DEVELOPING SHARED EDUCATION

A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

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CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE
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DEVELOPING SHARED EDUCATION

Introduction

Whilst our education system reflects historical divisions in society, the benefits of educating children and young people together are increasingly recognised. In recent years, the concept of Shared Education has developed to provide opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.

Shared Education involves the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together for better education and reconciliation outcomes.

Shared Education is defined as the organisation and delivery of education so that it:

- Meets the needs of, and provides for the education together of learners from all Section 75 categories and socio-economic status;
- Involves schools and other education providers of differing ownership, sectoral identity and ethos, management type or governance arrangements; and
- Delivers educational benefits to learners, promotes the efficient and effective use of resources, and promotes equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

Specifically, Shared Education involves the provision of opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together.

The vision is for:
 Vibrant, self-improving Shared Education partnerships delivering social change through educational benefits to pupils; promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion; and encouraging the efficient and effective use of resources.

Shared Education to date

Since the early 1980s, DE has developed and implemented a range of programmes to promote cross-community relations by bringing young people from each of the two main traditions together. The overarching aim was to improve mutual understanding and relationships between the two main traditions without excluding any other tradition. Many schools also developed their own working relationships with other schools from different backgrounds independently. In 2011, DE launched a new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy which encouraged schools and youth settings to work collaboratively.

In recent years, and with the support of external funding from the International Fund for Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies, the concept of a more strategic approach to Shared Education has evolved and a series of pilot projects were implemented.

Wider Context

Shared Education is developing within a wider legislative and policy context that is designed to promote equality and good relations.

"Building a Strong and Shared Community" has been recognised by the Northern Ireland Executive both as a key priority within its *Programme for Government 2011-15* (PFG) and as essential to the growth of a strong, modern economy and society. The PfG sets out three specific objectives for the Department of Education relating to Shared Education:

- to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group to advise on advancing Shared Education;
- to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in Shared Education programmes by 2015; and
- to substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.

The Executive's commitment to creating a united, reconciled and shared society is also outlined in the *Together: Building a United Community Strategy* which presents a vision for society based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation. It lays the foundations for a transformed and more shared society in the future and Departments are working together to ensure outcomes are delivered on the ground.

The strategy undertakes to "*enhance the quality and extent of Shared Education provision, thus ensuring that sharing in education becomes a central part of every child's educational experience*".

Shared Education sits within a broader education policy framework designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and tackle the significant tail of educational under-achievement that has characterised our education system by breaking the cycle of social disadvantage, educational failure and restricted life chances. Notably, the system has embedded both the concepts of self-evaluation and collaborative delivery that evidence indicates are necessary in the development of effective Shared Education programmes.

The Case for Shared Education

There is an extensive body of international research regarding the effectiveness of school collaboration generally and in divided societies more particularly.[1] This has been supplemented by specific local evidence, particularly a series of evaluations of Shared Education pilot projects. These include major reports by the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Atlantic Philanthropies funded Sharing in Education Learning Forum on the impact of Shared Education in schools.[2]

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[1] The report of the Ministerial Advisory Group provides an extremely useful literature review of both international research evidence and local studies.

[2] ETI, *A Final Evaluation of the International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme* (November, 2013); RSM McClure Watters, *Evaluation of the Sharing Education Programme – Programme Level Summative Evaluation Report (*May 2014)

The case for Shared Education has now been well established. This may be summarised as:

- The education case – improving access for pupils to a wider choice of subjects encompassing the full range of the curriculum; increasing access to specialist teaching and to modern facilities; and facilitating the sharing of ideas and good practice between education providers.

- The social case – improving societal well being by promoting a culture of mutual understanding and inter-relationship through significant, purposeful and regular engagement and interaction in learning between pupils from different community backgrounds and between schools and their communities.

- The economic case – making more effective and efficient use of limited resources to improve value for money.

Shared Education Going Forward
With funding from the Executive, the Department of Education and Atlantic Philanthropies, the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature Project will provide the means to support Shared Education to develop in schools over the next four years. Funding of £25 million over four years will be available. This represents a significant commitment against the backdrop of an extremely challenging financial landscape in the coming years. This funding will focus initially on schools that have already engaged in this work.

The overall aims of the Signature Project are to scale up the level of sharing drawing on existing evidence; mainstream financial support for any additional costs and improve the educational and reconciliation outcomes in schools working collaboratively. School projects will provide opportunities for shared curricular learning experiences. The projects will increase the extent, frequency and continuity of meaningful shared contact between peer groups over the funded period. School partnerships must demonstrate clear educational benefits resulting from the project, including reference to planned improvement in educational and reconciliation outcomes for learners within the curriculum.

