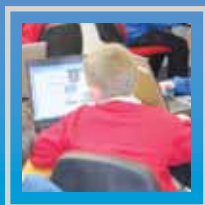




Evaluation of
THE FERMANAGH
Shared Education Programme
 Teacher Exchange Scheme
 (Shared Teachers)



Pro.Ed Consulting was commissioned by the Fermanagh Trust to undertake a Review of the Teacher Exchange Scheme, which is part of the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme.

Pro.Ed is an independent educational consultancy, which draws upon extensive personal experience as a primary practitioner, primary principal and as a member of the Education and Training Inspectorate.

PREFACE

Fermanagh primary schools have shown resourcefulness and innovation, by adopting new ways of working, to enhance teaching and learning and raise educational standards for pupils in their schools.

Six primary school partnerships, involving 17 schools, have piloted a Shared Teacher / Teacher Exchange Scheme, as part of the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Programme. The Trust thanks the funders, the International Fund for Ireland and Atlantic Philanthropies, for their support. The schools were able to enhance particular curricular areas, by availing of specialist teaching expertise from their neighbouring partner school, to teach their pupils and up-skill their staff. The fact that the partner schools are from a different sector was not a barrier – these schools have been providing shared cross-community classes for their pupils for over 4 years now, so strong supportive relationships already existed.

Fermanagh schools have been pioneering the way in Shared Education, which is now at the heart of the Programme for Government. As the Minister for Education said in his statement to the Assembly on Advancing Shared Education (22 Oct 2013):

‘Let me say clearly that I want to see:

- **Collaboration, not competition;**
- **Sharing, not duplication.’**

In summing up the case for sharing, the Minister said it is clear that:

- **‘Sharing brings educational benefits.**
- **Sharing builds respect for diversity and good relations.**
- **Sharing builds equality.**
- **Sharing builds a confident community’.**

This evaluation report highlights the benefits of the Teacher Exchange Scheme; it shows that it can work; and that it is an effective model. Implementation of the Scheme within the education system across the region could play an important role in helping to achieve priorities in the programme for government and objectives of the Department of Education. Shared Education and the Teacher Exchange Scheme can improve educational standards, develop community cohesion and build sustainable integrative communities. Fermanagh will be a better place for it.



Frank McManus

Chairperson
The Fermanagh Trust

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is a report on the review of The Fermanagh Trust Shared Education - Teacher Exchange Scheme [the Scheme] which operated in six partnerships in 16 primary schools in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, and one in the Republic of Ireland during the 2012/13 academic year. The Scheme is one strand of the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (SEP). The other strands include shared classes and partnership building.

The Scheme involved schools from one managing authority providing a teacher for a school, or schools, from a different managing authority to that of their own. The aim of the Scheme is to help strengthen curriculum delivery in the partner school/s, based upon identified needs in the host school, using relevant teaching expertise from the donor school. Most typically this saw a teacher from a maintained school teaching in a controlled school with a reciprocal arrangement of a teacher from the controlled school teaching in the maintained school. The Scheme also included the integrated sector and one school under Church of Ireland management in the Republic of Ireland.

Overall, 14 shared teachers provided support on a cross-sectoral basis. The subject focus and timetable of the shared /exchange teacher varied across the partnerships.

The Review Brief

The review brief was *'to capture the impact of the Teacher Exchanges on the schools involved, in case-study format and produce an overall briefing paper for wider dissemination'*.

To this end, the review considered the impact of the Scheme on each partnership in the following key educational areas:

- **teaching and learning;**
- **achievement and standards; and**
- **leadership and management.**

Cognisance was also taken of the relevance of the Scheme on current issues, including the broader aims of shared education, school sustainability and area planning.

Partnerships in the Scheme

The partnerships comprised of two, three or four schools. The schools within each partnership encompassed differing employing authorities, namely maintained primary [M], controlled primary [C] or integrated primary. One school, under Church of Ireland management, is located in County Cavan in the Irish Republic.

SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW FINDINGS

Teaching and Learning

- The available evidence indicates that programmes are relevant, well planned, in line with the identified needs of individual schools and provide continuity and progression in the children's learning.
- The available evidence indicates that the shared teachers deliver stimulating, enjoyable and relevant learning experiences which benefit the children. In most instances this was enhanced through team teaching and the effective use of resources.
- The available evidence indicates that teaching and learning is suitably monitored and evaluated. Lessons are evaluated in terms of the intended learning outcomes and the information used well to assist with subsequent planning.
- In a wider context, provision is monitored, usually by the principal and/or the relevant co-ordinator, as part of the school's self-evaluative processes, and the outcomes discussed with the shared teacher and used to inform the further development of the programme.

Achievements and Standards

- The available evidence indicates that the children's learning benefited from the Scheme. In all subject areas improvements were noted. In some subject areas there were significant gains, especially, for instance, in music where the children had limited prior skills or knowledge.
- Teachers have a clear expectation of improvement in subject areas where learning can be directly measured through quantitative data such as standardised scores. While in these instances it is valid to say that the Scheme is a very significant factor in any measured improvements, it cannot be said that it is the single attributable factor.
- Other gains noted included the added confidence and motivation of the children and the high levels of enjoyment shown by them.

Leadership and Management

- The available evidence indicates that, in all schools, the Scheme has had a very significant and valuable impact on management and leadership issues.
- School Development Plans and accompanying action plans appropriately address and support the respective programmes.
- A range of whole-school evaluation strategies supports a process of ongoing self-evaluation and feeds into each school's SDP and their programme for improvement.
- In a number of partnerships, programmes of work have been drawn up and will provide valuable whole-school guidance in important aspects of each school's work.
- Very significant benefits are evident in terms of staff development. Shared teachers report an increased sense of responsibility and enhanced subject awareness. Class teachers see themselves up-skilled and more confident and competent in areas where previously they felt less secure.
- Very often, the amount of time to plan and deliver programmes was under-estimated and shared teachers found themselves under pressure to organise and monitor their work.

Promoting the aims and values of Shared Education

- The available evidence indicates that the Scheme has enhanced all of the aims and values of Shared Education.
- There are significant collaborations which bring about very clear benefits to the learning and educational outcomes of the children and which support the professional development of the shared teachers and other members of the teaching staff.
- Though less well documented than educational imperatives, the findings show that other important shared education values are evident within the Scheme. These include equality of opportunity, developing good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.
- There is a very clear sense of mutual support and respect across all the partnerships. In all schools there is a greater awareness of the value of collaboration and an increasing dependency on one another.

Shared Education in Broader Policy Context

- Small schools are under pressure as DE pursues its vision of an estate of educationally and financially sustainable schools planned on an area basis, with a focus on sharing and collaboration.
- The building of professional and community relationships through shared classes of the SEP and the further impetus generated through the teacher exchanges, have forged strong and significant links among groups of schools.
- For the many schools where local area solutions are to be pursued, consideration should be given to the benefits gained from the Scheme and the extent to which the Scheme can be further developed to support a shared education model.

Curriculum Entitlement

- The available evidence indicates that participation in the Scheme significantly helps small schools address many of the difficulties they face in delivering a full and balanced curriculum.
- The Scheme has helped raise standards and increase access and equity for learners, and by so doing supports the DE vision of ‘every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.’

Challenges

- Most schools encountered difficulties in the delivery of the Scheme. In the main these were organisational matters which were resolved through time.
- Most of the shared teachers report insufficient non-contact time. Future arrangements should include additional planning time before and during the programme.
- There should be greater clarity in employment and payment arrangements.

CONCLUSIONS

The teacher exchange scheme, as part of the SEP, has been a very worthwhile and important initiative.

Across all 17 schools:

- Teaching and learning has been enhanced.
- There are improvements in the children's standards and achievements.
- The shared teachers have benefited from significant professional development.
- Class teachers are up-skilled in areas of the curriculum where previously they felt less secure.
- At a whole school level important areas of the curriculum are better organised, resourced and delivered.
- The good relationships, at all levels, that have been developed through shared classes, as part of the SEP, are further strengthened.
- In addition to educational benefits, the Scheme has promoted, to a greater or lesser extent, equality of opportunity, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

In relation to small schools:

- The Scheme has shown that, through collaborations, small schools can deliver all of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and provide access of opportunity to all learners.
- At a time when the sustainability of small schools is being examined, shared education offers a model of provision in the context of area planning.
- Where shared education is seen as an area solution to rationalisation, it is necessary for the impetus to come from the schools and the community they serve.

THE WAY FORWARD

The benefits of the Scheme and some points for consideration are detailed throughout the review and summarised in the Conclusion.

To build on the success of the Scheme, the following recommendations are made:

- The Scheme, subject to funding, should be developed further to include more schools.
- The aims and objectives of a partnership should clearly meet the principles of shared education.
- Priority should be given to small schools, particularly those which are the subject of local area solutions.
- If sufficient funding is available, the Scheme should also include larger schools.
- Shared teachers should be identified from within the permanent staffing of the partnership schools, rather than from an external appointment.
- Where an external appointment is necessary to meet a specific area of expertise, the processes for recruitment, selection, employment and payment should be easily managed.
- All paperwork relating to applications, monitoring, evaluating and accounting should be concise and easily managed.
- A monitoring report should be submitted mid-year to the sponsoring body to outline how the aims and objectives of the partnership are being addressed.
- Boards of governors should be involved at all stages of the process.
- An evaluation of the year's work should be completed by each partnership. The evaluation should include information on the extent to which the educational and non-educational objectives of the programme have been met.

Evaluation of The Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Teacher Exchange Scheme

1.0 Introduction

This is a report on the review of The Fermanagh Trust Shared Education - Teacher Exchange Scheme [the Scheme] which operated in six partnerships in 16 primary schools in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, and one in the Republic of Ireland during the 2012/13 academic year. The Scheme is one strand of the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme (SEP). The other strands include shared classes and partnership building.

The Scheme involved schools from one managing authority providing a teacher for a school, or schools, from a different managing authority to that of their own. The aim of the Scheme is to help strengthen curriculum delivery in the partner school/s, based upon identified needs in the host school, using relevant teaching expertise from the donor school. Most typically this saw a teacher from a maintained school teaching in a controlled school with a reciprocal arrangement of a teacher from the controlled school teaching in the maintained school. The Scheme also included the integrated sector and one school under Church of Ireland management in the Republic of Ireland.

