



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Shared and Integrated Education:
Centre for Shared Education

26 November 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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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 Trevor Lunn
Mr Nelson McCausland
Ms Maeve McLaughlin
Mrs Sandra Overend

Witnesses:

Dr Gavin Duffy	Centre for Shared Education
Professor Joanne Hughes	Centre for Shared Education
Professor Tony Gallagher	Queen's University Belfast
Professor Miles Hewstone	University of Oxford

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): I welcome Professor Joanne Hughes, Professor Tony Gallagher, Dr Gavin Duffy and Professor Miles Hewstone. Thank you very much for being with us today. You may make an opening statement, and members will follow it with questions.

Professor Joanne Hughes (Centre for Shared Education): I will say a few words and then invite my colleagues to introduce themselves to say a few words. I am the director of the centre for shared education at Queen's, which was established in 2012. We are an applied and interdisciplinary centre that is committed to researching and promoting evidence-based practice in all areas of education. Many of us in the centre have been involved in exploring issues relating to education and divided societies for many years.

The shared education approach is based on an analysis of the existing education system in Northern Ireland and efforts to promote community relations in it. It pointed to a twofold approach to community relations in Northern Ireland and, indeed, in other divided societies. We have had short-term contact initiatives or full immersion integrated education. The shared model, which is theory-informed, plugs the gap between the short-term contact initiatives, which are known to be largely ineffective, and integrated education, which is effective but which has had limited impact or appeal. We have defined shared education as:

"Collaborative activity between schools from different sectors that is underpinned by a commitment to reconciliation objectives and can contribute towards school improvement, access to opportunity and more positive intergroup relations in divided societies."

When we talk about theory-informed, we refer to two bodies of theory. First, there is contact theory, which asserts that contact between different groups, provided that it meets certain conditions, can be effective in reducing prejudice and promoting more positive social attitudes, not just towards the individuals involved in the contact situation, but the out-group as a whole. It is not about making exceptions to the rule. The conditions for effective contact are listed in our submission, but a key point to mention is that contact should allow for the development of more intimate ties usually associated with friendship. In that respect, it should be sustained over time. Identity should also, at some level, be salient in contact encounters in order to maximise its effectiveness.

The second body of theory relates to networks and collaboration; it highlights characteristics of effective collaboration in school improvement.

The work of the centre is organised around three interrelated strands of activity: we have a substantial programme of national and international research; we have delivered a shared-education programme in Northern Ireland; and we are involved in developing and delivering similar programmes in other divided jurisdictions. We have developed bespoke training programmes for practitioners and policy-makers involved in the delivery of shared education, and we are developing a master's pathway.

Our research findings are clear that increasing contact between pupils from different divided groups, which, in the case of Northern Ireland, are Catholic and Protestant, reduces prejudice, increases trust and generally promotes a more positive response to the out-group, or the other. We have shown that that happens in a range of educational settings, such as integrated schools, separate schools that have a significant proportion of pupils from the other community, and in a shared-education context where pupils can engage in sustained curriculum-based interaction. We have also shown that the effect of sustained contact is diminished for free school meal recipients, although there is still an effect for those pupils. We also know that outcomes are different for pupils in more divided communities. For them, there is sometimes a dissonance between the values promoted by the school, which are around mutual understanding, respect for difference, and so on, and the values that are valorised in the local community or in the home environment, which are sometimes to do with suspicion or a sense of threat.

Our research also suggests that the current grammar/secondary divide can be a hurdle to sharing. It can be difficult for secondary-school pupils to attend the local grammar, and there have been some issues around their feeling intimidated. The intersection between faith and class in Northern Ireland may exacerbate that problem.

There is generally a receptiveness to shared education in Northern Ireland schools, and our research has shown that that is related to the foregrounding of other educational priorities, which means that teachers do not feel under the same pressure to engage with issues that are controversial, although many do. There are educational benefits to be accrued from participation in sharing, not least with regard to the entitlement framework, and there may be additional benefits. Separate schools are a cherished representation of community and individual identity. A value of sharing, not just in Northern Ireland, as we found, but in other divided jurisdictions, is that separate schools, which many people have a strong attachment to, are perceived not be threatened.

Schools have been remarkably engaged and ingenious in overcoming some of the barriers that can arise in the collaborative process. Those include practical issues such as the coordination of timetables, pastoral-care policies, transport and community relations work to minimise opposition to the initiative, communicating with parents and working with local community representatives and local community elites. Schools have also worked collaboratively with local agencies to tackle issues particular to a locality.

Some things that might enable shared education include a policy framework that requires schools to engage in inter-sectoral sharing, reflected in inspection criteria for schools. Shared education should be a compulsory element of initial teacher education, reflected in modules or workshops on diversity in the classroom, for example, or collaboration in practice. It should also be reflected in continuing professional development. The delivery of shared education should reflect optimal conditions for effective contact and effective collaboration. Those are outlined in our longer submission.

Finally, there is a potential tension between foregrounding educational outcomes over reconciliation outcomes to maximise participation by schools and the need to keep salient issues of difference in order to maximise the generalise-ability of attitudinal and behavioural change among participants.

That is my statement. I would like to introduce my colleagues, Dr Gavin Duffy, who is a researcher in the centre, Professor Tony Gallagher, pro-vice-chancellor of Queen's, and Professor Miles Hewstone from Oxford University, who is director of the Oxford Centre for the Study of InterGroup Conflict. Tony, do you want to say something?

Professor Tony Gallagher (Queen's University Belfast): Thanks very much, first, for the invitation. I have two quick points. One is, as Joanne said, about some of the evidence. The nature of the challenge in different parts of Northern Ireland when schools are trying to work collaboratively is very different. A very important thing in our work with school collaborations is developing bespoke models in different places, recognising the importance of context, but giving a lot of autonomy and influence to teachers to work with us in developing the best way to do that. That is a particularly important part of our approach to shared education.

