

To: Independent Strategic Review Education

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Issue

Independent Strategic Review of Education. A reply from the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

Introduction

NICIE welcomes the opportunity to make a response to the *Independent Strategic Review of Education*. In particular, we recognise the central role that the Review has in helping the Department of Education deliver an effective allocation of resources as well as meet its statutory duty to 'encourage and facilitate integrated education' and the objectives of the *Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland: A Shared Future*.

Executive summary

NICIE believes that the Review presents us all with a once in a generation opportunity to reconfigure the schools estate and make significant impacts on how our children are educated together in a shared future. It is our view, that any recommendations made by the Independent Review must balance the need for local provision, against parents' right to choose an education for their children, in accordance with a particular religion or philosophy. If the aim of the review prioritises the reduction of surplus capacity, then it is our view that there are four possible options:

1. the formally integrated option
2. the jointly managed school option
3. the shared campus option
4. simple rationalisation option.

NICIE would support and have a preference for the formally integrated and the jointly managed schools options as we believe that it is only these models which can protect the

religious identity and community backgrounds of children and respect the parental right to choice, whilst balancing other considerations, such as financial cost. It is our view that they alone can deliver cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing, reduce surplus places, reduce the size of the schools estate and protect local educational provision. The shared campus (Scottish experiment) and simple rationalisation options are not supported by NICIE.

It is our belief that parental choice would best be facilitated by the Department of Education introducing a community auditing methodology that will allow parents to make an informed choice on how they would like to see children education in the locality. We believe that although there will be foundational principles involved in delivering a sustainable solution, no two individual cases are likely to be the same and so decisions that parents make will no doubt challenge all of the education sectors, the churches, and the government in equal measure. The future policy must be robust enough to ensure that sectoral interests are unable to veto evidence based, considered parental choice.

NICIE is firmly of the view that it has been the absence of meaningful parental choice in Northern Ireland which has held back the potential growth of integrated education for many years. It also partly explains why there are currently 50,000 spare places in our schools. Put simply, there are too many schools in Northern Ireland because there are too many sectors.

General comments

NICIE believes that the commitments made by government in *A Shared Future* represent the potential for a significant step change in public policy. These commitments are a positive development and must be the touchstone and overarching framework against which the successful delivery of education in Northern Ireland is measured in the future. Our response to this consultation will be largely (but not exclusively) determined therefore by the extent to which we think the rudiments of *A Shared Future* can best be promoted by the Independent Review. In simple terms, and in keeping with the key indicators identified in *A Shared Future: First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009*, we believe that the recommendations made by the Review should result in more Catholic and Protestant children being educated together in sustainable local schools that serve all of the community.

The Review has been charged with its task during a period of significant flux in the education system. The introduction of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Review of Public Administration will impact on how education is delivered both in terms of content and structure. There is also, as noted by the Independent Review, an identified demographic downturn with 50,000 places currently spare in our schools and a projected deficit of 80,000 by 2012. And yet despite the general demographic trend Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly multi-cultural and is witnessing a sustained growth in immigration. Multi-culturalism raises a number of particular opportunities and challenges. This is recognised in the *Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland*, which includes commitments made by the Department of Education. Given this complex backdrop NICIE supports the view that the schools estate, in general, is no longer fit for purpose. We believe that the Review is timely and would encourage a broad interpretation of the Terms

of Reference. In particular, NICIE is conscious of the need for a joined-up policy approach, and for this reason, we think that it will be necessary for the Review to take cognisance of (in addition to *A Shared Future*) the imminent Sustainable Schools Policy, which the Department of Education is soon to published, the investment strategy for Northern Ireland, education commitment contained in the Racial Equality Strategy and the recently published 10 year Strategy for Children and Young People.

In keeping with the Terms of Reference announced by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Minister for Education, NICIE would encourage the Independent Review to give due consideration to, and make a series of recommendations aimed towards, addressing four interdependent and principled concerns:

1. the need to ensure that the right of parental choice is appropriately balanced against economic considerations
2. the need to meet good relations objectives agreed by the Department of Education and contained within *A Shared Future*
3. the need to protect educational provision in local areas
4. the need to reduce the financial overspend associated with surplus capacity in existing schools.

Within this context we are pleased that the Review team has been charged with the task of advising on 'how the planned investment to renew the schools estate can best be deployed to incentivise collaboration and sharing, how the barriers to such sharing can be overcome, and how best to address the Department's duty to encourage and facilitate integrated education and Irish medium education.'

NICIE is concerned, however, that much of the initial focus and the Terms of Reference for the Review appear to be on how 'strategic planning of the schools' estate can best encourage and support cross-sector collaboration.' Although we support the principle of cross-sector collaboration and believe it to be central to a successful rationalisation of the schools estate, we also feel that it is necessary to draw attention to the First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009 which details implementation plans for *A Shared Future*. This document does not make reference to cross-sector collaboration, but instead refers to 'options for collaboration/sharing on a cross-community basis.'

An exclusive focus on cross-sector sharing by the Independent Review would equate with making a predetermined judgement on who are understood to be the legitimate key stakeholders for education in Northern Ireland. Put simply, the assumption would be that the current sectors are a true and complete reflection of what parents in Northern Ireland wish to see for their children in terms of educational provision. This judgement is unsubstantiated and NICIE does not believe it is correct.

The current education sectors in Northern Ireland do not represent communities. On the contrary, the sectors are primarily representative of individual parental choice which often has little or nothing to do with community background and can itself be questioned. It should be noted by the Review team that there are many parents who are forced to send their children to schools that are not their preferred choice. Since 1999, integrated schools in Northern Ireland have had to turn away 5772 children due to a lack of available places.

An independent omnibus research conducted by Millward Brown Ulster in 2003 on integrated education found that when asked for reasons as to why they did not send their children to an integrated school over half, 52%, of people responded that it was because there was none in their area.

The difference between cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing should be considered by the Review when interpreting its Terms of Reference. Exclusive focus on cross-sector collaboration would risk placing an undue restriction on future educational choices and how they might be decided. It could also restrict the development and implementation of new and innovative educational solutions. By contrast, a focus on cross-community sharing may represent a much more fluid interpretation of the Terms of Reference. In addition to the existing education sectors, which must of course be included in any consultative process, an additional focus on cross-community sharing suggests necessary consultation with local communities and parents prior to making educational policy decisions.

NICIE does not believe that parental consultation on a school-to-school basis is a sufficient means of capturing the opinions of local communities. A successful Review must take cognisance of the need to engender cross-community deliberation. This cannot take place within individual schools, the vast majority of which are of a predominantly single community background. We would encourage the Review to seek out innovative recommendations that will help overcome the difficulties associated with consulting parents and communities.

Developing mechanisms and processes for local area planning

When developing mechanisms and processes for local area planning the Review will first have to provide definitional clarity on its understanding of the term 'local'. For example, does this refer to the catchment area for a number of identified schools? Will it be determined perhaps on the basis of electoral wards? Would a definition of 'local' be more relevant in reference to local borough council areas? Or perhaps the Review might favour an approach that identifies specific towns and their rural hinterlands? Regardless of the decision as to what best constitutes a local area, NICIE believes that responsibility for strategic planning should be placed within a single designated lead body. Following the Review of Public Administration it appears sensible that the body responsible should be the new Education and Skills Authority. However, until this becomes operational, we feel that the Department of Education must be given an enhanced strategic roll that will make sure local area planning is premised upon a meaningful level of cross-sector collaboration and public consultation processes on options for cross-community sharing within and between schools at a local level. In addition, we think that it would be appropriate for the Review to consider partnership arrangements with Northern Ireland's District Councils. Following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, Northern Ireland's 7 new District Councils will be responsible for developing community plans. It would be worth considering if an education strand should be a requisite in this planning process.