Overall, 14 shared teachers provided support on a cross-sectoral basis. The subject focus and timetable of the shared /exchange teacher varied across the partnerships.

The report has two main elements:

- **An overall evaluation of the Scheme; and**
- **A case study of each of the six partnerships.**

In addition, a number of appendices provide supporting information.

2.0 Background

The Fermanagh Trust [the Trust] was formally constituted in September 1995 ‘to promote any charitable purpose and to support initiatives, which lead to social and community development in the County and hinterlands of Fermanagh.’ The Trust’s mission is ‘to build a County-wide Community Foundation which supports charitable endeavour, citizenship and peace building at local level’.

To meet these ends the Trust promotes, organises, funds and evaluates a wide range of initiatives. These include educational programmes, and primarily the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme [SEP], established in 2009 to provide opportunities for primary and post-primary schools in Fermanagh to explore cross-sectoral /cross community initiatives that will benefit schools and communities. Its aim is to develop linkages between schools from different sectors and to build bridges between the two main communities, contributing to increased understanding and mutual respect and helping to build more cohesive and sustainable communities in Fermanagh.

Strand A of the SEP, which supported cross-sectoral shared classes, was rolled out during the 2009/2010 school year and, within the primary sector, provided opportunities for controlled, maintained or integrated schools to come together to engage in joint activities. The table below shows the number of children, year on year, involved in the programme.

| YEAR | PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 2009 – 2010 | 1,685 |
| 2010 – 2011 | 2,404 |
| 2011 – 2012 | 2,645 |
| 2012 - 2013 | 3,781 |

Throughout this period, schools identified curricular priorities for which appropriate shared classes and joint activities were organised. In addition, all participating schools engaged in the Respecting Difference Programme. Moreover, participating schools engaged in Partnership Building activities including shared training sessions, programmes for parents and joint meetings of boards of governors.

Similar activities took place in the post-primary sector, with a corresponding growth of 202 to 1,069 participating pupils over the same period.

An independent evaluation of Year One [2009/2010] of Strand A was carried out. The findings, together with relevant newsletters relating to the activities and participating schools within Phase A can be found at www.fermanaghtrust.org.

3.0 The Rationale for Shared Teachers / Teacher Exchanges

3.1 Context

The context for the Teacher Exchange Scheme is set out in the Trust's literature on the Programme.

'Schools are coming under increasing pressure to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum within tighter budgets. The Department of Education [DE] has conducted viability audits, which reported on:

- the financial viability of schools;
- enrolment trends; and
- educational outcomes

Of the 44 primary schools in Fermanagh [2011/12], 28 [64%] were found to be experiencing 'stress' in one or more of these areas. An area planning process is underway, which will help determine the future of the schools' estate for the next three to four decades. A total of 24 primary schools [54%] do not meet the enrolment criterion of 105 pupils as set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy [DE 2009]'

3.2 Piloting New Sharing Arrangements

'Sharing staff between schools can widen the portfolio and repertoire of teaching expertise available to individual schools, thereby enhancing the educational opportunities for pupils, and potentially creating economies for schools in the medium to long term.'

3.3 Sharing Existing Teachers

'The emphasis was on partnerships to share existing staff [on a cross-sectoral basis] to meet the needs of the respective partner schools. The rationale for this included the following:

- The teachers' experience of working across the sectors will be retained within the schools and the partnership after the funding ends. The retained experience has greater potential to continue to have an impact than had an external, shared teacher been employed.
- The sharing of an existing teacher can potentially contribute more to the aims and objectives of the Shared Education Programme by creating higher levels of awareness of cross-sectoral school collaboration among pupils, parents, governors and wider school communities. This should have a greater impact in developing a greater understanding about what is possible in terms of cross-community sharing.
- The sharing of existing teachers within the partnership has a greater likelihood of sustainability after the funding ceases.'

4.0 Evaluation of the Scheme

4.1 The Review Brief

The review brief was ‘to capture the impact of the Shared Teachers / Teacher Exchanges on the schools involved, in case-study format and produce an overall briefing paper for wider dissemination’.

To this end, the review considered the impact of the Scheme on each partnership in the following key educational areas:

- **teaching and learning;**
- **achievement and standards; and**
- **leadership and management.**

Cognisance was also taken of the relevance of the Scheme on current issues, including the broader aims of shared education, school sustainability and area planning.

4.2 Area Planning

In paragraph 3.1 reference is made to an enrolment stress in the majority of the primary schools in the county that do not meet the enrolment criterion of 105 pupils as set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy [DE 2009.]

In March 2013 the document ‘Putting Pupils First: Shaping Our Future – Draft WELB Strategic Area Plan for Primary Schools’ was published. It considered the future of the WELB schools’ estate. This document considered viability issues and stated ‘there is a need to change from the existing network of schools to one that is sustainable. Area Planning is the process through which such a network will be developed.’

Whilst the WELB document acknowledges that individual schools have individual circumstances, an initial approach to the Area Planning process is the identification of three categories within which to place all schools:

- **no change proposed at present**
- **local area solution to be explored**
- **managing authority has approved action**

An important element of this report, therefore, is to consider the extent to which the Scheme impacts upon those schools where a local area solution is to be explored. Eleven of the 17 schools within the Scheme are in this category.

5.0 Partnerships in the Scheme

The partnerships comprised of two, three or four schools. The schools within each partnership encompassed differing employing authorities, namely maintained primary [M], controlled primary [C] or integrated primary, as shown below.

One school, under Church of Ireland management, is located in County Cavan in the Republic of Ireland. The six partnerships are listed in the following table.

| PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED IN THE SHARED TEACHER / TEACHER EXCHANGE SCHEME | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Partnership 1 | St Mary's MPS, Teemore Fairgreen National School (C of I), Belturbet, Co Cavan |
| Partnership 2 | St Macartan's MPS, Magheraveely Aghadrumsee CPS |
| Partnership 3 | Killyhommon MPS Derrygonnelly CPS |
| Partnership 4 | St John the Baptist MPS, Roscor St Martin's MPS, Garrison Belleek CPS St Davog's MPS, Belleek |
| Partnership 5 | St Mary's MPS, Newtownbutler Newtownbutler CPS St Joseph's MPS, Donagh |
| Partnership 6 | Enniskillen Integrated PS Holy Trinity MPS Jones Memorial CPS Lisbellaw CPS |

6.0 Methodology

The review process entailed gathering and evaluating evidence from all key stakeholders. The total of six partnerships involved 17 schools and 14 shared teachers.

All of the principals and all the shared teachers completed an on-line questionnaire [see Appendices 1 and 2]; meetings were held with the principals of each partnership [six meetings], a single meeting was held with all of the shared teachers; and 'reflections' were gathered from children, parents, teachers and governors of each school to contribute to the case studies.

In addition, the evaluator made school visits to observe a sample of the shared teacher activities.

The following sections of the Report provide the findings of the reviews.

7.0 Review Findings: Educational Benefits

This section considers the impact of the Shared Teacher / Teacher Exchange Scheme on:

- Teaching and Learning
- Achievement and Standards and
- Leadership and Management

7.1 Teaching and Learning

All schools report improvements in provision. While the subject focus of the shared teaching varies across the schools, all teachers and principals state that there have been improvements to the quality of teaching, the children's experiences and their learning.

The Scheme embraced a wide range of subject areas. These included Numeracy, The World Around Us [Geography, History and Science], ICT, Physical Education, Irish and Music. In addition, a number of partnerships included special needs support in their programme.

All schools, generally as part of their School Development Plan, had identified an area, or areas, of provision which required further development. In this regard, the use of the shared teacher had two very clear objectives: firstly to provide enhanced learning experiences for the children; and secondly, to provide opportunities for all staff members to gain greater competence and confidence in the targeted subject area. The capacity building of other teachers was seen as a key element of the Scheme as it provided the basis for continued good practice in the target area if, or when, the Scheme ends. This important aspect is considered in Section 7.3, Leadership and Management.

7.1.1. Planning

Initial planning procedures varied according to the size of individual schools and the number of schools in each partnership. For example, a partnership of two small schools organised a straightforward one-day-per-week teacher exchange, while a partnership of four large schools engaged upon detailed timetabling arrangements for two teachers, including one who had been newly appointed to fulfil the role. In another partnership of four schools, three teachers had to be organised, and shared classes had to be timetabled into the ICT suite of a local post-primary school.

In all instances preliminary meetings were held to agree details such as the focus of the teaching, timetabling, resourcing, role of the class teacher and monitoring and evaluating procedures. These meetings were usually between the shared teacher, the principal, co-ordinators and the class teachers, and involved the scrutiny of schemes of work and planners in order to identify and agree the topics or units of work to be delivered. One shared teacher noted, *'class teachers provided an overview of the topics they generally cover throughout the year for me to develop and work on, ensuring all skills were covered from Foundation through to Key Stage Two. This helped ensure progression of skills throughout the school, as well as making sure there were no overlaps of topics from one year to the next.'* In another example, a principal told how the analysis of standardised scores in mathematics had identified the need for a focus on problem-solving and mental maths strategies. In a further instance, the shared teacher reported, *'I planned lessons for each class in turn, trying to incorporate all areas of music, including singing,*

rhythm and pitch and listening.' One of the schools in a cross-border partnership adapted guidance material from the other jurisdiction for their own use. The principal reported, *'we are now using the ICT accreditation document as a framework for developing our own ICT strategy. This has been invaluable.'*

The available evidence indicates that programmes are relevant, well planned, in line with the identified needs of individual schools and provide continuity and progression in the children's learning.

7.1.2. Provision

The frequency of individual class contact varies across the partnerships: most classes receive one session each week from the shared teacher; in one instance the contact is fortnightly.

