



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Education

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Shared and Integrated  
Education: Northern Ireland Council for  
Integrated Education

19 November 2014

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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### Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education: Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)  
Mr Danny Kinahan (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jonathan Craig  
Mr Colum Eastwood  
Mr Chris Hazzard  
Mr Trevor Lunn  
Mr Nelson McCausland  
Ms Maeve McLaughlin  
Mr Robin Newton  
Mrs Sandra Overend

**Witnesses:**

Ms Noreen Campbell	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Ms Frances Donnelly	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Dr Helen McLaughlin	Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I welcome our witnesses. We have Noreen Campbell, who is the chief executive of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE); Helen McLaughlin, the vice chairperson of NICIE; and Frances Donnelly, who is senior development officer. You are all very welcome. Thank you very much for taking the time to come this morning. I invite you to make an opening statement, and members will follow up with some questions.

**Ms Noreen Campbell (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):** Good morning, everybody. I thank the Committee for initiating this inquiry. I think that you will agree that the volume of responses and the public debate generated confirms that it is an area of utmost interest. I thank you for giving the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education the opportunity to present to you through written submissions and this morning, and hopefully we will be able to offer some solutions that you will want to question us about. I am the chief executive of NICIE and was previously principal of Hazelwood Integrated College in north Belfast. My colleagues this morning are Helen McLaughlin, who is a management consultant, a parent of an integrated pupil and vice chairperson of NICIE; and Frances Donnelly, who is a senior development officer in NICIE and also a parent of integrated pupils. Helen will start this morning.

**Dr Helen McLaughlin (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):** I echo what Noreen says. Thank you for inviting us here this morning. We are here very much in the spirit of trying to help with the inquiry and to answer your questions as best we can in that spirit. As Noreen said, I am the vice chair of NICIE and am also the parent of a child who attends Rowandale Integrated Primary

School. Just before we came in here this morning, we had some very good news, which is that the development proposal that Rowandale submitted some months ago has been approved today. So, just by chance, before we walked in here, we have had that really good news. I will talk to you today as a parent of Rowandale as well as vice chair of NICIE.

I want to say a bit about my own education first. I come from a Catholic background and went to a fantastic Catholic school with wonderful teachers and great lifelong friends. One day a group of Quakers came along to our school and created opportunities for us to get together with kids from local Protestant schools. It was a lot of fun. It was very contrived; it had to be made to happen. It did not have a lot of impact except to make me realise what was missing from my otherwise wonderful education, which was children from the other community and, indeed, other communities.

When I became a parent, I knew that I wanted my child to go to an integrated school. My parents, at that stage, being slightly older, Catholic parents, had some questions about what that actually meant. I know that, as a Committee, you are interested in definitions of integrated education. They were very interested in what that would mean for my grandson. My father asked a question that has really stuck with me, which I think is an excellent question. He said, "How will he be taught the difference between right and wrong if there is no faith-based ethos in the school?" I thought that was a great question. Although they never said it, I know that they also had questions about what would happen about sacramental education, preparation for first communion and those sorts of things.

I feel very proud of how Rowandale has answered their questions, not just in words but in actions. It is really in talking to you about how Rowandale dealt with those issues that I hope to get across to you what integrated education actually means — its definition in very practical terms.

In terms of the difference between right and wrong, before you get through Rowandale school gate, there is a sign that greets you and tells you what the school's value base and ethos are and what its sense of right and wrong is. The first line of the sign says:

*"We are integrated — we nurture all our children in the values of their own background. Our aim is to enrich individual identity through the understanding of other beliefs."*

It goes on, "We are anti-bias", "We are all-ability", "We are democratic" and so on. So, in answer to my father's question about right and wrong, my child's education is steeped in a very strong value base, based on equality, diversity, respect, and, perhaps even more importantly, parity.

In a faith-based school there are also strong values, of course, but alongside that there are clear messages about which faith takes precedence in the school, through the symbols, iconography and practices in the school. Even where faith schools claim to be mixed, to the children from the minority community, there can be no mistaking what the dominant tradition is. In an integrated school, your background is entirely valued, and your friend's different background is entirely valued. No background is dominant, and no background has to be silent. That is what we mean by parity in an integrated school.

As regards the sacraments, I think that speaks to how integrated schools deal with identity. Sometimes there is a bit of a perception that you have to leave your identity or background at the door of an integrated school, but that is really not the case. My son was prepared for his first communion in his integrated school. In fact, I would say that his communion experience was multiplied and intensified by doing it at an integrated school. What made the day amazing and unforgettable for me, and very striking for my parents, was that, once all of the wee Catholic children had made their first communion in church and had returned to the school for a party, the party was hosted by the parents and children who had not been involved in the church ceremony. In other words, the party was hosted by the Protestant mummies, daddies and children, and, indeed, mummies, daddies and children from other backgrounds. It was pretty overwhelming for me and my family. I felt that my child's background and culture were celebrated, not just by and with his own side but by the whole community. It was a totally enriched and enriching experience.

That said, you could ask why more children do not go to integrated schools. We were very lucky as parents. Before we had a school-age child, local parents wanted to choose an integrated education for their child, but they could not, because there was no integrated school in Moira. So, they did all of the hard work of setting the school up. Indeed, in the face of fierce opposition, it was quite a battle. It would have been very easy to miss the fact that there is a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education. How many parents who want a state education or a faith education for their

children are left to go and set it up themselves? How many parents have the knowledge and skills to set up a school from scratch?

I hope that, in this brief talk, I have defined what integrated education means to me and my family. I am not here today to say that integrated schools are better than everyone else or that other schools are not good schools or that they do not want the best for their children; of course, they do. We face challenges in the integrated movement. Sometimes we get it wrong, just like other schools. However, for me, the single thing that defines integrated education and makes it different is that we deliberately strive to educate children from different community backgrounds together all day, every day. We work deliberately and consciously with those children to celebrate all identities in a spirit of parity. My son's friendships are mixed. Without any contrivance, he is with kids from the other community and other communities all day, every day. No one has to invent or pay for a special project to make it happen. That is what integrated schools do.

**Ms N Campbell:** I will ask Frances to talk a little bit about the intersection between integrated and shared education.

**Ms Frances Donnelly (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education):** Thank you, Noreen. When looking at the integrated sector's involvement in shared education in the few words that I am going to say, my reference point is the definition of shared education provided by the ministerial advisory group, which is that it involves two or more schools from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits, promoting efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, respect for diversity and community cohesion. That is a slightly abbreviated version, but the three key areas are the educational, economic and societal benefits.

Integrated schools exist, first and foremost, to be excellent schools. Why else would any of us, as parents, send our children to a school? They also exist to have strong connections to local communities. Consequently, they immediately recognise the educational and economic benefits of sharing with, and learning from, others. This is simply a good educational approach, and it is second nature to integrated schools.