Where surplus places in existing schools and a demographic downturn in a local area are of concern, the necessary development and planning proposals for education must

indicate whether the need to retain a local school is considered to be more important than the demands made by the education sectors for particular types of schools. NICIE believes that the protection of local educational provision must always take precedence over the interests of the sectors when planning the schools estate. The protection of local provision is more important than a physical school building and is more important than retaining any one particular type of school. We would encourage the Review team to make a statement supporting this position.

To ensure that communities do not lose local educational provision, the sectors must not be allowed to plan in isolation from each other. NICIE is concerned that during the Review, the Education and Library Boards responsible for controlled schools (including controlled integrated schools) and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools responsible for Catholic schools have collectively failed to discuss their development and rationalisation plans with the aim of producing collaborative outcomes. A recent example of this practice was the closure of Masserene College and St Malachy's High School in Antrim. In this instance the opportunity for collaboration was obvious. However, little attempt was made to engage in cross-sector deliberation. The result was an unnecessary reduction in post-primary provision in Antrim.

The demand for cross-sector collaboration in order to protect local educational provision and for cross-community sharing in order to meet the objectives of *A Shared Future* have not, to date, been fully explored. We would support a prohibition by government preventing any further development planning or rationalisation until the Department of Education has had an opportunity to act upon the Review team's final report.

A further concern is that recent proposals to close local schools have not been measured against informed parental opinion. It must not be left to the education sectors to determine what is considered to be most suitable in a local area without having first presented the parents with a series of possible options. The Review should recommend that mechanisms and processes are put in place so as to guarantee that the voice of parents is heard in meaningful way. These mechanisms and processes must become the primary means for justifying local development and planning proposals.

One possible way of ensuring that the voice of parents is heard is to implement a community auditing methodology. In 1998 the Department of Education published a report entitled *Towards a Culture of Tolerance—Integrating Education*. This report was agreed by all of the key educational stakeholders. *Towards a Culture of Tolerance* focused on how integrated education in particular might be encouraged. In the absence of other information it was acknowledged that the only means by which the demand for integrated education could be assessed would be to conduct local surveys in the form of community audits. Unfortunately, community audits have not been implemented by the Department of Education.

A Shared Future recommends that in shaping its good relations commitments the Department of Education 'should consider bringing forward the recommendations' contained in *Towards a Culture of Tolerance*. NICIE believes that a community auditing methodology must now be developed and extended beyond the initially envisaged role of encouraging integrated education so as to include a series of educational options that

parents can choose from and that will ensure the simultaneous protection of local educational provision, the promotion of cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Trustees of the Catholic Church, the Transferors Representatives of the main Protestant churches, the local Education and Library Board, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta must be obligated to engage with the Department of Education and agree on a series of options from which parents can choose in each particular local area where there is identified surplus capacity.

Models of sharing facilities and resources

A truly comprehensive education system that is premised upon the sharing of facilities and resources and upon collaborative arrangements among sectors will require new and innovative models of schooling. At the outset, it is important to declare that NICIE's preference is for the formally integrated model for schools, as it is our view that such schools are not only philosophically and educationally robust, but are in our view best able to meet the criteria laid down by Government for *A Shared Future*. We do, however, accept that not all parents would wish to choose such a model and we recognise that there are other models which are able to promote levels of sharing and collaboration, and that what is suitable in a particular locality may not be either possible or suitable in another. However, regardless of the model chosen, we feel that any development proposal should be measured and assessed against a series of questions. These questions must include:

1. does the decision protect educational provision in the locality?
2. will the implementation of the proposed model reduce the financial waste associated with identified surplus capacity in existing schools?
3. will the decision reflect a substantive majority of parental opinion?
4. will the proposed model promote good relations objectives agreed by the Department of Education and contained within *A Shared Future*?

Bearing these four considerations in mind the Independent Review might deliberate on the following options.

Formally Integrated schools

In an area where there is surplus capacity within schools a decision may be made to provide for a single integrated school. This could be done by transforming an existing school in the locality to formal integrated status and transferring the children from the remaining schools into the transformed school. Alternatively, all of the schools with falling rolls in the local area might be closed and a new integrated school built into which the children could enroll.

An integrated school is one that brings Protestant and Catholic children together in roughly equal numbers. This requisite is interpreted by the Department of Education as 70% of the majority community and 30% of the minority community. Most of the integrated schools in Northern Ireland currently subscribe to the NICIE statement of principles. This commits them to strive towards a pupil profile of 40% Protestant, 40% Catholic and 20% other. Integrated schools have a balanced staff and governor profile which is representative of

the local communities they serve. There are positions reserved on the board of governors for Trustees of the Catholic church and Transferors representatives of the main Protestants churches. Historically, the Trustees of the Catholic church have refused to nominate to the boards of governors of integrated schools (the Review may wish to ask the pertinent question of why this should be the case). The refusal to nominate has meant that the schools themselves have had to ensure Catholic representation on the board.

The benefits of integrated schools in the context of the Independent Review would be that they will effectively reduce surplus capacity. Integrated schools will retain local education provision and will promote cross-community sharing in a structured and meaningful sense because children of all community backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes, with a balanced staff and governor profile. The amount of daily contact between children from different community backgrounds distinguishes integrated schools from a shared campus approach (the Scottish experiment). Integrated schools have the advantage of having been already established, tried and tested in Northern Ireland. They demonstrate how the parental right to have children educated according to their own religious beliefs can be rendered compatible with cross-community sharing and norms of equality. In particular, the preparation of Catholic children for the sacraments and the education of Protestant children about their Christian faith from a Protestant perspective have been successfully delivered. Integrated schools may have an advantage over jointly managed schools in that they will perhaps strike a more appropriate balance not only between Protestant and Catholic interests but also between those of a Christian faith, other faiths and none. Integrated schools have 25 years experience of developing inclusive policies, practices and a culture of tolerance, including staff training.

The Review might wish to take note of the fact that no Catholic maintained school has transformed to integrated status or has given its parents the opportunity to consider this option. The Council for Catholic Maintained School and the Trustees of the Catholic church here have argued that a Catholic ethos is incompatible with a transformation to integrated status of a Catholic school but the English American, Australian and Irish examples provide the evidence that joint schools operating within a faith based context are theologically acceptable. The current argument articulated by the Catholic sector in Northern Ireland means that in excess of 520 schools have been excluded from representation in any discussions on integrated education.

A further consideration is that it must be accepted that in some local areas the balance struck within integrated schools between the individual parents right to have their child educated according their own religious beliefs and the need to create conditions conducive to cross-community sharing and norms of equality may be rejected. For some parents the ethos in integrated schools will not be considered sufficient enough to guarantee that their children are educated according to a particular religious belief or philosophy.