The second point is that the terminology of shared education has now become so ubiquitous that it has been applied to a vast range of different things. We are very clear that when we talk about shared education we are talking about very robust work with serious, sustained, long-term collaboration and engagement between schools that changes the nature of the relationship between them and leads to significant positive changes for the young people, the teachers, the parents and the wider communities. We have a very particular understanding of what shared education means, even though the term is used now as a much wider umbrella and covers stuff that we do not necessarily see as falling within our understanding of it. Those are a couple of quick points to begin.

Professor Miles Hewstone (University of Oxford): I will add to the points made so far. Thank you very much for talking to us. My colleagues in England sometimes have great difficulty getting to talk to anyone about the policy implications of their work. I have always found ears in Northern Ireland much more open, so thank you for that. I would like to add to what Professor Hughes said. One of the other things that we can share in our work is the value of contact, not just in changing attitudes to what we call primary out-groups — the most obvious out-groups that people come into contact with — but to secondary out-groups. Actually, one of the benefits of promoting positive mixing between groups such as Catholic students and Protestant students is that they also develop more tolerant attitudes towards ethnic minorities, for example.

Another of the things that we focused on in our work is that the benefits of contact do not just accrue from direct, face-to-face contact. I could not miss the opportunity to hear my colleague Roger Austin speak to you just before I came in. I am a great fan of the implications of what new technology can offer in the kind of work that he does. I smiled at your understanding that we have not yet got those two universities together because the links are absolutely obvious. You can see the opportunities for sequential work, where people might begin their contact in relaxed confines, with distance learning through ICT, then you organise face to-face contact, and then, as he said, the face-to-face contact is followed by a burst of online contact, so those things work together.

Contact is not always positive; it can be negative. One of the ironies is that, where you bring people together, you are likely to see more positive contact, but you are also likely to see more negative contact. You cannot possibly be bullied by a boy from the out-group if you do not go to school with boys from the out-group. The good news there, however, is that in our very recent work we find that, even though there may be greater evidence for negative contact in those mixed settings, positive contact has a very clear buffering effect. Prior positive contact buffers and strengthens you. It means that you do not respond to that negative contact with an increase in your own intolerance or aggression towards the other side.

Finally, just to show that we are optimists but not idealists, one of the things that we always have to be aware of is that we do not create conditions for mixing, or desegregation, only to find, as they did in schools in the United States after they desegregated in 1954, that the children themselves choose to re-segregate. You go in through the front door, and you find that the black kids are all on the basketball team and the football team, and the white kids are doing the school newspaper and the tennis club. You have to be alert to that possibility. Once you have gone through the door, you have to work to promote mixing at various levels. The work that we are doing at the centre at the moment, which is completely new, is to look in detail at people's social networks. We are looking at the intimacy of people's friendship groups to see whether we can ascertain just how close relations are between members of different communities in their friendship networks.

Dr Gavin Duffy (Centre for Shared Education): Good morning, Committee. I am Gavin Duffy; I am a research fellow at the School of Education and have been attached to the shared-education

programme since 2011. My research takes a different tack, as my work is essentially qualitative. It is about trying to provide contextual data and information about what actually happens in schools and the relationships between schools. So much of my work has been underpinned by the notion of collaborative effectiveness. I am particularly interested in drawing out what makes a strong and effective partnership. I hope to talk to you about that this morning.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Thank you very much for your presentation and your detailed paper. We could ask quite a number of questions about this, but time is always limited. A lot of your work is about the education focus; that is very clear from the presentations that we received earlier about Cross and Passion College and Ballycastle High School. Members could not fail to be impressed by the work there on shared education. In your paper, you also discuss the limited reach of integrated education and also the suspicion that there exists in our communities. Do you foresee a time when shared education will be mainstreamed?

Professor Gallagher: We are probably not far off that point at the moment, in many senses. Look at the programmes that have been put in place by the Department, potentially through European peace money, and the shared campuses initiative. There is a whole range of things. I think that we are on the cusp of going into a situation where the working assumption is that schools should work with other schools, not just to promote cohesion but because it is good educationally and makes more effective use of resources. We are very close to that. One of the advantages of shared education and collaboration is that it is possible to do that across much of the system without the tensions and difficulties involved with threats to identity. It squares the circle, in a way, which is part of its attraction. If we can get into that situation, it will change the nature of relationships between people and — who knows? — that opens up all sorts of possibilities for further development and evolution in the future.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): You talked about bespoke models and contextualising situations and that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach capable of achieving that outcome. Are there particular examples that you find have surpassed expectations when you have looked for a solution for schools in certain areas?

Professor Gallagher: Gavin will maybe say a little bit about the work in Derry/Londonderry on the Foyle Contested Spaces Programme because there is some amazing stuff happening there. One of the incredibly inspirational things about Ballycastle is that the two schools have agreed to hook their fates together through the shared-campus initiative, and each delivers a part of the curriculum that the other depends on. That speaks of a trust between the schools that I find amazing. You see something similar in Limavady, where there is a high level of engagement between schools. The imagination and creativity that the teachers in the schools have shown is also impressive. There have been a few situations like that, where teachers, given the space and freedom to try things, have responded in a way that is just amazing. Part of the value of the work is that, rather than imposing a particular template or model on schools and then requiring them to do it, is giving teachers space to be a part of creating the solution. We should allow them to try things that sometimes do not work. Learning from that is a very valuable part of the experience of making the models work.

Apart from that, one of the main general lessons that we have taken out of working with collaborative networks over the past six or seven years is that the more points of contact between schools, the better. The more intersections there are, the tighter the interweave, as it were, between the schools and the more likely it is to be sustained into the future. The work that Miles and Joanne are doing demonstrates the positive consequences that can arise from that. It creates a situation where that becomes permanent, or the way in which things just happen. It is a new pattern of reality, if you like. So rather than have small programmes or connections on particular, tightly defined, areas of activity, we should encourage as many connections possible. Gavin, would you like to say something?

