**Overview**

The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 became law on the 26 October 2022. This Act placed a duty on the Department of Education (DE) to prepare, publish and maintain a strategy for the encouragement, facilitation, support for and provision of integrated education.

The strategy had to include an Action Plan to deliver on the strategy and the law requires that DE consult on that Action Plan.

This consultation is an opportunity to have your views considered in the future direction of the Action Plan and we would welcome your comments.

**We would recommend that you read the accompanying Integrated Education Strategy and Action Plan prior to completing this questionnaire.**

Links to the Integrated Education Strategy and assosciated Action Plan as well as a glossary of some terms used within the Strategy and in this survey can be found in the related documents at the bottom of this page.

**Introduction**

The Department would like to hear your views and feedback on these proposed actions to inform, shape and improve final policy proposals to reflect changes to the law on Integrated Education.  During the past number of months, the Department has engaged with key interest groups and stakeholders, and this has informed the current proposed actions.  This consultation, therefore, forms part of wide ranging and ongoing engagement.

**It is advisable to read the accompanying Integrated Education Strategy and Action Plan prior to completing this questionnaire.**

These documents can be accessed at the following links.

[A Strategy for Integrated Education In Northern Ireland](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/strategy-integrated-education-northern-ireland)

[Integrated Education Strategy Action Plan](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/integrated-education-strategy-action-plan)

**ABOUT YOU**

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

*Please select only one item.*

* A member of the public
* A parent/guardian
* A pupil
* A school or pre-school leader
* A teacher or educational practitioner
* A school governor or member of pre-school management committee
* A Sectoral or Community Body
* Other (If you don't fit into any obvious grouping above)

**Parents education phase response**

**2.** Which phase of education is your child/children at? (Please tick all that apply).

*(Required)*

*Please select all that apply.*

* Pre-school
* Primary school (including schools with pre-school provision)
* Post-primary school
* Special school

**General phase of Education**

**3.** What phase of education are you involved in? (Please tick one option only).

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item.*

* Pre-school
* Primary school (including schools with pre-school provision)
* Post-primary school
* Special school

**Specify Sectoral or Community Body**

**4.** Please specify which Sectoral or Community Body.

*(Required)*

Please specify whether Sectoral or Community Body.

Specify Other

5 Other, please specify.

*(Required)*

Please type here.

**Privacy**

The Department may make responses available on the website [www.education-ni.gov.uk](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/), although contact names and addresses would be removed.

Please note that under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (Annex A) your response may be made available, on request, to the public.

A copy of the Department of Education Privacy Notice can be found at [DE Privacy Notice](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/department-education-privacy-notice)

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

**Timescales and Submission of Responses**

This questionnaire can be completed online until 31 October 2023.  If you prefer, you can email or post responses to:

[IntegratedEducationActImplementationTeam@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:IntegratedEducationActImplementationTeam@education-ni.gov.uk)

Or;

**Integrated Education Act Implementation Team**

Department of Education

Rathgael House

43 Balloo Road

Rathgill

BANGOR

BT19 7PR

**Completing the Questionnaire**

This consultation contains a number of statements and questions.  We would like you to indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements.

We have included a number of comment boxes where you can provide additional information if you want to.

**1. The Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.**

This Act defines integrated education and integrated schools and changes the responsibilities of the Department of Education and the Education Authority. It now requires both DE and EA to *“encourage, facilitate and support the development of integrated education.”* The Act goes on to provide the meaning of support to be:

*“(a)identifying, assessing, monitoring, and aiming to meet the demand for the provision of integrated education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including, in particular, monitoring the number and success of applications for integrated education), and*

*(b)providing sufficient places in integrated schools to aim to meet the demand for integrated education within the context of area planning and the overall sustainability of the school estate (including examining evidence of expected future demand).*

*Monitoring in (a) above means by reference to data collected in respect of relevant catchment and other areas.”*

DE must consider integrated education when making decisions about public services. They must also consult with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders before opening a new school. It must *“prepare, publish, and maintain a strategy for the encouragement, facilitation, support for and provision of integrated education. This strategy must contain an Action Plan and be published within 6 months of the date on which this Act came into force.”*

The Department published the first Strategy and Action Plan on 26 April 2023 meeting this requirement. The Department must publish a report on integrated education by April 26, 2024, and then every three years after that.

**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?**

*(Required)*

*(Please select only one item)*

* Strongly Agree
* Agree
* Neither Agree nor Disagree
* Disagree
* Strongly Disagree

**2. The vision of the strategy.**

Progress has been made across our society in moving towards a shared and united community. As we continue to build on the peace we now enjoy, there is an important role for education to play in continuing to build good relations at a local level and to foster positive relationships that will form the foundations for the future. The IE Strategy noted that Integrated Education, alongside the many other involved in education, can play a critical role in continuing to build trust, mutual respect, and inclusivity.