The societal benefits of sharing are arguably the most difficult to achieve in any shape or form. However, in an integrated school, they are realised at every level of the structure of the school itself. That does not make managing diversity any less challenging, as that is the same across all sectors. However, it does provide a platform for community relations all day, every day. Therefore, our schools are uniquely placed to promote active community cohesion.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluation report of the shared education projects funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) noted that the longer-term aim for all schools is for shared education to be so integral to the ethos and fabric of each school community that it becomes the way that we do things around here. That is the starting point for integrated schools with regard to community relations; it is not a long-term goal. That is simply where we come from. It is the way that we do things in integrated schools.

In terms of wider shared education, we have schools that are active participants in the area learning communities. In many cases, they have taken the lead role in working with those communities. They also provide recognisable neutral venues and safe spaces for activities and events. We have had a number of schools submit proposals for the shared education campus, namely Hazelwood, Sperrin and North Coast Integrated Colleges. We have been disappointed that none of our integrated schools has made it through the first tranche. That is a great source of disappointment and surprise. We feel that they were very strong and robust proposals. Therefore, NICIE would ask for clarification about the process for the shared education campus and reassurance that comments from the local education and library board cannot unduly influence the outcome of that process. Integrated schools play a full role in trying to achieve the shared education targets and will continue to do so. However, we, as full partners, are entitled to full recognition in that and, indeed, special recognition, particularly in terms of societal sharing and the contribution that integrated schools make.

I will just pick out a couple of specific shared education projects that NICIE has been able to contribute to and make great advances with. These were projects that were supported by IFI and Atlantic Philanthropies. One of those was hosted by NICIE. That was Sharing Classrooms, Deepening Learning. That project recognised that, in terms of the entitlement framework and shared education, the context in which a lot of post-primary teachers deliver courses is changing. There are mixed classes and more diverse environments, and that can give great uncertainty to teachers. It can make

them feel very vulnerable and uncomfortable. That should not come as any surprise. It is a consequence of our segregated education system and our teacher training. It is also something that we recognised with new teachers coming into the integrated sector. Our project worked on supporting those teachers with professional development. We supported bespoke training and offered accredited training for those teachers, encouraging them to go through their own journey of exploration of diversity, which they have often never had any opportunity to do before. It is only by encouraging our teachers to go through their own journey that they can fully support young people going through the equivalent.

That project remains really important to us. In NICIE the funding has stopped, but the work continues and has gone into other initiatives, which Noreen will speak about in a couple of minutes. It certainly raises critical issues around our teacher training and the teachers that go out into schools that are completely different from what they were a number of years before, certainly in regard to delivering the entitlement framework.

The second project was the Primary Integrating/Enriching Education (PIEE) project, which was hosted by the North Eastern Education and Library Board. Some of you may already be slightly familiar with that. I believe that the North Eastern Board presented on that a while ago. That focused on small, rural primary schools, controlled and maintained, developing sustainable relationships. I think that is one of the key words in all of the debate — the sustainability of sharing; not one-off projects, but something that develops an interdependency. That was my certainly my personal experience, because I was the NICIE seconded officer to PIEE. That was over four years, with 28 schools in partnerships and really important sustainable relationships.

The one thing that I found in PIEE and in integrated education is that parents are much more open to sharing than I think we give them credit for. Parents want sharing wholeheartedly, and they know when they are being short-changed. I think they are open to new and innovative ideas and that we should trust our parents more in the process going ahead.

**Ms N Campbell:** Thank you, Frances. My colleagues have outlined the key characteristics of shared education and integrated education, but both approaches are a response to our divided system. Integrated education was developed to challenge segregation in education. Shared education operates within the segregated system. It creates connections between schools of different types that are typified by being of a dominant or single identity. In integrated schools, sharing is the daily norm.

You will not be surprised if this morning I concentrate on integrated education and why the duty imposed on Government to encourage and facilitate it should be respected and implemented. Doing so will allow us, as a society, to move beyond segregation to an integrated system of education — I emphasise, integrated with a small i — one fit for purpose for the 21st century.

What would such an integrated system look like? First of all, it would be made up of the schools that are integrated in law, as we have 62 such schools at the moment, as well as four additional schools looking to join that group through the process of transformation. The system would also include schools that are integrated in ethos. They may be Catholic or controlled in management type, but they would, through their daily experience of their children, have moved beyond a dominant ethos to an ethos of equality that characterises an integrated school.

NICIE has developed a programme, which we call Positive Partnerships for Integration, to support those schools that wish to recognise the diversity of their students and to move away from a dominant ethos to one of respect and equality for all. We consulted fully with all stakeholders when we were developing that. We consulted the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Commission for Catholic Education, the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the various political parties. We are ready to start the programme, and we have schools interested in participating in the programme, but we do not have the funding to do so.

Under our proposed shift from a segregated system to an integrated system, faith schools and controlled schools would continue to exist, but they would be obliged to connect their students through shared education in a meaningful way. Such a change in system would allow us to reimagine ourselves as a society that is not defined by difference.

Why do we need that step change, and why are we in NICIE calling for structural and systemic reform? We do so for societal reasons. If we want to move beyond division, we must address the division of our children. That division is not a result of parental choice but is a legacy of our history and divided past. That segregation replicates and perpetuates division. Until now, no one has

seriously engaged with the part played by our schools in keeping children separate and normalising for our children a non-thinking acceptance of the other and of division. Our children deserve better. We can and should no longer assume that children inherit a green or orange identity at birth.

Moreover, we argue that the status quo is not an option. In NICIE's second submission, I included a chart that was taken from the report on monitoring the peace process. It showed the demographic shift between our two major traditions. Are we content to see Catholic schools taking an increasing share of the system as the population changes? We argue that that is not a recipe for a peaceful, inclusive society.

There are sound educational reasons for change. Children learn best when they feel accepted. Too many of our children are asked to leave part of their identity at the school door. I argue that there is no classroom in any school in Northern Ireland where the children are the same, whatever it says on the badge or the door. We do a disservice to our children and their emerging sense of self when we presume an identity for them.

There are strong economic reasons for reform. Our economic situation is dire. It has been calculated that £80 million a year could be saved by removing the duplication that characterises our system. That money would be better spent on tackling educational underachievement than on keeping children separate.

The underpinning principle of our system is supposed to be parental choice. In all major public opinion polls, parents tell us that they would prefer to see their children educated together. The majority of our integrated schools are oversubscribed and, in some cases, have not been allowed to grow. In a great number of areas, there is no choice of an integrated school. That situation must be rectified.

NICIE argues that we can no longer defer reform. The debate stimulated by this inquiry supports our conclusion. The question is; how can reform be achieved? For that reason, we have called for a Patten-style inquiry, which would be tasked with the reformation of our education system. In addition to that, there are some steps that we think could be taken immediately that would support the dismantling of the segregated system and the creation of an integrated system. The first is to do with planning. We are calling for a level playing field in planning. There is no planning authority to test and provide for parental choice in integrated education. Parents are expected to initiate transformation of their schools or to set up new schools.