Having accepted these possible barriers, NICIE would encourage the Review team to consider the current public opinion data available. Research in Northern Ireland has consistently shown that the vast majority of the adult population approves the further establishment of integrated schools. A series of omnibus surveys conducted by Millward Brown Ulster, 2001-2003, found that 82% of respondents personally supported integrated education (defined as Protestant and Catholic children being educated together) and 81%

thought that integrated education was important to peace and reconciliation. A further survey conducted in 2006, found that 71% of respondents would support a request to transform their local school to integrated status. Breaking this data set out by community background shows no significant difference in preferences between the two main religions. 69% of Protestants would support a transformation and 73% of Catholics would support a transformation.

The transformation of an existing school to integrated status takes place when parents vote by a simple majority in favour of change. And yet, research indicates that up to 86% of parents in Northern Ireland do not know that this is possible. NICIE and the Department of Education have not been able to effectively inform parents of their right to vote to transform their school to integrated status. In part, this is because NICIE is precluded from approaching schools directly and because we find it difficult to access parents. There is often a tendency for principals, boards of governors and the education sectors to act as gatekeepers. This could be argued to be a denial of the parent's right to choose. NICIE strongly believes that if transformation was better presented within the context of addressing surplus capacity and retaining local educational provision then many more parents would vote for their local school to be integrated. However, we also recognise that in the context of the Independent Review, the method by which integrated education is currently encouraged and facilitated must change. The potential for change is welcomed.

If the focus of the Review is on the protection of local education provision, then a school-by-school approach to transformation would not always be a suitable means for creating integrated schools. Rather, integrated education would have to be agreed by the parents of children in the local area as a whole. This decision could not be made by the parents of one school. As an addition to the current method for transforming individual schools to integrated status, NICIE suggests that the Review team considers recommending a new method that can guarantee, cross-community deliberation and decision-making. We believe that a community auditing methodology would be the most effective way of delivering this outcome.

NICIE recognises that there is also a need for the education sectors to agree on how integrated education can be encouraged and facilitated. We think that the Review should ensure that integrated education is on an equal footing to the other sectors. Integrated education should be one option among many from which local parents can make an informed choice. Once the parents have made their choice, the education sectors should be obligated to make that choice a reality.

Jointly managed schools

In an area where there is surplus capacity a decision may be made to amalgamate schools that have falling rolls. An amalgamation may involve closing a number of schools and moving children into another existing school in the locality. The school that is to remain open would then be required to change its management structures so as to ensure that the sector representing children from the school that is to be closed are included. It may alternatively involve closing all of the schools in the area and building a new school to which all of the children in the locality could be transferred. The management structures in

any new build would also have to represent the sectors involved. This approach would result in a jointly managed school.

The benefits of jointly managed schools will be that they effectively reduce surplus capacity. They will retain local education provision and will demand cross-sector collaboration, initially in creating the school, and continuously in the management of the school. Jointly managed schools could also claim the promotion of cross-community sharing in a structured and meaningful sense because children of all community backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes and taught by the same teacher according to an agreed ethos. The disadvantages of the approach are that the model is not yet tested in Northern Ireland (although similar approaches have been in other parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland). Jointly managed schools would require management agreements between the education sectors which could raise logistical issues (however, this may be lessened by the centralised responsibility of the new Education and Skills Authority envisaged by the Review of Public Administration). Finally, the protection of a particular ethos might also be raised as a problem on two counts: first, some parents and the churches may fear a reduction in the particular religious ethos of the new school compared to the previous schools. This would be a specific concern for the Catholic church. Second, some parents may be concerned that religion was being afforded too much focus within the school. This may be of concern for the parents of children who attended controlled schools (experiments elsewhere, in the United Kingdom and Ireland demonstrate that such difficulties are not insurmountable).

Jointly managed schools would have to clarify the position of the Trustees of the Catholic church, the Transferors representatives of the main Protestant churches, the local Education and Library Board (Until the implementation of the Review of Public Administration) and Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, within the management structures of the school. Agreed solutions to these structural difficulties would not, however, be impossible to overcome provided there was a willingness to engage by the sectors, clear recommendations given by the Independent Review, and leadership provided by the Department of Education.

There are already 16 schools jointly managed by Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in the United Kingdom and 1 in Ireland. Because of the nature of the education system in Northern Ireland, jointly managed schools would not be exclusively church controlled. NICIE believes that fair representation and decision-making procedures could be agreed within the board of governors of jointly managed schools so as address any concerns held by the key stakeholders. The constitutions and articles of associations of jointly managed church schools in the United Kingdom and Ireland may provide useful examples of what is possible.

In considering jointly managed schools the Review should observe that all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland (other than nurseries) must currently include provision for the religious education of all registered pupils. The board of governors and principal of a school are obligated to make sure that this requirement is complied with. Moreover, schools in Northern Ireland are required to follow the core syllabus for religious education which was prepared by the main church bodies. This syllabus is of a Christian nature but not of any particular denomination. Accordingly, there is a fundamental common theme of

Christianity found in all Northern Ireland schools upon which the future amalgamation of Catholic and controlled schools could be premised.

A difficult issue that may have to be addressed when it comes to jointly managed schools is the question of protecting and transferring the ethos of existing schools into the identity and culture of the new school. The perceived loss of a Catholic ethos in particular may be unacceptable for some parents. Nevertheless, innovation coupled with the lessons learned from jointly managed church schools in the United Kingdom and Ireland indicates that the specific difficulty of protecting ethos in a jointly managed environment can be resolved to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

A shared campus (the Scottish experiment)

In an area where there is surplus capacity within existing schools a decision may be made to bring schools that have falling rolls together within a single shared campus. This decision would require a number of smaller schools to transfer their pupils into an existing larger site or alternatively may require the closure of a number of schools in the local area and the building of a new campus that can be shared. The management structure of this school would be premised upon the principle of autonomy for the education sectors. The children may have minimal contact and could attend separate classes. The staff could be considered separate and there would most likely be two principals and two boards of governors. On issues of common concern, such as financial management, those who share the campus and the sectors responsible for them would be required to collaborate and take joint decisions on an agreed basis.

The benefits of a shared campus will be that they effectively reduce surplus capacity and the financial overspend associated with too many types of schools would be addressed. They will retain local education provision and will demand cross-sector collaboration. A shared campus will also respect the rights of parents to have their children educated according to a particular religion or philosophy.

The disadvantages of a shared campus will be that this model has not been tested in Northern Ireland (although we understand that the option has been experimented with in some areas of Scotland with different levels of success). Given the particular nature of community divisions in Northern Ireland, NICIE does not believe that the shared campus model is sufficient enough to constitute a meaningful level of cross-community sharing. We would be concerned that this option risks replicating within schools the phenomenon of interfaces witnessed within many of Northern Ireland's residential neighbourhoods. It could be argued that a shared campus falls considerably short of the government's declaration in *A Shared Future*: 'Separate but equal is not an option. Parallel living and provision of parallel services are unsustainable both morally and economically.' It is hard to imagine how a shared campus might constitute anything other than parallel living for the children. Although the resource implications for shared campuses are substantially less than retaining separate schools, the option would still require the retention of separate staffing and management structures.

NICIE recognises that in some circumstances a shared campus may be the only viable option. We support the concept therefore as one of a number of choices from which

parents can make an informed decision. However, we are concerned that following the simple rationalisation model, a shared campus may be the preferred option of many Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. With the exception of retaining their own independent schools, it is our view that a shared campus could be seen as the best option for sectors that are set on retaining as much independent control of the schools estate as possible. Such decisions may not be in the long-term interests of a local area and would not take into full consideration the preferences of parents.

