

Response ID ANON-3GJ1-NWZZ-E

Submitted to Integrated Education Act Action Plan Consultation
Submitted on 2023-10-31 10:58:47

Introduction

ABOUT YOU

1 Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent:(Please tick one option only).

Other (If you don't fit into any obvious grouping above)

Specify Other

5 Other, please specify

Specify Other:

INTO Irish National Teachers' Organisation

Additional Information

6 If you would prefer your response to remain confidential, please tick this box

Remain Confidential:

No

Timescales and completing questionnaire.

1. Requirements of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

7 To help us develop a future strategy, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree that the strategy and action plan helped you understand the requirements of the Act?

Disagree

2. The vision of the strategy.

8 To what extent do you agree or disagree that this new vision for Integrated Education sets the right ambition for Integrated Education?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

3. Action Plan.

9 To what extent do you agree or disagree that implementation of the following actions will deliver and support effective communication and consultation?

Communication and Consultation - 1. The Department will continue to utilise the two Integrated Education groups to support implementation of the Act.:
Neither Agree nor Disagree

Communication and Consultation - 2. Provision of initial additional funding of £50,000 to support implementation of this Strategy.:
Agree

Communication and Consultation - 3. The Department has committed to keeping resourcing of the strategy under review.:
Agree

Communication and Consultation - 4. The Department will make sure internal processes and procedures reflect the requirement to consider Integrated Education when changes policies or processes.:
Agree

Communication and Consultation - 5. The Department will ensure that it meets all its duties under the Act.:
Agree

Communication and Consultation - 6. The Department will continue the consultative process with all partners during implementation of the IE Act.:
Agree

Communication and Consultation - 7. The Department will engage with representatives of integrated education, including school leaders and practitioners on key educational issues.:

Disagree

Communication and Consultation - 8. The Department will focus on consultation with NICIE as the DE body that is tasked with encouraging and promoting Integrated Education.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Communication and Consultation - 9. The Department will draw up a formal document that sets out the basis for consultation with NICIE and the extent of its coverage.:

Agree

10 Have Your Say. Please feel free to provide any further comments or feedback regarding Key Area 1 – Effective engagement and consultation. Please do not provide any personal or specific information that may identify you or anyone else.

Comments re Effective Engagement and Consultation:

It is not sufficient to engage only with representatives of Integrated education. There needs to be engagement with all education sectors and stakeholders. The extension of the definition of Integrated Education to include 'Those who are experiencing socio - economic deprivation and those who are not', and 'Those of different abilities' surely encompasses all schools in NI, not just the Integrated Education Sector. Therefore the level of engagement also needs to extend to all schools.

There is also little reference to 'Shared Education' in the consultation or the Plan for Integrated education, yet 3.5 of Chapter 3, states that 'The underpinning role of partnership and collaboration are important outworkings of the sponsorship role undertaken by the Department.' There needs to be clear evidence of engagement and consultation in this area.

Key Area 2 – Demand for Integrated Education.

11 To what extent do you agree or disagree that implementation of the following actions will support the identifying, assessing, monitoring, and aiming to meet the demand for Integrated Education?

Able to meet demand - 10. The Department will produce an operational definition of demand for Integrated Education that is measurable and valid.:

Agree

Able to meet demand - 11. The Department will, in carrying out this exercise, assess any current gaps in data to measure demand and take action to address those.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Able to meet demand - 12. The Department will work with its education partners to identify outcomes for children and young people to accompany this Strategy. Metrics will be identified to measure progress towards achieving these outcomes.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Able to meet demand - 13. The Department will routinely publish data relating to the demand for Integrated Education.:

Agree

Able to meet demand - 14. The Education Authority working in partnership with CCMS will consider data relating to demand when developing and up-dating future Strategic Area Plans and associated Operational Plans.:

Agree

Able to meet demand - 15. The Department will review its existing internal processes and procedures relating to the development of new schools.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Able to meet demand - 16. The Department will ensure it meets the duties within the Integrated Education Act relating to development of new schools.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

12 Have Your Say. Please feel free to provide any further comments or feedback below regarding Key Area 2 – Demand for Integrated Education. Please do not provide any personal or specific information that may identify you or anyone else.

Comments on Demand for Integrated Education:

It is important that the data in relation to demand for Integrated education is collated fairly and is published in an open and transparent manner, taking account of the extended definition of Integrated education, as of October 2022. There is a concern that if Integrated Education is to be unduly advantaged over other sectors within education in the North that this will increase demand and skew the statistics. All schools in Northern Ireland require to be resourced appropriately and Integrated Education should not be unduly advantaged to the detriment of other schools in the North.

