

# Integrated education: Een werk van lange adem

De uitdagingen van geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-  
lerland volgens leerkrachten en directeurs

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## Woord vooraf

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Met klamme handjes begon ik aan deze thesis. Deze spannende rit die me tot in Noord-Ierland heeft gebracht, beantwoordt niet aan de horrorverhalen. Afgelopen jaar heb ik ontzettend veel kunnen bijleren over een samenleving, een geschiedenis, maatschappelijk relevante theorieën en de mens tout court. Het was een leerrijk en interessant proces als eindpunt van mijn masteropleiding. En in dat proces is er steun en hulp vanuit allerlei hoeken gekomen.

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# 1 Inleiding

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Noord-Ierland kent een woelige geschiedenis waarin katholieke nationalisten en protestantse unionisten met elkaar de strijd aangingen. Deze strijd werd officieel beëindigd in 1998 met het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord. In het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord (1998) staat: “An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing” (Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, 1998). Sindsdien zouden geïntegreerde scholen katholieken en protestanten onder hetzelfde dak brengen als deel van de oplossing voor het probleem. Tot de dag van vandaag blijft het onderwijs in Noord-Ierland echter extreem gesegregeerd evenals de huisvesting waar meer dan 90% van de sociale huisvesting religieus gesegregeerd is (Morris, 2016). Het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord beëindigde het conflict, maar tot de dag van vandaag is de samenleving verdeeld.

Dat zorgt ervoor dat geïntegreerd onderwijs twintig jaar na het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord nog steeds met verschillende moeilijkheden te kampen heeft. In 2007 gingen nog steeds 92% van de protestantse studenten naar protestantse scholen en 91% van de katholieke studenten naar katholieke scholen (Weinstein, z.d., p. 2). Daarnaast gaan 7% van alle kinderen in Noord-Ierland naar een geïntegreerde school (Department of Education, 2014, About integrated schools). In deze masterproef stel ik dan ook de volgende onderzoeksvraag: Wat zijn de huidige moeilijkheden met geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-Ierland en waarom heeft deze onderwijsvorm zich nog niet verder kunnen verspreiden?

Geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-Ierland is een vorm van vredeseducatie of peace education. Peace education wordt doorgaans geïmplementeerd in post-conflict samenlevingen om strijdende gemeenschappen dichterbij elkaar te brengen, de waarden van tolerantie en niet-gewelddadige actie bij te brengen, alsook vaardigheden in conflictresolutie (Barnes, 2009; Harris & Morrison, 2012; Reardon, 1988). Sinds het beëindigen van het conflict in Noord-Ierland werden verschillende vormen van peace education ingevoerd met wisselend succes. Het is dan ook belangrijk om peace education in Noord-Ierland ook in een ruimer kader te beschouwen.

In de volgende sectie bespreek ik eerst de geschiedenis van Noord-Ierland, het ontstaan en verloop van het gewelddadige conflict, alsook de beëindiging ervan. Ik schenk ook aandacht aan de blijvende moeilijkheden voor Noord-Ierland na het Goede vrijdag Akkoord. Daarna zet ik de relevante theorie en begrippen rond peace education uiteen om vervolgens de peace education programma's die van toepassing waren en zijn in Noord-Ierland toe te lichten. Specifieke aandacht gaat hierbij ook naar geïntegreerd onderwijs.

Na dit overzicht gaat deze thesis dieper in op de onderzoeksvraag aan de hand van tien interviews met vijf directeurs en vijf leerkrachten van verschillende (basis en secundaire) scholen. De interviews leggen de moeilijkheden, opmerkingen en bedenkingen vast die zij bij geïntegreerd onderwijs ervaren. De analyse van de interviews wordt gecombineerd met de bestaande literatuur en beleidsdocumenten. In de literatuur ben ik op zoek gegaan naar de bestaande moeilijkheden en problemen die leerkrachten en directeurs ervaren. De aandachtspunten die de leerkrachten en directeurs in de interviews meegeven zijn van verschillende aard: persoonlijk, institutioneel, financieel, schoolgebonden,... Deze punten zullen waar mogelijk getoetst en vergeleken worden met de bestaande literatuur. De laatste sectie concludeert en vat samen.



## 2 The Troubles in Noord-Ierland: een geschiedenis van verdeeldheid

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In Noord-Ierland is er een diepe breuklijn tussen twee gemeenschappen die verdeeld zijn op religieus vlak, nationalistisch vlak en op het vlak van politieke identiteiten. Religieus gezien zijn er protestanten en katholieken, op nationalistisch vlak uit zich dat in voorstanders van een Britse of Ierse nationaliteit en op politiek vlak manifesteert dit zich als unionisten, die willen dat Noord-Ierland deel blijft van het Verenigd Koninkrijk, en nationalisten, die het Ierse volk verenigd willen (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 242).

De wortels van het probleem gaan terug tot het einde van het eerste millennium. St. Patrick christianiseerde in de eerste helft van de vijfde eeuw de Kelten en de Vikings die toen in Ierland leefden. Na de val van het Romeinse Rijk werd het belangrijk geacht om het christendom levende te houden, daarom werden er christelijke missies opgestart naar allerlei delen van de wereld, zo ook naar Ierland. In de 17<sup>e</sup> eeuw kregen de Britse – en protestantse – koningen schrik van het katholieke Ierland dat als een bedreiging werd gezien. “King James was concerned that Ireland could be a staging area for a Catholic invasion of England” (Smith, 2005, p. 42). Daardoor startte Engeland de Plantations of Ireland, waar Engelse, protestantse kolonistoren tegengas zouden bieden voor de katholieken door een eigen gemeenschap te starten met scholen en kerken.

In de twee eeuwen die daarop volgden waren er verschillende opstanden met duizenden doden tot gevolg (Smith, 2005, p. 42). In 1801 werd het Ierse parlement en de Ierse overheid van het gehele eiland afgeschaft door een Act of Union waarbij de verantwoordelijkheden werden overgenomen door het Verenigd Koninkrijk. Als gevolg waren er in de 19<sup>e</sup> eeuw verschillende pogingen om dit tegen te gaan, met weinig succes.

Tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog in 1916 vond de Paasopstand plaats; een gewapend verzet in Dublin met als doel onafhankelijkheid van de Britten te krijgen, maar ook dat oogste weinig succes en kwam tot een halt na zes dagen. De leiders van de opstand werden geëxecuteerd (Perry, 2010, p. 331). Dit was alleen maar een voedingsbodem voor het ontstaan van de IRA – Irish Republican Army, een nationalistische paramilitaire organisatie die geweld gebruikte en als enige oplossing een zogenaamde ‘long war’ zag (BBC, z.d., History: The Troubles). Uit de IRA ontstond Sinn Féin, de politieke vleugel die pleitte voor een volledige scheiding van Brittannië (Darby, z.d., The Plantation of Ulster).

Tijdens de laatste verkiezingen die het gehele eiland besloegen in 1918, wonnen de republikeinen 73 van de 105 zetels. De Britse overheid weigerde de legitimiteit te accepteren van deze verkiezingen. Dit leidde tot de Irish War of Independence van 1919 tot 1921. In 1920 werd door de Britten met de Government of Ireland Act het land in twee gedeeld waardoor het eigenlijke Noord-Ierland ontstaat met elk hun eigen ‘Home Rule’. Ze staan finaal dus nog steeds onder Brits bewind, al zal Ierland later onafhankelijk worden (Perry, 2010, p. 331).

Noord-Ierland “was born in violence” (McKittrick & McVea, 2002, p. 4). Tijdens de eerste twee jaar van het bestaan van Noord-Ierland, werden 428 mensen vermoord waarvan twee derde katholieken (McKittrick & McVea, 2002, p. 4). McKittrick & McVea (2002) stellen dat er vier elementen belangrijke zijn in het verhaal van Noord-Ierland. Het eerste element is het feit dat twee derde van de Noord-Ierse populatie protestanten zijn waarvan het grootste deel unionisten zijn die een voorkeur hebben voor de link met Groot-Brittannië. Het tweede element zijn de katholieken, die ongeveer een derde van de Noord-Ierse bevolking beslaan en die zich, in tegenstelling tot de protestanten, Iers voelen. De meesten geloofden dat een onafhankelijk, verenigd Ierland de natuurlijke, politieke weg

was. Het derde en vierde element stellen McKittrick en McVea zijn de Ierse en Britse overheid die aanvankelijk de Noord-Ierse kwestie op een afstand hielden, maar waardoor ze uiteindelijk dieper in de problemen zijn gekomen (McKittrick & McVea, 2002, pp. 1-2).

Dit culmineerde in de zogenaamde Troubles, een conflict gedurende een periode van 30 jaar, dat startte in 1968 met een mars voor burgerrechten in Londonderry die bekogeld werd met stenen door loyalisten (extremistische protestanten) en werd beslecht in 1998 met het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord, ook gekend als het Belfast Akkoord. De protestantse meerderheid wou in het Verenigd Koninkrijk blijven terwijl de nationalistische en voornamelijk katholieke minderheid zich bij Ierland wou aansluiten. Dit kwam bijgevolg tot een bloedig conflict waarbij meer dan 3.500 mensen het leven lieten.

De spanningen begonnen te groeien omdat de unionisten gedurende 50 jaar het parlement domineerden. De nationalisten wouden dat de institutionele discriminatie tegen de katholieken ophield maar volgens hen ging het allemaal te traag waardoor dat voeding gaf aan spanningen en geweld. Het liep uit de hand wanneer de Britse overheid troepen stuurde in 1969 om de orde te herstellen. De situatie bleef echter escaleren waardoor de Britse overheid in 1972 het Noord-Ierse parlement opschortte en de regio onder direct bestuur vanuit Londen plaatste (BBC, z.d., History: The Troubles). Op het einde van 1969 splitste de IRA. Katholieke militanten vonden dat de IRA gefaald had om de katholieken te beschermen. Hieruit ontstond de Provisional IRA die de Britse troepen als grootste vijand zagen. Naast deze twee actoren waren er ook nog de loyalisten, de paramilitairen die de unionisten steunden (Smith, 2005, p. 51).

Op 31 augustus 1994 verklaart de Provisional IRA een tijdelijk staakt-het-vuren. Dit werd verbroken tijdens 1996-1997 maar het markeerde toch het einde van de IRA-campagne. In '96 startten de vredesgesprekken die leidden tot het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord dat aanvaard werd door Sinn Féin en gesteund werd door referenda in Noord- en Zuid-Ierland. Sinn Féin nam vanaf die dag plaats in het nieuwe Northern Ireland Assembly. Pas in 2005 meldde het IRA Army Council echter dat ze hun gewapende campagne staakten en dat ze hun doelen konden bereiken door enkel politieke en democratische programma's te gebruiken voor exclusief vreedevolle doelen (Perry, 2010, p. 333).

Hoewel het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord reeds twintig jaar geleden ondertekend werd, is het duidelijk dat Noord-Ierland nog aan het bouwen is aan een vreedevolle toekomst. De verschillen tussen beide partijen blijven tot vandaag de dag het land parten spelen. De segregatie is zichtbaar: zo staan er bijna 80 metershoge muren in interface zones waar extreme unionistische en nationalistische wijken elkaar raken (Morris, 2016) en ook het schoolsysteem blijft extreem gesegregeerd.

## 3 Theoretisch kader

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### 3.1 Peace education

#### 3.1.1 Een korte geschiedenis

Na de Eerste Wereldoorlog groeide de blijvende nood voor vrede, waardoor mensen zoals Maria Montessori en John Dewey het idee promootten van “education for international understanding” (Tinker, 2016, p. 20). Dit idee komt voort uit de veronderstelling dat conflicten het gevolg zijn van bepaalde houdingen en dat deze houdingen kunnen veranderen door middel van onderwijs (Tinker, 2016, p. 20). Tussen de wereldoorlogen in begonnen leerkrachten internationale betrekkingen te doceren met als doel dat hun studenten geen oorlog zouden beginnen tegen buitenlanders (Bajaj, 2008, p. 17). Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog kreeg dit idee meer kracht vanuit de internationale gemeenschap wanneer de VN erkende dat traditionele diplomatieke akkoorden gefaald hadden om effectief te reageren op internationale conflicten (Tinker, 2016, p. 21). Dit wordt ook de *reform phase* genoemd, dat als doel heeft oorlog te voorkomen. “The central thesis is that if people and nations behaved differently, gave more consideration to nonviolent alternatives, war could be prevented” (Reardon, 1988, p. xi).