Simple rationalisation

In an area where there is surplus capacity within existing schools a decision may be made to close the smaller schools. Parents would then have the option to send their children to the local school that remains open or to enroll them in a school outside the local area. This approach is simple rationalisation.

The benefits of simple rationalisation will include a reduction in surplus capacity and the protection of local provision. It will also reduce the size of the schools estate. The disadvantages are that parental choice may be curtailed and this approach may not engender cross-community sharing. It is difficult to envisage how simple rationalisation would promote cross-sector collaboration. The sectors would be forced to defend their own schools against possible closures in competition with other sectors.

NICIE does not think that simple rationalisation will be a suitable option in the majority of cases since it fails to account for the fact that a majority of Catholic schools and controlled schools in Northern Ireland have a pupil base almost singularly derived from one of the two main communities, Protestant or Catholic. Department of Education statistics demonstrate that in 2005 there were a total of 1278 schools in Northern Ireland. There were 1222 schools outside of the integrated sector. Further analysis indicates that only 28 of the schools outside the integrated sector had a pupil balance in which the minority community was 30% or more of the school population. This equates to 2.2% of all schools.

Catholic parents do not usually choose to send their children to controlled schools. Similarly, Protestant parents do not usually choose to send their children to Catholic maintained schools. Although this generalisation will, of course, not hold true in every instance, for the vast majority of areas in Northern Ireland the option of closing small schools with a view to transferring children to the largest school in a given locality will raise significant difficulties. The option could prove unworkable.

Where the simple rationalisation option is deemed suitable NICIE believes that changes in procedures within the school that is to remain open must take place so as to reassure parents that their children will be treated fairly. The school that is to remain open should be required to place a community relations ethos and commitment to a culture of tolerance within its mission statement. The school will not have to remove or lessen any particular ethos to which it is already committed. However, it should be required to work towards a proportional balance within its staff profile and within its board of governors so as to guarantee that it reflects the communities living within the locality. Without the introduction

of these simple provisions it is difficult to see how a school could stimulate cross-community support.

In addition, further resource savings, greater cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing might be incurred through the introduction of schools federations and confederations. Schools federations and confederations may provide valuable additional support that could improve the delivery of education in local areas. However, these two options cannot by themselves deliver all of the objectives set for the Review.

A schools federation

In an area where there is surplus capacity within existing schools a decision may be made to bring schools that have falling rolls together under a single management structure. This would involve the appointment of a peripatetic principal/manager and perhaps a single governing board for the local area. Children would continue attending their local school. However, the introduction of a single principal/manager would perhaps act to promote greater cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing. It should also be noted that in addition to the peripatetic principal/manager, individual schools within a federation may still require the appointment of a lead teacher to deal with issues on a day-to-day basis.

The benefits of a schools federation would be that it would retain local educational provision and particular types of schools; Catholic, controlled, integrated etc. A federation would probably encourage cross-sector collaboration and the exchange of best practice between schools. The education sectors would have to work together in determining the formal linkages between schools and agree on the appointment of a peripatetic principal/manager and the membership and function of a board of governors.

The disadvantages of a schools federation are that it has not been tried and tested in Northern Ireland. Also, there would be logistical difficulties in creating and sustaining this particular model. The role of the education sectors in appointing a peripatetic principal/manager and holding this person to account would raise questions of representation on a board of governors (the Review should consider how this might be impacted upon following the Review of Public Administration when employment of teachers will shift into a single Education and Skill Authority). It is also questionable as to how significant the impact of a federated model would actually be on reducing surplus capacity within local schools.

NICIE does not oppose the option of a schools federation in principle. We believe that examples of this model in England and Wales demonstrate the positive advantages that failing schools in particular can experience by being directly associated with successful schools. We are not convinced of the benefits, however, when assessed against the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review.

A schools confederation

In an area where there is surplus capacity within existing schools a decision may be made to bring schools formally together in a confederation. This model enables independent

schools within a local area to exchange pupils and staff. Pupils can be taught together for certain subjects, or alternatively, peripatetic teachers can move from school to school throughout the locality. Each school remains accountable to its own education sector and can retain its own principal and board of governors.

The benefits of a confederation are that it protects local education provision and protects the parental right to choose an education of a particular religious or philosophy. The level of cross-community sharing may also increase with children from different schools being educated together for certain subjects. In addition, there will be a requirement for a minimal amount of cross-sector collaboration and the pooling of resources.

Perhaps the main disadvantage of a confederation is that it is difficult to see how this will reduce surplus capacity within existing schools. Hence, a major objective within the Terms of Reference of the Independent Review will not be achieved.

The introduction of confederated schooling in Northern Ireland could be closely attached to introduction of the Entitlement Framework. The Entitlement Framework includes a pupils' right to access a menu of at least 24 courses at Key Stage 4, of which one third must be vocational and one third must be academic. At post-16 this right will increase to a menu of at least 27 courses of which one third must be vocational and one third must be academic. Delivering The Entitlement Framework will depend upon developing models for local collaboration and partnership. Regardless of the number and range of institutions available in a particular locality, a much richer and more varied educational provision could be offered, cost-effectively, through much higher levels of cooperation and collaboration between the schools. Examples of this already exist in the Learning Partnerships established in Limavady and Ballycastle. These novel approaches to educational provision are making valuable contributions to the learning experience of all children in local areas, whilst facilitating contact between pupils who may attend otherwise segregated schools. By creating a culture of co-operation, the partner schools and colleges can bring considerable resources and skills that both add value to the learning experiences of children and young people, and crucially, help schools to do things differently. A development of this kind could potentially meet the general policy objective in *A Shared Future* to 'afford new opportunities for shared intercultural learning in primary and post-primary education.'

NICIE is supportive of confederated schools. However, we believe that this should be seen as an additional support to the aims and objectives of the Review. We do not think that this approach can achieve all of the necessary objectives in the Terms of Reference of the Review by itself. However, confederation may substantially support educational reforms if implemented in addition to other suitable options.

Concluding Remarks

It is our view that any recommendations made must balance the need for local provision against the parental right to choose an education for their children in accordance with a particular religion or philosophy. We have considered four options and two additional approaches (federation and confederation), have argued for the integrated option and the jointly managed schools options as our preferred method for delivering a sustainable,

robust schools estate which is both fit for purpose and which will offer the best opportunity to develop the basis on which we can create and more importantly sustain our Shared Future. We have shown why we believe that our preferred options can protect the religious identity and community backgrounds of children and respect of parents to choose whilst balancing other considerations, such as financial cost. We have also demonstrated why we feel that the shared campus (Scottish experiment) and simple rationalisation options whilst offering financial saving and the potential for reducing spare places, will not deliver aims and objectives of *A Shared Future*.

The Review should present a series of options to the Minister for Education and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and recommend that implementation be determined on a case-by-case basis. As we have indicated, it is only by introducing a community auditing methodology that parents will be empowered to make an informed choice on how they would like to see children education in the locality. We trust that the review is able to facilitate the delivery of the effective reconfiguration of the schools estate which will result in informed parental choice and will make significant impacts on how our children are educated together.