Dr Duffy: The Foyle Contested Spaces education partnership, based in Derry/Londonderry, was an alternative model of collaboration. It evolved out of the first phase of the shared-education programme between 2007 and 2010. It was funded by OFMDFM Atlantic Philanthropies and was part of their Interface/Contested Space Programme. This model is unique in Northern Ireland, in that it is made up of five primary and three post-primary schools drawn from across the sectors. What is incredible about this is that it is a combination of an educational and a social approach to addressing social need areas.

There were five particular social need areas that schools collectively decided were issues for them, and so conversations took place prior to the formation of the partnership in which schools tried to identify common social need areas. They identified five areas: antisocial behaviour; improving

community relations in a contested space; the impact of substance misuse; looking collectively at areas such as health, sexual health and sexual resilience; and appropriate and safe use of the internet and social media.

As a social needs-based programme, it was important for the schools to locate it in the curriculum because that is a school's core business. It ran from Key Stage 2 through to Key Stage 3, so it was a programme for pupils from age 8 to age 15. The programme was delivered on a shared basis, and it exposed young people to different cultural and religious practices along the way. It required the collaboration of teachers, principals and senior leaders in schools. With that, a partnership infrastructure was established to support the partnership. One thousand, one hundred and sixty-one pupils were involved, and 1,000-odd pupils moved between schools on a weekly basis for three years. To support that, there was an infrastructure of eight principals, three vice-principals, 35 teachers and an external primary coordinator.

What emerged out of that partnership? For me, it was about being able to provide contextual evidence of the practice of shared education; it was also an opportunity for us to identify effective collaboration. From a research perspective, the partnership was able to represent quite a number of perspectives, including pupils, teachers, school leaders and parents. It was also an opportunity for the primary voice to be heard. From what I understand, the primary voice in shared education is relatively quiet, so this was an opportunity to get primary schools' perspective across. The big thing was that it demonstrated social and educational impact. Bear with me. In terms of the social impacts, we are talking about encouraging the movement, as I said, of over 1,000 pupils and educators across contested-space settings. Research by Rosellen Roche in Queen's suggests that there is a thing called "bounded contentment".

It is the idea that, over generations, there is a reluctance to move between one another's communities in a contested-space setting. We are talking about communities such as Derry/Londonderry or north Belfast, which has been described as a patchwork quilt. There is a tendency, I think, for people to locate themselves in their own communities and not move. That was an important point. We had over 1,000 pupils, roughly 40 educators and hundreds of parents, moving between those spaces. It provided an opportunity for meaningful contact between participants from different cultural and religious backgrounds. We have evidence from the research that it reduced prejudices and challenged ethnic and denominational isolation. Social relationships began to form as well. Those social relationships are friendships between young people, and there are friendships, personal and professional, between teachers and school leaders. We also found evidence of that extending beyond the classroom; social media are a great way for young people to engage with one another outside the school environment. The partnership also connects schools in the community and makes stronger links between statutory and voluntary agencies.

As for educational impacts, the contested-space partnership established and supported a sustainable cross-sectoral partnership of schools in what is perhaps one of the most highly contested spaces in Northern Ireland. It developed a cross-sectoral teacher network, which is really important, and from that came personal development opportunities and capacity building. It also established a collaborative school leadership network. Some of our leaders described the role of principal as being quite lonely, and connecting eight principals and bringing them together was quite phenomenal. It provided regular and sustained education between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, as well as a unique opportunity to address social needs in the curriculum, between personal development and mutual understanding (PDMU) and Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3.

Finally, the collaboration has led to school improvement.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Tony, you said that the term "shared education" is now being widely used. Perhaps, we need a clear definition of shared education. You have provided a definition, but does it need to be refined? Have you had any conversations with the Department in the lead-up to it developing a policy paper on shared education?

Professor Gallagher: Joanne led the centre's work on formulating the definition, which partly reflects the international work that some of us have been involved in. Joanne might say a little about that. If you think about the definition in the ministerial advisory group (MAG), we are quite comfortable with that. The key thing is that shared education involves work between schools from different sectors focused on the curriculum, is sustained and regular, and tries to create new habits.

The tradition EMU approach was to have one-off projects that brought people together for a while to do something before scattering again. Some very worthy work has been done in recent years that is

like that but on a more enhanced level. However, unless it works to establish sustainable and collaborative networks between people, it is very difficult to see how it can change practice in schools and classrooms. Unless you change what is happening in and between schools, there is no reason to imagine why anything else will change with attitudes, school improvement and all the rest of it.

Joanne, do you want to say anything about the definition in international work?

Professor Hughes: The centre is involved in some international activity. We have been working for the last three or four years in Macedonia, for example, to help them to develop a model for shared education based on the Northern Ireland model. We have been working with the ministry of education there and senior policy officials.

I do not know how much you know about Macedonia, but they have separate school systems for ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. That came out of their peace agreement: they formerly had integrated schools that have become separate. The kids in the ethnic Albanian schools are educated in Albanian, and the kids in the Macedonian schools are educated in Macedonian, so there is a language issue as well. The shared education model being developed there is looking at aspects of the curriculum where there is minimal verbal instruction and where the kids can come together. Sometimes, those separate schools work in the same building and the kids attend them in shifts.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Have you had conversations with the Department on drafting policy?

Professor Gallagher: Yes, we are talking to members of the inspectorate who are developing a framework for evaluating and assessing the impact of the Delivering Social Change programme, which is likely to be formally announced quite soon. We talk to officials from the Department all the time, and they talk to many different people. One of the things that we been impressed by has been their willingness to talk to a wide range of voices to inform and shape the initiative.