Later, in de jaren 50 bestond peace education voornamelijk uit de studie naar de oorzaken van oorlog en andere vormen van direct geweld en strategieën om ze te verminderen. Vanaf de jaren 60 en 70 werd de definitie van geweld verbreed waarbij indirect en structureel geweld eronder vielen. Dit betekende dat er nu ook aandacht was voor development education en human rights education (Reardon, 1988, p. 6). Een van de ontwikkelingen op het gebied van peace education is het gebruik van dergelijke programma's door internationale actoren. De actoren gebruiken ze als gereedschap om te helpen met peacebuilding en herstel in landen die uit gewelddadige conflicten komen, met de hoop dat de volgende generaties niet voor de gewelddadige oplossingen kiezen (Tinker, 2016, p. 23). Reardon (1988) noemt deze fase de *reconstructive phase*, die gericht is op internationale systemen en instituties (Reardon, 1988, p. xi).

Eind jaren 70 verschoof de focus naar interne conflicten. Het curriculum werd zo ontwikkeld dat er een nadruk kwam op participatief leren, egalitaire klassen en problemen oplossen in plaats van didactische methodes.<sup>1</sup> Dit kwam verder uit de aandacht die er was voor mensenrechten en sociale rechtvaardigheid (Reardon, 1988, p. 8). Zo onderscheidde peace research zich in de jaren 70 van de vroegere focus op internationale betrekkingen. “Firstly, the focus of international relations tends to be on the notion of the nation-state as a central colligatory concept, whereas peace research operates on the notion of the individual person. (...) Secondly, the focus of international relations theory tends to be realist, whereas peace research is normative” (Page, 2008, p. 12). Peace research is dus

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<sup>1</sup> Deze omschakeling wordt beschreven in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972). Daarin stelt hij dat er van een “banking education” naar een “problem-posing education” wordt gegaan. Deze banking education houdt in dat de “teacher teaches and the students are taught” (Freire, 1972, p. 73). De studenten accepteren de passieve rol die hen wordt opgelegd. Hier tegenover staat problem-posing education die banking education moet overwinnen. Studenten zijn hier niet langer volgzame luisteraars, ze zijn nu kritische medeonderzoekers die in dialoog treden met de leerkracht. “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (Freire, 1972, p. 80).

verschoven van het bestuderen van oorlog naar de studie van alle vormen van geweld en van onderwijs dat gericht is op een vreedevolle samenleving (Ardizzone, 2003).

Vanaf het einde van de jaren 90, heeft de internationale gemeenschap meer aandacht voor landen die uit gewelddadige conflictsituaties komen, vanwege het einde van de Koude Oorlog en de daaropvolgende Agenda for Peace van de Verenigde Naties. Dit vloeide verder uit bewijs dat geleverd werd door onderzoekers die stelden dat de bestaande onderwijsinstaties uit conflictgebieden, peacebuilding processen kunnen ondermijnen omdat ze de sociale verdeeldheid die geleid heeft tot het conflict in stand houden en versterken (Tinker, 2016, p. 31). Reardon (1988) definieert de laatste fase als de *transformational approach*, waarin elke vorm van geweld wordt aangepakt met aandacht voor de individuen en de naties (Reardon, 1988, p. xi).

### 3.1.2 Definiëren

Vanuit de relatief korte geschiedenis van het domein peace education blijkt al dat het vanuit verschillende perspectieven tot stand kwam. Zo wordt peace education ook op verschillende manieren gedefinieerd en is er geen eenduidige definitie (Page, 2008, p. 2; Zajda & Daun, 2009, p. 54; Reardon, 1988, p. 11).

UNESCO definieert peace education als volgt:

“What is peace education? Education for non-violence and peace includes training, skills and information directed towards cultivating a culture of peace based on human rights principles. This education not only provides knowledge about a culture of peace, but also imparts the skills and attitudes necessary to defuse and recognize potential conflicts, and those needed to actively promote and establish a culture of peace and non-violence” (UNESCO’S Work on Education for Peace and Non-Violence, 2008, p. 3).

UNESCO stelt dat de objectieven van peace education onder andere zijn: begrijpen hoe geweld ontstaat, leren om constructief te reageren op dat geweld en specifieke kennis van alternatieven voor geweld leren. De fundamentele concepten zijn respect en vaardigheden stelt UNESCO (UNESCO’S Work on Education for Peace and Non-Violence, 2008, p. 3).

De onderliggende gedachte van peace education is volgens Harris & Morrison dat peace education “currently [is] considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution” (Harris & Morrison, 2012, p. 9). De veronderstelling is dat burgers geweld zullen afzweren als ze meer informatie hebben over de gevaren van geweld en oorlog (Harris & Morrison, 2012, p. 26).

Ook van vrede bestaat er geen eenduidige definitie (Reardon, 1988, p. 13). Peace education programma’s hebben daarom hun eigen visie op de samenleving die ze willen bereiken, de manier waarop en de rol van de school daarin. Een voorbeeld is de verschillen in het geïntegreerde ethos van scholen zoals later besproken zal worden. Tinker (2016) stelt dat het moeilijk is om vrede te bereiken die politiek of cultureel neutraal is want vrede en geweld worden gevormd door verschillende regimes met hun eigen waarheid die op hun beurt weer afstamt van verschillende religies en ideologieën (Tinker, 2016, p. 29).

Traditioneel gezien verwijst vrede naar de afwezigheid van oorlog en direct geweld. Galtung (2013) verbreedde de definitie van vrede door de concepten positieve en negatieve vrede te introduceren. Hij stelt dat negative peace een staakt-het-vuren inhoudt, uitbuiting, geen structuur en de afwezigheid van rechtvaardiging. Positive peace aan de andere kant, betekent dat coöperatie aanwezig is evenals

billijkheid en gelijkheid, en een cultuur van vrede en dialoog (Galtung, 2013, p. 174). Vrede als overkoepelend concept is de optelsom van deze eigenschappen. Na negative peace wordt gerechtigheid, eerlijkheid en gelijkheid en de herstelling van sociale relaties centraal geplaatst. “Positive peace is built on negative peace” (Harris & Morrison, 2012, p. 32).