* the following document is an appendix to the submission made by the Northern Ireland Council For Integrated Education to the Independent Strategic Review of Education.

Strategically planning the Schools Estate (post-Independent Strategic Review of Education)

Options for individual schools

Simple Rationalisation

Even if it is considered desirable to leave things as they are, pressure from falling rolls and the new curriculum may mean that some schools have to close. This option would imply that we minimise the degree of change and try to keep as many existing school types as possible. So, for example, it might mean that two controlled schools amalgamate, or two Catholic maintained schools amalgamate. Or it might mean that one or more schools close and their pupils attend other schools. Under this option we would still have schools mainly attended by Catholic pupils, schools mainly attended by Protestant pupils and an Integrated school. This is the way rationalisation of schools has tended to work in the past.

Shared campus

Under some circumstances it may not be possible to close or amalgamate schools within the two main community sectors. An alternative option would be to rationalise across the sectors while still maintaining distinctive school types. One option would be for a 'Protestant' school and a 'Catholic' school to move to a new shared campus. The schools would remain as separate schools, but would share some core facilities, such as a sports hall, technical or scientific labs, an assembly hall or even some shared classrooms. However, as separate schools, the pupils still have separate uniforms, teachers and timetables, and would not use the shared facilities together. There are examples of this type of shared campus in some Central European countries in Scotland and in Ireland.

Jointly managed Church schools

The previous option tries to make more effective use of facilities, while retaining as far as possible the existing differences between school types. A further option along these lines might involve bringing schools together in a more formal way, without creating an Integrated school as such. This option might involve one or more of the main Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church agreeing to run a jointly managed school. The Churches would own and manage the school, much like voluntary schools in the current system. Unlike the 'shared campus' option, however, this would be a single school with a common uniform and staff. The Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church would form the Trustees of the new school. They would appoint equal numbers to the Board of Governors of the school and these appointments could comprise the largest bloc on the Board. There are examples of jointly-managed Church schools in a number of countries, including England, Canada and Australia. They mainly involve joint management by Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches.

There are two main ways this option might occur. First, two voluntary schools, one of which is under Catholic Church management, might agree to merge into a new jointly managed voluntary school. Second, an existing Controlled school, which is owned by an Education and Library Board, could be put under the control of one or more of the main Protestant Churches and then merge with a Catholic maintained school to form a new jointly managed maintained school.

Jointly managed schools

This option is a variation of the previous option, but would involve such a formal role for the Churches. Under this option a Catholic maintained school and a Controlled school would merge to form a new school which would be jointly managed by the Education and Library Board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS). As in the previous option this would be a single school with a common uniform and staff. Unlike the previous option the Education and Library Board and CCMS would appoint equal numbers to the Board of Governors of the school and these appointments could comprise the largest bloc on the Board.

Transformation to Integrated school

Under existing legislation it is possible for the parents of an existing school to vote to transform it into an Integrated school. This existing mechanism could be used to deal with the pressure of falling rolls or education reform. This option would most likely mean that the parents of one school would vote to transform it into an Integrated school and another school or schools would agree to close and transfer their pupils to the new transformed Integrated school. Under existing arrangements the Education and Library Board would appoint the largest number of representatives to the Board of Governors of the transformed Integrated school and places would be retained by the Transferors Representative Council (representing the main Protestant churches) and gained by the Trustees (representing the Roman Catholic church).

New Integrated school

An other option available under existing legislation is that an entirely new Integrated school is opened. In the circumstances we are considering, this option would imply that two or more existing schools close and transfer their pupils to a new Integrated school. The new school would be led by a group of Founding Trustees who would appoint the largest group of representatives to the Board of Governors. The different Churches and the local Education and Library Board would not have automatic rights of membership on the Board of Governors, but it would be likely that most of them would be offered places on the Board.

Community School

The notion of Community schools was raised during the discussions in TACOTIE. It would appear that Education Law in N Ireland still allows for the establishment of and funding for "Community schools". A community school could be primary or post primary school (or indeed multi layered.). It would be established within agreed catchment

areas/communities with a view that they serve those communities. They would emerge through community audits/deliberative polls or agreed and evidence based, informed parental choice. In order to provide equality of opportunity and to ensure that the Strategic Investment Board's and Shared Future's requirements are met, they would be established by cross sectoral agreement and could be a replacement school as a result of rationalisation/amalgamation, a replacement for (a) dilapidated school/s, or the preferred new build model for a new area. Although their ethos (Christian/secular), governance arrangements (representation rights), size and catchments would reflect the agreed and informed needs and aspirations of the local communities which they will serve, their purpose would be the same in whatever host community they were located.

The fundamental principles would be to provide centres of educational excellence which were predicated upon educating children of all faiths and none together in a safe, shared environment. The nature of the status (Voluntary/GM or what is currently controlled or even Catholic managed) would be determined by the local community together with sectoral interests. The question of percentages/balance would be up for discussion. The teaching staff and governors would be mixed.

Options for collaboration between schools

Confederation

Within a defined area existing schools, with cross-sector collaboration, may be come schools together in formal confederation. This model enables independent schools of different types within a local area to exchange pupils and staff. Pupils can be taught together for certain subjects, or alternatively, peripatetic teachers can move from school to school throughout the locality. Each school remains accountable to its own education sector and can retain its own principal and board of governors.

Federation

As with the previous model existing schools may come together. In this instance, however, the school would be placed under a single management structure. This would involve the appointment of a peripatetic principal/manager and perhaps a single governing board for the local area. Children would continue attending their local school. However, the introduction of a single principal/manager would perhaps act to promote greater cross-sector collaboration and cross-community sharing. It should also be noted that in addition to the peripatetic principal/manager, individual schools within a federation may still require the appointment of a lead teacher to deal with issues on a day-to-day basis.

Shared Sixth Form

On agreed site all children, from all types of schools would attend single schools/unit post-16 to study for A-levels

Extended Schools

An Extended School provides a range of services and activities, sometimes during or beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community. In doing so, Extended Schools will engage in collaboration and partnership

with neighbouring schools and statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the community. The provision will be diverse but must be linked to the key outcomes for children and may include breakfast clubs, after school study support and after school youth, sport and leisure activities, programmes for parents and community use of schools, creating a new ethos and culture for schools, facilitating partnerships and collaboration in order to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. The focus will be on supporting learning, healthy lifestyles and creativity, with funding allocated directly to schools.

A Matrix for Strategic Planning

There are two main ways in which schools might change following the Independent Review of Education:

1. individual schools might change to cope with the new circumstances
2. groups of schools might work together to share facilities and expertise

Below are a number of options for change, firstly dealing with options for change within individual schools, and then options for change among groups of schools. At least one option from each should be implemented in every area.

Each of the options is measured against 4 performance indicators and has been scored out of maximum of 10 with an overall total of 40 in the following cover sheet. The advantage and disadvantages (i.e. rationale for scoring) is including in the explanatory notes which also follow.