We are saying to them that there is not a one-size-fits-all model here or a fixed rigid template. They need to give teachers a degree of responsibility and autonomy to allow them to help to shape things, and they have to allow the programme, the assessment frameworks and the evaluation frameworks to be adaptable so that they recognise that we are dealing with problems for which there is no easy solution. Part of the challenge for everyone involved is to work together to find new solutions. That means having a certain tolerance of failure, because you can learn from that. That is the only way that you will create innovative solutions. We have talked to them quite a lot and continue to do so, and we are very impressed by the officials and inspectors and their preparedness and willingness to take on board the evidence that Miles, Joanne and others are feeding into the system.

Mr Lunn: Thank you very much for your presentation. It is good to see you again.

I am afraid that technology has let me down once again, so I have not read the full paper because I have only had it since 10.00 am. Your shared education project is on a roll. I cannot deny that a lot of money is being thrown at it, and hopefully a lot of benefit will come out of that. I cannot quite understand the perception of hostility or a level of hostility that is developing towards the integrated sector. I see it in your presentation, Joanne:

"Research has shown that integrated education, whilst an effective mechanism for relationship building, has only limited appeal".

That flies in the face of every poll I have seen for the last five years. You go on to say that, where integrated schools are an option, the overwhelming majority of parents are:

"opting to send their children to separate schools."

Again, that flies in the face of the expressed desire of parents, who frequently say that if there was an integrated school available they would either send their children to it or at least consider sending their children to it. Why did you make a comment like that?

Professor Hughes: Although the surveys have been saying for many years that between 60% and 80% of parents favour integrated education, that is not reflected in their behaviour. Even in cases where it is an option, there are integrated schools that are undersubscribed.

Mr Lunn: There are undersubscribed schools right across every sector and right across Northern Ireland. It was my idea to phrase the review as being about "shared and integrated", not "shared versus integrated". Do not think that I am on a mission of some kind, because I am not. When there are only 62 integrated schools out of a total of 1,150, clearly there are going to be a lot of situations where there is no integrated school available. That is part of the problem. It is not that parents who would like to send their children somewhere like that choose not to, they just cannot do so geographically.

Professor Hughes: When you have 80% of respondents to a survey saying that they would send their children to an integrated school, you would expect every integrated school to be bursting, and that is not the case. We have no hostility at all towards integrated education; in fact, a lot of our research evidence has endorsed integrated education as a way of promoting better relations between Protestants and Catholics. Maybe Miles wants to say something about that.

Professor Hewstone: In the various presentations that we have made, both in our articles to peer-reviewed journals and our presentations to teachers, we have always emphasised that integrated education is what we are trying to match. There is so much good practice there that we are also trying to achieve. You need to make sure that if you offer anything else as an alternative, you do at least as well as the existing provision. We are also always open to the idea that, however carefully we have measured and however much research we have done, there may be some measurement that we have not used yet that might just show that there is additional effectiveness of integrated schools. That is why we are doing the work on social networks: we thought that it was possible that the integrated education would be promoting these really mixed, integrated social networks of children — in other words, getting to some deeper level of integration that other schools have not yet reached. Our eyes are very much open.

Professor Gallagher: We have talked often about the apparent conundrum between opinion poll evidence and the reality. My sense is that when people are responding to an opinion poll they are offering a preference in an abstract sense. I have had lots of conversations with lots of parents in lots of different situations, and whenever parents are making a choice about a school for their child, it is no longer an abstract choice: they are choosing between a number of very specific schools in their very specific area, and so the reputation of local schools becomes very important. That is why, in any particular area, they might prefer, in an abstract sense, a particular type of school. However, whenever they are choosing between three or four actual schools, one of those schools has, in and of itself, a good reputation, and that is what they choose, and that is not always an integrated school.

As Joanne said — just to reinforce the point, in case it needs reinforced — I have always been a strong supporter of the integrated sector and work with it. Integrated schools, by and large, are great. However, even the most optimistic target is for 10% of the school-age population, and we are concerned about the other 90% to try to ensure that everyone in the school system has the opportunity of as strong and positive an experience as possible.

Mr Lunn: You lead me on to my next question. However, before I get to that, what do you think about NICIE's statement last week? If you think of the shared education programme in terms of sociological benefit, its starting point is your end point. It is starting from where you would like to be.

Professor Gallagher: Not necessarily. We may have a range of views on this, but my personal view is that we think that the collaborative model provides an opportunity to work with schools and allows them to maximise the benefit to the young people in terms of cohesion, qualifications, standard of experience and all the rest of it. Once we talk to schools about the collaborative model, many of them are very enthusiastic about it. Virtually every school that we have worked with has found it to be a very positive experience and likes to run with it and, with only a limited level of support, is prepared to do some amazing things. At some point in the future, schools may decide that it is working so well that they will want to keep it like that, or they may decide at some point in the future that it is working so well that they want to become an integrated school. However, I do not want to prescribe any future for that; that is up to schools. From my point of view, we can do something now that they find valuable, and in future they can decide what is best for them going forward, but that is a matter for the schools. I do not want to say that this is all about getting to a particular end point.

Professor Hughes: Just to follow on from that, our position is theory-informed and evidence-based. It is the idea that we know that sustained contact works to change attitudes and behaviours, and there are a range of opportunities in our education system to promote that — shared education being one of them. We are not, as Tony said, prescriptive as to where we see this ending up.

Mr Lunn: Just bear with me, Chairman. Tony, you said that the most optimistic rejection for integrated education would be about 10% of the school population. However, in your paper you say that:

"officially designated integrated schools account for only around 4% of overall provision."

That is not right.

Professor Hughes: The schools, not the number of pupils attending them, are 4%.

Mr Lunn: Surely the figure you should be working on is the number of pupils — the percentage of the school population.

Professor Hughes: That figure only applies to the schools in the report, and we checked it before we provided the information.