Reardon (1988) bouwt hierop verder en stelt dat er twee trends zijn binnen peace education: “education for negative peace” en “education for positive peace”. Onderwijzen voor negatieve vrede heeft als doel de kans op oorlog te verminderen. Dit soort lesgeven concentreert zich eerder op afzonderlijke gevallen zoals de nucleaire dreiging tijdens de Koude Oorlog (Reardon, 1988, p. 14). Daarnaast bestaat er education for positive peace, waarvan *Education for international understanding* van UNESCO (UNESCO, 1959) volgens Reardon een van de eerste vormen was. Education for international understanding wil begrip voor het wereldtoneel doceren. In tegenstelling tot negatieve vrede, ligt de nadruk bij positieve vrede op gemeenschappelijke factoren, wederzijds begrip en samenwerking. Het vertrekt vanuit de veronderstelling dat verhoogd begrip zal leiden tot betere relaties (Reardon, 1988, p. 28). Het doel is om de levenskwaliteit te verhogen en dat uit zich in positive peace education volgens Reardon op drie manieren in het curriculum: environmental education, development education en human rights education (Reardon, 1988, p. 31).

Positieve vrede bouwt aan de vrede. Binnen het zogenaamde peacebuilding, zijn er verschillende fasen. Zo onderscheiden de Verenigde Naties in An Agenda for Peace “preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping” (UN, 1992, p. 822). Peacebuilding wordt gedefinieerd als: “identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people and in addition address the deepest causes of conflict” (Tinker, 2016, p. 30). Barnes (2009) neemt peace-building ruimer en laat peacemaking eronder vallen (Barnes, 2009, pp. 134-135).

Om compleet te zijn over peace education definiëren Harris & Morrison tien hoofddoelen waartoe peace education dient: “

1. To appreciate the richness of the concept of peace
2. To address fears
3. To provide information about security
4. To understand war behaviour
5. To develop intercultural understanding
6. To provide a “futures” orientation
7. To teach peace as a process
8. To promote a concept of peace accompanied by social justice
9. To stimulate a respect for life
10. To manage conflicts non-violently” (Harris & Morrison, 2012, p. 32)

### **3.1.3 Het geval Noord-Ierland**

In Noord-Ierland heerst er negatieve vrede en wordt er gewerkt aan de positieve vrede. Daarom is er voornamelijk peacebuilding van toepassing. Barnes (2009) stelt dat peacebuilding acht hoofdfuncties heeft: “(1) waging conflict constructively; (2) shifting conflict attitudes; (3) defining the peace agenda; (4) mobilising constituencies for peace; (5) reducing violence and promoting stability; (6) peacemaking/conflict resolution; (7) community-level peacemaking; (8) changing root causes and building cultures of peace” (Barnes, 2009, pp. 134-135). Veel van deze functies zijn kenmerken die terug te vinden zijn in geïntegreerd onderwijs als vorm van peace education in Noord-Ierland. Geïntegreerd onderwijs bouwt aan de positieve vrede.

Al tijdens de Troubles werden programma's opgezet om het contact tussen beide partijen te bevorderen, zoals Education for Mutual Understanding. Zulke programma's vallen onder peace education.

Als we terugkoppelen naar de tien hoofddoelen van peace education volgens Harris & Morrison (2012), blijkt dat in Noord-Ierland voornamelijk punten 1, 2, 5 relevant zijn voor deze thesis omdat deze punten voornamelijk betrekking hebben op contacten in post-conflict gebieden.

Harris & Morrison plaatsen ook nog een belangrijke voetnoot waaruit blijkt dat ook peace education relevant blijft in Noord-Ierland. Ze stellen namelijk dat een groot nadeel van peace education is dat het een lange-termijn oplossing biedt voor urgente dreigingen. "For peace education to be effective, it must transform ways of thinking that have been developed over the millennia of human history" (Harris & Morrison, 2012, p. 28). Tot de dag van vandaag zijn de Troubles, een conflict dat de wortels heeft in de 17<sup>e</sup> eeuw, nog in leven. Dit uit zich in een gesegregerde samenleving.

## 4 Peace education programma's

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### 4.1 Het Noord-Ierse onderwijs

Na het einde van de Troubles in Noord-Ierland kwam peace education echt op dreef. De programma's richten zich voornamelijk op het onderwijssysteem, maar daar zitten moeilijkheden ingebed. De segregatie die reeds werd aangehaald op verschillende niveaus, wordt ook weerspiegeld in het onderwijs. Volgens statistieken uit 2007 gaat 92% van de protestantse studenten, naar protestantse scholen en 91% van de katholieken naar katholieke scholen (Weinstein, z.d., p. 2).

“This extreme segregation is reflective of a wider societal divide. There is separation residentially and in the workplace, with little religious mobility or intermarriage” (Hayes & McAllister, 2009, p. 439).

De reden voor deze tweedeling in het onderwijs gaat terug tot in 1831 wanneer het nationale systeem voor scholen werd opgericht. Toen behoorde het hele eiland nog tot het Verenigd Koninkrijk. Het systeem was bedoeld om onderwijs te voorzien voor kinderen van alle strekkingen maar in de praktijk namen autoriteiten van bepaalde strekkingen scholen over waardoor de scholen gesegregeerd werden (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 243).

“The Catholic Church refused to countenance handing its schools over to state control at all and complained that the new arrangements disadvantaged them in comparison to the circumstances operating under the national system. The Protestant churches agreed to transfer their schools only after they had won significant legislative concessions that made “state” schools Protestant in all but name” (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 243).

De segregatie in scholen werd en wordt aanschouwd als een van de oorzaken voor verdere segregatie in de maatschappij. Er zijn in Noord-Ierland hoofdzakelijk twee soorten scholen, namelijk: controlled schools en catholic maintained schools, ofwel protestantse en katholieke scholen. Daarnaast bestaan er nog enkele andere scholen waar geïntegreerde scholen deel van uit maken (Government of Northern Ireland, z.d., Types of school). Sinds 2007 is er daarnaast shared education in het leven geroepen. Shared education betekent “the education together of – (a) those of different religious belief, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons; and (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant providers” (Department of Education, z.d., Purpose of Shared Education). Concreet betekent dit dat verschillende scholen van verschillende strekkingen gaan samenwerken (Gallagher, 2016, p. 368). Ze blijven dus aparte scholen. “Thus, integrated schools provide not only shared education, but proactive acknowledgement of difference” (Abbott, 2010, p. 849). Daarin zit het verschil en de kritiek erop.