Lessons were thoroughly planned and consideration consistently given to the age and ability of the children. Across all partnerships, the children report that they enjoy input from someone other than their class teacher, especially when the focus is active learning. In one instance a child told the evaluator, *'I can't wait for Miss M to come. Her lessons are always good fun because we are doing things and not just working.'*

A feature of the provision was the effective use of resources to support learning. One shared teacher observed, *'I generate various PowerPoint presentations and other resources to make the mental maths sessions fun, enjoyable and interactive, and activities are based on current interests of the children.'* In another partnership, the shared teacher availed of the ICT facilities in the local post primary computer suite to work with classes on ICT accreditation activities.

Many lessons included effective cross-curricular links. One shared teacher noted, *'I also felt that children benefitted from seeing music lessons connected to other area of the curriculum eg Y3/4 linked their linguistic phonics spelling with a poem which was then set to music and performed by the class.'* In another instance the evaluator accompanied a Y2 class on an out-of-school visit to observe an activity which effectively linked science, art and literacy.

Three partnerships included SEN support as an element of their programme. Clear benefits to the children were identified, including increased opportunities for withdrawal sessions and one-to-one support to help meet the targets on Individual Education Plans [IEPs], and the drawing up of banks of practical activities, games and ICT applications to support the children's learning. Almost always the shared teacher and the class teacher worked together in a team teaching situation. This had the immediate benefit of two teachers supporting the children's learning. One shared teacher notes, *'as both teachers were working together it enabled us to work with target groups and support their learning, often on a one-to-one basis.'* Another supported this view, *'having two teachers in the room helped ensure that all children were supported and pushed to reach their full potential.'*

Shared teachers who provided SEN support liaised closely with the class teacher. One shared teacher observed, *'through discussion with class teachers I was able to ensure that the work I was completing with the children was further consolidated through class activities.'*

The available evidence indicates that the shared teachers deliver stimulating, enjoyable and relevant learning experiences which benefit the children. In most instances this was enhanced through team teaching and the effective use of resources.

7.1.3. *Monitoring and Evaluation of Provision*

Significant emphasis is placed on monitoring and evaluating the quality of the children's experiences. In all partnerships time is set aside to review the effectiveness of the shared teacher and make changes as required. One teacher noted, *'I found I had too much content for the Y1's so I had to modify my planning accordingly.'* In another example the class teacher observed, *'Mrs A and I evaluated our team teaching lesson after each session. We consulted our plan and highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons to inform our planning for the next session.'* In another example of lesson evaluations, a shared teacher noted, *'class teachers were constantly monitoring and evaluating lessons. They would discuss how they could improve lessons to add an alternative approach or just take it a step further.'*

In partnerships giving ICT support, the requirements within the new lines of progression for ICT provided a detailed checklist of progress. In one instance, individual portfolios of work were established for Y3/5/6, over and above those required for Y4 and 7, and formed the basis of the evaluation of the children's skills development.

Where special needs support was an element of a partnership, there was focused target setting, usually set within individual education plans [IEPs]. *One shared teacher noted, 'At the beginning of term children were tested to establish a base-line and from this targets were identified. The targets were carefully monitored and assessed to ensure they were met or needed to be revised.'*

Monitoring and evaluating processes operated at a whole school level. These included ongoing discussions between team teaching partners, lesson observations by the principal and co-ordinators, written evaluations by the shared teachers and, where appropriate, the analysis of informal and formal assessment data. One principal stated, *'delivery is monitored through monthly evaluations of tasks undertaken, and regular staff discussions with the shared teacher and with the SMT.'*

In some instances, as part of the school's self-evaluation procedures, the impact of the Scheme was considered by the Board of Governors in the context of school development planning and the evaluation of relevant action plans.

The available evidence indicates that teaching and learning is suitably monitored and evaluated. Lessons are evaluated in terms of the intended learning outcomes and the information used well to assist with subsequent planning.

In a wider context, provision is monitored, usually by the principal and/or the relevant co-ordinator, as part of the school's self-evaluative processes, and the outcomes discussed with the shared teacher and used to inform the further development of the programme.

7.2 Achievements and Standards

By virtue of addressing an identified need, the focus of provision was usually something new or something presented in a different way. One class teacher noted, *'the children were having new experiences and learning and developing skills which they had not previously had. They were always very willing to learn new things.'*

Looking at the range of subjects delivered during the programme, the following improvements in the children's learning were reported:

7.2.1. Music

Five partnerships identified music as an area for development. Across all the schools the principals and teachers report significant benefits for the children. In all cases, the shared teachers delivered programmes in line with subject requirements. The children's music-making included singing and instrumental work which frequently resulted in performances at school concerts and participation at local music festivals. One shared teacher reports, *'our joint choir won first prize in Fermanagh Feis and pupils from both schools entered solo singing classes, achieving great success.'* Children developed their music understanding and appreciation through notation, awareness of rhythm, pitch and tempo, simple composition and being introduced to a variety of music forms. One child observed, *'I liked doing music with Mrs D because I learnt how to play the recorder. She also told us how to sing South African songs.'*

Most teachers identified the added social benefits brought about by music: one commented on a link with PDMU *'through music, pupils are developing greater confidence and self-esteem,'* while a principal noted, *'for all children the music has been a new and refreshing programme of work, allowing them to explore music-making and develop their own creativity and confidence in a way they had not done before.'*

A number of teachers reported positive feedback from the children and parents. A shared music teacher noted, *'parents are pleased that their children are getting the opportunity to learn to read music and put this knowledge into practice through learning the recorder and bells.'*

7.2.2. Numeracy

Based on Progress in Mathematics [PIM] scores, two schools in a four school partnership identified the need for further work in aspects of numeracy, namely mental maths and problem solving. A third school also availed of the shared teacher and reported clear benefits from their involvement. The fourth school provided the shared teacher. Most of the support was given in classes from Y2 to Y7, with the children receiving focused activities to help develop flexibility and quick recall in mental maths, and to further develop problem-solving strategies; some time was also given to withdrawal support in numeracy for individuals or small groups. Improvements in the children's learning noted to date include an all round greater accuracy and quicker recall of basic number facts, flexibility in maths thinking, an increased maths vocabulary and the development of problem-solving strategies. In addition, the withdrawal support has proved worthwhile, as observed by the shared teacher, *'in the small withdrawal groups I can see huge improvement among the children over the last few months.'*

While general improvements are evident, the three schools will carefully monitor the outcomes of Progress In Maths [PIM] testing later in the third term. There is a clear expectation that the

focused input over the year will see improved scores, particularly in number and problem-solving. While it is difficult to attribute improvement to one single factor when others may be present, the teachers in all three schools are confident that standards in numeracy will improve this year, and that this will be as a direct result of the work of the shared teacher. As well as improvements in learning, the children's show a more positive attitude to their work. A class teacher notes, *'the children have become more confident with their maths and have developed a greater interest in the subject.'*

7.2.3. ICT

Four partnerships included ICT in their programmes. One partnership, in addition to using their own facilities, availed of the computer suite at a local post-primary school. This larger, better resourced facility had the added benefit of being able to accommodate shared classes. The in-house expertise was also valued, as the shared teacher noted, *'their ICT co-ordinator helped with some software problems, including making contact with C2K to resolve a couple technical difficulties.'*

Specific aspects of ICT were identified for development within each partnership. In all instances these addressed the requirements of the Using ICT Levels of Progression and the CCEA ICT Accreditation Scheme. All of the schools report improvements in the children's learning, including their ability to apply their skills to other subject areas: one class teacher noted, *'we have observed a huge improvement in the standard of the children's ICT work in other classroom situations, as they utilise and transfer skills to other curricular areas.'*

A number of schools report the delivery of a much more coherent and better planned ICT programme: one principal stated, *'one of the significant successes is that particular tasks are now being addressed in different year bands, so that the workload for accreditation is not left to Y4 and 7, but that there is instead, steady and purposeful progress across the year bands.'*

Improvements in ICT skills and application are clearly evident: one principal stated, *'all Y7 children will achieve Level 4 in the ICT Accreditation Scheme. Most, if not all, Y4 children will gain Level 2. This will be the first time that they have taken part in the ICT scheme.'* In addition, all schools make reference to increased levels of confidence shown by the children in their understanding and use of ICT applications. The evaluation of numeracy, above, refers to the difficulty of attributing improvement to one single factor when others may be present. This difficulty pertains here also. Again, though, all schools report on the positive impact of the shared teacher and the higher level of expertise being brought to the subject.

7.2.4. Irish

One school in a two school partnership had been involved in the Primary Languages Programme for a number of years. The focus was Spanish because their preferred option of Irish was unavailable due to a tutor shortage. The school then lost the services of the Spanish tutor when she obtained a permanent position elsewhere. The Scheme provided the opportunity to introduce the children to Irish. Starting from a base-line that the children had no understanding of Irish, the shared teacher drew up detailed scheme of work that could be applied initially to all classes and then modified to suit the progress and age of the children. The shared teacher reports, *'all the pupils started out at a base-line of zero words, and now have a sizeable repertoire of words and phrases – obviously the Y6/7 group having more than the younger children. While it's difficult to quantify the exact amount of Irish learnt, it's fair to say that considerable progress has been made as a result of the programme.'* An important element of the programme was

the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children to learn Irish and the sense of achievement they gained as their vocabulary increased. The principal states, *'the children thoroughly enjoy the classes and look forward to the Irish lessons with Mrs T every week. They are very enthusiastic and responsive.'*

7.2.5. Physical Education

In a two school partnership one of the shared teachers delivered PE and ICT lessons to both classes in a two-teacher school. The PE element focused on dance, specifically Zumba, for which the teacher is a qualified trainer. The sessions were beneficial and well-received. The principal observed, *'the Zumba lessons have been extremely enjoyable, and have provided a positive and fun method of encouraging the children to become more active, one of the major priorities in our Health Promoting Strategy. The children have learned a wide repertoire of Zumba routines, steps and dances – it's great!'*

7.2.6. The World Around Us

This programme was delivered in one school within the partnership of four large schools. The emphasis was on good practice lessons delivered in a team teaching model to help bring about sustainable improvements to current practice. The objective was the development of a more practically focused WAU programme feeding in to a revised scheme of work for WAU: the principal noted: *'by the end of the year we will therefore have a more comprehensive WAU scheme of work for the school.'*

The shared teacher was timetabled throughout the school, teaching fortnightly in the three or four classes of each year group. The emphasis was on work of a less formal nature: the shared teacher noted, *'the topics are definitely more practical with less focus on written work; there is a fresh, practical, hands-on approach to WAU.'* This approach was observed by the evaluator during a Y4 lesson which combined the principle of fair-testing with a seed growing activity.