If I am a Catholic parent and I want a Catholic school, CCMS will have provided a choice of such schools for me and similarly with the ELBs and controlled schools. If I am a parent who would like an integrated school and my local school is oversubscribed or there is no integrated school, I am expected to go to the local single-identity school. We think that that is an outrageous situation and that the time has come when the human rights of parents to have integrated education and to see their children educated together are respected. For that reason, we argue that the new ELB must accept its responsibility under the Education Order 1986 and must plan to ensure that there is sufficient integrated choice in every area. Area-based planning must be responsive to that and must test for parental demand.

We also think that there is an argument for looking at the issue of ownership of schools, albeit that that might be something that would be left to a Patten-style inquiry, because it would be controversial. We have a unique and complicated system of ownership, with its roots going back into the last century. Only controlled schools are owned by the state. Grammar schools, Catholic schools and grant-maintained integrated schools are owned by the trustees of the schools, yet all are equally in receipt of government funds. That can cause difficulties for local communities, as evidenced by the recent Clintyclay Primary School controversy. A single system of ownership would help move us to an integrated or unified system of education.

Equally, I think that I have counted 10 different systems of boards of governors in our schools. There is no reason for that whatsoever. If we had a uniform system of governance across our schools, it ought not to impact on the ethos of the schools, but it would at least begin the process of unifying our system of education and moving towards a cohesive system that will provide world-class education.

There is also the issue of teacher training. The recent international review panel on teacher training argued that maintaining the status quo of segregation at that level was not an option and proposed a range of solutions to creating an integrated system of teacher education. Unless we educate our trainee teachers together, we will not effectively deliver on shared education.

There is also the issue of preschool education, and that can be tackled easily. Preschool education is supposed to be non-sectoral, yet our nurseries and nursery units are often seen as denominational or single identity. DE should only fund those nursery units and schools that are genuinely and overtly open to all.

NICIE believes that change is necessary and possible. Nelson Mandela said:

*"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."*

Our schools should be places where children can learn to love, and where we can inculcate acceptance and respect of the other and cherish difference and diversity.

The findings of the inquiry and any recommendations are important. You have the power to remove education from the political arena. You can shift the focus on education to what is best for children and best for future society. Thank you for your attention, and we are pleased to take questions.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you very much for your presentation. It was quite surprising for Committee members, but the submissions we have received have promoted quite heated discussion in the press. Perhaps some of that has not been particularly edifying.

Will you maybe explain why it has become so controversial when, for us — certainly for me — shared education is a very simple concept?

**Ms N Campbell:** There have been different levels of controversy in the press. In NICIE, we felt that the CCMS challenge to remove article 64 was controversial. We felt that that was unhelpful in getting the benefit of the Committee, which we see as a very positive tool for people coming together to find solutions to a better system for the future.

Our position is that we do not see shared education here and integrated education there. It is not an "either/or"; it is an "and". We have a model of full immersion sharing, which is integrated, and a system of major division. Shared education recognises that there is a right and a need for young people to connect, and shared education is a mechanism for doing that. We want to work with shared education to make sure that that mechanism is meaningful and strong. Equally, we need to move away from segregation and allow schools to recognise the diversity and the change in identity of their children and to become integrated in their ethos.

There will always be some schools that want a dominant ethos, which is faith-based or single identity, and those are the schools that would benefit most from shared education. Many schools will say that there any number of different children in their classrooms and want to explore how they can recognise that and be recognised for the work they are doing on that without changing the ownership of the school or the management structure or type.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** It would appear that you have been a little dismissive of the concept of shared education. Even in your comments today, you said that shared education operates in the segregated system. Do you not recognise that sharing is as much as some communities will give at this stage, and that something is better than nothing?

**Ms N Campbell:** We absolutely accept that something is better than nothing. As Frances outlined, we have had quite a significant input into shared education. We work within it and encourage all our schools to work within it. Our positive partnerships initiative is also based on sharing.

I would not want to be dismissive of shared education, but I do think that there is a critical point. Shared education is based on, and works within, the system we have. I do not think that the system we have is fit for purpose of the 21st century. I think the system has to change.

Shared education is, and hopefully will develop as, a very useful mechanism for connecting young people. There are big challenges with that in how you ensure that there is long-term and meaningful connection of young people across the sectors. If those can be overcome, it will definitely be of benefit, but it is not enough in itself.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you feel threatened by shared education?

**Ms N Campbell:** No. We welcome shared education. We think it has really put a focus on what is important in education and has brought that to the public's attention. When the public were asked about their understanding of shared education and integrated education, as they were in a poll in the 'Belfast Telegraph' two weeks ago, they were very clear that integrated education was children being educated together on a daily basis, and 64% of them said that that was option they preferred. They also clearly understood that shared education was children or schools sharing resources across the divide and within the system.

There is a critical difference, but we are not saying that that is a reason not to support shared education or shared initiatives. We encourage integrated schools to be part of those.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I want to look at the comments about area planning that you made in your paper. You feel that, in some way, this has limited the progress of the integrated education sector. We had representation from Professor Knox and Professor Borooah, and they claimed that there are issues with academic attainment in integrated schools when compared to non-integrated schools. You have spoken about the surveys and said that parents would like their children to be in a shared experience. Is the priority perhaps that they want their children to be at schools where they can excel and where there is a higher level of attainment?

**Ms N Campbell:** I think that there are two distinct issues there, but let me begin with the latter. I expect that most people around the table are parents, and, as parents, our duty is to put our children first and ensure that they have the best education possible. No integrated school would have survived for a nanosecond if it were not able to give that assurance to parents. We have 62 schools, and there is a range across those schools. I think that the focus is generally on post-primary, because you have very hard measurements to look at there, and people can see where a school is or is not.

Some of our schools are doing extremely well and others are not doing as well as they should. We are totally committed to supporting schools to improve their performance for their young people. We think that that is what schools are about. They are about ensuring that young people can take their place in the world and fulfil all their objectives.

We did a comparison. A lot of our integrated schools have just come through inspections, and we tested the inspection reports over the last three years against the chief inspector's report. For example, in our primary schools, where teaching and learning is good or better, the Northern Ireland average is 82%, but, for our integrated primary schools, it is 96%. So, for the 25 out of 26 primary schools that were inspected, teaching and learning was deemed to be good or better. None of those primary schools were deemed to have poor management, and 96% of integrated primary schools were assessed as having pastoral care that was very good or outstanding, and the chief inspector outlined that there was a clear correlation between good achievement and high-quality pastoral care.

In our post-primary schools, 68% were rated as good or better for overall effectiveness against the Northern Ireland average of 63%. Some 92% were rated good or better for pastoral care. That, again, was above the Northern Ireland average. Our English and maths and five good GCSEs also compare favourably. That is a figure that you will be interested in. We would like to do a bit more work on getting the statistics in.