Peace education probeert de segregatie bij de wortels aan te pakken. Dit gebeurde over de jaren heen op verschillende manieren. De vroegste inmengingen in het onderwijssysteem om vrede te bevorderen dateren al van tijdens de Troubles en focusten zich op het curriculum. Dit betekent dat de handboeken en de lessen over geschiedenis en religie worden aangepast. Daarnaast werden er ook contactprogramma's opgericht waar er activiteiten werden georganiseerd over de verschillende gemeenschappen heen, bekend als het Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) programma (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 244). Geïntegreerd onderwijs is een derde optie, die er zich op richt om

conflicterende gemeenschappen samen te zetten in een onderwijscontext, al dan niet met aangepast curriculum.

## 4.2 Education for Mutual Understanding

“Education for Mutual Understanding aimed at promoting values associated with better community relations” (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 244).

Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) is een cross-curriculair thema dat gericht is op het leren over beide gemeenschappen en contacten stimuleert door activiteiten te organiseren voor beide gemeenschappen. De Education Reform Order van 1989 introduceerde EMU in Noord-Ierland (Smith & Robinson, 1996, Introduction). Het hoofddoel van EMU was dus om respect aan te leren aan jongeren en anderen “to [learn them to] appreciate the interdependence of people” (Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 245) en ze alternatieven voor geweld te laten zien om conflictsituaties op te lossen. Het voormalige Northern Ireland Curriculum Council formuleerde in 1990 de doelen:

“to learn to respect and value themselves and others; to appreciate the interdependence of people within society; to know about and understand what is shared as well as what is different about their cultural traditions; and to appreciate how conflict may be handled in non-violent ways” (Smith & Robinson, 1996, Introduction).

Al bleken er duidelijk enkele problemen te zijn met het EMU. De band tussen EMU en het onderwijs was niet sterk. De thema's die EMU aanhaalde zoals tradities, geschiedenis en respect waren verplicht in het curriculum maar het “cross-community contact” dat aanbevolen werd, was slechts optioneel voor scholen (Smith & Robinson, 1996, Introduction). Het “cross-community contact” hield bijvoorbeeld in dat protestantse en katholieke studenten samen een museum gingen bezoeken. Maar ook de thema's kwamen onder vuur te liggen omdat het EMU neigde te focussen op veilige, weinig controversiële onderwerpen en weinig progressie zou boeken (Gallagher, 2016, p. 364; Salomon & Cairns, 2011, p. 245). Daarnaast heeft onderzoek aangetoond dat de implementatie van EMU moeilijk kon worden gecontroleerd. Dat kwam doordat leerkrachten verschillende visies hadden op EMU en z'n doelen (Smith & Robinson, 1996, EMU in Transition). Ten slotte was het allemaal “on a voluntary basis” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 125). Bekerman en McGlynn (2007) concluderen over het EMU: “Even the best of intentions will not be sufficient to sustain it in a divided society” (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 26).

Maar het curriculum blijft een rol spelen in peace education in Noord-Ierland. Apart van Education for Mutual Understanding, drukt de Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment vandaag de dag de doelstellingen uit voor het Noord-Ierse curriculum. Ze schrijven dat “[in] the field of developing as an individual, Personal understanding, Mutual understanding and Moral character are the relevant aims. In the field of developing as a contributor to society, cultural understanding and ethical awareness are relevant to peace education” (CCEA, z.d., Curriculum Aim and Objectives). Maar dat verloopt niet steeds volgens plan want desondanks de aanmoedigingen van het Human Rights Commission of Northern Ireland (NIHRC), blijft het controversieel om onderwerpen zoals vrede, religie en de geschiedenis van Noord-Ierland in het nationale curriculum te incorporeren (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 28).



### 4.3 Integrated Education

Naast het Education for Mutual Understanding en aanpassingen van het curriculum werden ook scholen opgericht als onderdeel van peace education waar leerlingen van alle strekkingen naartoe konden gaan; de zogenaamde geïntegreerde scholen.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), de koepelorganisatie voor geïntegreerd onderwijs, definieert geïntegreerd onderwijs als:

“Education together in a school of children and young people drawn mainly from the Protestant and Catholic traditions, with the aim of providing for them an excellent education that gives recognition to and promotes the expression of these two main traditions. The integrated school, while essentially Christian in character, welcomes those of all faiths and none, and seeks to promote the worth and self-esteem of pupils, parents, staff, governors and all who are affected by the presence of the school in the community. The core aim is to provide children and young people with a caring and enhanced educational experience thus empowering them as individuals to affect positive change in a shared society” (NICIE, 2012, Definition).

Reeds in 1976 publiceerde de drukgroep ACT (All Children Together) een paper waarin een gedeeld beleid werd voorgesteld van scholen in Noord-Ierland. De geesten waren nog niet rijp en het voorstel werd geweigerd door alle grote protestantse en katholieke kerken in Noord-Ierland. Toch heeft het een impact gehad want het voorstel werd twee jaar later opgenomen in de Education Act NI van 1978. Nog eens twee jaar later werd de eerste geïntegreerde school opgericht in 1981: Lagan Integrated College (NICIE, z.d., Early History). De school was tot stand gekomen als resultaat van een “parent-driven, grassroots initiative” maar kreeg geen steun van de kerk. De ouders wouden jongeren de kans geven om samen onderwijs te volgen volgens een ethos dat wederzijds verstand, respect en “interdependence” promoot (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 24). Deze scholen worden grant-maintained integrated schools genoemd, zij zijn vanaf het ontstaan een geïntegreerde school. Daarnaast zijn er controlled integrated schools, dat zijn scholen die voorheen een controlled school waren maar getransformeerd zijn naar een geïntegreerde school (Department of Education, 2018a, p. 18).