In a subject area which is not formally assessed, a class teacher observed, *'children are constantly on task, enjoying the activity; if their interest and motivation could be assessed there would be clear evidence of improvement.'* This was noted by the evaluator in a Y2 activity where the children engaged with enthusiasm and concentration on a paired nature activity. While there was much evidence of engagement and interest in the class activities and the learning opportunities arising from them, the wider benefit of the programme is being seen by the school more in terms of staff development and whole-school planning.

7.2.7. Special Needs / Literacy

Three partnerships included an element of SEN support in their programme. Support models, such as withdrawal groups, one-to-one instruction and team teaching were mixed and matched according to the needs of individual children and the circumstances within each school. One school identified a target group of Y5 children underachieving in English and Maths: a class teacher stated, *'through testing we found a number of children who had high NRIT scores that did not correlate with their standardised scores in English and Maths. We saw a need to "bridge the gap" and help these children reach their full potential.'* A more specific area of weakness was targeted by team teaching: a class teacher observed, *'Mrs A and I planned a series of lessons around independent writing. My class were finding this difficult and I was eager to get some fresh ideas and support when teaching writing skills.'* Other support was focused on needs identified in IEPs and psychologists' reports. In all instances there was close liaison between the

shared teacher, the class teacher and the SEN co-ordinator [SENCO]: a shared teacher noted, *'I worked alongside SENCOs and class teachers to target areas of the curriculum that these children needed the extra support with, and then we monitored the outcomes.'*

All schools reported improvements in the children's learning as individual or class needs were addressed. One principal noted: *'these sessions have helped to raise the standard of work these children produce and have helped them develop greater confidence and self-esteem. They also enabled children to achieve the targets set out in their IEPs etc.'* This view was endorsed by a shared teacher who noted, *'children gained greatly from the opportunity to have 1:1 support. It's apparent from their class work that they have made good progress in the areas identified for improvement.'* Another principal noted, *'there has been an improvement in literacy skills among focus groups as evidenced in word recognition and spelling.'* The benefits have also been noted by children: one girl stated, *'Miss M has helped me with my numbers and I think I'm getting better at maths.'*

The available evidence indicates that the children's learning benefited from the Scheme. In all subject areas improvements were noted. In some subject areas there were significant gains, especially, for instance, in music where the children had limited prior skills or knowledge.

Teachers have a clear expectation of improvement in subject areas where learning can be directly measured through quantitative data such as standardised scores. While in these instances it is valid to say that the Scheme is a very significant factor in any measured improvements; it cannot be said that it is the single attributable factor.

Other gains noted included the added confidence and motivation of the children and the high levels of enjoyment shown by them.

7.3. Leadership and Management

There is very strong and consistent view from the partnerships that the Scheme has significantly benefited all schools in terms of leadership and management. This is evidenced in a number of ways, including school development planning, self-evaluation and staff development.

7.3.1. School Development Planning

In their application to be part of the Scheme, each partnership was required to state the aims and objectives of their participation. In many instances principals were able to address areas identified in the School Development Plan [SPD], while on other occasions Plans had to be revised in the light of the available expertise and the priorities of other schools in the partnership. Other factors to impact on the SDP included the identification of roles and responsibilities within each partnership, financial planning, the organisation of training days, and the setting up of procedures to monitor and evaluate the programme. All of this whole-school planning brought about greater and more focused liaison among the schools: one principal noted, *'increased*

collaboration between the principals in order to co-ordinate the programme has led to closer relationships, and in turn to increased sharing of good practice.' This long term benefit at a strategic level is regarded as a key strength of the Scheme: a principal noted, *'shared education has become more integral to the schools' planning, monitoring and evaluating as there is a direct impact on teaching and learning and in raising standards.'*

A further benefit for many schools, and identified in some SDPs, has been the drawing together of subject guidance, both in terms of lesson plans and schemes of work. In one school the shared teacher worked closely with a newly-appointed co-ordinator to produce whole-school subject guidance: the shared teacher noted, *'working closely with the WAU co-ordinator, all my work and planning have been passed on to her to manage and this will form the basis of the WAU scheme of work.'*

Linked to this has been the acquisition and effective use of additional resources to support learning. One shared teacher reports, *'every school receives an update of all my resources on monthly basis as I upload all the resources I use onto their shared network area on the computer system, which includes notes on how they are used or adapted to suit various classes.'*

7.3.2. Self-Evaluation

Most schools report detailed procedures to measure the impact of the Scheme. These include monthly evaluations by the shared teachers; meetings, as appropriate, between the shared teachers, class teachers, co-ordinators and principals; feedback from children and parents; the measurement of improvement from base-line positions; scrutiny of targets in IEPs; analysis of school data such as standardised scores; and building up of portfolios of work. Information from these sources is used to measure improvements in the children's experiences and in their learning and to help determine priorities for subsequent school development. In addition, a number of partnerships refer to the important role of the board of governors, including instances of shared meetings.

7.3.3. Staff Development

All schools report very significant benefits in terms of staff development. This is evident at two levels: the professional development of the shared teachers, and the up-skilling and capacity-building of class teachers and classroom assistants.

(a) Shared teachers

Generally, shared teachers report that their experiences have been enjoyable and professionally rewarding: one shared teacher stated, *'it's so pleasing to know you are making a big difference to the children's learning.'* Many refer to their own professional development and report a variety of gains. These include improved organisational skills and time management; improved writing and reporting procedures and monitoring and evaluating strategies; and confidence to lead a subject and teach alongside others. In addition, most of the shared teachers referred to the need to be aware of all developments in their subject area: one shared teacher noted, *'this has widened my professional development; my subject knowledge of ICT has increased as it involved much more specific planning for year groups. I also had to ensure I was well organised in order for lessons to be a success.'*

The challenges of delivering effective lessons to different classes in a different school prompted one shared teacher to observe, *'this has made me reflect on how I may have become complacent in my music teaching in my own school. I've now revised the schemes of work to include new resources, modern technology and packages such as Sibelius to compose and record my work.'*

While shared teachers are very positive about their experiences, a significant number comment on the lack of time to plan, prepare and evaluate their work. One shared teacher, on a one day each week exchange pointed out, *'not only do I have to plan lessons for the four classes in the other school, I have to prepare differentiated work for the sub teacher for the four year groups in my own class.'* In the large school partnership, the teacher shared over three schools noted, *'I can find myself planning 10 different lessons to deliver in one day, pitched for a particular class, topic or child to ensure that they are fully benefiting and reaching their full potential.'* Another shared teacher supported this position, *'time is limited, yet in my role of shared music teacher, so much planning time is demanded to disseminate this good practice effectively.'* **This recurring theme from shared teachers points up the importance of building in sufficient planning time for any future programmes.**

(b) Class teachers and classroom assistants

All schools reported significant benefits to class teachers, particularly from team teaching situations. In nearly all instances, shared teachers delivered their programme in the presence of the class teacher. On most occasions this was done through team teaching; at other times the class teacher observed the lesson and made notes for future reference. The benefits were especially evident in subjects such as ICT and music where the class teacher felt particularly insecure. One shared teacher noted, *'the teachers have gained new skills in ICT, in particular in PowerPoint. I have shown them how to create presentations using music, animation and motion paths. They are now proudly creating their own presentations.'* Another shared teacher observed, *'teachers have observed each lesson and are beginning to feel more confident in delivering the music curriculum.'* One principal summed up the overall benefits to the partnership, *'shared teachers were given opportunities to develop their areas of expertise, and through this other teachers have been able to take these skills on board, offering an opportunity for everyone to enhance their classroom practice.'*

There are a number of examples where the shared teacher has introduced other teachers to external initiatives. One principal noted *'in our SEN work, Miss M has accessed a range of staff development programmes including Numeracy Recovery to support the children's learning.'* Another principal noted, *'in ICT we have seen an increased level of use on our Education City account and our use of Learning NI has increased.'*

The drawing up of guidance material, including the development of resources, has provided further benefits to class teachers. Usually the individual lesson plans drawn up by the shared teacher are put together to form detailed whole-school guidance. One shared teacher stated, *'by the end of the year I will have developed a mental maths scheme / plan of work which will indicate the lessons, activities and resources for each month. This will be available for each school, including my own.'* This was endorsed by another shared teacher, *'by the end of the project we will have schemes of work based around topics which can be used by all teachers in both schools.'* One principal described the long-term benefits, *'teachers have observed modelled lessons and now have a scheme of work to guide them in the future.'*

Classroom assistants have also benefited from the Scheme. In many instances they worked alongside the shared teacher or observed lessons. One shared teacher noted: *'during the lesson the classroom assistant was able to see new software being used and then help the children apply it to their topic.'* The greater involvement of classroom assistants in SEN lessons was also noted by a shared teacher, *'in the withdrawal group Mrs C was able to use the new approaches she had observed in a previous session.'*

A very comprehensive staff development day was held centrally for all the teachers and classroom assistants of the partnership of the four large schools. The focus of the day was mental maths and problem-solving.

The available evidence indicates that, in all schools, the Scheme has had a very significant and valuable impact on management and leadership issues. School Development Plans and accompanying action plans appropriately address and support the respective programmes.

A range of whole-school evaluation strategies supports a process of ongoing self-evaluation and feeds into each school's SDP and their programme for improvement.

In a number of partnerships, programmes of work have been drawn up and will provide valuable whole-school guidance in important aspects of each school's work.

Very significant benefits are evident in terms of staff development. Shared teachers report an increased sense of responsibility and enhanced subject awareness. Class teachers see themselves up-skilled and more confident and competent in areas where previously they felt less secure.

Very often, the amount of time to plan and deliver programmes is under-estimated and shared teachers find themselves under pressure to organise and monitor their work.

8.0 Congruency with the Aims of Shared Education

In addition to delivering educational benefits for learners and promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, the objectives of shared education include promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

This section of the report examines how the Shared Teacher / Teacher Exchange Scheme contributes to these additional objectives of shared education.

