



Building
together
for our future.

***Braidside Integrated Primary
and Nursery School***
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Dear Parents,

This letter is to update you on the progress of the Integrated Education Bill. The Bill is moving to the Final Stage of the Northern Ireland Assembly and a final debate and vote will take place on Wednesday 9 March 2022. If the Bill is passed it will come into operation within 6 months of receiving Royal Assent.

The full text of the Bill is available on the Northern Ireland Assembly Website at the following link.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/legislation/bills/non-executive-bills/session-2017-2022/integrated-education/integrated-education-bill-as-amended-at-fc-stage---full-print-version2.pdf>

Braidside Integrated PS the Council for Integrated Education believe the Bill offers a significant opportunity to better meet evidenced parental preference for Integrated Education, address current barriers to the growth of Integrated Education and provide a fair level of support for Integrated schools. Some of the opportunities include:

- An updated definition of Integrated Education that better reflects the diversity already in Integrated schools, whilst honouring the founding principle of educating children together from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds.
- An enhanced responsibility on education bodies to assess and meet parental demand for Integrated Education. This includes a consideration of Integrated status for any brand-new school, should this be the wishes of parents, families, and communities in an area, following consultation. **Consultation will remain key in determining any further development of Integrated Education.**
- The development of an Integrated Education strategy set by the Department of Education and developed through consultation with schools and communities. **There is no provision within the Bill to increase the funding awarded to Integrated schools.** However, the strategy will include provision to facilitate the Integrated Education ethos within Integrated schools and associated support to develop and maintain this, including through the school improvement process. It will also ensure full and equal access to training and resources provided by the Education Authority for all schools.

NICIE think this will help to ensure Quality Integrated provision that parents will support.

Every Integrated school to date has either been established by a parent group or Transformed through a parental ballot. The Bill will further facilitate parental involvement in the development of Integrated Education through more actively measuring and aiming to meet demand where it is wanted. We believe the Bill will enable more children and young people to benefit from an Integrated Education and be more prepared to live well in a diverse world. **Thank you for joining us, as a catalyst, to have more children and young people from Catholic, Protestant, other beliefs, cultures, and communities educated together.**

You as parents have chosen integrated education for your children and this Bill would hopefully enable more parents who wish to have this option become a reality for them in the future.

Whether this bill is passed into law or not, Braidside Integrated PS and NICIE remain committed to providing your children with a high-quality education in an environment where pupils of Catholic, Protestant, other faiths and none are taught together all day, every day. As the Bill approaches the final stage, you may want to share your views and experiences of Integrated Education with your elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. Contact details can be found via <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/your-mlas/locate-your-mla2/>

Yours faithfully,

J McAuley

Principal.