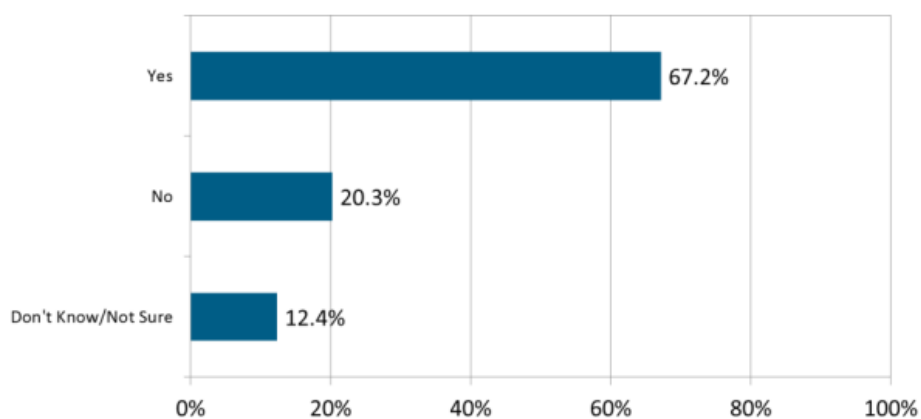
De geïntegreerde scholen hebben in de beginjaren zelf bepaald dat er een verhouding van maximum 60-40 moet zijn tussen de leerlingen van beide strekkingen en om beide culturele tradities te weerspiegelen. Tegenwoordig wordt een onevenwicht geaccepteerd en wordt een principe van 40-40-20 gehanteerd waarbij er 40% protestanten moeten zijn, 40% katholieken en 20% “other” (Smith, 2005, p. 98). Naast het feit dat geïntegreerde scholen, scholen zijn voor alle religies en achtergronden, zijn ze ook “all ability” scholen. Ze verwelkomen dus leerlingen van allerlei niveaus: van de slimste leerlingen tot leerlingen met speciale noden.

Volgens de laatste cijfers van 2017 zijn er momenteel 65 geïntegreerde scholen in Noord-Ierland (Integrated Education Fund, 2017, List of integrated schools in Northern Ireland). In het schooljaar 2017-2018 gingen er 23.088 leerlingen naar een geïntegreerde school wat goed is voor ongeveer 7% van het totaal aantal schoolgaande kinderen in Noord-Ierland (Department of Education, 2018a, p. 24). Gallagher (2016) stelt dat dit cijfer lijkt gestagneerd te zijn na de snelle groei van de jaren 90 en vroege jaren 2000 en het ziet er niet uit dat het significant gaat stijgen in de toekomst (Gallagher, 2016, p. 364). Toch is er een significante stijging gebeurd afgelopen twee jaar met 1.071 leerlingen. “This growth is mainly seen in primary schools, and could be explained by the fact that three primary schools transformed to integrated status in the last two years” (Department of Education, 2018a, p. 14).

Het gebrek aan contact tussen protestantse en katholieke scholen wordt door onderzoekers geïdentificeerd als een belangrijke factor die bijdraagt tot het aanhoudende conflict (Hayes, McAllister, & Dowds, 2007, p. 455). Daarbovenop komt nog eens dat de leerkrachten hun visies gevormd worden door de gemeenschap waar zij uitkomen. Als dit niet erkend of gecontesteerd wordt, dan kan hun visie overslaan op de leerlingen waardoor de breuklijn tussen de gemeenschappen blijft bestaan (Niens, O'Connor, & Smith, 2013, p. 129).

De geïntegreerde scholen worden veelal als succesvol gepercipieerd. Volgens een studie uit 2002, zou drie kwart van de ouders aangeven dat ze zouden kiezen voor geïntegreerd onderwijs als er meer geïntegreerde scholen zouden zijn (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 25). En volgens een opiniepeiling uit 2018 van LucidTalks (Figuur 1) bij ouders geeft 67,2% aan dat ze het zouden steunen moest de school van hun kind een geïntegreerde school worden (White, 2018, p. 9).

**QUESTION 4: If your child/ren's school, (or if you're not a parent your local school), was to propose becoming an officially integrated school, would you support this proposal?**



**Figuur 1.**

**Bron: LucidTalks**

Maar zijn de geïntegreerde scholen naast begerd ook een succesformule? McGlynn onderzocht reeds in 2001 de impact van geïntegreerd onderwijs en kwam tot het besluit dat het op lange termijn een beduidend positieve impact had op vriendschappen over de gemeenschappen heen, respect voor diversiteit, vertrouwen in pluralistische instellingen en er een verbetering was om zich open te stellen voor andere perspectieven (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 78). Een ander onderzoek van Niens, Cairns, Hewstone en McLernon (2003) stelde dat studenten uit geïntegreerd onderwijs vergevingsgezinder waren. En in 2004, vatten McGlynn en collega's al het relevante onderzoek over geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-Ierland samen en kwamen tot de conclusie “that IE [overall] positively impacts identity, out-group education, forgiveness, and reconciliation” (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 25).

Maar naast alle positieve aandacht kreeg geïntegreerd onderwijs ook negatieve aandacht. Sterke tegenwind kreeg het van de kerk, die stelde dat “educational integration seeks to curtail expression of religion and threaten ‘cultural identity’” (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 24). Het is duidelijk dat geïntegreerd onderwijs zeker nog obstakels moet overwinnen, zowel moeilijkheden binnen scholen als belemmeringen die door externe factoren worden veroorzaakt.

### **4.3.1 Geïntegreerd ethos**

Het Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) definieert het geïntegreerde ethos als volgt:

“The integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background. Integrated education is value-driven and childcentred. It is delivered through a holistic approach with an emphasis on developing every aspect of a child’s or young person’s potential” (NICIE, 2012, Declaration of Ethos).

Geïntegreerd onderwijs ontwikkelt een waardering van diversiteit, prosociale vaardigheden en niet-gewelddadig probleemoplossend denken. Dit zijn de overkoepelende aspecten. Naast het inclusieve aspect en de anti-bias programma’s leren studenten aan de hand van het curriculum en leermogelijkheden om pestgedrag te vermijden en erop te reageren. Deze zitten verweven in het alledaagse onderwijzen en interacties. Dit wordt door Pickett ‘integrated ethos’ genoemd (Pickett, 2008, p. 353). Concreet komt dit erop neer dat de geïntegreerde scholen de contacthypothese aanhangen (Allport, 1954).

### 4.3.2 Contacthypothese

“Learning of stereotypes feels easier and even natural if you do not know the other person. If you end up interacting with ‘the other’, it becomes harder to demonize that person” (Bollens, 2012, p. 61).