8.1 *Aims and Objectives of Shared Education*

Shared Education has a higher profile than ever as a result of the recently published report 'Advancing Shared Education' by the Ministerial Advisory Group (March 2013). The report sets out terms of reference, provides definitions, sets the work in context, and makes a total of 20 recommendations.

Two definitions in the report (Paragraph 7.2 pages 103 & 104) are pertinent to the review of the Shared Teacher Scheme:

Shared Education:

'shared education involves two or more schools from different sectors working in collaboration with the aim of delivering educational benefits to learners, promoting the efficient and effective use of resources, and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.'

Collaboration:

While the Ministerial Advisory Group considers collaboration to encompass a range of activities schools can be engaged in together, these activities must include two key elements:

- *'teachers across the schools working together, whether that be in relation to training and professional development activities or curriculum planning and the delivery of lessons; and*
- *children from across those schools actively learning together through face-to-face interaction, whether that is working together on specific projects or through participation in same classes and/or the same sporting and extra-curricular activities.'*

[Note: The Advisory Group's report states that occasions when teachers come together from different schools for the purposes of professional development does not count, in itself, as an example of 'shared education.' Similarly, schools that bring children together for isolated events, such as a school quiz or Christmas carol singing, also does not count, in itself, as 'shared education.']

In the context of the definition of Shared Education, the review findings show that all the partnerships operate within a collaborative model on a cross-sectoral basis; each has at least two management types present.

In the context of the definition of collaboration, the review findings show that all schools have teachers working together and most have occasions when the children are also.

The findings set out in Section 7 above, provide detailed evidence of the many educational benefits individual learners, teachers and schools accrue from the Scheme. In summary, these relate to enhanced teaching and learning experiences, improvements in standards and achievements and the professional development of teachers. In addition, the efficient and effective use of resources is clearly evidenced in the identification and use of teacher expertise across the schools.

There is evidence in the review that those Shared Education objectives, which are in addition to the educational objectives, are being met. These are defined, above, as those promoting:

- equality of opportunity,
- good relations,
- equality of identity,
- respect for diversity and community cohesion.

The main findings are provided in the following pages.

8.2 Promoting Equality of Opportunity

All partnerships reported that an evaluation of the needs of individual schools was the first consideration when identifying programmes for inclusion in the Scheme. One principal noted, *'the principals had already identified areas for development in their own SDP, and also identified areas of expertise in their own schools which they could offer as a subject specialist. These were then discussed and a programme devised to best meet the needs of each school.'* Another principal noted, *'both principals are very much aware of the areas within their individual school which may require support. As a result of much discussion and analysis of each other school's SDP, the curriculum content for the shared teachers was agreed.'*

There was an equitable distribution of shared teacher support across each partnership. At its simplest, a two teacher partnership benefitted from each having one day each week of the expertise of the shared teacher from the other school. In a more complex arrangement in the four large school partnership, one teacher from the maintained sector spend his week across the other three schools, while one teacher from the controlled sector spent all her time in the maintained school. While this appears to be an imbalance, the class and pupil contact time within the schools was the same, given that the maintained school is larger than the other three combined.

One partnership of two schools identified music as a common need. Without a specialist in either school, it was necessary to appoint a part-time teacher. The shared teacher divided her time over the two schools, providing lessons for all classes and training and conducting a joint choir. The arrangement was especially valuable given that the schools were unable to secure external music support due to a number of factors including the size and location of the schools.

In some instances, timetabling arrangements across the partnership caused initial difficulty. These were solved to the satisfaction of all schools: one principal observed, *'agreement had to be reached to suit all three schools which meant timetabling and exchanges were quite complicated. However, the value of the shared work significantly outweighed any inconvenience.'*

8.3 Good Relations

Of benefit to all partnerships were the existing good relationships built up over the last few years through participation in Strand A of SEP, which saw a programme of shared activities and classes, and a series of partnership building events such as joint training, shared school events and joint meetings of boards of governors. One principal noted how the Scheme had given an impetus to further contact, *'without doubt, relationships have further developed through this programme. The organisation, planning and monitoring have required closer links and much more regular meeting between staff.'* The growth of good relations is a consistent theme in the responses from all partnerships: one principal noted, *'the main benefits of our programme include the excellent teacher interaction and the further development of the relationships between the schools.'* This view was endorsed by a shared teacher, *'you cannot put a value on the professional and personal relationships and network of friends that developed from the experience.'*

One shared teacher reported *'being part of the place'* when in a partnership school: another stated, *'if an outsider came in they would not know I'm from the controlled sector and that's the way it should be.'* Good relationships extend beyond the school with parents welcoming and appreciating the input of the shared teachers. In addition, some partnerships have had joint meetings and functions involving the boards of governors.

8.4 Equality of Identity

Shared teachers deliver the same lessons across sectors and draw together guidance material for use in all the schools within the partnership. In the four large school partnership, the shared teacher from the maintained sector delivered lessons to all classes in two controlled and one integrated primary school, while at the same time drawing together a scheme of work for use in all four schools. A shared music teacher noted, *'before the programme, I had drawn together schemes, plans, resources and ideas. I used these as the basis of my work in our partner school.'*

Some partnerships included shared classes. In joint ICT classes held in a local post primary school, children from different schools worked together on ICT accreditation tasks in the well-resourced computer suite. Similarly, shared SEN teachers used the same resources and support strategies across their respective partnerships. One teacher referred to inclusivity of the children's experiences, *'music is inclusive and regardless of ability or background, all children can enjoy these lessons.'*

8.5 Respect for diversity

Opportunities are provided in some schools to introduce the children to different cultures and backgrounds. One shared teacher noted, *'pupils and teachers were able to gain knowledge about different styles of music from different cultural backgrounds, eg children playing by ear using Irish traditional techniques and styles'*. In another example, the children were introduced to a variety of singing styles including African rhythms. This work was enhanced with videos on different cultures. One shared teacher from the controlled sector helped children in a maintained school compose using voice and instrumentation from their own cultural tradition, using fiddles, accordions and tin whistles.

Paradoxically, a number of partnerships report that rather than being aware of diversity, the children see no difference with their partner schools: one principal in the cross-border arrangement noted, *'the benefits and beauty of our partnership is that our children in both schools seem to be, to a large extent, unaware of the diversity of backgrounds.'* Another principal noted: *'across the schools, children are more aware of their 'sameness' rather than their differences.'* This reinforces earlier references to sharing arrangements being perceived as a normal way of working, and building upon the shared classes and activities of Strand A of the SEP and as a dividend of ongoing relationship building.

8.6 Community Cohesion

There is some evidence that the Scheme has had broader community benefits. One partnership, serving a community that has experienced many tensions and divisions, reports that there is a greater willingness by parents to be involved in events in partner schools. A principal reported, *'more bridges are being built with the 'whole' community. We organised a fundraising event and I was overwhelmed by the support of parents from S.'* In another instance a principal reported how the shared teacher had played the piano at the other school's official opening service, an event attended by staff members and governors from the partner school: *'the shared teacher playing a key part in this religious service helped further improve and enhance community relations.'* The successes of joint choirs at local festivals and shared performances also promoted community cohesion. One principal noted: *'up to this year the maintained part of the partnership always travelled to the controlled school to participate in activities. For the first time pupils from the controlled school came to our school. This was a massive development.'*

The available evidence indicates that the Scheme has enhanced all of the aims and values of Shared Education.

There are significant collaborations which bring about very clear benefits to the learning and educational outcomes of the children and which support the professional development of the shared teachers and other members of the teaching staff.

Though less well documented than educational imperatives, the findings show that other important shared education values are evident within the Scheme. These include equality of opportunity, developing good relations, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

There is a very clear sense of mutual support and respect across all the partnerships. In all schools there is a greater awareness of the value of collaboration and an increasing dependency on one another.

9.0. Shared Education in Broader Policy Context

This section considers how the Shared Teacher / Teacher Exchange Scheme can contribute to a number of key government policies and initiatives that are relevant to schools:

- Sustainable Schools Policy
- Putting Pupils First: Shaping Our Future
- Salisbury Report – School funding
- Northern Ireland Curriculum

A number of key government policies and initiatives will significantly impact on the existing schools estate, namely:

9.1 Sustainable Schools Policy

Paragraph 3.1 of the above policy, makes reference to three of the criteria by which the viability of any primary school will be measured. The policy also proposes that a primary school should have a minimum of four teachers and no more than two composite classes in one classroom. The policy has as its vision an estate of educationally sustainable schools planned on an area basis, with a focus on sharing and collaboration.

9.2 Putting Pupils First

Shaping Our Future – Draft WELB Strategic Area Plan for Primary Schools, see paragraph 4.2, reinforces the Sustainable Schools Policy and aims to establish a viable schools' estate through the process of area planning.

9.3 Salisbury Report on School Funding

Smaller schools will receive less funding under the proposed new model. The report states, 'We do not think that, in the current climate of financial austerity, all small schools can continue to be generously funded at the expense of their larger counterparts.' The likely outworking of this is that small school support allowances will be significantly reduced over time, with a corresponding increase in the value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit [AWPU] within the formula funding arrangements.

9.4 Local Area Solutions

As noted in paragraph 3.1, nearly two-thirds of the primary schools in the county [and 11 of the 17 schools in the Scheme] exhibit at least one viability stress and are subject, according to 'Putting Pupils First', to a local area solution. The same document does not define a local area solution, rather it is perceived as a local response set within local circumstances and promoted from within the community. One approach is shared education, and the document reports that WELB and CCMS are, and will, engage with schools and communities which have identified shared education as a possible solution for the future educational provision within their area.

9.5 The Scheme in the context of a shared education solution

The majority of partnerships within the Scheme are affected by the principle of local area solutions. The four large primary schools within one partnership are considered sustainable in relation to enrolment and financial viability; this is not so for most of the remainder. The review has provided strong evidence on the value of well focused collaborative arrangements. This is an important baseline for further development within the context of local area solutions.

Small schools are under pressure as DE pursues its vision of an estate of educationally and financially sustainable schools planned on an area basis, with a focus on sharing and collaboration.