If you look at the performance of integrated schools compared to other schools, that is, controlled and Catholic schools together, the number of young people who are getting five good GCSEs, including English and maths, is 38% compared to 34.5% for the others. The more interesting one is free school meals. The whole focus of the chief inspector's report was on free school meals and underachievement and, in particular, underachievement of working-class boys. There is a very striking difference because, in integrated schools, 24.5% of our boys on free school meals are achieving five good GCSEs. That is significantly better than boys in either Catholic or controlled schools. So, we are getting some things right, but we are always conscious of the need to get things better, and we are committed totally to doing so. I do not know if that answers your question on the academic side.

You connected that with area-based planning and the lack of numbers of people choosing integrated schools. There is no central planning for integrated education. Historically, 40 of our schools were set up by parents' groups. Parents had to get together across the divide, which was not necessarily easy, and had to create those schools. In the first 10 years, they had to get the funding and the money to

create those schools. They had to face enormous barriers to do so. That speaks of the success of our schools because there were such deep roots embedded in those schools by parents.

Another 22 schools went through the process of transformation. Again, parents and, in some cases, boards of governors, said, "We want our school to change. We want our school to become integrated". That is not an easy process, as the parents in Clintyclay have discovered because there were still obstacles. If I am a parent who wants a controlled school for my child, I can go out and look, and the ELB will have said, "We need x number of schools here" and there will be a choice of schools; similarly, for Catholic schools. So, why should parents who want an integrated education, which is, after all, the norm of the type of education across the world, be the ones who have to create that for themselves. To me, that is the absolute opposite of facilitating and encouraging integrated education.

We think that area-based planning has made the situation worse. Despite the Minister saying that he wants area-based planning to be for areas not sectors, individuals not institutions, and that he wants innovative solutions, the CCMS has managed and planned for the Catholic side, and the ELBs have managed and planned for the controlled side, and nobody is managing planning for the integrated side. After lobbying, we now have a place at the table, but nobody will accept responsibility for planning. We think that if the new ELB accepts that responsibility, which sits under the 1986 Act, that will make a significant difference.

We think it is significant that, in the review of Irish-medium, the Minister accepted the recommendations and, at the same time, said that he would support a similar type of review of strategic planning for integrated education. That review puts at the heart of it who is responsible for planning for Irish-medium education, who is responsible for testing parental demand and who is responsible for removing the barriers. We want the same for integrated education. We want a level playing field.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Just to link it back to the question, you mentioned oversubscription, but your oversubscription is really limited to only a small number of successful schools.

**Ms N Campbell:** No. Out of 62 schools, they are all oversubscribed except seven. I might be out by one or two.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** You have the transport advantage over the controlled and maintained sectors.

**Ms N Campbell:** The transport advantage works in favour of different people in different ways. My point is that there are 62 schools in 62 areas, but there are a vast number of areas where there is no integrated choice at all. That is what we should be focusing on and making sure that parents have that choice.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I will return to some questions, because other members have indicated that they wish to speak, but, before I do that, I welcome the pupils from Christ the Redeemer Primary School. You are very welcome to the Committee this morning. Members of the Committee will meet you after we have completed our session here. Thank you very much for attending here today.

**Mr Hazzard:** Thanks very much for the presentation. I will just start around language. I think that, on all sides, some of it is inflammatory. I want to focus on the words "segregation" and "segregated". I do not think that it is applicable to the situation. The definition in front of me states that it is to actively and on a predetermined basis separate. It is the physical act of separating. However, I think that our system allows for parents to choose. Even in the document that NICIE has produced, it states that there will be an integrated college

*"within a reasonable distance from your home."*

If that had said, "there may not be an integrated college within a reasonable distance from your home", there may be grounds to look at it as the choice is not there. If someone sitting at home chooses to send their child to a particular school, and you actively accuse them of being a segregationist, I think that is wrong. You need to look at the use of the words "segregate" and "segregation". I do not think that reflects the situation. If you want to talk about duplication or replication or something else, there may be grounds to do that, but I think that segregated is a loaded term.

**Ms N Campbell:** I am sorry if I am hogging this now, but "segregated" is a loaded term, and it really touches to the heart of the debate. We do not like the word. But, interestingly, we talk about segregated housing, and it does not seem to have the same emotive impact on us. When we talk about segregated education, we feel really unhappy because we do not want to think that we are keeping our children divided, yet 92% of our children go to schools that are a majority of one or the other. One of the definitions of segregation is the keeping of people apart. There are historical reasons for that. We just need to say that we have had a history, and it has shaped a particular type of educational system, but now we are in a different place, let us find the means. I said this morning, "Let us create an integrated system of education with a small 'i'." I am more than happy to say, "Give us a different word. Let it be a unified system of education." That is something that the Committee could really play a part in. If we do not want a segregated or duplicated, or whatever word we use, system of education, what system of education do we need? What we do call it and how do we get there? That is where the value of this Committee comes in to help us chart our way from one point to another.

This Committee is leading the way in having this debate, and we do not want to feel that we are playing a negative part in it. If we have done so, I have to apologise for that. We want to be part of the solution, and we want to find a means and to model our integrated values, which are about listening, learning and understanding. If we fail, we have to learn from that, but I believe that there is something about that word and the way that it touches at our core that tells us that we need to look at it more closely. We do not want it. If we do not want it, how do we make sure that it can never be used to describe us, and how can we make sure that people looking in on us from outside do not say, "They are segregated by religion in their education", which is what they do.

**Mr Hazzard:** It is positive to hear that you have taken that on board. The same question will be put to others, you can rest assured of that.

There was racial segregation in the United States of America. However, when schools came together, results did not necessarily improve, because the schools were not socially integrated. Very often, I find that the integrated movement here focuses solely on religious and ethnic integration. I know that it does not do so in practice, but, when you read it, the definition is always about religion. It is always Catholic and Protestant or other. We never sell the advantages of social integration and having poor kids alongside kids from affluent backgrounds.

I know that integrated schools do that, but they do not sell it. When it comes to the big argument, it is always about the cohesiveness of our society, with Catholics and Protestants. It is not about the other divisions in society. I feel that, when we talk about integration or shared, we need to make sure that we look at socio-economic sharing and integration as well. Do you also agree with that, and is that important?

**Dr H McLaughlin:** I do agree with that. Something that you said touches on something that we have thought about a lot in the last couple of years. You mentioned how we sell ourselves. The social mixing and all-ability mixing is something that we very much strive for. I often use the word "strive", because I do not think that we ever get it perfect, but we strive, and social mixing is a huge part of that. In my son's school, you can see that. You can see the all-ability aspect.

You are right. When we come into the public debate, then because this had its roots in looking at the fact that we educate Catholics and Protestants separately in this country, it has remained a real core driving force for it. It may be that, when we come into public debate, we go back to talking about that. We even have to remind ourselves always to say that our divisions are very much based on Catholic and Protestant but that, now, we have to take account of the fact that there are other communities, other language groups and other ethnic groups and all of that. Yes, that is a huge part of what we do as well.