The IE Strategy set out the Department of Education’s vision for Integrated Education, which is to create:

‘A vibrant and supported network of sustainable integrated schools providing high-quality integrated education to children and young people.’

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

*(Required)*

*(Please select only one item*

* Strongly Agree
* Agree
* Neither Agree nor Disagree
* Disagree
* Strongly Disagree

**3. Action Plan.**

Section 9 of the Act requires that an Action Plan must be included with the strategy which must -

1. *Be prepared in consultation with persons with knowledge and experience of integrated schools including teachers, governors, pupils, families, and sectoral and community bodies;*
2. *Include targets (including timetables);*
3. *Include measurable benchmarks against which the success of the strategy (including progress towards meeting targets) can be assessed.”*

**The Department is seeking views from all groups as specified in the Act.**

The Department has sought to include members of the various educational bodies in the process by setting up the following groups:

* *Implementation Steering Group – This group is made up of senior staff at Director level from within DE and across the education sector and is tasked with setting the strategic direction of implementation subject to Ministerial views and legal constraints.*
* *IE Working Group, which is more operational in nature supports this work and is comprised of staff at senior management level (below Director) from the same organisations as the Steering Group.*

The Department is committed to working with these groups to define outcomes, indicators and performance measures that will support development of a more outcomes-based Strategy following review of this initial strategy in 2024.

*The following Key Areas for action have been identified:*

• Key Area 1 – Effective Engagement and Consultation

• Key Area 2 – Demand for Integrated Education

• Key Area 3 – Measuring Progress

• Key Area 4 – Ethos, Information and Guidance

• Key Area 5 – Regulation and Compliance

**Key Area 1 – Effective Engagement and Consultation.**

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

| *(Required)* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. The Department will continue to utilise the two Integrated Education groups to support implementation of the Act.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Provision of initial additional funding of £50,000 to support implementation of this Strategy.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. The Department has committed to keeping resourcing of the strategy under review.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. The Department will make sure internal processes and procedures reflect the requirement to consider Integrated Education when changes policies or processes.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. The Department will ensure that it meets all its duties under the Act.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. The Department will continue the consultative process with all partners during implementation of the IE Act.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. The Department will engage with representatives of integrated education, including school leaders and practitioners on key educational issues.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. The Department will focus on consultation with NICIE as the DE body that is tasked with encouraging and promoting Integrated Education.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. The Department will draw up a formal document that sets out the basis for consultation with NICIE and the extent of its coverage.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |

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.

Please type here.

**Key Area 2 – Demand for Integrated Education.**

One of the key requirements introduced within the Act is a duty on the Department to assess, monitor and aim to meet the 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?

| *(Required)* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 10. The Department will produce an operational definition of demand for Integrated Education that is measurable and valid.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. The Department will, in carrying out this exercise, assess any current gaps in data to measure demand and take action to address those.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. The Department will routinely publish data relating to the demand for Integrated Education.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. The Department will review its existing internal processes and procedures relating to the development of new schools.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16. The Department will ensure it meets the duties within the Integrated Education Act relating to development of new schools.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |

**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.

Type comments here.

**Key Area 3 – Measuring Progress.**

The Department is fully committed to active and ongoing monitoring of progress against delivery of the DE Integrated Education Act Strategy vision and the actions set out within the Action Plan.

**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?

| *(Required)* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 17. The Department will formally report on progress on this strategy to the Assembly by 26 April 2024.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. The Department will report on progress with the strategy at subsequent intervals as laid down by the Act.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 21. The Department will monitor and review delivery of the Action Plan with its education partners in line with outcomes, indicators and performance measures.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |

**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.

Please type here.

**Key Area 4 – Ethos, Information and Guidance.**

The Department recognises that Integrated Education provides exciting opportunities for children and young people from different community backgrounds to learn together on a daily basis and can play a key role in building a shared society.

The Act says an integrated school is one that "*intentionally supports, protects and advances an ethos of diversity, respect and understanding between those of difference cultures and religious beliefs and of none, between those of different socio-economic backgrounds and between those of different abilities."*

**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?

| *(Required)* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 22. The Department will review the guidance used for schools wishing to transform to integrated status.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. The Department will review the resources required to support schools transforming to integrated status.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. The Department will work with NICIE to support integrated schools to confidently understand and fulfil the updated legal definition of Integrated Education.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. The Department will work with EA to implement arrangements to ensure Integrated Schools have appropriate access to support services.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |
| 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.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |

**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.

Please type here.

**Key Area 5 – Regulations & Compliance.**

The Act provides the Department with the power to make regulations and to produce guidance in support of the Act. It further requires that the Department utilises these powers to make regulations.

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

| *(Required)* | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action 15 The Department will prepare regulations and guidance to support delivery of the Integrated Education Act as required.  *(Please select only one item)* |  |  |  |  |  |

**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.

Please type any additional comments here.

It is the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, as passed by the Assembly, which defines Integrated Education and sets out a range of duties that the Department of Education (DE) must comply with.

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

Please type here.