Mr Lunn: It am even quickly trying to work out what 62 is as a percentage of 1,150, and I think that you will find that it is more than 4%. It is getting more like 6%. Just for the record, the correct figure of the school population in officially designated integrated schools is touching 7% of the pupils. Is your 10% schools or pupils, Tony?

Professor Gallagher: The IEF's target is 10% of pupils.

Mr Lunn: Pupils, yes.

If it is 7% at the moment, that does not include the naturally integrated schools — we all know where they are and who they are — that are not officially designed but are effectively very much shared schools with a healthy population that could easily qualify for integrated if they cared to apply for that status, but there is no need for them to do that. If you add those in, then you come towards the figure that we often quote, which is that about 90% of our pupils are educated solely with their own co-religionists. That means that you have already got that 10% that you are —

Professor Gallagher: It is the IEF's target, not mine.

Mr Lunn: Well, I know, but you quoted it. I always end up sounding hostile to what you are trying to do, and I am not, honestly. I hope you accept that.

Professor Gallagher: Miles can talk about the schools that are mixed without necessarily being within the integrated framework.

Professor Hewstone: I just want to make a point about the importance of studying integrated schools and comparing them with other kinds of schools. In a situation where you have choice, there is always the risk that you have self-selection effects, so that certain kinds of people choose to go to certain kinds of schools and they choose to avoid certain kinds of schools. There is always the risk that you start from a lower baseline in an integrated school because the kind of parents who choose to send their children to those kinds of schools may be the people whose attitudes we are less interesting in changing. I am not taking anything away from the good work that is done in integrated schools. They will always suffer from a self-selection bias that other schools will not.

Professor Hughes: We have done some analysis of mixed schools, or those schools that have between five and 10% of children from the other religious group, and super-mixed schools, which have more than 10%. Our findings for those schools are that there are very effective outcomes in terms of contact, but I am fairly confident that those schools would not want to transfer to integrated status. They are avowedly, particularly in the Catholic sector —

Mr Lunn: I am not advocating that they do.

Professor Hughes: OK. I thought you said —

Mr Lunn: That is perhaps the best form of integration: natural integration based on demographics, geography and history. That is fine. But again I cannot help thinking, Chair, that if we are sitting here in 20 years' time, we will be having much the same discussion. Hopefully there will be a much greater

input from the shared education movement, but we will still have Catholic maintained, controlled, integrated, Irish-medium. Hopefully all of them will have a fair degree of sharing, and the integrated sector will be twice as big as what it is now.

Professor Gallagher: We hope that in 20 years' time we are in the situation where the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way schools work have changed and schools no longer think that they can do all the things they need for their pupils by themselves, but work with other schools. That will be better for the schools, better for the young people and, the evidence suggests, better for the local communities as well. Hopefully it will contribute to the development of a more cohesive and shared society.

Mr Lunn: Always interesting.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Thank you. From a personal perspective, I went to a single-sex — probably a very much traditional single-identity — school and moved to what is now a super-mixed school. I moved to Methody. It was really for educational outcomes and also because there were boys there. That was probably — *[Laughter.]* — to be perfectly honest. It did prepare me for life afterwards. When I went to Queen's it was not quite the shock that it would have been, and also when I entered the real world — whether this is the real world or not. *[Laughter.]* Certainly, there were positives for me.

The whole idea of super-mixed — it is an interesting term. It is probably quite apt, but I am not sure that I would consider it to be integrated.

Mr Craig: I welcome you all to the Committee. I made a point of welcoming my old university earlier. There again, there was a bit of strange shared education in our household, because my wife went to Queen's and I went to the University of Ulster. I do not think either university encouraged that, but it just happened naturally.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): You are dissolving your own boundaries there.

Mr Craig: Natural sharing, Trevor. When I look at education right across Northern Ireland, I see something quite interesting. The controlled sector has examples of all types of schools from all sectors under that umbrella. Should we be using that sector as a bedrock for future sharing?

Professor Gallagher: We are in a situation where we have a range of different sectors and management types. I think that is unlikely to change radically in the near future. If it does not change radically, the question is what we can do to enhance and improve the experience of young people in the schools. That is where I think the collaborative model works, because you can have schools from different sectors working together.

When CCMS was here it pointed to four examples of maintained schools that have mixed enrolment. There are some controlled schools — as you say, there is an Irish-medium controlled school; there are controlled integrated schools; there are controlled schools that have a mix because of circumstances. There is a variety of different types of schools, and we will not find the single type that works. If we can get schools to work together collaboratively in the way that we have done, then we can get a very quick win for everyone. If that becomes the mainstream experience for young people, as the Chair was saying, then we can look at that sort of issue in the future and see if schools want to change their structural arrangements in any way. That will be a matter for schools, parents and teachers.

Mr Craig: Tony, there is another thing that I can see. When you look at where all Departments are going financially in the next three to four years, sharing, and not only across sectors, is really important. To be honest with you, I do not think the sectors will be that terribly important when you look at how rural and physically isolated some of our schools actually are and their inability to deliver a wide enough curriculum. Do you see huge opportunities there for sharing of education, whether it is internally within sectors or more broadly across sectors, in the survival of those smaller units, which mean an awful lot to those local communities?

Professor Gallagher: Absolutely. We have been working with quite a number of primary schools, in particular small rural primary schools, that in and of themselves face real challenges in trying to deliver the curriculum, but when they work with their neighbours from another sector, then collectively they can often do that. In those situations the schools very often do not want to explore an integrated

option at this point. Maybe they will at some time in the future. In that situation, collaboration and sharing are a way of benefiting all the kids, helping to secure that important social institution in a rural community, and helping to keep the community together. There are many places where we know that that is a viable option, and we hope that the leaders of the sectors and the Department see that.

Dr Duffy: Somewhere like Ballycastle is a perfect example in view of the broad curriculum that they offer together. Alone, it is an entirely different picture.