Geïntegreerde scholen volgen de logica van de contacthypothese (Tomovska, 2010, p. 121). Deze hypothese werd geïntroduceerd door Williams in 1947 en later verfijnd door Gordon Allport in 1954 in het boek *The Nature of Prejudice*. De contacthypothese stelt dat “if the members of two groups engage in an equal status, cooperative encounter which leads towards achieving a common goal and the encounter has institutional support, it should lead to improved intergroup relations” (Tomovska, 2010, p. 121). De contacttheorie voorziet het kader waarin raciale en/of etnische vooroordelen worden verminderd (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 455). Deze quote uit *The Nature of Prejudice* illustreert de logica die geïntegreerde scholen hanteren:

“The trend of evidence, (...) seems to favour indirect approaches. By indirect we mean programs that do not specialize in the study of minority groups as such, nor focus upon the phenomena of prejudice as such. The student seems to gain more when he loses himself in community projects, when he participates in realistic situations, and develops, as William James would say, acquaintance with the field rather than knowledge about the field” (Allport, 1954, pp. 450-451).

Natuurlijk contact tussen verschillende gemeenschappen zorgt volgens deze hypothese voor vermindering van vooroordelen en voor gelijkheid dan kennis. Daarnaast stelt Allport (1954) dat om een maximaal effect te hebben, contactprogramma’s moeten leiden naar gelijkheid in sociale status, moeten voorkomen in alledaagse situaties, niet kunstmatig zijn en als het mogelijk is, van de goedkeuring van de gemeenschap genieten. “The deeper and more genuine the association, the greater its effect” (Allport, 1954, p. 454). Recenter onderzoek van Pettigrew en Tropp (2006) voerde een meta-analyse uit van 1.400 papers over intergroep contact die de contacthypothese bevestigt. “[The] meta-analysis reveals that greater intergroup contact is generally associated with lower levels of prejudice” (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766). De resultaten tonen aan dat Allport’s optimale condities de positieve effecten van intergroep contact versterken. Maar tevens zijn de condities niet essentieel om positieve resultaten te bekomen, ze fungeren als faciliterende omstandigheden (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 766). Dankzij Pettigrew en Tropp (2006) is de intergroep contacttheorie een

gevestigde algemene sociaalpsychologische theorie en niet zuiver een theorie die ontwikkeld is simpelweg voor raciaal en etnisch contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 768).

De contacthypothese stelt voor dat conflicten tussen verschillende groepen gereduceerd kunnen worden door de individuen van die tegengestelde groepen samen te brengen. Een van de onderliggende veronderstellingen is dat een conflict ontstaat door een gebrek aan informatie van de andere groep en het gebrek aan kansen om zulke informatie te verkrijgen. De contacthypothese stelt dus dat conflicten vermeden kunnen worden door contact tussen de verschillende groepsleden te promoten waardoor er meer tolerantie zou ontstaan, evenals een positieve houding (Aboud & Sakar, 2007; Bekerman, Habib & Shhadi, 2011; Hayes et al., 2007; Wright & Tropp, 2005).

## 5 Onderzoeksvraag en probleemstelling

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In het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord, dat de vrede verankerde tussen beide partijen, werd geïntegreerd onderwijs vastgelegd (Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, 1998). Exact twintig jaar later, blijkt dat het geïntegreerde onderwijs nog niet uit de startblokken is geschoten. Volgens statistieken uit 2007 gaat 92% van de protestantse studenten naar protestantse scholen gaan en 91% van de katholieken naar katholieke scholen (Weinstein, z.d., p. 2). Deze segregatie wordt door onderzoekers voorgelegd als een belangrijke factor die bijdraagt tot het aanhoudende conflict (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 455).

Naast de segregatie in de samenleving, zijn er ook tal van moeilijkheden voor geïntegreerd onderwijs. Uit eerder onderzoek blijkt dat leerkrachten en directeurs verschillende benaderingen hanteren in hun school, sommigen vinden het moeilijk om controversiële onderwerpen te onderwijzen, sommigen hebben hun eigen achtergrond in een bepaalde religie en vinden dat ze een gebrek aan training hebben. Hoe effectief geïntegreerd onderwijs is, hangt af van de leerkrachten en de scholen, vandaar de focus op leerkrachten en directeurs. Maar veel onderzoek dateert reeds van meer dan tien jaar geleden en behandelt de problematiek vanuit het oogpunt van leerkrachten en directeurs slechts minimaal.

Hieruit kan ik verder werken naar de onderzoeksvraag: Welke problemen of moeilijkheden ervaren directeurs en leerkrachten in geïntegreerd onderwijs? Komen ze verder uit het gebrek aan training? Steunt de gemeenschap hen? En hoe komt het dat deze onderwijsvorm zich nog niet verder heeft kunnen verspreiden?

## 6 Methodologie

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De thesis is gebaseerd op tien semigestructureerde interviews met directeurs en leerkrachten van geïntegreerde scholen in Noord-Ierland in combinatie met een literatuurstudie bestaande uit wetenschappelijke artikels en beleidsdocumenten. De scholen van de geïnterviewden waren zowel lagere (primary) als middelbare (post-primary) scholen. Van de geïnterviewden waren er vijf directeur en vijf leerkracht. In de interviews werd er voornamelijk gepeild naar de perceptie van leerkrachten op de school, het lesgeven, moeilijkheden, geïntegreerd onderwijs als concept en hun opinie.

Via Paula McIlwaine van NICIE heb ik een lijst verkregen met alle geïntegreerde scholen van Noord-Ierland en de contactgegevens van de directie daarbij. Vervolgens heb ik elke primary en post-primary school gemaïld waar ik dan van enkele directeurs antwoord heb gekregen. De directeurs hebben me dan op hun beurt weer verder geholpen door een brief (zie 10.11) die ik geschreven had te verdelen onder het leerkrachtencorps.

De interviews duurden tussen de 25 minuten en 70 minuten. Drie waren vrouwen, zeven waren mannen. De ervaring in het onderwijs varieert van persoon tot persoon, maar waar dat relevant is, zal dat verduidelijkt worden. Daarnaast bevonden sommige scholen zich ook in een meer rurale omgeving en anderen in een meer stedelijke omgeving.

Van de semigestructureerde interviews heb ik een interpretatieve inhoudsanalyse gemaakt. Daaruit kwamen verschillende thema's meermaals aan bod. De analyse volgt een thematische structuur van wederkerende onderwerpen die door de directeurs en leerkrachten werden aangehaald.

Daarnaast heb ik ook klasobservaties uitgevoerd in Glengormley Integrated Primary School. De klasobservaties hadden voornamelijk als doel om de werking van de leerkracht in een klas te observeren. Deze informatie komt voornamelijk aan bod bij 7.1 Interne aandachtspunten.