**Ms Donnelly:** It is also worth noting that the status of the integrated sector as such is defined in legislation. So, if our language is about Protestant and Catholic, it is also related to the fact that, by law, an integrated school is defined in such a way: reasonable numbers of Catholic and Protestant. The other factors, of course, are important. We have had an ongoing debate with the Department of Education around the fact that people now identify themselves in many ways, whether they are active churchgoers or whether they are culturally Protestant or culturally Catholic or whether they are newcomers. This whole idea of having to have numbers and balance is part of the integrated ethos,

but it also can be very confining as well and does not always reflect the changing society in which we live.

**Mr Hazzard:** Finally, I know that there has been great work across the board in the integrated sector on cultural awareness, certainly when it comes to those who maybe had a fear before that their Irish cultural identity was never reflected in an integrated school. We have heard before of a shared situation where some schools have come together and played Gaelic football or whatever it might be. Can you give us a flavour of how the integrated sector has looked to embrace or to promote Irish culture? I am aware that in this paper, for example, there is no Irish. To my mind, looking at the pictures, there are no pictures of Gaelic football or hurling or anything in any of this. There is plenty of rugby and soccer. Again, I know that you are working on it, but I would love to know how far you still think you have to go.

**Dr H McLaughlin:** I will chip in with a small example and then hand over. In my son's school, for example, they have now started to offer Irish-language teaching, and that is new thing. That is through having a member of staff who is able to offer that, which is fantastic. It sounds like a very clichéd way to do it, but there is a good awareness of things like celebrating St Patrick's Day and looking at what that is all about and what that means for people and so on. That leads to discussions about Irishness around the world and that sort of thing. Just on a school level, I am starting to see more of that. He is in year 5, and I am starting to see more of that in the last few years. I will hand over to my colleague for the bigger picture.

**Ms N Campbell:** Again, our schools were established to ensure parity of esteem and ensure that everybody felt included and accepted. That meant ensuring that as far as possible. As Helen touched on, sometimes it comes down to whether you have a teacher available who can offer a particular subject. Post-primary schools all have their Gaelic team and their soccer team, and, if they are big enough, they may also have a rugby team. Most post-primary schools offer Irish in some shape. It may be in taster classes, or it may be done as it is in Shimna, which is a specialist language college. In fact, I was following it on Facebook, and it was having some sort of "talkathon" in Irish. I should have been able to say that in Irish, but I cannot.

The commitment there is to ensure that people feel accepted and have access to their culture and can bring their culture into school. It is not just about Irish culture; it is about the culture of every child in the school, so it is really important.

I think that the Remembrance Day assemblies at our integrated schools are particularly poignant because you have there this recognition of something that can be controversial outside and some children and some staff wearing poppies and some not. Yet, you will have them coming together to have this really meaningful assembly where people are remembering and remembering our own local past as well as the greater wars.

The conversations that are held among the young people when they prepare for those are important. It is about a young person being able to say, "Yes, I do belong to the Orange lodge and my family always has. This is why it is important to me and this is what we do and how we celebrate it".

I will give you an example from my experience. In my school, we had what we called a Speak Your Peace day, and we developed that in response to the situation at Holy Cross, where tensions were so high in north Belfast. We felt that we had to create a space where our young people could be themselves and understand one another. It was for the year 10 group, and they were asked to bring in a symbol that was important to them. They sat around in small groups and talked about their symbol and how it was important. It was great to sit on those groups and not see paramilitary flags on the table but national flags, harps that might have been carved in Long Kesh, guitars and skateboards, because, for a lot of children, the symbols that are important to them are immediate. Listening to those young people explain what that meant to them and their family and to hear their friends' interpretation of their symbol was the most powerful experience because it was true learning. There was total acceptance that people are different and come from different places and that we have been a divided society, yet there was also that capacity to learn from one another and show respect to one another.

**Mr Kinahan:** Thank you very much. I am sorry to have nipped out. I have loads of questions but they all really come down to one thing, which is this: what change in legislation would you like to see from an integrated point of view?

I ask this from two or three different points of view. In many cases, you have a preferred position, as do other schools, which leads to problems where there is a really good controlled school that is as good as an integrated school because it has large numbers in a mixture. As you are in a preferred position, one of your schools can expand at the cost of the other school when, in fact, we may already have an integrated school there, although run in a slightly different way. One angle is the conflict in some areas, because it is not always the same. The other comes down to how you teach religion and/or politics in your schools.

I love the story that we just heard. That is what I want to see happening everywhere, but there are different angles in different patches. In Hazelwood, when Catholic pupils are learning about the Catholic religion, what are the others doing? Is it the same all the way through? Do we need to change legislation to make things more comparative so that everyone is learning about all religions and not just the main two?

**Ms N Campbell:** Frances, do you want, as a parent, to talk about the religious education?

**Ms Donnelly:** There is an agreed curriculum for religious education in Northern Ireland. How it is delivered in primary schools and integrated schools has been agreed by the four main Churches. Some children may require sacramental preparation, and that is carried out in whatever way the school wishes to do it, whether children are pulled out for additional teaching or whether they are all taught together. There is a variety of methods but there is an agreed curriculum.

My children went to an integrated primary school and they both went through preparation, but their experience in religion was very much about being with children who are different and learning about different religions. That has gone over into post-primary education as well. My colleague in NICIE has more of a religious education background. We would probably like to see more of an emphasis on the world religions. We have that Christian basis of course, but there is an argument that all children should be exposed to a greater experience of different religions.

**Ms N Campbell:** In the past, NICIE developed a programme called Delving Deeper, which enables children from different Christian denominations to look into the common Christianity and at what they share and to deepen understanding between them. But certainly, at post-primary level, as well as the curriculum that is taught in every school with regard to religion, our integrated schools also invest time in other faiths so that children have that broad global awareness. We see that as being very important, particularly as more different faiths come into Northern Ireland.

Your other question is about area planning. The problem with area planning is that it is based on sectors and sectoral thinking. As such, it channels us into ways of thinking about either/or, whereas the aim of area-based planning was to say, "This is an area. How do we best meet the needs of all of the children in this area?" Shared education has a very valuable role to play in that in terms of collaboration. It is how you balance whether a parent might want a very specific single-identity type of education or an integrated education. Your very good controlled school might say, "In our school, we know we have 20% of children from a Catholic background. We know we have 10% newcomers. We know we're a diverse school, so let us represent that in our ethos. Let us have a look at how we have been in the past and whether that is equality for everyone. If not, how can we do it and how can we have it recognised?" Schools are not in competition with one another.

Regarding legislation, one of the big difficulties is the fact that schools have been, because of the way their funding has been set up, in competition with one another. If you are a principal in a school, your prime objective will be to your school, not to the other school, no matter how well you get on with them. There is a conflict there, which is a bigger issue. If you could have a different system of funding and a different system of area-based planning, and if you invited schools to open up and not be seen as one or the other, you could have a fairly rapid transition to a different, unified system of education.