The building of professional and community relationships through Strand A of the SEP and the further impetus generated through Strand B, have forged strong and significant links among groups of schools.

For the many schools where local area solutions are to be pursued, consideration should be given to the benefits gained from the Scheme and the extent to which it can be further developed to support a shared education model.

9.6 Curriculum Entitlement

Small schools are under pressure to deliver the full entitlement of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Difficulties such as a shortage of subject expertise; the pressure and work load on teachers with multiple year group composite classes; and the lack of challenge, extra-curricular opportunities and peer interaction for children are well documented, and are again set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

These difficulties are perceived to work against the Department of Education [DE] vision, ‘every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.’ This vision has two overarching goals, namely

- raising standards for all; and
- increasing access and equity

The findings of this review show that all of the collaborations have resulted in both raising standards and increasing access and equity for the learners. One principal noted, ‘I’m much more aware of the fact that shared education provides the opportunity for small rural schools to ensure we are providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all the children.’ Another principal commented, ‘we can see that shared education has opened doors for us into the curriculum that would not always be possible in a small school like ours.’

The deployment of subject specialists and the consequent capacity building for teachers have helped bring about improvements in the children's outcomes across all the subject areas addressed; and, for objectives which are not directly educational, Section 8 provides significant evidence of increased access and equity across all schools.

The available evidence indicates that participation in the Scheme helps small schools address many of the difficulties they face in delivering a full and balanced curriculum.

The Scheme has helped raise standards and increase access and equity for learners, and by so doing supports the DE vision of 'every young person achieving to his or her full potential at each stage of his or her development.'



10.0 Challenges Encountered

All partnerships identified some challenges in the outworking of the Scheme. These are outlined below.

10.1 *Insufficient non-contact time.*

Most shared teachers commented on the need for additional planning time. Overall, the amount of time to prepare lessons, organise resources, liaise with class teachers, evaluate lessons and monitor outcomes was underestimated. This was especially so when the shared teacher had to help prepare lessons for the substitute teacher taking his or her own class.

Often the shared teachers had other responsibilities including SENCO or co-ordinator duties. In three instances the shared teacher was also the teaching principal or acting principal.

10.2 *Timetabling*

The timetabling of classes, especially when three or four schools had to be visited proved problematic for some partnerships. Initial arrangements were reviewed and changes made as necessary. One school timetabled for Monday sessions lost out on visits because of the high number of Monday closures.

10.3 *Staffing changes.*

The programme in two partnerships was affected by changes to the shared teacher personnel. One instance was caused by illness and the other when a shared teacher secured a permanent position elsewhere. These caused gaps in provision while appointments were made, though the new teachers quickly settled into their new roles.

10.4 *Employment procedures*

Two partnerships experienced difficulties with employing authorities over employment and payment issues. These were resolved through time. A clear procedure needs to be in place to facilitate HR procedures when a shared teacher is being appointed from outside the partnership.

Most schools encountered difficulties in the delivery of the Scheme. In the main these were organisational matters which were resolved through time.

Most of the shared teachers report insufficient non-contact time. Future arrangements should include additional planning time before and during the programme.

There should be greater clarity in employment and payment arrangements.

11.0 Conclusions

The Shared Teacher / Teacher Exchange Scheme has been a very worthwhile and important initiative, within the Fermanagh Shared Education Programme.

11.1 Across all 17 schools:

- Teaching and learning has been enhanced.
- There are improvements in the children's standards and achievements.
- The shared teachers have benefited from significant professional development.
- Class teachers are up-skilled in areas of the curriculum where previously they felt less secure.
- At a whole school level important areas of the curriculum are better organised, resourced and delivered.
- The good relationships, at all levels, that have been developed through Strand A of the SEP are further strengthened.
- In addition to educational benefits, the Scheme has promoted, to a greater or lesser extent, equality of opportunity, equality of identity, respect for diversity and community cohesion.

11.2 In small schools:

- The Scheme has shown that, through collaborations, small schools can deliver all of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and provide access of opportunity to all learners.
- At a time when the sustainability of small schools is being examined, shared education offers a model of provision in the context of area planning.
- Where shared education is seen as an area solution to rationalisation, it is necessary for the impetus to come from the schools and the community they serve.

12.0 The Way Forward

The benefits of the Scheme and some points for consideration are detailed throughout the review and summarised in the Conclusions.

To build on the success of the Scheme, the following recommendations are made:

- The Scheme, subject to funding, should be developed further to include more schools.
- The aims and objectives of a partnership should clearly meet the principles of shared education.
- Priority should be given to small schools, particularly those which are the subject of local area solutions.
- If sufficient funding is available, the Scheme should also include larger schools.
- Shared teachers should be recruited from within the permanent staffing of the partnership schools, rather than from an external appointment.
- Where an external appointment is necessary to meet a specific area of expertise, the processes for recruitment, selection, employment and payment should be easily managed.
- All paperwork relating to applications, monitoring, evaluating and accounting should be concise and easily managed.
- A monitoring report should be submitted mid-year to the sponsoring body to outline how the aims and objectives of the partnership are being addressed.
- An evaluation of the year's work should be completed by each partnership. The evaluation should include information on the extent to which the educational and non-educational objectives of the programme have been met.

A FINAL WORD FROM A PARENT.....

“My children enjoy playing and learning new things in Roscor School and meeting their new friends. I feel that this is a very good way of getting cross community schools working together to enhance the children's learning.

This also encourages children to understand equality and diversity within the community.”

(Parent of pupil in Belleek CPS)

NOTES



13.0 CASE STUDIES

The following section sets out a case study of each of the six partnerships.

Each case study provides details of the partnership schools, the objectives of the partnership and how the shared teachers were organised within the respective schools.

The case studies include 'reflections' from the broad school communities of each partnership on the out-workings of the scheme.

Views were sought from the shared teacher, other teachers, the principal, the children, parents, members of the board of governors and any other interested parties.

| PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED IN THE SHARED TEACHER / TEACHER EXCHANGE SCHEME | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Partnership 1 | St Mary's MPS, Teemore Fairgreen National School (C of I), Belturbet, Co Cavan |
| Partnership 2 | St Macartan's MPS, Magheraveely Aghadrumsee CPS |
| Partnership 3 | Killyhommon MPS Derrygonnelly CPS |
| Partnership 4 | St John the Baptist MPS, Roscor St Martin's MPS, Garrison Belleek CPS St Davog's MPS, Belleek |
| Partnership 5 | St Mary's MPS, Newtownbutler Newtownbutler CPS St Joseph's MPS, Donagh |
| Partnership 6 | Enniskillen Integrated PS Holy Trinity MPS Jones Memorial CPS Lisbellaw CPS |

CASE STUDY 1

St Mary's Primary School and Fairgreen National School

St Mary's is a maintained primary school in the townland of Teemore located about half way between the small town of Derrylin in County Fermanagh and the County Cavan border of the Irish Republic. The enrolment of 83 children is catered for by four teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Fairgreen is a primary school under Church of Ireland management situated in the town of Belturbet in County Cavan and is about six miles from St Mary's. The enrolment of 37 is distributed over two teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

The two schools established a link under strand A of the SEP and have been working together for four years. Participation in Strand B saw a further collaboration between the schools. Both schools identified areas of work that required further development, specifically the teaching of Irish in St Mary's, and ICT and Physical Education in Fairgreen. From within each school a teacher was identified with the expertise required to support the other. It was agreed that a shared teacher model would have significant benefits for both schools.

It was agreed that the shared teachers would provide one day's input each week to the partner school. This would focus primarily on class contact, including working alongside the host school's teacher. In addition, opportunities would be sought to increase the knowledge and skills of the teachers of the host school and, where appropriate, revise the relevant subject guidance material.

In the broader context of shared education, the scheme was seen as a significant way to further develop the excellent relationship between the two schools and to help break down any barriers that may still exist.

A timetable was drawn up for the respective weekly visits and appropriate content agreed. Lessons were planned, delivered and evaluated and the progress of the children monitored. As well as enhancing the children's learning experiences, significant emphasis was placed on the professional development of each host school's staff through a programme of team-teaching, observations and discussions

In addition, throughout the partnership programme, the aims and values of shared education were to the fore.

The novelty for them of a Protestant teacher from Belturbet teaching them in Irish in Northern Ireland was a wonderful experience for them and for many of the teachers as well. The cross-border, cross-community friendships formed and the work shared will remain with them in the future.

Governor St Mary's

I thought the Shared Education Programme was a fantastic idea. It gave my daughter the opportunity to mix with children from other backgrounds and religions. As a result of the Programme the children made some lovely friends and gained a lot of respect for each other.

Parent St Mary's

As teachers, we have shared expertise, resources and ideas. This has further developed our personal as well as our professional relationships.

Teacher Fairgreen

I think it is hugely important for children to be involved in cross community activities.

Parent St Mary's

As the leading professional in the school, I have been very privileged to have had the opportunity to access professional expertise from our colleagues in St Mary's, which has strengthened and enhanced the educational opportunities which we have been able to offer our students in Fairgreen.

Principal Fairgreen

I'd a wonderful opportunity to widen my professional development. My subject knowledge of ICT has increased as my work involved much more specific planning for year groups. I now have much more confidence to try new things in my own classroom as well in as in Fairgreen.

Shared teacher St Mary's

It has given the children an understanding of the school system in Northern Ireland, and enabled them to make new friends.

Parent Fairgreen

This was a great opportunity for children from both religions to work together, and to learn to respect each others' cultural identity and traditions. Well done – long may it continue.

Fairgreen Parent

I like it because it's good fun and you get to meet different people and make new friends.

Fairgreen pupil

The teachers understanding and experiences have continued to be enhanced, and there is an ongoing development of relationships at both a professional and personal level. The extension of contacts to include parents and Boards of Management / Governors has been very beneficial.

Principal St Mary's

CASE STUDY 2

St Macartan's Primary School and Aghadrumsee Primary School

St Macartan's is a catholic maintained primary school in the parish of Aghadrumsee located near the town of Roslea in County Fermanagh and close to the County Monaghan border of the Irish Republic. The enrolment of 145 children is catered for by six teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Aghadrumsee is a controlled primary school situated on the outskirts of the small village of Magheraveely in County Fermanagh and is about one mile from St Macartan's. The enrolment of 31 is distributed over two teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

The two schools identified music as an area of study that required further development. This was due to a lack of expertise in the two schools.