Mrs Overend: Thank you very much for your presentation this morning. I think there is so much more sharing going on than we ever realised. As my time in this job has progressed, I have come to appreciate how small rural schools are gaining from sharing expertise. Even larger primary schools in my area are sharing expertise across the divide and gaining expertise in areas. There is more integrated or shared education than previously expected. It is integrated with a small "i", I should say.

You have said in your report that there are some groups that are less inclined to be involved in sharing. What groups are these, and are they defined by socio-economic rather than ethno-religious factors?

Professor Hughes: I am not sure that we said that there were groups less inclined to be involved in sharing. What we were saying was that the outcomes are different for different groups depending on contextual variables. For example, some of our quantitative research has shown that in areas that are very divided, like North Belfast, there are some positive outcomes from sharing, but they are maybe not as extensive as they might be for schools in Limavady or Ballycastle or other more mixed environments. It was about outcomes in relation to context.

Dr Duffy: We have schools at different levels of sharing, and they are engaged with each other in entirely different ways. It is entirely contextual. In some regards, we have schools that would be described as organic or emerging partnerships: they are at the very early stages. We also have partnerships across Northern Ireland that are heading towards some sort of symbiotic or almost interdependent relationship, as in Ballycastle. There is a spectrum of ways in which schools engage with one another.

Mrs Overend: It goes back to your original question, which was interesting, about the definition of shared education and how it needs to encompass the wide variety, and that that is not a negative but a positive. We should encourage all levels of sharing and congratulate them. It is a work in progress, which changes over time.

Mr Lunn: I am going to move away from my normal tack here to consider the acknowledged gap between what is produced by the best of our schools and the deficit at the bottom end of results. What potential do you think there is in sharing programmes for cooperation between the best of our grammar schools and other schools half a mile down the road producing the figure of 25% not even achieving five GCSEs? I get the impression that — I am sure that I have heard it from at least one representative of the grammar sector — they are not much interested in that. What is your experience of that so far? They should surely be able to give a helping hand to improve the overall situation.

Professor Gallagher: Joanne has mentioned that some of the survey evidence suggests that there is a bit of tension between the possibility of grammar and secondary schools working collaboratively. I suspect that that is more related to broader policy contexts and people wanting to maintain demarcation lines and clarity. That is unfortunate, but I suspect that that is the explanation.

If you look at the experience in England, where federation and collaboration have been on the agenda for quite a long time, it is largely focused on school improvement and strong schools supporting weaker schools to try to improve their practice. Indeed, there has been things in the news this week about public schools working with local authority schools as part of that process.

There is plenty of evidence in many different places. That is one particular context, but there is also evidence of schools working together and teachers sharing a wider repertoire of experience and expertise as a way of helping teachers to change their classroom practice. That is what you need for school improvement to happen. Collaboration does that. It gives teachers a sustained regular network of expertise that they can dip into. That will always help.

I think that you are absolutely right: there is the potential in an environment where there are fewer concerns about undesirable change. In that sort of context, schools can work together, share practice,

expertise and experience, and broaden the repertoire of classroom skills that teachers are working with to improve things for everyone.

Professor Hewstone: I make the point that, through some of our other work in another context in a particular large-scale European study that involved the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, we found positive benefits of mixing for ethnic minority immigrant children who are integrated into friendship networks with majority group children. If you can get the schools to collaborate at the right level, you can use the programme as a first step towards increasing the educational aspirations of children and then their educational performance. We intend to provide that at the end of our study. Our study will be a five-year longitudinal study and, at the appropriate point, we will be able to plug in the school grades and GCSE scores of children and see some of the hard outcomes of some of the mixing that we are involved in.

Dr Duffy: As a practical example, we have schools across Northern Ireland that are involved in partnerships. I will give an example without identifying the schools. A school may have been struggling, and the inspectorate may have deemed that a certain department in that school is inadequate. As a result of the collaboration between a maintained school and a controlled school at a post-primary level, the maintained school, with its expertise in science, has been able to help another school pull its grade up from inadequate to outstanding.

Mr Lunn: Was that a maintained grammar school?

Dr Duffy: They are not grammar schools. I am leaving aside school type and am talking more about that idea of strong/weak. It is not so important that there is a sharing of expertise from one school that has the experience. When our schools come together, they often look for common and complementary need. Common needs are the types of need that both schools need, and complementary need is the idea of identifying where each school has skills. The idea of strong/weak is reasonably crude in that example, as the school that was struggling had an expertise in special needs and was able to help the other school in return. That is the type of relationship that we are essentially talking about.

Mr Lunn: I cannot help thinking that the grammar schools could do a lot to help their image. They seem determined to cling to a system where they put children through these tests, which some of us despise, and the failures have to go to some other school. They could at least improve their image by trying to assist those schools. If they are not prepared to help the children, they could at least give them a helping hand. Anyway, that is my rant for today.

Mr Craig: He used the F word.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Well done.

Mr McCausland: I second that. Apologies, I had an appointment that I could not get out of this morning. I want to ask about the research and studies you have done on sharing and on children coming together from different backgrounds and traditions. If children come together from schools in the Catholic maintained sector and the controlled sector, they will probably come from different cultural traditions. Those who come from the maintained sector, particularly at secondary level, will come from a school at which they probably play Gaelic games, have the Irish language on the curriculum and probably have an Irish traditional music group. Therefore, there is strong cultural identity that may not be the same as in the controlled school. Do you see any issues arising from that?

Professor Gallagher: My experience of controlled schools, particularly in rural areas, is that there is often a strong tradition of music, which is particularly centred around bands, such as pipe bands. I have been in schools in which kids practice playing the bagpipes, for example.

I suspect that you are right to the extent that there is a probably a clearer or more tightly defined cultural framework in maintained schools. However, in our experience, that has not been a problem. What has tended to happen is that people have used that cultural difference as an opportunity to broaden pupils' experiences. There have been situations in which there have been discussions about remembrance in November, for example. That has broadened the experience for children from Catholic schools, who traditionally may not have been as connected to that, and has addressed some of the aspects of history and citizenship.