The 4 performance indicators are:

1. capacity to deliver local educational provision
2. capacity to deliver economic efficiency
3. capacity to deliver promotion of cross-sector collaboration
4. capacity to deliver promotion of cross-community sharing

Note:

We would like to stress that although a matrix could be used to engender consensus among the various sectors, this must be balanced against informed parental choice. For this reason, any matrix must sit along side some form of community audit/deliberative poll. Indeed, some of the options listed below only make sense when put the in context of consulting with communities. In this instance, the concept of representative decision-making is flawed. There has been an assumption in the past that the sectors represent the wishes of parents and local people when it comes to schools. There is no empirical evidence to support this claim. The Independent Review must recommend that control be removed from the sectors as much as possible and democratic decision-making returned to parents/communities.

Cover sheet

Individual school models		Performance Indicators				
		a. Delivery of local educational provision	b. Economic efficiency	c. Promotion of cross-sector collaboration	d. Promotion of cross-community sharing	Total (rank order)
1	Shared-campuses (Scottish experiment)	5	5	8	6	24 (4)
2	integrated new build	9	7	7	8	31 (2)
3	Integrated transformed	8	9	6	7	30 (3)
4	Jointly managed church schools (Catholic church/Protestant churches)	6	7	10	7	30 (3)
5	Jointly managed schools (ELBs or new Education Skills authority/Catholic church/Protestant churches)	7	7	7	9	23 (5)
6	Simple rationalisation	4	5	6	4	19 (7)
7	Multi-level schools	6	4	5	5	20 (6)
8	Community schools	10	10	10	10	40 (1)
Between school collaborations and partnerships		Performance Indicators				
		a. Delivery of local educational provision	b. Economic efficiency performance	c. Promotion of cross-sector collaboration	d. Promotion of cross-community sharing	Total (rank order)
1	Confederations	6	8	9	9	32 (1)
2	Federations	7	5	10	7	29 (3)
3	Joint sixth form colleges	6	7	8	7	28 (4)
4	Extended schools	8	8	7	7	30 (2)

Explanatory notes

Explanatory notes		
	School models	Performance Indicator
		a. Delivery of local educational provision
1	Shared-campuses (Scottish experiment)	<p>Advantages Will retain local provision and respect the right of parents to have their children educated according to a particular religion or philosophy in a specific geographical region.</p> <p>Disadvantages It has not been tested in Northern Ireland and given Northern Ireland's troubled past cannot be compared in the same context as Scotland which is a relatively stable region. This model cannot deliver for all people, particularly those who want an integrated provision.</p>
2	integrated new build	<p>Advantages This model will retain local educational provision by opening a school where Catholic, Protestant children, along with other faiths and none together are actively encouraged to enrol.</p> <p>Disadvantages For some parents the ethos in integrated schools will not be considered sufficient enough to guarantee that their children are educated according to a particular belief or philosophy and thus may risk removing local provision</p>
3	Integrated transformed	<p>Advantages Delivers local educational provision by opening a school where Catholic, Protestant children, along with other faiths and none together are actively encouraged to enrol.</p> <p>Disadvantages It takes 10 years for a transformed school to become 'integrated' and build up an acceptable religious balance and be perceived in the local community as a truly integrated school. Historically, it is only the controlled schools (de facto Protestant) that have transformed. This exasperates the Protestant community, as there is a perception that they are the only ones that are 'giving up' their identity and cultural background. The CCMS and the Trustees of the Catholic church fear that a Catholic ethos and culture will be somewhat diluted.</p>
4	Jointly managed church schools (Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>Advantages Will retain local educational provision. This model allows for joint representation on the school management board in equal numbers from both Protestant and Catholic churches. Therefore, both sides are in a position to ensure that the children's religious identity is protected.</p> <p>Disadvantages Some parents may be concerned that there is too much religious focus within the school. It may not be as attractive to minority groups such as those from other faiths, those with no faith, migrant parents or the ethnic minority communities as there is too much emphasis on the two main traditions.</p>
5	Jointly managed schools (ELBs or new Education Skills authority/Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>Advantages Will retain local educational provision. This model would provide for a more balanced management system where neither of the church representatives would be perceived to be getting their way over the other. Ethos from respective sides would be protected.</p> <p>Disadvantages The ESA could be coerced into adopting a mediation or facilitation</p>

		role between the respective church representatives. This model has not been tested in Northern Ireland and parents may be reluctant to experiment with their child's education.
6	Simple rationalisation	<p>Advantages Parents would have the option of sending their children to a local school that remains open thus protecting local provision to a certain degree.</p> <p>Disadvantages Does not retain local educational provision to the same extent as other models as it involves the closure or amalgamation of local schools. Parents may consider travelling further distances to send their child to a school of their choice. This will inevitably increase the costs of financing school buses to transport children out of the local community into unknown territory. Parents may fear that their children will not be treated fairly and the sectors would be forced to defend their own schools against possible closures in competition with other sectors.</p>
7	Multi-level schools	<p>Advantages This model would deliver local educational provision from early years, through to primary and on to secondary level and provide continuity for families in a familiar setting. Would have the added advantage of reducing transport costs.</p> <p>Disadvantages Multi-level schools could be created within existing sectors and may not retain provision for the entire community</p>
8	Community Schools	<p>Advantages nature and governance arrangements determined by local community, community buy in at inception, Quality of education can be assured, can grow without threat to other school enrolments, could stop "flight" to perceived better schools</p> <p>Disadvantages In rationalisation cases might be hard to agree form of governance which would win community support. This is new and might need to be seen to work in a pilot before people will take up places.</p>
Between school collaborations and partnerships		Performance Indicators
		a. Delivery of local educational provision
1	Confederations	<p>Advantages Protects local educational provision and the parental right to choose an education of a particular religious philosophy and encourages sharing of resources. This model would enable pupils to avail of a much wider and varied range of curriculum to suit their educational needs and career aspirations without having to travel out of their local communities.</p> <p>Disadvantages Will not reduce surplus places. Extra time would have to be accounted for to permit travel between lessons for both teachers and pupils.</p>
2	Federations	<p>Advantages This model would retain local educational provision and offer parents in specific geographical areas the option of choosing a particular type of school on their doorstep.</p> <p>Disadvantages An untested model in Northern Ireland and will not reduce surplus places. There would also be logistical complications with regard to timetabling and travelling between campuses</p>
3	Joint sixth form colleges	Advantages

		<p>Protects local educational sixth form provision, as pupils can stay within their own locality without having to travel further afield to attend another school or further education college to specialise in specific subject areas. This model would therefore offer more subject choices and flexibility for pupils who have specific career aspirations and who are interested in studying subjects which their own school cannot offer at a higher level eg drama, music, technology etc.</p> <p>Disadvantages Difficulties in timetabling and the amount of time it would take to travel between campuses for both teachers and pupils. Bus routes to and from school buildings may not be feasible in urban areas.</p>
4	Extended schools	<p>Advantages Sustains local education provision and offers greater flexibility and childcare arrangements for working parents who can drop their children off at school on their way into work in the morning and pick them up on their way home. It also provides a centre for adult communities to avail of lifelong learning opportunities through evening classes on their doorstep.</p> <p>Disadvantages This model would increase the running costs of the school as it would be open for longer periods of time eg heating, lighting, caretaking, cleaning, teaching, and supervision of breakfast and homework clubs. Parents may have to pay extra for these services to offset the costs of running this business-orientated facility.</p>