It was agreed that a shared teacher would be appointed to provide support to each school. This arrangement was facilitated by the agreement of WELB to fund a teacher of special needs at Aghadrumsee for 16.5 hours per week for the 2012/13 school year. A full-time temporary appointment was therefore made to provide SEN support at Aghadrumsee each morning and music at the two schools in the afternoons.

A job description was agreed and an appointment made. The music element of the job description included the requirement to teach music to different age groups of pupils from composite classes both separately and together, and promote shared classes at a single venue; to maximise opportunities for joint participation in musical competitions, assemblies and performances; and plan and communicate with class teachers and principals in the partnership. Furthermore, in the broader context of shared education, the job description included the development of the partnering ethos between the two schools and strengthening further community links.

A timetable was drawn up for the class visits and the content agreed. Lessons were planned, delivered and evaluated and children's progress noted. As well as enhancing the children's learning experiences, significant emphasis was placed on the professional development of each host school's staff through advice on appropriate teaching materials and resources. Sessions of team teaching provided further capacity building for non-specialist teachers.

Years ago I was a child minder of two children. One child was the same age as my daughter. It's great that they've met up again through Shared Education and are arranging to meet outside school.

Parent Aghadrumsee

I like shared classes. I like getting to meet up with the other boys. I'm the only boy in my class. I get to do fun things in music. We sing and I like the instruments. The loud music is great.

Pupil Aghadrumsee

Children are more aware of their 'sameness' across different sectors because they have had different providers in different venues and have experienced high levels of achievement.

Principal St Macartan's

While previous projects of dance etc laid the foundation to enable us to go where we are now, it is through the shared teacher that the two schools have become somewhat joined at the hip for, on a daily basis, they both are aware what the other is doing. When pupils have the opportunity to perform together we have the opportunity to bring parents of different cultures together.

Governor Aghadrumsee

The by-product to the educational benefits of the partnership is building respect for each set of pupils and their parents for their neighbours. Neighbours, who for so long have been strangers, now have the opportunity to turn around and we can make our contribution in Aghadrumsee to a peaceful future.

Governor Aghadrumsee

It is lovely for the class teacher to observe or team teach as they get to see how ideas and activities can be delivered and in due course try these out themselves in their own room.

Shared Teacher

Despite the fact the programme was interrupted because the shared teacher got a permanent position and we had to make a new appointment half way the year, all aims and objectives have been fully met and more. Every one sees the benefits – children, teachers, parents and governors.

Principal Aghadrumsee

Parents are aware of the benefits of a shared teacher and see the benefits for the children. Governors, too, see the need for a subject specialism within the schools.

Shared Teacher

I like meeting up with my friends. I like getting to their school and seeing what they are doing.

Pupil Aghadrumsee

CASE STUDY 3

Killyhommon Primary School and Derrygonnelly Primary School

Killyhommon is a catholic maintained primary school in the parish of Botha six miles from the village of Derrygonnelly. The enrolment of 62 children is catered for by three teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Derrygonnelly is a controlled primary school situated in the village of Derrygonnelly about ten miles from Enniskillen and six miles from Killyhommon PS. The enrolment of 44 is distributed over three teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Shared class arrangements involving the two schools together with St Patrick's Primary in Derrygonnelly were established under Strand A of the Shared Education Programme and have been running for four years. These shared classes covered a range of subject areas including Physical Education, music and participation in the Respecting Difference Programme. In addition community events involving sport and music were held and there was a joint function involving the respective boards of governors.

For Strand B the two schools identified aspects of their respective provision that required further development: music in Killyhommon and ICT in Derrygonnelly. From within each school a teacher was identified with the expertise required to support the other. It was envisaged that the sharing of teachers would establish 'a collaborative, cross community, sustainable model that would benefit both schools.'

It was agreed that a teacher from each school would exchange classes for one day each week to deliver their respective subjects. It was planned that the ICT teacher from Killyhommon would guide classes through the ICT accreditations at Key Stages 1 and 2 at Derrygonnelly, and the music teacher from Derrygonnelly would provide general music classes, instrumental tuition and produce seasonal musical events at Killyhommon.

The Principals of both schools, in consultation with the other teachers, identified a programme of work for the year. The shared teachers had the responsibility for drawing up, delivering, monitoring and evaluating the plan. In addition, there was clear appreciation of the staff development opportunities to be gained from the sharing of expertise between the schools.

The programme was very good for our school because we got to do proper music every week with a piano.

Pupil Killyhommon

The children have been being taught a lot about ICT in one year and they are thoroughly enjoying the new subject and a change of teacher, especially in a small school where you could possibly be teaching the children over three years.

Shared teacher Killyhommon

Our two schools have shown that principals, teaching staff, boards of governors and pupils can work together, crossing the sectoral divide. There has been great work done between both schools in the building of trust and the breaking down of barriers.

Principal Derrygonnelly

The school is very good at promoting programmes that look at difference and the children are taught the importance of respecting and valuing difference. They have benefited this year from working with a teacher from the partnership school, learning new skills which they are enjoying enormously.

Parent Killyhommon

Working in the partnership has refreshed my whole approach to the reaching of music and made me update my own scheme and resources. I have realised the importance of music for children and the enjoyment they get from it.

Shared Teacher Derrygonnelly

I have got to know some of the girls of Derrygonnelly PS and I will know I will see them again when I go to town school in September and I will know their names and they will know me, even though we don't go to the same school.

Pupil Killyhommon

Working relationships between both schools have been further enhanced. This has been an exciting, fresh and innovative programme that has allowed us to see what possibilities this type of working model has for us both.

Principal Killyhommon

I hope that this is just the beginning of sharing as it is our children who are the future of Northern Ireland and are the decision makers of the tomorrow.

Parent Killyhommon

CASE STUDY 4

St John the Baptist Primary School, Belleek CPS, St Martin's PS and St Davog's PS

This partnership involved a sharing arrangement across four schools in the greater Belleek / Garrison area of west Fermanagh.

St John the Baptist Primary School is a catholic maintained school situated in the townland of Roscor, three miles from the small town of Belleek. The enrolment of 54 children is catered for by three teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Belleek is a controlled primary school situated in Belleek. The enrolment of 42 children is catered for by two teachers, one of whom is the part-time principal

St Martin's is a catholic maintained primary school in the village of Garrison. The enrolment of 92 children is catered for by four teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

St Davog's is catholic maintained primary school situated in Belleek. The enrolment of 86 is distributed over four teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

Shared class arrangements involving differing pairings of the four schools were established under Stand A of the Shared Education Programme and have been running for three years. This single partnership under Strand B saw a broader collaboration amongst all of the schools.

It was agreed that for the purposes of effective management and development of the partnership, it would be necessary to appoint one of principals to the role of Strand B co-ordinator on a one day per fortnight release basis. This was duly done and the following shared programme agreed:

- The four schools would share an externally appointed special needs teacher
- Using a Belleek teacher, joint classes from St John's and Belleek would receive ICT support in the computer suite of St Mary's College, Brollagh
- A Belleek teacher would provide ICT support to classes in St Martin's.
- A St Martin's teacher would provide music support at St John's and Belleek.
- The sharing of teachers would facilitate staff development across the partnership.

She is helping me get better at my Maths and I'm getting more confident at it.

Pupil St Davog's

I personally feel that I've gained a lot from the specialist teacher. I feel able to find and link music to more areas of the curriculum in future.

Class teacher St John's

I can see in pupils from my class an increased level of confidence in their work approaches. Strategies shared are having an impact in classes on a day to day basis. Some pupils' level of word knowledge, reading and comprehension skills have improved greatly. We hope that standardised tests at the end of the year will reflect these improvements.

Principal St John's

The teachers I work with have had opportunities to learn along with the children. They now can read music and have seen demonstrated the methods used to teach music. They have become more confident in their own ability to teach music.

Shared teacher St Martin's

A big benefit has been working in a controlled school. I've only worked in the maintained sector, but this has broadened my experience of teaching in different schools.

Shared Teacher in all four schools.

Working with a wider range of children has meant that I've been asked more questions than usual about the use of software. The children have sought to use the software in a wider variety of ways and this meant that I now have more in-depth knowledge of what is available and how best to use it.

Shared teacher Belleek PS

As a class teacher I observed at first hand the gradual improvements in the children's work and the security they felt from receiving individual help. The programme has positively promoted the concept of shared education and has highlighted awareness of how it can work successfully.

Principal St Davog's

We discussed the targets on the IEPs and then she used a wide range of materials which were at the right level, challenging and interesting for the children. They were constantly engaged and learning.

Class teacher St Davogs

Music is cool!

Pupil Belleek

Being able to watch a subject specialist has enabled the class teachers to develop their own skills when teaching music. They have been able to use the methods in their own teaching. Their subject knowledge has increased so much.

Principal Belleek

CASE STUDY 5

St Mary's Primary School, Newtownbutler, Newtownbutler CPS and St Joseph's PS, Donagh

St Mary's is a maintained primary school in the village of Newtownbutler in County Fermanagh about five miles from Lisnaskea. The enrolment of 155 children is catered for by seven teachers, one of whom is the non-teaching principal.

Newtownbutler primary is a controlled primary school, close to St Mary's in the village. The enrolment of 59 children is catered for by four teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

St Joseph's is a maintained primary school in Donagh, a small village about half way between Newtownbutler and Lisnaskea. The enrolment of 80 is distributed over four teachers, one of whom is the teaching principal.

The three schools established a link under Strand A of the SEP and have been working together for four years. Participation in Strand B saw a further collaboration among the schools. The schools identified areas of work from within their SDPs and agreed that there would be a focus on ICT accreditation, enhancing the provision of music, and raising standards in literacy and numeracy through supported special needs interventions.

It was agreed that the shared teacher, drawn from each school on a termly basis, would provide a weekly team teaching arrangement in the specialist area to the 16 classes across three schools. In addition, a programme co-ordinator would plan and organise provision and promote the values of shared education in the community.