Schools choose to use the opportunity of collaboration in different ways. They focus on different areas of the curriculum, and some of the issues are more directly related than others. That is OK, because the important thing is to bring people together in as many ways as possible. As Miles said earlier and Joanne's work demonstrates, once you have created that context, it provides an opportunity for you to start to address issues around difference. You will have built up a level of trust and can start to deal with some of the more challenging issues. That is when you start to get the evidence and when, I suggest, you will see a significant change to and improvement in the cohesive nature of our society.

Mr McCausland: Do you not accept that remembrance, although hugely important, is not the counterpart to the other things?

Professor Gallagher: Sure.

Mr McCausland: Others whom I have spoken to about their experience of controlled schools would not have as fulsome a view of the extent of the musical and other traditions. I remember some years ago someone from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCEA) saying to me that, when it was organising an event, it was very easy to go to a Catholic maintained school to get a traditional music group. I think that there was a school up around Castlederg somewhere that had a pipe band and that there used to be a pipe band at Campbell College. Apart from the recent developmental work that has been done by the Ulster-Scots Agency to put music into schools, I do not know of any other schools, bar one, that have a band.

Professor Gallagher: The school that I was in did not have a band, but some of the pupils played in a band and were allowed to practise in the school.

Mr McCausland: My point is that, if a culture is excluded from schools, it is denied the validity of being part of the education system.

Professor Gallagher: That makes an assumption that there is specific exclusion. I do not know that there is. Perhaps there is, but I do not know. I am not aware that there is.

Mr McCausland: If a thing is not there, it has either been intentionally or unintentionally excluded.

Professor Gallagher: It may be that there are others spaces available for it.

Mr McCausland: I will not pursue the point, but I will just make an observation. For any cultural or linguistic expression across Europe — there are examples internationally — the two key things are to be part of the education system, which gives you validity and intergenerational passing-on, and to be part of the media.

Professor Gallagher: In our first wave of shared education schools, a rural maintained secondary school developed a lot of activity with a network of controlled and maintained primary schools in its area. One of the unexpected benefits was not just the experience of the kids but the school starting to connect with all sorts of community organisations. The maintained school started to be used as a community resource for events, meetings and other activities. On at least one occasion, the Orange Order held something in the maintained school, because it had a good hall.

I am a little bit vague because we have not come across this as a particular issue. However, that is an example of where the connections created across communities because of the collaborative relationships between schools have a community impact and help to provide opportunities for people to come together in ways that previously would not have happened at all.

Mr McCausland: I have no objection to any of those things. That is good. However, even the fact that you say that you have not come across it as an issue is relevant. It is an issue that has been left in the "too difficult" drawer or forgotten about. I make the point that children going into a school have a basic human right to learn about the culture and the cultural expressions of the community from which they come. In many cases, as you say, the children play in a band outside school but that is not brought into the school. That almost delegitimises and marginalises it. To create a shared future and better relationships, that would be a good thing.

Dr Duffy: Nelson, I am not exactly sure whether this is the type of thing that you want information on, but I go back to the partnership in Derry/Londonderry as a practical example. You mentioned culture

and the arts. The children have a shared choir that operates both inside and outside the school. The partnership has engaged in quite a large drama piece, involving 150 children and nine schools across the city. That is another expression of activity that happens both inside and outside the school. We have evidence of shared sports — rugby, Gaelic, and so on. The type of research that I do tends to be very focused on small groups of young people or on classroom observations. I am involved in observations where young people talk about their common identities, their accents, their language and their gender. Therefore, it is more than a conversation around culture. It is actually quite broad.

Mr McCausland: What I am suggesting is that, if they are talking about their cultural identities, in some cases, one group of children may be coming forward with a cultural identity that they bring from the home into the school that is then reaffirmed and validated in the school, while the other children may be coming with a cultural identity that they have outside the school but that is almost left outside the school gates. That is the point. You are not getting a level playing field. There are two dimensions to it. There is the rights issue and then the relationship issue.

Professor Hughes: I have written a paper on the issue, and I think that —

Mr McCausland: Great. Give me the title and the details.

Mr Eastwood: It disagrees with everything that you have said. *[Laughter.]*

Professor Hughes: The maintained sector is the Catholic sector, and there is a strong attachment to cultural traditions, and so on, within it. The controlled sector is open to everyone and presented in that way, so it is difficult to attach it to particular traditions or a particular culture.

Mr McCausland: Only if you approach it on a school basis rather than on a child-centred basis. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) contains commitments that children have the right to learn about the culture of the community and the home from which they come and that that has to be done on the basis of equity so as not to discriminate between children. Therefore, what is available to children in one education sector should be available to those in another sector. It is an important issue. It is a rights issue. You also get a better relationship if children come together. If you can give me the details of the paper, I will be delighted to read it.

Professor Hughes: I will send it to you.

Mr McCausland: Thank you. It was worth coming today.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Nelson is happy.

Finally, I want to know whether you have done any research around the Youth Service.

Professor Hewstone: Do you mean outside of school, with a particular focus? I am not quite sure what you are getting at.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): There are opportunities for sharing with youth clubs, and so on, as well. I was just wondering whether any research had been done around the level of engagement and sharing in communities.

Professor Gallagher: The closest that we have got to it may be the Contested Spaces programme work in Derry/Londonderry. One of the key things there was not just collaboration between schools but collaboration with statutory and non-statutory agencies. A focus on the particular use of a sector has not at this point been a focus of the work that I have been involved in.

Professor Hughes: Other projects are looking at that. There is the investigating links in achievement and deprivation (ILiAD) project, which is investigating links between education and disadvantage. The research is ongoing. It is due to report to OFMDFM in March, I think.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Any research would be quite interesting. There is a focus on schools, but, once the young people leave school at 3.30 pm, what level of engagement is there after that? We might find that, in some areas, it is very high, and there are probably some very good models, whereas, in other areas, engagement could be encouraged.