Explanatory notes		
	School models	Performance Indicator
		b. Economic efficiency
1	Shared-campuses (Scottish experiment)	<p>Advantages Potential for limited sharing of resources, long term savings. return on sale of surplus school sites (Trustee issues?)</p> <p>Disadvantages Possible high level of initial capital investment. Continued duplication of some resources e.g. staff</p>
2	integrated new build	<p>Advantages Reduces duplication of resources across sectors. Possible return on sale of surplus school sites. Long term financial savings on capital and recurrent costs.</p> <p>Disadvantage May require significant capital investment. Staff redundancies</p>
3	Integrated transformed	<p>Advantages More economical use of existing resources.Reduces duplication of resources. No significant capital investment</p> <p>Disadvantages Requires resourcing to underpin transformation process and effective change. May require limited capital investment. Staff redundancies (primarily in Catholic sector?)</p>
4	Jointly managed church schools (Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>Advantages More effective use of existing resources. Reduction in duplication of resources</p> <p>Disadvantages May require significant capital investment. Staff redundancies</p>
5	Jointly managed schools (ELBs)	<p>Advantages More effective use of existing resources. Reduction in duplication of</p>

	or new Education Skills authority/Catholic church/Protestant churches	resources Disadvantages May require significant capital investment. Staff redundancies
6	Simple rationalisation	Advantages Financial savings from reduction in surplus places. Use of existing estate. Possible return on sale of surplus school sites Disadvantages Increase in travel costs as local schools are closed. Staff redundancies
7	Multi-level schools	Advantages Reduction in size and cost of school estate as ages 3-18 are brought under one roof creating opportunities for long term savings Disadvantages Significant capital investment required across all sectors either as new build or for refurbishment/adaptation.
8	Community Schools	Advantages: One school replacing others, one school as new build instead of 2 or 3, potential for staff, site and running costs savings, potential for savings in delivering GCSE and A levels through a "one stop shop". Disadvantages. In rationalisations. the saving is obvious if the other schools close or amalgamate into a community school. f however, there is no agreement, to add a community school would not be cost beneficial. In the case of new areas/new build again unless the sectors agree this might be an additional school and so again would not be cost beneficial.
Between school collaborations and partnerships		Performance Indicators
		b. Economic efficiency
1	Confederations	Advantages Savings from sharing of resources Disadvantages May be increased transport costs as children move between local schools. Potential need for investment in new technology for example to assist sharing.
2	Federations	Advantages Potential savings as reduction in numbers of principals/senior managers although each school may still require a 'head' teacher. Disadvantages Does not reduce surplus places and hence no savings.
3	Joint sixth form colleges	Advantages Financial savings to be made in the sharing of resources, namely buildings, materials and staff. Disadvantages Possible capital investment in some areas. Staff redundancies.
4	Extended schools	Advantages Value for money on use of staff buildings etc. Possible business opportunities. Support for national economy for e.g. in provision of childcare for working parents. Disadvantages May require sustained financial support to ensure quality provision. Projects may require significant capital investment.

Explanatory notes

	School models	Performance Indicator
		c. Promotion of cross-sector collaboration
1	Shared-campuses (Scottish experiment)	<p>Advantages Opportunities for cross sectoral collaboration on issues of common concern e.g. finance, grounds maintenance etc...</p> <p>Disadvantages separate management boards and staff /promotion of parallel living</p>
2	integrated new build	<p>Advantages Necessary collaboration with regard to closure of existing schools and this would ensure opportunity to manage new school/opp for sectors to discuss future needs/all stakeholders have opp to manage school</p> <p>Disadvantages No previous history of cross sectoral collaboration? Potential difficulties in managing change (of cultures etc..)</p>
3	Integrated transformed	<p>Advantages None</p> <p>Disadvantages Potential of ostracising the Catholic sector/No history of Catholic school transforming</p>
4	Jointly managed church schools (Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>Advantages Would ensure collaboration between the Churches/Would give Protestant churches control of schools again</p> <p>Disadvantages Schools managed by churches and not state/some sectors might perceive that there would be too much emphasis on religion in schools</p>
5	Jointly managed schools (ELBs or new Education Skills authority/Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>Advantages Would demand cross sector collaboration in terms of management of the school/opportunities to collaborate</p> <p>Disadvantages No history of this /no models/potential of retention of separation</p>
6	Simple rationalisation	<p>Advantages Easy option to rationalise within sectors leading to smaller separate sectors</p> <p>Disadvantages Would not promote cross sector collaboration/Irish medium and Integrated schools not taken into account</p>
7	Multi-level schools	<p>Advantages None</p> <p>Disadvantages Would not promote cross sector collaboration</p>
8	Community Schools	<p>Advantages: Planning would be cross sectoral, governance is pen to cross sectoral involvement, potential to involve sectors not previously involved (e.g. CnaG and IE), As meets SIB requirement on planning would incentivise cross sectoral sharing</p> <p>Disadvantages. This is new and until one is drawn up and piloted there might be resistance from Trustees. There might need to be incentivisation/obligation to ensure this work. Voluntarism may not be enough to drive this as a solution.</p>

Between school collaborations and partnerships		Performance Indicators
		c. Promotion of cross-sector collaboration
1	Confederations	<p>Advantages Would promote limited cross sectoral collaboration</p> <p>Disadvantages Limited collaboration because each school retains own management/resources etc...</p>
2	Federations	<p>Advantages Would certainly promote cross sectoral collaboration having one management structure</p> <p>Disadvantages None</p>
3	Joint sixth form colleges	<p>Advantages Would promote Cross sectoral collaboration provided in local area</p> <p>Disadvantages Pupils only educated together post 16</p>
4	Extended schools	<p>Advantages Great potential for school to work together but no history/more chance of post primaries working with primaries/great potential for local business and organisation to play bigger role in life of school</p> <p>Disadvantages Potential that each school will duplicate services rather than identify needs of certain services /'everyone wants everything on own doorstep' If not on own doorstep will people be willing to travel?/Little collaboration or strategic planning between DE and DHSSPS</p>

Explanatory notes		
	School models	Performance Indicator
		d. Promotion of cross-community sharing
1	Shared-campus (Scottish experiment)	<p>advantages A shared campus is potentially flexible and could deliver cross-community sharing to a lesser or greater degree. Where children are literally under the same roof but for other purposes remain separate this model will respect the rights of parents to have their children educated according a particular denominational religious ethos. In areas where parents want to share to a greater degree this model could allow for an increase in the amount of contact that takes place between children.</p> <p>disadvantages This model has not been tested in Northern Ireland. There is a concern that it risks replicating within schools the phenomenon of interfaces witnessed within many of Northern Ireland's residential neighbourhoods. It could be argued that a shared campus falls considerably short of the government's declaration in <i>A Shared Future</i>: 'Separate but equal is not an option. Parallel living and provision of parallel services are unsustainable both morally and economically.' It may be used as an excuse not to move towards greater levels of cross-community sharing particularly if decisions are dependent upon cross-sector agreement. In addition, unlike the current integrated model there is no sense that such schools would actively seek to balance their pupil profile in terms of the number of Catholics and Protestants attending.</p>
2	integrated new build	<p>advantages Will promote cross-community sharing in a structured and</p>