Difficulties posed by an initial trawl within the partnership resulted in an external appointment being made. This teacher provided SEN focus group support until roles and responsibilities across the three schools were reviewed. A revised way of working was established which saw the newly-appointed teacher split between providing SEN support across the schools, and covering for the three shared teachers within the partnership.

A team teaching model was devised to ensure that all teachers would have the opportunity for to observe good practice. In addition, schemes of work would be drawn up to provide school guidance in the shared teachers' areas of expertise and a bank of relevant resources would be acquired.

This is an excellent collaborative arrangement and one which should promote the sharing of best practice in the three schools involved. I also believe the focus group approach will enhance the children's social skills and help them to become versatile and receptive to change.

Parent/Governor St Mary's

It has been very useful to develop team teaching and work closely with other teachers. It has helped me reflect on my own practices and evaluate what could be done better another time.

Shared teacher Newtownbutler PS

We got to know people we didn't know before. I loved it!

Pupil St Joseph's

It's has been good to get to know other parents and teachers in our community through our parent workshops and school events and staff development days.

Class teacher Newtownbutler PS

Parents are pleased with the scheme and are happy that their children are developing their ICT skills and completing their ICT accreditation. They are pleased that the schools in the community are making use of each others' expertise and skills to benefit the children.

Shared teacher St Joseph's

I feel comfortable with her and she helps me a lot. I can understand better now and she explains it in fun ways. I am more confident about maths.

Pupil St Mary's

While governors were involved at a management level throughout, many of the governors enjoyed learning more about how the shared teacher worked on a practical day to day basis during our recent shared meal, when an informal opportunity was offered to discuss the out-workings with staff.

Principal St Mary's

Shared education has become more integral to the schools' planning, monitoring and evaluating as there is a more direct impact on teaching and learning than in previous years of the programme, eg in raising standards.

Principal St Joseph's

The programme has enabled us to work more freely and comfortably across the sectors – sharing ideas, expertise etc. For some of us it has taken us beyond our comfort zone as we develop enhanced practices and teaching strategies for all the pupils.

Principal Newtownbutler PS

I am delighted to see that additional focused support is available to help my child achieve the targets in her IEP. I welcome an external teacher to share this expertise with my child.

Parent St Mary's

I believe Shared Education is a very positive development and has enhanced good community relations. I have commended staff and pupils throughout the course of the programme and as chair of the Board of Governors I fully support the continued participation of this school.

Chair BoG St Joseph's

CASE STUDY 6

Enniskillen Integrated Primary School, Holy Trinity PS, Jones Memorial PS and Lisbellaw PS

Enniskillen Integrated Primary school [EIPS] has an enrolment of 233 children. There are 10 teachers and a non-teaching principal.

Holy Trinity is a maintained primary school located on two sites in the centre of Enniskillen. The enrolment of 680 is catered for by 31 teachers and a non-teaching principal.

Jones Memorial [JMPS] is a controlled primary school on the outskirts of Enniskillen. The enrolment of 192 is distributed over nine teachers and a non-teaching principal.

Lisbellaw is a controlled primary school in the village of Lisbellaw about six miles from Enniskillen. The enrolment of 195 is distributed over seven teachers and a non-teaching principal.

The four schools established links under Strand A of the SEP and have been working together for four years in a programme of shared classes and activities. Participation in Strand B saw a further collaboration among the schools. The partner schools identified areas of need and also areas of expertise which could be offered to the other schools.

It was agreed that Holy Trinity would release a teacher to provide numeracy support in the other three schools. This work would focus on mental maths and problem-solving, together with specialised support for children experiencing difficulty in aspects of their numeracy. In addition, a mental maths scheme would be produced for use in all the partnership schools. Furthermore, a full day training event in problem-solving was planned for the whole partnership in a local hotel. Shortly before the programme was due to begin the designated shared teacher was unable to take up the post and an external appointment was made.

A teacher from Lisbellaw was identified to support Holy Trinity in the area of World Around Us [Geography, History, Science and Technology.] The focus would be on developing practical activities, particularly in the teaching of science, and drawing together revised whole-school schemes of work.

The shared teacher is really great. The children really enjoy her and the lessons she takes. The focus is on practical work and I have built up lesson plans and I'll be able to deliver these in future. The idea has helped us all so much.

*Class teacher
Holy Trinity*

- The benefits -**
- Building relationships
 - More openness between school
 - Resources and financial aid
 - Up-skilling of teachers
 - Helped children's learning
 - Enjoyment!
- Principal Lisbellaw*

Class teachers have noted an improvement in the children's overall maths work, especially in problem solving and in their times tables. Children have become more confident in their maths and have developed a greater interest in the subject.

Shared teacher Holy Trinity

There have been good opportunities for staff liaison which has encouraged the development of new relationships and increased sharing and collaboration, as well as greater mutual respect across all the schools within the project.

Principal JMPS

The children are very keen to use a different approach. The benefit is that learning is accessible by every child as it has a practical focus. They don't really see my 'work' as work as they are doing activities, rotating around stations and are busy as opposed to filling in their booklets. Children love it.

Shared teacher Lisbellaw

The focus within the school was on the development of a more practically focused WAU programme feeding into a revised scheme of work for the school. The children have been able to more fully develop their understanding of aspects of WAU. In particular their ability and confidence to undertake practical tasks has been greatly improved. This has been very evident in the pupils' enthusiasm and participation in the activities undertaken.

Principal Holy Trinity

I really love doing maths problems on the inter-active whiteboard.

Pupil JMPS

This was a good chance to develop improved learning opportunities within the curriculum area and which will be incorporated into the subject plans and schemes of work for all year groups. There was also the benefits sharing of good practice across the school.

Principal EIPS

The children really look forward to every session and I'm learning lots too. Two teachers in the class is great as well.

Class teacher JMPS

The best thing about shared education is making new friends.

Pupil Lisbellaw

I like that we don't write down much but do lots in our heads.

Pupil EIPS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Principals' Pro-forma

Appendix 2 Shared Teachers' Pro-forma

APPENDIX 1:

Principals' Pro-forma

FERMANAGH TRUST:

Review of Shared Teaching / Teacher Exchange Scheme Pro-Forma for Partnership Principals

Dear Colleague

In your application to participate in the above Scheme you set out your aims and objectives for employing a shared teacher in your school. In order to evaluate the impact of this added resource you are requested to complete this pro-forma. Your response and other information will help build a picture of the effectiveness of the Scheme and determine whether it is a model for further development and growth.

Your response should focus on the impact of the Scheme on your school, ie the benefits to your children, the benefits to your staff and how the Scheme promoted shared education in your school community.

I would be very grateful, therefore, if you would complete this pro-forma and e-mail it to me at agwalsh@btinternet.com no later than Wednesday 24th April [and sooner if possible!]

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--|
| Name Of Your School: | |
| Principal: | |
| Name(S) Of Partnership School[S]: | |
| Name Of Shared Teacher[S]: | |
| Teacher's Area Of Expertise: | |

Overall aims and objectives of your programme *[as stated in your application]*

How was the shared teacher organised? *[eg work patterns, classes, time-tabling, staff development etc]*

How was curriculum content identified?

How was the content planned and delivered?

How was the delivery monitored and evaluated?

In terms of Teaching and Learning, what benefits were gained? *[any clear evidence here would be especially helpful]*

In terms of Achievements and Standards, what improvements were noted? *[again any clear evidence, particularly quantitative data, would be helpful]*

In terms of Leadership and Management were benefits were gained? *[eg capacity building, up-skilling, resourcing etc]*

Where there any specific difficulties in the out-working of the Scheme? How were these overcome?

To what extent do you consider your stated aims and objectives within the Scheme have been met? *[where they have not, please provide further information]*

To what extent to you consider your involvement in the Scheme has enhanced teachers' and pupils' awareness of shared education?

Can you suggest how this scheme could be improved or further developed?

Overall, what do you consider have been the main benefits you gained by participation of the Scheme?

Any other comments

Thank you for completing this pro-forma. Please return to agwalsh@btinternet.com

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2:

Shared Teachers' Pro-forma

FERMANAGH TRUST:

Review Of Shared Teaching / Teacher Exchange Scheme Pro-Forma For Partnership Shared Teachers

Dear Colleague

You will know that an evaluation of the Shared Teacher Scheme is being carried out by Pro-Ed Consultancy. As part of this exercise, all shared teachers are being asked to complete a pro-forma. The pro-forma aims to capture your views on the Scheme, and in particular, how your expertise has been utilized both in terms of teaching and learning and in overall staff development. In addition, an important element of the evaluation is a consideration of how the aims and values of shared education have been realised.

I would be very grateful, therefore, if you would complete this pro-forma and e-mail it to me at agwalsh@btinternet.com no later than Wednesday 24th April [and sooner if possible!]

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--|
| Shared Teacher's name: | |
| Your school: | |
| Name(S) Of Partnership School[S]: | |
| Teacher's Area Of Expertise: | |

| |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>How was your shared work organised? <i>[eg days worked, classes, time-tabling, staff development etc]</i></p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

How was curriculum content identified?

How was the content planned and delivered? *[eg team teaching, shared classes etc]*

How was the delivery monitored and evaluated?

In terms of Teaching and Learning, what benefits were gained? *[any clear evidence here would be especially helpful]*

In terms of Achievements and Standards, what improvements were noted? *[again any clear evidence, particularly quantitative data, would be helpful]*

In terms of Leadership and Management what benefits were gained? *[eg up-skilling of other teachers, resourcing, revised schemes etc]*

Where there any specific difficulties in the out-working of the Scheme? How were these overcome?

To what extent to you consider your input has enhanced teachers' and pupils' awareness of shared education?

Have there been any wider benefits? *[eg comments from parents or governors]*

From the shared teacher's perspective can you suggest how this scheme could be improved or further developed?

Overall, what do you consider have been the main benefits you gained by participation of the Scheme?

Any other comments

Thank you for completing this pro-forma. Please return to agwalsh@btinternet.com

Name: _____

Date: _____

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For further details on the Fermanagh Trust Shared Education Programme,
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*The Fermanagh Shared Education Programme is funded by the International Fund
for Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies.*