In addition, the Peace IV Programme will provide funding to support further the development of Shared Education in schools that have not yet engaged in Shared Education, as well as across pre-school and youth work settings in a way that will complement the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Programme. ETI will inform DE and stakeholders through the ongoing evaluation of the learning from the Delivering Social Change Shared Education Programme on how best to support educational establishments in offering shared education in the longer term from 2018 onwards.
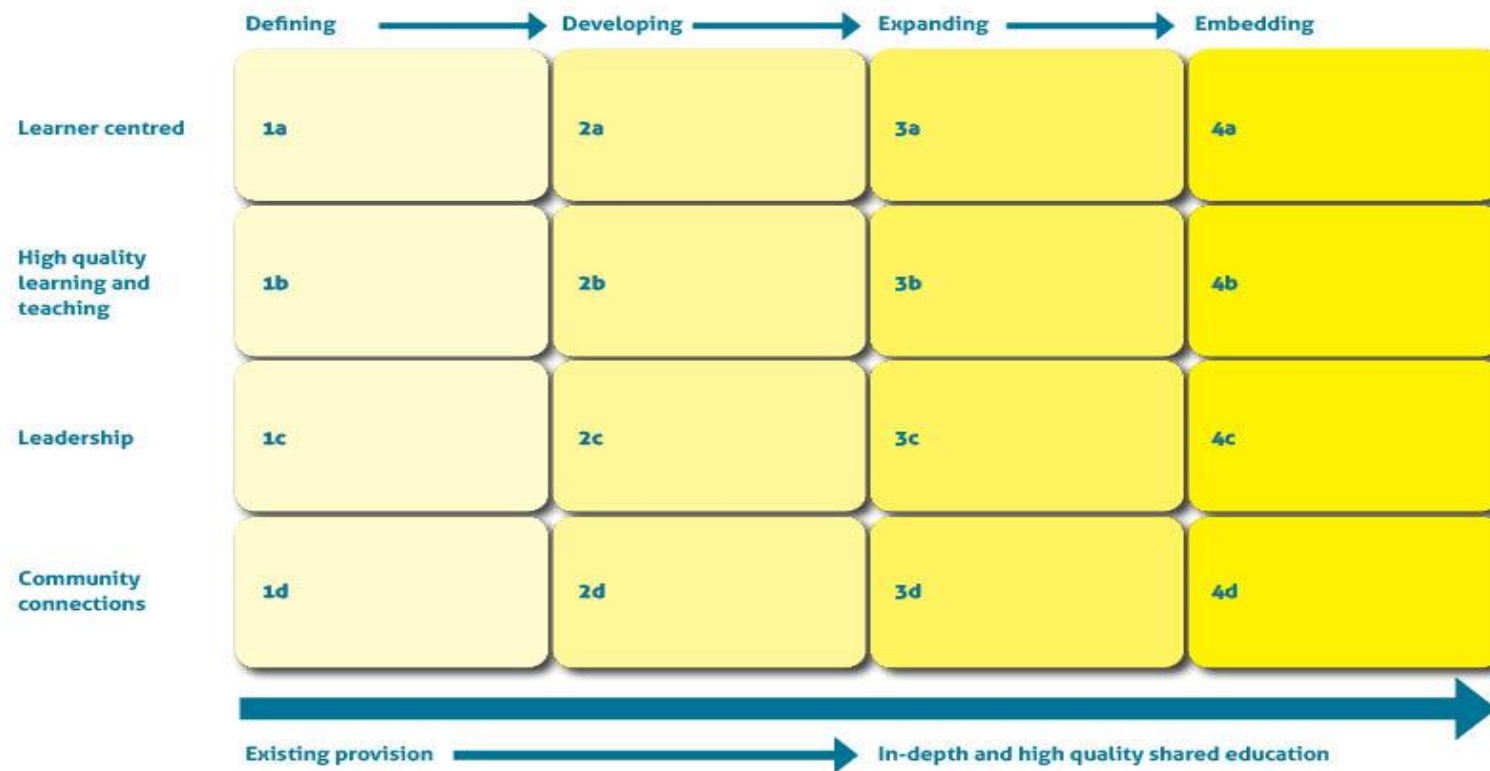
The Framework
This framework provides school partnerships with the means of self-evaluating the extent and quality of their shared education provision and to set targets for development. Schools are at different starting points along a continuum in regard in shared education. For some, they are beginning their journey to build true understanding rather than compliance, and for others, in embedding high quality shared education.

ETI will work alongside schools in supporting the development of quality in shared education through honest and robust self-evaluation, recognising the time, resources and strategic planning needed to progress shared education effectively. It is not intended given the starting point of different partnerships that all will reach 'embedding' after 4 years. Key here will be the partnership identifying the progress made in demonstrating measurable educational outcomes and

delivering social change by achieving conditions in schools and communities whereby children and young people become better learners, more fully engaged in learning and more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes, dispositions, behaviours, understanding of reconciliation and respect for others.