		<p>meaningful sense because children of all community backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes, with a balanced staff and governor profile from the outset of the new school. Integrated schools have been established, tried and tested in Northern Ireland and can deliver cross-community education. They have 25 years experience of developing inclusive policies, practices and a culture of tolerance, including staff training. They demonstrate how the parental right to have children educated according to their own individual religious beliefs can be rendered compatible with cross-community sharing and norms of equality. In particular, the preparation of Catholic children for the sacraments and the education of Protestant children about their Christian faith from a Protestant perspective have been successfully delivered. Integrated schools may have an advantage over other forms of shared education in that they will perhaps strike a more appropriate balance not only between Protestant and Catholic interests but also between those of a Christian faith, other faiths and none.</p> <p>disadvantages For some parents the ethos in integrated schools will not be considered sufficient enough to guarantee that their children are educated according to a particular religious belief or philosophy. Integrated schools cannot deliver a complete educational experience from a particular denominational religious perspective. Where a particular religious practice (i.e. Catholicism or Protestantism) is deemed central to education an integrated school may not be conducive to cross-community sharing</p>
3	Integrated transformed	<p>advantages Will promote cross-community sharing in a structured and meaningful sense because children of all community backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes. Integrated schools have the advantage of having been already established, tried and tested in Northern Ireland and can deliver cross-community education. They have 25 years experience of developing inclusive policies, practices and a culture of tolerance, including staff training. They demonstrate how the parental right to have children educated according to their own individual religious beliefs can be rendered compatible with cross-community sharing and norms of equality. In particular, the preparation of Catholic children for the sacraments and the education of Protestant children about their Christian faith from a Protestant perspective have been successfully delivered. Integrated schools may have an advantage over other forms of shared education in that they will perhaps strike a more appropriate balance not only between Protestant and Catholic interests but also between those of a Christian faith, other faiths and none.</p> <p>disadvantages A school that transforms cannot guarantee a balanced pupil profile as currently determined by the DE from the outset (70% majority 30% minority community), and some schools may never achieve this depending on local demographics. For some parents the ethos in integrated schools will not be considered sufficient enough to guarantee that their children are educated according to a particular religious belief or philosophy. Integrated schools cannot deliver a complete educational experience from a particular denominational religious perspective. Where a particular religious practice (i.e. Catholicism or Protestantism) is deemed central to education an integrated school may not be conducive to cross-community sharing.</p>
4	Jointly managed church schools (Catholic church/Protestant churches)	<p>advantages Will promote cross-community sharing in a meaningful sense because children of Catholic and Protestant backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes and taught by the same teachers. Would also retain an agreed/shared ecumenical Christian ethos.</p>

		<p>disadvantages</p> <p>The model is not yet tested in Northern Ireland. A school premised upon an agreed/shared Christian ecumenical ethos could prove problematic. First, some parents and churches may fear a reduction in the particular denominational religious ethos when compared to the previous faith schools. This would be a specific concern for the Catholic church. Second, some parents may be concerned that religion was being afforded too much focus within the school. This may be of concern for the parents of children who attended controlled schools. Unlike the current integrated model there is no sense that such schools would actively seek to balance their pupil, staff, governor profile in terms of the number of Catholics, Protestants or representation for those of other faiths and none. Such school may not be viewed as open to non-Christians.</p>
5	Jointly managed schools (ELBs or new Education Skills authority/Catholic church/Protestant churches	<p>advantages</p> <p>Will promote cross-community sharing in a meaningful sense because children of Catholic and Protestant backgrounds will be educated together in the same classes and taught by the same teachers. Will also maintain the influence of the Catholic church within the school whilst retaining state influence and the relationship currently experienced in many controlled schools with Protestant churches through the Transferors Representative Council. School of this sort may be seen as more welcoming to those of all faith and none, when compared to jointly managed church schools that maintain an agreed/shared Christian ecumenical ethos.</p> <p>disadvantages</p> <p>The model is not yet tested in Northern Ireland and in fact does not exist anywhere in the world. There may be risk that the demand to protect a particular denominational religious ethos (i.e. Catholicism) by some parents could not be afforded sufficiently by this model. Unlike a church school, this model would not deliver a agreed/shared Christian ecumenical ethos and for some parents it may, therefore, be seen as even less acceptable than a jointly managed church school. Unlike the current integrated model there is no sense that such schools would actively seek to balance their pupil, staff, governor profile in terms of the number of Catholics, Protestants or representation for those of other faiths and none.</p>
6	Simple rationalisation	<p>advantages</p> <p>This is the status quo in Northern Ireland. It is tested and in areas where community relations and other factors (notably academic attainment rates) determine that such as approach is feasible controlled and catholic maintained schools have attracted significant number of pupils from minority communities. However, it will guarantee the retention of a particular religious ethos from those parents who demand it.</p> <p>disadvantages</p> <p>It is difficult to envisage how this would promote cross-community sharing. Historical record demonstrates that the majority controlled or Catholic maintained school have failed to attract pupils from minority community in any substantive sense.</p>
7	Multi-level schools	<p>advantages</p> <p>a whole school approach to education from 4-16+ may depend upon school encouraging as many members of the local community in general to attend in order to retain viability.</p> <p>Disadvantages</p> <p>Multi-level school could be create within single sectors and for this reason would not change the status quo of a school system divided roughly along protestant/catholic lines.</p>

8	Community Schools	<p>Advantages; In essence this is a Shared school.. and as a school designed by the local community it will involve cross community input, it would be open to all faiths and none and new incoming families, it has no baggage, it is open to ongoing monitoring to ensure it represents the community needs, it is new and is not seen as a “win-loose solution”, so had potential for a wide “buy in”.</p> <p>Disadvantages. Again the new-ness of the idea might militate against this working. In communities in which there are majority groupings/paramilitary gate-keepers, it might be difficult to access “community” feelings. If a community school type is determined by a local community as needing to reflect either “secular” or “faith based” ethos, the other traditions might feel alienated.</p>
Between school collaborations and partnerships		Performance Indicators
		d. Promotion of cross-community sharing
1	Confederations	<p>advantages The level of cross-community sharing may increase with children from different schools being educated together for certain subjects. There would be room for a flexible amount of daily contact between Protestant and Catholic children determined by the local circumstances. There would be no threat to the ethos of individual schools since their own boards of governors and principals would retain authority.</p> <p>disadvantages There may be tendency to minimise the amount of sharing that takes place between children and the focus could be on pooling resource rather than ensuring that children from different community backgrounds are educated together.</p>
2	Federations	<p>advantages The introduction of a single principal/manager/governing board would perhaps act to promote greater cross-community sharing between schools. Children could be taught in different schools in the local area on the basis of pupils exchanges and there would be room for a flexible amount of daily contact between Protestant and Catholic children determined by the local circumstances.</p> <p>disadvantages There may be tendency for some federations to be established within a single sector, thus reducing the amount of cross-community sharing. It may be difficult to reconcile a cross-sector federation with the concept of protecting a particular religious ethos considering that there would be a single principal/manager/governing board for a number of schools.</p>
3	Joint sixth form colleges	<p>advantages If delivered in isolation this would guarantee the protection of ethos until the age of 16. It would deliver cross-community sharing for 2 years and would be flexible in terms of negotiating the type of ethos promoted.</p> <p>disadvantages It would only deliver cross-community sharing for 2 years of a pupils school life and would be limited to those who attended the college.</p>
4	Extended schools	<p>advantages Extra facilities may encourage members of minority communities (Protestant/Catholic others) to send their children to a school.</p> <p>disadvantages does not require cross-community sharing as a explicit aim or objective</p>