**Mr McCausland:** Thanks for your presentations. When we talk about children coming together in a school from Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds etc, the terms "Protestant" and "Roman Catholic" can have a religious connotation or — you used the word "cultural" — sometimes it is another way of speaking about ethno-cultural or cultural differences. This is a question that I put to all sectors, not just yours. How do you address the right of children to learn about the culture of their community and the home from which they come, which is part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child? You gave examples of maybe introducing Gaelic games or some Irish language. How do other cultural traditions in Northern Ireland get accommodated? How is that dealt with?

**Ms N Campbell:** I think there is space created for all children to bring their cultural experience to the table. For example, a lot of schools use a programme called Different Drums, where children bring in the drum that represents their identity. They learn the history of it and then they drum together. That is a really powerful experience. We have remembrance assemblies where children share their experiences and the experiences of their family. Every school will take a slightly different approach to how it ensures that both of our major cultures are represented, because, after all, that is why we were established, but also our newcomer cultures. One of the fundamental principles is to find ways and means of doing that.

**Ms Donnelly:** I think that the integrated school provides the everyday opportunities. I am immediately thinking of the literature that is available in the library, the texts and poems that are used in English, the drama activities, art activities, music, PE, the speakers who come into the school, the charities that are supported and the community groups that are linked to the school. It is kind of within the fabric of the school, and there is almost an automatic means by which that happens. The teachers know that it is an integrated school and, as part of their process of lesson preparation and working with the young people, it is simply the way that they are, in reflecting the major cultures.

**Ms N Campbell:** I could maybe add something to that. NICIE received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to mark the centenary anniversaries. We used that funding to support teachers to teach controversial issues. We created a bank of resources that is available to all schools for those contentious anniversaries. We also created some super drama pieces so that, through drama, schools can explore the issues on the signing of the covenant or the 1916 rising. As children love talking to each other about those issues, you also get that daily interchange.

**Mr McCausland:** I would just make an observation. In sport, sometimes a parallel or comparison is drawn between football and Gaelic football. The difference to me is that one has a very specific cultural heritage or identity associated with it and the other is just an international game now. Finding ways to express other cultural traditions other than Gaelic ones needs to be teased out in a range of schools, not just in a particular sector.

I want to ask a question about another matter, which is one that I struggle with and cannot quite get to the bottom of. One of the early integrated schools — it might have been Lagan College — had a motto that said "That they all may be one", which is a bit of Bible text. Is there a place in the integrated system for parents to send their children to those schools if they come from what I would describe as a very conservative, evangelical Protestant background? They may not want to go with a certain interpretation, which they might view as having more of an ecumenical spirit, and they might feel more comfortable with a more secular form of integrated education in which those issues are set aside. Are there different views in the integrated sector about that? That is the sense that I have, but I am not clear on it.

**Ms N Campbell:** We have a lot of debate internally about how best to develop our schools and their ethos and how best to engage. All our schools are committed to parental involvement and engagement. A parent with that background who feels that their child being in an integrated school would in some way impinge on that and who wants to test it will know that they can ask those questions. I think that it is about that open dialogue. As Helen said, we are a work in progress.

**Dr H McLaughlin:** That question interests me a lot. The integrated movement started, for good reasons, by identifying itself as an integrated movement with a Christian tradition. I understand why that was necessary 30-odd years ago, but I think that there is now room in the movement to discuss the extent to which we should carry that forward.

Just as there is a diversity of Catholic and state schools, there is a diversity of integrated schools. That is still very much there and is, I suppose, written into the integrated movement. However, development and responsiveness to need happens very much at the coalface with the schools working with parents and with parents being able to say, for example, "I was really surprised that you did that assembly in that way. It did not really fit with what I want my children to be exposed to". There is room for that debate. In fairness, and as is the case in any movement, I would like us in this movement to continue to debate it.

I suppose that that was a long way of answering your question. The door is open to addressing those questions. I do not think that we would say, "No. It has to be a certain way, and if schools do not do it that way they are not in".

**Mrs Overend:** It is good to meet you. Thank you for coming.

Integrated education is the forced equality of the two religions. What about areas such as mid-Ulster, which are predominantly of one religion? We heard someone say on the radio this morning that you cannot turn around without meeting someone from a particular religion. If an integrated school is supposed to show equality, what about the surplus? Would it not be better for a shared area partnership to receive extra support in that area to bring everyone together to promote that shared ethos rather than having an integrated school? How do you see that?

**Ms N Campbell:** In areas where you have a predominance of one cultural background on paper —

**Mrs Overend:** One religious background.

**Ms N Campbell:** Or cultural or religious background. You are less likely to get shared education in those areas, because you will not have the variety of schools. Therefore —

**Mrs Overend:** What if you do?

**Ms N Campbell:** That will not be the same as a city area where there is a lot of mix. Our argument is that, in an area where there is a majority population, it is more important to have an integrated school, because that gives parity of esteem to the minority. It is not about numbers. We aspire to get the best balance we can, but we also aspire and are totally committed to the ethos of equality of esteem so that, if you are the only child in the school from a particular background, you can feel proud of that background and be accepted. We think that it is really important in Northern Ireland that areas do not become monocultural. We should keep diversity in them, and we can do that through having an integrated school.

I also think that through the Committee we have an opportunity to move away from the idea that, because we happen to have been born into a particular area or baptised in a particular church, that is all that we are. There are many mixed marriages, and people in those marriages call it "double belonging". I think that is a beautiful phrase.

If those children go to a controlled school, they are expected to leave the Catholic part of their identity at the door. If they go to a Catholic school, they are supposed to leave the Protestant part at the door. That is not fair. There are children of parents who do not have a religion and children of parents who do not necessarily see themselves as Irish or British but as Northern Irish. There is a huge fluidity amongst young people and young parents about how they see themselves. I think that that is why they want their children to be educated together. They do not want to be pigeonholed as they were in the past. It is about how we can start to move beyond that into a much more fluid view of ourselves so that we see ourselves not as a binary, polarised society but as one that is working to become unified.

**Mrs Overend:** There are schools that are integrated not with a big "I" but in all but name. It is very much felt that the integrated schools threaten the future of those schools that are less forced integrated, so to speak, but —

**Ms N Campbell:** We recognise totally that many schools are naturally integrated. That is the phrase that is used. It is quite flattering, as it recognises the importance of young children being educated together.

In the recent judicial review, Judge Treacy looked at mixed schools and asked whether they were the same as integrated schools. He said, "No, they are not the same as integrated schools because they have a dominant ethos that is based on a single identity". So, no matter how welcoming they are to all children and no matter how supportive they are of all the differences in the school, unless they engage with that dominant inherited ethos and decide that they may need to make some changes, add certain books to the library or add a subject to the curriculum, they will not be integrated. It will definitely mean that they will need to train their teachers and support their teachers' thinking in a broader way. If those schools can do that, they will become schools that are integrated in ethos.