Self-evaluation: Mapping <u>our</u>[3] journey to effective shared education

	Defining →	Developing →	Expanding →	Embedding
Learner centred	1a	2a	3a	4a
High quality learning and teaching	1b	2b	3b	4b
Leadership	1c	2c	3c	4c
Community connections	1d	2d	3d	4d

Existing provision ➡ In-depth and high quality shared education

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[3] Schools should seek to engage in self-evaluation as a partnership at the outset in order to plan collaboratively joint actions to bring about improvement

Learner-centred	Defining 1a Schools identify the need to:	Developing 2a Partnership schools:	Expanding 3a Partnership schools:	Embedding 4a Partnership schools:
Participation in shared education	• Develop learning beyond predominantly single settings and one-off events • Seek ways to give pupils a say into shared learning	• Engage pupils in single class/year group in sustained[4] shared education activities to learn better • Listen and act on pupils' views on shared education	• Engage groups of pupils in more than one class/ year group in sustained shared education to learn better • Use pupils' views to inform the improvement of shared learning	• Engage pupils in multiple classes/ year groups and beyond the classroom in sustained shared education to learn better in a planned and progressive way • Integrate pupils' views across partnership in the ongoing review process for further development of shared learning
Surmounting barriers e.g. *cognitive, emotional, personal, social and physical*	• Have greater awareness of diverse backgrounds and experiences of pupils • Build capacity to meet wider needs of pupils	• Audit, identify and understand diverse backgrounds of pupils • Develop strategies and structures to help pupils work with others from differing backgrounds to surmount barriers to learning and achievement	• Plan collaboratively and use effective strategies and structures to enable pupils to surmount barriers to learning and achievement	• Develop, monitor and review collaboratively consistent and well-developed strategies and structures to enable pupils to surmount barriers to learning and achievement
Outcomes[5] *Education and reconciliation*	• Improve outcomes for pupils • Develop pupils' understanding in how to engage in promoting reconciliation for life and work in NI and globally	• Develop and target strategies to improve outcomes • Develop pupils' understanding about intended outcomes of shared education in: • Meeting the aims of NI curriculum • Helping them to learn and attain better • Developing skills in promoting reconciliation	• Demonstrate progress in measurable outcomes for pupils across the curriculum and beyond the classroom • Prepare pupils better for their next stage of education and the diverse world of life and/or work through acquiring skills in reconciliation	• Demonstrate improved measurable outcomes for pupils through shared education across their curriculum experience • Prepare pupils well for their next stage of education and the diverse world of life and/or work through their knowledge, understanding and skills in reconciliation

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[4] For example, at developing stage, sustained could mean a minimum of 6 quality shared contact sessions, expanding to a minimum of 12 shared contact sessions and at embedding stage, shared classes are daily/weekly.

[5] Educational outcomes could include skills in communication, using mathematics, ICT, thinking skills and personal capabilities, attitudes and dispositions for learning, behaviours, attendance, punctuality, progress measured through internal data and standards in public examinations/accreditation.

High quality learning and teaching	Defining 1b Schools:	Developing 2b	Expanding 3b	Embedding 4b
Planning for shared education	• Identify the need to understand effective planning for sustained shared education beyond events	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Audit provision for shared education, identify and plan steps for development including extra-curricular/enrichment activities • Implement agreed plans to develop high quality shared education across partnership	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Plan for effective shared education throughout the curriculum and beyond the classroom • Monitor and review regularly the effectiveness of planning and implementation to bring about improvement in processes and outcomes	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Plan and embed coherent and effective shared education throughout the curriculum and beyond the classroom • Involve pupils regularly to inform planning for continuous improvement
Quality of learning experiences	• Identify the need for pupils to be included more fully in the learning environment through experiential and meaningful shared learning • Consider what shapes identity and ways to be at ease with difference	Partnership schools collaborate to plan, develop and facilitate: • Positive, inclusive learning environments • Effective learning strategies and methodologies • High quality shared learning	Partnership schools collaborate to facilitate and expand: • Positive, inclusive learning environments and methodologies in shared classes across the partnership • High quality shared learning and engage pupils to attain better	Partnership staff: • Create safe, respectful and high quality shared learning environments • Use effective learning strategies consistently to enable high quality shared learning and to improve pupils' attainment
Assessment for, and of, shared education	• Seek ways to baseline pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, dispositions and behaviours in shared education from which to track progress	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Establish a baseline of pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, dispositions and behaviours in shared education from which to track progress	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Plan and use a range of methods to monitor and track progress in pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, dispositions and behaviours in shared education	Partnership schools collaborate to: • Track and evaluate consistently , progress in pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviours in shared education to inform next steps across the partnership

