Democracy Day
Debate, Deliberate, Decide
Sam Fitzsimmons
Integrated Education Fund
“...an education system that comprises a network of sustainable schools, within reasonable travelling distance for pupils, capable of delivering effectively the statutory curriculum..”
The 6 criteria of the Sustainable Schools Policy are:
• quality educational experience;
• stable enrolment trends;
• sound financial position;
• strong leadership and management by Boards of Governors and principals;
• accessibility; and
• strong links with the community.
MINIMUM 105 pupils in a rural primary
Total 46,000 surplus places across primary schools in NI
Dr Jessica Bates & Dr Una O’Connor
School of Education, Ulster University
• Commissioned and funded by Integrated Education Fund
• Part of a series of community-focused consultations/audits in relation to education provision in specific localities in Northern Ireland commissioned by the IEF
• Twin emphasis on developing a methodology of community engagement in education provision and findings specific to the local area
The aim of this research project was to initiate and facilitate conversations around the future provision of primary education in an area.
Primary School provision in the area

Village 1 Population 2,100

Religious Balance %

- Protestant: 1.9%
- Catholic: 77.3%
- Other: 20.8%

Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Total Attendance</th>
<th>Approved Enrolment No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Integrated Primary School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62 (30 spaces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Maintained Primary School</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>192 (57 spaces)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Village 2 Population 1,900

Religious Balance %

- Protestant: 3.9%
- Catholic: 41.3%
- Other: 54.8%

Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total Attendance</th>
<th>Approved Enrolment No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Maintained Primary School</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>121 (81 spaces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Primary School</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>58 (32 spaces)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Primary School provision in the area

- **Village 1**: Controlled Integrated Primary School, with 32 pupils, with space for 62.
- **Village 2**: Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 135 pupils, with space for 192.
- **Village 2**: Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 40 pupils, with space for 121.
- **Village 2**: Controlled Primary School, with 26 pupils, with space for 58.

1 Kilometre
1 Mile
Methodology

• ‘Community conversation’ rather than a consultation or audit
• Emerging community conversation methodology, particularly in relation to sensitive issues at a local level
• Preparing the ground: meetings with principals and governors/trustees, meetings with local representatives, letters home to parents, notices in appropriate local locations, advertorial in two local newspapers
Fieldwork took place over a four-week period
Importance of multiple methods/opportunities for individuals to participate
Facilitated group discussions with parents
Open public event
Online response form
LucidTalk poll ran in parallel to our work
Qualitative and quantitative data collection
Round Table Discussion 1
What do you think are the challenges and strengths for parents and the community in this scenario in relation to school provision?
Challenges

- Rural location, rural isolation
- Population size
- Population change
- Transport
- Budget Pressures
- Schools feeling vulnerable
Strengths

- Hub of the community
- Small class sizes
- Diversity of choice / school sectors
- Understanding of rural context
Round Table Discussion 2
As a parent (using your imagination if need be) – what would be your main priority in choosing a primary school?
As a parent, please rate the aspects below in terms of how important they are / were / or would be to you in choosing a school for your child/ren:

- Distance to the school from your home
- Good educational standards
- An Integrated Ethos: School for all faiths and none
- A school which reflects a single religious or cultural background
- Good sports, cultural, and extracurricular activities
- Good, well maintained, school buildings and facilities
- Availability of good transport to and from the school
A school which reflects a single religious or cultural background

An Integrated Ethos: School for all faiths and none

Good sports, cultural, and extracurricular activities

Availability of good transport to and from the school

Distance to the school from your home

Good, well maintained, school buildings and facilities

Good educational standards

Very Important or Important
“...an education system that comprises a network of sustainable schools, within reasonable travelling distance for pupils, capable of delivering effectively the statutory curriculum..”
Round Table Discussion 3
Primary School provision in the area

Village 1
- Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 135 pupils, with space for 192.

Village 2
- Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 40 pupils, with space for 121.

Controlled Primary School, with 26 pupils, with space for 58.
Primary School provision in the area

Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School
- 32 pupils, with space for 62.

St John's Primary School
- 135 pupils, with space for 192.

Seaview Primary School
- 40 pupils, with space for 121.

Carnalbanagh Primary School
- 26 pupils, with space for 58.
Future options

• School provision in each village
• Desire to see integrated education continue to be present in the area > 1 maintained and 1 integrated school? With the integrated provision in Glenarm and clearer communication about what integrated education involves
• Need for statutory consultation with local stakeholders (schools, parents and prospective parents) at the centre of the process going forward
• No solution will keep everyone happy
Primary School provision in the area

- Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School, with 32 pupils, with space for 62.
- Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 135 pupils, with space for 192.
- Catholic Maintained Primary School, with 40 pupils, with space for 121.
- Controlled Primary School, with 26 pupils, with space for 58.
Primary School provision in the area

- Carnlough
  - St John's Primary School
  - Integrated Primary School

- Glenarm
  - Integrated Primary School

Distance:
- 1 Kilometre
- 1 Mile
Feedback
What are the potential strengths and limitations relating to a community conversation approach as a way of enabling parents to share their views on education provision in their area?
Research

Contemporary Challenge
Carnlough and Glenarm Community Survey: Gathering views on local primary school provision
Download

The 4Rs, Journal on Education
Download

Teaching for Democracy in the North
Download

Educational Inequalities and the Journey to Peace in the Northern Ireland context
Download the Position Paper

Clogher Valley Community Audit
Download the Main Report
Download the Summary Report

Kilkeel Community Audit
Download the Main Report
Download the Summary Report

Picture Galleries
- Gallery – Baroness May Blood
- Gallery – Famous Faces
- Gallery – Down Royal Event
- Gallery – Stand up for integrated education
- Gallery – House of Lords 2016
- Gallery – 25th Anniversary London Social Event
- Gallery – The Carson Awards 2017

Media Resources
- List of Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland

Useful Links
- Advocacy Resources
- The Stormont House Agreement
- 25 Years of supporting Integrated Education
- The Big Small Stories

Download the Full Report

Learn More
Thank You

www.ief.org.uk
www.ulster.ac.uk