As mentioned previously most, if not all schools in the North, including those which are not 'Integrated schools', fit two of the three criteria (some even meet all three) with pupils of differing abilities and pupils experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not. Therefore all of these factors need to be taken into account in establish the true demand for Integrated education (under the new definition) in the North.

Key Area 3 – Measuring Progress.

13 To what extent do you agree or disagree that implementation of the following actions will provide useful evidence of progress made through the lifetime of this Action Plan?

Actions lead to evidence of progress - 17. The Department will formally report on progress on this strategy to the Assembly by 26 April 2024.:

Agree

Actions lead to evidence of progress - 18. The Department will report on progress with the strategy at subsequent intervals as laid down by the Act.:

Agree

Actions lead to evidence of progress - 19. The Department will review and revise the Integrated Education Strategy in light of that report and publish and lay a revised version with the Assembly.:

Agree

Actions lead to evidence of progress - 20. Future versions of the Strategy will be outcomes-based, complete with associated outcomes and indicators to measure performance. The Department will develop new sources of data to support this if required.:

Agree

Actions lead to evidence of progress - 21. The Department will monitor and review delivery of the Action Plan with its education partners in line with outcomes, indicators and performance measures.:

Agree

14 Have Your Say. Please feel free to provide any further comments or feedback below regarding Key Area 3 – Measuring Progress. Please do not provide any personal or specific information that may identify you or anyone else.

Comments re measuring progress:

As previously stated, Progress needs to be measured against the new extended definition of Integrated Education and should take account of any and all schools who meet this definition within the North, and not just those currently designated as 'Integrated'. These will need to be clearly differentiated in the reports and action measuring progress.

Key Area 4 – Ethos, Information and Guidance.

15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that implementation of the following actions will support the ethos of Integrated Education and provide appropriate information and guidance to help Integrated schools support this in their school?

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 22. The Department will review the guidance used for schools wishing to transform to integrated status.:

Agree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 23. The Department will review the resources required to support schools transforming to integrated status.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 24. The Department will work with NICIE to support integrated schools to confidently understand and fulfil the updated legal definition of Integrated Education.:

Strongly Agree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 25. The Department will work with EA to implement arrangements to ensure Integrated Schools have appropriate access to support services.:

Agree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 26. The Department will work with EA to implement arrangements so that professional learning programmes are available to leaders and teachers within Integrated Schools as required by the Act.:

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 27. The Department will review and update existing guidance on the statutory process by which proposed and significant changes to education provision are made to ensure it is clear in setting out the nature of the evidence that should be considered and provided when bringing forward a proposal relevant to Integrated Education.:

Agree

Support Integrated Ethos, providing information and guidance - 28. The Department will continue to work with education partners to review and update information and guidance on Integrated Education and schools for parents and guardians navigating the admissions process.:

Agree

16 Have Your Say. Please feel free to provide any further comments or feedback below regarding Key area 4 – Ethos, Information and Guidance. Please do not provide any personal or specific information that may identify you or anyone else.

Comments re Ethos, Information and Guidance:

Reiterating that Integrated schools should not be advantaged to the detriment of other schools or sectors. All teachers should be in receipt of TPL, sufficient and appropriate to support their teaching in the 21st century and the pupils they are teaching. In supporting the Strategy for Integrated

Education in NI, DE must ensure that other schools, teachers and pupils are not disadvantaged in any way.

Key Area 5 – Regulations & Compliance.

17 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following action will meet the requirement for providing regulations?

Providing Regulations - Action 15 The Department will prepare regulations and guidance to support delivery of the Integrated Education Act as required.:
Agree

18 Have Your Say. Please feel free to provide any further comments or feedback below regarding Key area 5 – Regulations & Compliance. Please do not provide any personal or specific information that may identify you or anyone else.

Comments re Regulations and Compliance:

In complying with the regulations DE must also have cognisance of equality legislation and ensure that no child in NI is educationally disadvantaged if they do not attend an Integrated school.

Additional Comments

19 Please make any additional comments you would like to add below.

Additional comments:

INTO believes that all pupils, in all schools in Northern Ireland, regardless of sector or level are entitled to an education where they are 'happy, learning and succeeding' (DE Every Child, Oct 2023). No child or school sector should be advantaged over another and while the DE have to comply with the Integrated Education Act (NI) 2022, this must be taken in the context of other education and equality legislation in NI and United Nations legislation on the rights of the child.

INTO believes there should be more emphasis on Shared Education within the Strategic plan and more funding should be diverted to this, as EA funding was axed this year. Through Shared Education projects, an increased number of schools and pupils were involved than just in Integrated schools. These building blocks should be 'built' upon, not knocked down and allowed to become derelict, if DE and stakeholders and partners are serious about fulfilling the duties set out in the Integrated Education Act (2022), under the new definition of Integrated education.