Effective Leadership	Defining 1c	Developing 2c Partnership schools:	Expanding 3c Partnership schools:	Embedding 4c Partnership schools:
Strategic leadership for shared education: • *SLT* • *MLT* • *Governance*	• SLT and MLT initiate work to clarify an agreed understanding of shared education in partnership • Governors engage in process to seek agreement and/or clarity about the aims and purposes of shared education • Schools identify the need for their ethos to reflect more fully in reality at all levels a respect for diversity and mutual respect	Consult with governors, staff, parents and pupils to: • Set a clear vision for shared education in the local context • Agree benefits of shared education for pupils and wider community • Review their partnership ethos • Evaluate critically how best to develop aims of shared education	(*SLT, MLT, staff, governors, parents and pupils*) collaborate across the partnership to: • Articulate clearly their vision for shared education • Expand shared education through governance, curriculum, planning, learning and teaching collaboratively across partnership • Reflect the aims of shared education through ethos, pastoral policies and processes	(*SLT, MLT, staff, governors, parents and pupils*) collaborate across the partnership to: • Establish collaborative leadership and management of shared education • Develop collective ownership for outcomes and quality provision • Embed shared education through governance, curriculum, planning, learning and teaching • Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote mutually respectful working relationships at all levels through jointly-developed pastoral policies and processes
Action to promote improvement in shared education	• Shared education yet to feature clearly in the schools' development plans	• Conduct honest and frank evaluation of the extent and quality of shared education to inform development plans	• Jointly evaluate and develop sharply-focused action plans to improve pupil outcomes	• Evaluate, refine and implement actions to ensure improved outcomes for pupils
Empowering and supporting staff in shared education	• Whole- staff/ governors training on shared education required.	• Identify effective practice in shared education, • Empower staff to identify their own needs for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) • Designate personnel to lead and manage shared education • Collaborate, plan and deliver professional development to develop staff confidence and competence in shared learning	• Enable staff to access CPD regularly to identify and disseminate effective practice in shared education • Designate teams across the partnership to lead and manage shared education to promote coherence across provision, policy and practice	• Embed ongoing CPD targeted to address those areas of shared education practice which prove complex and challenging, including embedding collaborative leadership at all levels • Motivate and enable staff to provide high quality shared education
Resources/ Accommodation	• Resources and accommodation are not yet shared with another school or wider community	• Share resources and accommodation between schools and wider community	• Plan the allocation of resources and accommodation between schools and wider community to provide shared learning and value for money	• Plan and use resources and accommodation between schools and wider community to improve shared learning experiences, value for money and outcomes for pupils

Community Connections	Defining 1d Schools identify the need to:	Developing 2d Partnerships schools:	Expanding 3d Partnerships schools:	Embedding 4d Partnerships schools:
Parents/ Carers	• Enable parents/carers to understand the aims of shared education within context of NI curriculum and between partnership	• Develop ways to engage parents/carers on the purpose, benefits and expected outcomes of shared education	• Inform parents/carers regularly of emerging outcomes of shared education between partnership and their views are used to inform improvement	• Engage parents/carers in the review of outcomes of shared education to inform further development
External partners	• Promote links between schools and external partners beyond those which are ad hoc	• Audit the extent, depth and quality of liaison with external partners • Engage appropriately with external partners to support shared education practice and to build staff capacity	• Link and build on existing effective shared education practice by external partners • Evaluate existing practice delivered by external partners to inform future planning and focus on building capacity of school staff to deliver • Model the values and effective practice of partnership working in collaboration with external partners	• Monitor and evaluate collaboration with external partners to demonstrate impact on pupils outcomes • Build strong internal staff capacity to facilitate high quality sessions with less dependence on external partners
Community access and engagement	• Extend access by the local community to school resources and activities to develop shared education • Engage with diverse community voices on shared education • Consider ways for pupils to share their shared education experiences across the schools and the local community	• Develop opportunities for local community access to both schools' resources and activities • Engage appropriately with diverse community voices on reaching an understanding of the complexities of shared education • Provide opportunities for pupils to share the outcomes of their shared education experiences across the schools and the local community	• Seek and use greater community engagement effectively to promote shared education • Use issues raised from diverse community voices to inform collaborative planning • Enable more pupils to share the range of outcomes of their shared education experiences with local community	• Ensure ongoing community access to schools' resources and activities to promote shared education and community cohesion • Respond proactively to issues raised from diverse community voices, including skilful handling of communication and media • Share and celebrate regularly the outcomes of shared education with local community

Self-evaluation: Mapping our journey to effective shared education

	Defining	Developing	Expanding	Embedding
Learner-centred				
High quality learning and teaching				
Leadership				
Community connections				

Main forms of evidence to support evaluations

Going well (max 3)
1.

2.

3.

Going forward (max 3)
1.

2.

3.

Issues raised by partnership
1.

2.

3.