents groups.

In order to provide the high levels of financial support needed, the IEF will be required in the meantime to use the limited unrestricted reserves of the Fund.

We ask for the support of our donors and supporters to help us to fundraise to support the growth of Integrated Education in these communities and beyond. The success of this appeal is essential in light of the huge financial commitment we are making. To make a donation please contact Campaign Manager, Paul Caskey.

Lord Chancellor Gives Boost to Integrated Education Campaign

The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor Lord Falconer of Thoroton played host to a reception at his private residence at the House of Lords to promote the work of the Integrated Education Fund.

Lord Falconer welcomed the evening's guest speaker Helen Farrimond, Principal of Cranmore Integrated Primary School.

In her speech to an influential audience of politicians, business leaders and judiciary Mrs Farrimond said: "We know that Integrated Education is a lasting means of bridging the community divide in an ever increasingly polarised Northern Ireland. It would be easy sometimes to walk away from the difficulties that challenge us in the integrated sector but that is not an option for us because we know that we

make a difference. Integrated Education is not the panacea for all the ills of Northern Ireland but it is a powerful measure that will help to create a more tolerant society."

The Lord Chancellor paid tribute to the courage and commitment of parents throughout Northern Ireland who have established 58 integrated schools since the opening of Lagan College in 1981.



Lord Falconer, the Lord Chancellor, Helen Farrimond, Principal of Cranmore IPS

News in Brief

Specialist School

Shimna Integrated College was thrilled to learn that their application to become a specialist language college in September 2006 has been approved by the government.

Angela Smith, NIO Minister for Education made the exciting announcement on Tuesday 14th March when she praised the successful schools' "potential", "innovation" and "creativity". The college is one of twelve schools chosen to pilot the 'centres of excellence' scheme in Northern Ireland. They will receive a one-off capital grant of £100,000 and £100 per pupil for four years.

David Cameron visit to Lagan Integrated College

The Integrated Education movement in Northern Ireland was delighted that David Cameron MP, the leader of the Conservative Party, chose to visit Lagan Integrated College last December during his inaugural trip to Northern Ireland.

Leader of the Opposition was greeted by the acting principal Dessie McNally, governors, staff and pupils before commencing a tour of the school. On his fact-finding mission he witnessed how integrated schools tackle difficult issues such as sectarianism, racism, and conflict resolution which are an integral part of the taught curriculum but also saw at first hand how they celebrate and embrace diversity.



Leader of the Conservative Party, David Cameron on a visit to Lagan College

Hazelwood Peace Assembly

To mark their 20th Anniversary, Hazelwood Integrated College and Hazelwood Integrated Primary School embarked on a series of special events to celebrate their success and achievements. A grant from the IEF supported a number of activities, including an Anniversary magazine and a Carol Service at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast with the Donaghadee Male Voice Choir and comedian and IEF campaigner Frank Carson.

A special peace assembly was also held with guest speaker President Mary McAleese on Tuesday 28th March. Other distinguished guests included the Bishop of Down and Dromore, Harold Millar, the US Consul General, Dean Pittman, local politicians, Lady Sylvia Hermon, Gerry Kelly, David Forde, the Mayor of Newtownabbey, Mr William de Courcy, Assistant Chief Constable, Duncan McCausland, Lady Elizabeth Bloomfield as well as governors, parents and friends of the College.

Investors in People 'first' for Portaferry IPS

Portaferry IPS is the first primary school in the Ards Peninsula to receive the prestigious Investors in People award. Confirmation of the award was given in June, and the school's principal, Jennifer Smyth, officially received the award from Education Minister Angela Smith at a ceremony in Hillsborough Castle.

Soccer Tournament at Priory

For the 6th year running, Priory CIC celebrated IE Week by organising the Priory College Challenge Cup Soccer Tournament. The tournament had 13 participating primary schools from Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood and East Belfast. Local primary school children from different social and educational backgrounds had the opportunity to participate in a training session with soccer coaches provided by the Irish Football Association.

Erne Integrated College pupils hitting a high note!

Two A level music students from Erne Integrated College, Keri Wilson and Callum Johnston hit the high spots in December with their Christmas song, 'In Another World'.

Written by the two students, the pupils recorded the song in the College's studio, initially as part of their course work. As the song developed though, their music teacher, Mr David Baxter, noticed that it was very catchy and cleverly written so he advised them to develop it into a Christmas song.

All proceeds of the CD went to the local branch of the NSPCC and the CD can be bought in local shops as well as from the College.

BBC "Any Questions" at Drumragh College

On Friday 31st March Drumragh Integrated College hosted the Radio 4 broadcast "Any Questions". Members of the panel included Peter Hain, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Anne Atkins (Radio 4), Pat Doherty (Sinn Fein) and Ian Paisley Jnr (DUP).

The live broadcast from Drumragh College was hosted by Jonathon Dimbleby. "Any Questions" invites members of the audience to pose questions to the panel covering a wide range of current social, economic and political topics.

In preparation for the event, members of the A-level politics department put local politicians through their paces on issues such as Integrated Education, local councils, health care and devolution.

Shadow Secretary of State Visit to Brownlow Integrated College

David Lidington MP, the Conservative Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland visited Brownlow Controlled Integrated College, Craigavon, on 19 January.

During his fact-finding visit to the first transforming school in Northern Ireland, Mr Lidington met the Principal, Errol Lemon, and pupils before embarking on a tour of the school.

Mr Lidington said, "I am delighted to be visiting Brownlow Integrated College. At a time when Integrated Education is going from strength to strength, Brownlow has reached a landmark by attracting equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant pupils. I hope this will be a springboard for further success in the integrated sector'.

Integrated Education Week 27th February to 3rd March 2006



Pictured are the two winners, Georgina Whiteside from North Coast IC and Russell Bryce from Oakgrove IC, along with two of the judges, Anne Odling-Smee and Eileen Bell MLA

The launch of Integrated Education Week took place on Tuesday 28th February 2006 at the Long Gallery, Stormont. David Ford MLA hosted the event and the guest speaker was Tim Collins who came to international prominence with his rousing speech to troops during the Iraq conflict. He highlighted the importance of dialogue and public speaking in the rebuilding of a society after conflict.

A public speaking competition organised by Cynthia Currie, North Coast Integrated College, Coleraine, in conjunction with NICIE followed the launch in the Senate Chamber at Stormont. Georgina Whiteside from North Coast IC won the exciting first place prize of a trip to London to visit the House of Commons and the runner up, Russell Bryce from Oakgrove IC, L'Derry won £50. Both Georgina and Russell will be ambassadors for Integrated Education in 2006 and will represent the integrated movement at key engagements.



Judges and participants at Stormont

There were many other excellent events happening in integrated schools around Northern Ireland during Integrated

Education Week. The week provides a superb opportunity for integrated schools to celebrate their growth and diversity while reaching out to their local communities. This year the week's theme was 'the heart' and events ranged from visits by local MLAs to football tournaments, healthy eating and special peace assemblies.

Once again Integrated Education Week was a great success and has proved to be a highlight of the year.



Cynthia Currie and Colonel Tim Collins



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