Professor Gallagher: There is a very long tradition of work in the youth sector. It is a different type of pedagogy. There is often evidence of a greater commitment to addressing issues around reconciliation and cohesion and to using more creative methodologies to do so. One thing that has always been identified as important is its voluntarist nature. Therefore, it can sometimes work a little bit better than similar work in schools, because the young people have the choice of going to such settings, whereas the engagement was compulsory for them in school. The University of Ulster did some interesting work on that. It trained youth workers and teachers together to try to create some synergy between them. That was successful to a degree, but, because they are from two different professions, there remained some degree of professional tension, and I guess that that is still the case.

Professor Hughes: It goes back to the point about how difficult it is for our teachers, given the expectation that we have of them, to address some of those controversial issues in the context of the classroom. They do not receive training for it and are currently educated in separate teacher training colleges, so we need to think about whether they will have the capacity or will to do it.

Professor Hewstone: Members of the Committee may or may not be aware of work on the national citizenship scheme in England. It is an idea that David Cameron is very keen on. I am not recommending it for that reason, but it is a great idea for bringing together people from different backgrounds, and not just from different ethnic and racial backgrounds but, deliberately, from different social and economic backgrounds. The scheme gets young people from school who volunteer to take part in activities outside school. They take part in a four-week programme that starts off with some outward-bound activities and they then get some real-world experience of, for example, how to market a product. People from business are involved, and there is something aimed at helping the young people find employment at the end. They also do some community charity work in a team of 12 and get to know one another. Depending on their team, they get to know people from a particular subset of other groups. We are in the middle of an evaluation of that work. I say that to give you faith in the idea. Nobody is recommending that the people of Northern Ireland take this brave step on their own as if there were no evidence ahead of them.

There are lots of other examples. People mentioned collaborations. We have collaborations in South Africa and have done similar work in Malaysia and many other countries, and there is a huge evidence base that suggests that, if you bring people together and create the conditions for positive contact, the outcomes will be positive.

Dr Duffy: Although this is not specifically about the Youth Service, we have some evidence of how schools can engage more broadly in the community and build stronger links to voluntary and statutory agencies. Some of the partnerships that I have worked with have made links with youth clubs, for example, whereby people will use youth clubs in each other's communities. We have evidence of city councils having become involved with schools, and there have been stronger links with the PSNI, voluntary agencies, agencies such as the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, other education groups, community wardens, Churches and historical sites and settings. There is almost a community development element built into some partnerships.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Mr Lunn wishes to come back for a very short question.

Mr Lunn: I want to go back to Nelson's point about the cultural expression in various types of school. He started off on the musical side of it. As you will know, I have a musical interest. I also go to a lot of schools. I always ask them, "What is the extent of music interest in the school?". Without exception, nowadays — it gladdens my heart — there has been a resurgence in the teaching of music and the teaching of instruments, and schools have a band, a traditional music group or whatever. It is right across the board. I cannot but think that that is an area in which there is real scope for collaboration, because music teachers are sometimes contracted in rather than permanently employed and can teach in more than one school at a time. It is really good stuff. I do not want to cross swords with Nelson —

Mr McCausland: Oh, go on.

Mr Lunn: — but you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that a controlled school is for everyone and is almost the equivalent of an integrated school —

Mr Eastwood: Not when it has British Army cadets in there.

Mr Lunn: — and then ask why we need integrated schools, while wanting the controlled school to have a Protestant ethos to it. It may come down to the instruments. Nelson, you want them to be taught the flute and the side drum, whereas they are actually being taught orchestral instruments and proper music.

Mr McCausland: I find that many orchestras have drums and flutes. They are musical instruments. I was not going to come back in, but I will now. *[Laughter.]*

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): Through the Chair, of course.

Mr McCausland: I am grateful to Mr Lunn for opening the door. I am sure that you will be generous, Chair. One of the best examples of good sharing that I came across was when pupils were having fife and drum classes in the Boys' Model. They were able to bring their fife and drum group together with the traditional music group from Bearnageeha. They performed separately and then played certain tunes together, but they could do that only because there happened to be a group from a particular tradition in each of the schools to come together. If you have only one group, it does not work. That is the issue. Trevor raised a point about controlled schools. If it is child-focused, the cultural mix and cultural provision and accommodation in a school in one area, depending on the community that it serves, will be different from that in a controlled school in another area. It will entirely depend on the community that it serves, but the children going into the school bring the right with them. It is not something that they leave at the door. It is a human right.

Professor Gallagher: The Boys' Model, Bearnageeha and Ashfield Boys' School were also involved in the Belfast Cuchullains and played hurling and shinty with Scottish shinty teams. It is used in interesting ways in sport as well.

Mr McCausland: I think that the music example was a better expression of cultural sharing. I have not seen too many shinty teams around the Shankill recently.

Professor Gallagher: There were some interesting games in Scotland with the shinty teams.

Mr McCausland: Yes. They can stay there.

Mr Kinahan: Sorry that I was not here for half the meeting. Have you considered having a matrix or a step-by-step continuum from no sharing to sharing to totally integrated or having sets of examples that everyone can follow so that you are pushing sharing, all the while knowing that everyone is at different points?

Professor Gallagher: There is a continuum, yes. The inspectors have picked up on that and are using it as part of the framework that they are organising. We are saying to the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) that a continuum is useful, because it gives you a guideline for where people might be at different stages. However, do not assume that everything moves at the same speed and do not assume that it is a simple linear model in which you cannot do the third step unless you have done the second step, because our experience is that it is much more organic than that. The inspectorate is using that as part of its framework, and that is very useful.

The Chairperson (Miss M McIlveen): I thank you for your time and for your presentation. If there is other information that you would like to send to us, we will be very willing to accept it.