Our programme is to support schools in doing that. We recognise that there are schools out there that do great work, and we also recognise that those schools would like to be recognised and to be able to say, "We do this work. We are working towards an equality of ethos, and we want to attract children from all areas". We have a programme that is packaged and ready to go. All we need is the funding for it. I think that it will answer a lot of your questions, because it is all school-based.

**Dr H McLaughlin:** Could I just jump in there? That question struck a chord with me, as it was really because of that issue that we started to develop the positive partnerships for integration programme. I think that there are real questions about what a school does if first, it is in an area with a mostly single-identity population anyway, or secondly, if it feels that it is integrated because it has a bit of a mix. We wanted to develop a programme that really took those opportunities. In either of those situations, the programme would mean that we would sit down with the school and ask what it would look like if it went through a process to move towards adopting an integrated ethos. It would ask what that would look like, how it would help them and what the challenges or blockages would be. Through the programme, we would support the whole school community — the school, governors, parents and children — through a process to move towards an integrated ethos if that is what they choose to do. We see that as very much a way of working with schools where they are.

You will note that we have not come today and said, "We want all schools integrated overnight tonight, so do it now." We have suggested some means and processes to get there at some point, but this programme would be about recognising that sometimes you have to meet schools where they are at, offer them something and work with them.

**Ms Donnelly:** If you do not mind my jumping in, I think that the programme also acknowledges where schools are at and also potentially all the good work that they are doing that they want recognised. It is adding to it rather than taking away. I think that that is a really important element of schools that are transforming and looking at integration. It is about where you are, acknowledging the good work and some of the difficulties that perhaps may exist while adding to the question of how embracing a more integrated ethos contributes to the benefit of your young people.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Mr Hazzard, did you want to make a very brief intervention?

**Mr Hazzard:** Yes. I have a very brief question about numbers. You sort of touched on it by saying that you do not need to have certain numbers. In a school of 30, how many of the minority have to be there for it to be an integrated school? Surely you are not suggesting that there does not have to be any.

**Ms N Campbell:** No. First of all, I am convinced that in your school of 30, they will not all be the same, no matter whether they are in a school with a particular name. I think that you have to create an environment where parents are happy to say who they are and where they come from. That is number one.

Number two is that we are committed to the best balance. Our statement of principles says that that balance is ideally 40:40. We are reviewing that because, as Helen said, people do not want to be pigeonholed and described like that any more. The better your balance, the easier it is to create that open dialogue that allows people to feel accepted and to shape a school. You may have a school that sees itself as Catholic or controlled. It may always have been that, but it maybe now wants to become something different. That does not happen overnight. Parents, governors, teachers and young people have to have a voice in shaping that. If you do not have the capacity for people to say, "Well, actually, this is who I am", whatever that might be, you cannot move towards that open and integrated ethos. So, yes, you absolutely need diversity in a school.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Thank you. I am conscious of time. We have three more questions.

**Mr Lunn:** It is good to have you here. For the record, I am delighted to hear about Rowandale and that the parents' wishes will be respected and dealt with there. I am actually more interested in listening to other people's questions today, because I could ask lots of questions to which I already know the answer, so I might be accused of prompting an answer. I will just ask you one. You touched on Drumragh Integrated College briefly. In fact, we were well into your presentation before it was even mentioned. Leaving aside the decision that is pending on Drumragh itself, how satisfied are you with the Minister's reaction to Judge Treacy's judgement, particularly on planning and the needs model?

**Ms N Campbell:** I think that the best way to put it is that we are keeping a watching brief. There is a total commitment on our part and in the integrated movement on a wider basis that we will not allow the findings of the judicial review to go unnoticed. We are actually doing a checklist on how it is being

taken account of. I think that the Minister voted for an amendment that you had in the Assembly in support of —

**Mr Lunn:** I will talk to you about that in the morning. *[Laughter.]*

**Ms N Campbell:** We took that as a very positive sign. Whenever we hear good news of schools being allowed to increase, we take that as a positive sign. We look forward to seeing an inquiry or a grouping set up to see how we can strategically plan to support integrated education in the way that has been set up for Irish medium, and we would like to see that happen very soon. We have not come to an end-of-term report yet on the Minister and his response.

**Mr Lunn:** For clarity, the Minister and his party voted for the Alliance amendment to include the word "promote" in the obligation, but a couple of weeks later when it came to Further Consideration Stage, they decided to side with the DUP and vote against it. I can see Chris laughing. I think that it is funny too.

No, I will not pursue that.

Trying to be fair to the Minister, will you agree that there may have been a softening of the Minister's attitude in decisions that have been made since the Drumragh judgement has loomed on the horizon? I am thinking of Millennium and perhaps Rowandale and others. To give him credit, he is perhaps attempting to honour his obligation.

**Ms N Campbell:** I think that that is true because, where we have been disappointed, the Minister has expressly said that he wants the overall provision of integrated education in the area to be looked at as well. So, where we have been disappointed, for example in Portadown or, indeed, in Clintyclay, we are disappointed for the moment and are hoping that we can get further progress. The Minister has not closed the door. I think that there is a recognition, and I suppose that the challenge is for that to permeate down. The judgement said that the Department had to be alive to the statutory obligation at all levels, including operational and strategic. If we are seeing that recognition at the strategic level, we have to see it at the operational level, particularly in planning. That, I think, is the big challenge.

**Mr Newton:** I welcome the members to the Committee today. My wife and I chose integrated education and were very keen to see that happen. We chose Methody as an integrated school, but obviously, by your definition, it does not meet the criteria to be an integrated school. I am a bit confused, which is not hard to do sometimes, I have to tell you. I am confused about part of your submission, where you say:

*"We acknowledge the principle of parental choice and ... acknowledge the right of parents to seek faith-based provision ... choice should be accommodated ... rather than being used as a prop to maintain a segregated system ... would include single identity and faith schools, and schools integrated both by legal status and by being recognised as having an integrated ethos ... children in single identity schools [would be] guaranteed sustained and meaningful shared learning."*

Is that not part of the problem, in that, where there is always going to be this choice of alternative education systems or approaches, we are never going to move to what really would be a shared education system? In moving and creating the integrated system, are you not adding to the problems in getting to a shared education system?

**Dr H McLaughlin:** It is an important question, and it has struck me since I joined NICIE a few years ago. People often saw integrated education as an extra sector, and, taking the long view, our view is that we do not want integrated education to be another sector jostling amongst the sectors. Ultimately, we would like the standard to be integrated education. It is probably easy for us to talk about parental choice and the ability to still respect it, because all the indications that we have are that, ultimately, if we do the process correctly and in the ways that we described, we will be able to move to a largely integrated system with parental choice being respected. That would mean that we would not be jostling for position but that we would be helping to support the development of a different system. It may be always be that, alongside that mainstream system, there are single-faith schools and schools that have a different ethos. We do not feel that it is appropriate to say that there can never be a school that has a different ethos from ours, but we feel that, by going with parental choice and working through the correct processes, we will arrive at a system that is largely integrated anyway. We believe that that is what parents want, and all the research that we have done indicates that.

**Mr Newton:** Am I right to say that your ambition is to see the integrated system closed down?

**Dr H McLaughlin:** I do not know about Noreen, but I have often said that there should not need to be a NICIE. You talked about the idea of shared education being really simple. For me, the idea of integrated education is very simple. It is just to educate children together. Do not invent a system; just educate children together. My feeling is that, if that is where the system goes, why would we need a little body? NICIE is quite a little body that is there to support integrated schools and their development. That is what the education boards will do, and that is what the system will do. I include in that that little inkling that we have at the moment that there may well be schools, even in the Catholic sector, that are saying, "We are a small rural school, and we have a mixed community. There are cuts left, right and centre, and we are in danger of closure. I wonder whether the right thing for our local kids would not just be to have a shared school — an integrated school." I am very hopeful of that and that, one day, there will not be a NICIE, because it will not be needed.

**Mr Newton:** We look forward, at some stage, to seeing a presentation on the strategic plan for the downturn of NICIE.

**Ms N Campbell:** I think that your question is very important, because it illustrates the complexity of where we are. How do we move beyond that so that we are, in fact, redundant? That is why we asked in our submission whether the time is right for a Patten-style inquiry. By that, we mean an independent-style inquiry that can get above us and all our particular interests, if you like, and ask what the best way is, taking into account where we have come from to move us on more quickly than we are moving at the moment.

**Mr Newton:** I will leave it there, Chair, in the interests of time.

**Mr Eastwood:** Thank you very much for your presentation and for answering the questions. I was glad to hear you talking about Different Drums. Like a lot of good things, they come from Derry. A lot of questions have been asked, and I know that we are short of time. You have probably answered my point already. I think that one of the fears that some people have about integrated education concerns the fact that people assume that, when kids go into the school, it is a neutral space. You said that people are changing their attitudes to things, but people are still Irish, still nationalist, still unionist or still British. I think that that is not a bad thing. You probably have given some assurances, but can you assure us that you are trying to create not a neutral but a diverse environment?

**Ms N Campbell:** I think that I will leave it to a parent to do that.

**Dr H McLaughlin:** I can speak only from my experience of my child going through school and of being a governor in an integrated school. I do not see any evidence that the children coming through the doors of the integrated schools that I am involved in somehow come in as individuals and come out as some sort of homogenous mass. I simply do not see any evidence of that. I realise that it is a fear, and we respect that it is a fear that parents have. I think that, in the integrated sector, we try very hard in our promotion and awareness raising to illustrate that, in fact, the activities and what goes on in integrated schools actually reflects the schools' diverse nature. We acknowledge that. The intention is not to create a homogenous mass, as I said, but to allow young people to explore the identities that they have and to perhaps take on new ones. As Noreen said, we all change identity. We add to our identity as we go along, and I think that the integrated ethos and environment is really supportive of young people being able to do that.

**Ms N Campbell:** There has been a lot of research into integrated schools, and it shows that young people who have come through integrated education maintain a strong sense of their unique identity and very strong friendships across the divide into adulthood. They also have a more positive view of building good community relations and have the additional identity of "us". So, they say, "I am this, but I am also us". There is very interesting research on that.

**Mr Eastwood:** That is very useful. Thank you. I will not hold you up any longer.

**Mr Craig:** I am bit like Trevor, in that I was listening to some of the questions and replies. I want to go back to area planning, because I find it intriguing. I now understand where you are coming from, Noreen, on that one. You sort of indicated that your ambition is to replace the system that is there with your integrated model. Does that rationale mean that you do not really take on board any of the

impact that the creation of a new school has on existing schools and on area plans that are already there?

**Ms N Campbell:** No, that is not what I am saying at all; quite the opposite. We are not saying that we want to replace the model with a system of integrated schools. We want to replace the model of segregation and difference with the model of schools that are all diverse and all offer an equality of ethos in the school. Those are the characteristics of an integrated school. But this is about neither a sector nor a legal status. It is about the experience of young people on a daily basis, and we think that that can be achieved through area-based planning.

I will give you an example. We have some fairly controversial examples of what happens at the moment. With the two "Breda" schools in the South Eastern Education and Library Board, the proposal was to close Newtownbreda and Knockbreda and open a new school. What type of new school was it opening? It was opening the same type of school. So, the parents from both were annoyed that they were losing their school, but they did not have voice in shaping what type of new school they might want. We say that parents ought to have been involved in saying, "At the moment, we have a range of types of school. What does it mean? What would those schools look like? Which would best suit new parents starting a new a school in your area to serve the needs of your area and your children?" You would then have parental involvement in the new school, not parental disapproval. Where you have parental involvement, you have better results and better outcomes, because the young people buy in and you have a school that can succeed. So, we are not looking to say, "Do this our way". We are saying that we should put parents, children and the future needs of our society first and find a means of doing it that moves us beyond division.

**Mr Craig:** Noreen, I listened with interest to that, because I think that you are right. Parental choice should come first; there is no question about that. I find this intriguing, because it could be that your model is the correct model and should be used everywhere. For how many years have you been in existence now?

**Ms N Campbell:** About 32.

**Mr Craig:** In that period, how many schools have you succeeded in converting from either controlled or maintained to integrated? It strikes me that that is the way to go forward. Instead of displacing schools, we should convert them.

**Ms N Campbell:** Again, I could not agree with you more. To date, 22 schools have transformed, but we feel that they have transformed because the onus has been put on parents. In our model — let us take the example that we just discussed — the parents of Newtownbreda and Knockbreda might have said, "We are serving an area where there is plenty of diversity. We want an all-ability school for our children so that some are not streamed off to grammar schools, leaving the rest feeling like second-class citizens. We want a co-educational school and a school that recognises all religions". A new school is being created, so the question is not about displaced schools but about getting the new schools right. If I am area-based planning, I might say, "Here is an area. There is no integrated choice". Are there schools that could provide that integrated choice and, if so, what is the best path for them? Is it through transformation, which it might not be, or is it through positive partnerships, which it might be? It is about finding different ways to enable change. It sounds as though you think that we have hard-and-fast-answers. We do not think that we have; we think that we are trying to find a means of opening up our system.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** Do you have a supplementary to that?

**Mr Craig:** Well —

**Ms N Campbell:** I have not convinced you.

**Mr Craig:** It opens up an interesting debate, and it is somewhere where I believe the Minister and the rest of us are trying to go with shared education. The same question has to be asked every time under area planning. If you are going to build a school anywhere, all those questions now have to be asked.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** I thank you for coming to the session. We received a copy of your financial statements and the director's report, which raise a couple of questions about your

organisation and its financial future, so, if you are content, we will write to you about that. I am conscious of time and the fact that we still have to meet the primary school. Thank you for your time this morning.

**Ms N Campbell:** Thank you. I just want to commend these wonderful children here. Were I their principal, I would be so proud of them.

**The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen):** They did not make a noise at all. They were so good. If only members were as good. *[Laughter.]*