## 7 Analyse

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In de analyse wordt ingegaan op de resultaten van tien kwalitatieve semigestructureerde interviews. De resultaten zijn geordend in twee grote luiken: interne aandachtspunten en externe aandachtspunten. De interne gaan over wat er in het bereik van de school zelf ligt, de externe zijn externe factoren die invloed hebben op het geïntegreerde onderwijs. Als laatste worden er nog enkele overige aandachtspunten geformuleerd.

Hieronder is een tabel met de functie en school waarin de geïnterviewden werken. De quotes worden aangeduid door het interviewnummer in de analyse.

Bijlage	Interviewnummer	Functie	School
10.1	PI	Directeur	Middelbare school
10.2	PII	Directeur	Middelbare school
10.3	PIII	Directeur	Middelbare school
10.4	PIV	Directeur	Lagere school
10.5	PV	Directeur	Lagere school
10.6	TI	Leerkracht	Middelbare school
10.7	TII	Leerkracht	Lagere school
10.8	TIII	Leerkracht	Lagere school
10.9	TIV	Leerkracht	Lagere school
10.10	TV	Leerkracht	Lagere school

### 7.1 Interne aandachtspunten

#### 7.1.1 Geïntegreerd ethos

Verschillen in de interviews kwamen vaak verder uit de verschillen in het geïntegreerde ethos van de scholen, directeurs en leerkrachten. Het onderscheid kan worden gemaakt in het passief of actief beoefenen van het geïntegreerde ethos. Het passieve kwam tot uiting in een laissez-faire houding waar de contacten tussen de leerlingen als ‘natuurlijk’ worden beschreven en dus de contacthypothese passief wordt gevolgd. Daar tegenover staat de actieve beleving van het geïntegreerde ethos, waar volgens de geïnterviewden alles eerder gevierd en gepland wordt en bewust beleefd wordt.

Montgomery, Fraser, McGlynn, Smith, en Gallagher (2001) identificeren drie manieren waarop geïntegreerd onderwijs benaderd wordt: “passive (allowing it to happen naturally), reactive (doing

something if the need arises), and proactive (planned policy and structures)” (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 81). Uit een andere studie waarbij 52 directeurs van geïntegreerde scholen werden geïnterviewd, blijkt dat er een verschillende aanpak heerst. 18 directeurs beschreven dat hun benadering liberaal was, waar de nadruk ligt op de gemeenschappelijke cultuur en er een natuurlijke gelijkheid zou heersen, wat dus met het onderzoek van Montgomery et al. kan vergeleken worden met de passieve aanpak. Deze aanpak kon ook nog onderverdeeld worden tot proactief liberaal, waar er een bewuste nadruk ligt op gelijkenissen, en passief liberaal, waar de gelijkenissen eerder toevallig zijn (OECD, 2010, p. 244).

Naast de liberale benadering, stelden ook 16 directeurs dat er in hun school een pluralistische benadering is, die diversiteit, geschiedenis en cultureel erfgoed omarmt. Dit stemt ongeveer overeen met de reactieve aanpak volgens Montgomery et al. Vervolgens was er ook nog een kritische integratie dat door vier directeurs wordt gevolgd. Dit is niet alleen de diversiteit omarmen en vieren maar ook sociaal onrecht actief aanpakken (OECD, 2010, p. 246). Dit zou dan weer volgens Montgomery et al. proactief genoemd kunnen worden. Dit zijn vergelijkingen, geen gelijkschakelingen.

Als laatste zijn er nog combinaties in stijlen. Zes directeurs volgen een liberaal pluralistische integratie waar culturele verscheidenheid wordt erkend maar ook gelijkheid en gelijkenissen worden benadrukt. Acht directeurs volgen een liberaal kritische integratie waar de gemeenschappelijke grond wordt gezocht in combinatie met het bewust aanpakken van onrecht (OECD, 2010, p. 247).

Twee directeurs (PI, PIV) en een leerkracht (TI) uit de interviews gaven aan dat het contact tussen de kinderen geen extra aandacht vereist en dat het “naturally” verloopt. Deze aanpak kan passief of liberaal genoemd worden. Maar een van de twee directeurs nuanceerde: “Children don’t see [differences], adults create barriers. (...) We teach children that it is okay to be different” (PIV). Deze directeur meent dus initieel dat alles natuurlijk verloopt maar de school introduceert kinderen tot de Ierse taal en stelt dat er wisselwerkingen zijn tussen Gaelic football en rugby. Deze directeur stelt ook: “We celebrate difference” (PIV). Net zoals alle overige directeurs die dus actief het geïntegreerde ethos uitoefenen. PIV lijkt een andere stijl te hanteren per situatie, maar overwegend proactief. De verschillen vieren tussen leerlingen bevestigt wat Gay (2013) argumenteert. Zij stelt dat gelijkenissen tussen waarden en ethiek en culturele diversiteit en verschillen bijdragen tot “e pluribus unum”. Gelijkenissen en verschillen zijn complementair (Gay, 2013, pp. 65-66).<sup>2</sup>

De actieve benadering van het geïntegreerde ethos komt naar boven in zowel een gepland beleid, het curriculum als extra-curriculaire activiteiten. In het beleid komt dit tot uiting door aandacht te schenken aan verschillende betekenisvolle religieuze gebeurtenissen. Zo stelde een directeur: “We plan very carefully for a number of key aspects what happens within the school. (...) It is very strategic and we do think very carefully” (PIII). Deze aspecten zijn dan Aswoensdag – dat belangrijk is voor de katholieken, Remembrance Day – voor de protestanten, en de dag dat de kinderen

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<sup>2</sup> Gay (2013) beschrijft in haar essay *Teaching To and Through Cultural Diversity* het concept culturally responsive teaching. Ze definieert het als “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (Gay, 2013, pp. 49-50). In deze vorm van lesgeven worden verschillen belicht net zoals culturele en historische ervaringen van verschillende etnische groepen. Het gaat over onderwerpen die niet erkend worden in traditioneel onderwijs. Hier wordt niet teruggedeeind voor moeilijke onderwerpen want “[culture] and difference are an unconditional part of their human heritage” (Gay, 2013, p. 61).



aankomen op hun geïntegreerde school en ze nadenken wat dit juist betekent. “(...) even before the children have arrived to school, we ask them to complete a piece of work, where we simply ask them to tell us what they think it means to be in an integrated school. It is usually artwork. They come in with globes, jigsaw pieces, quotations. But it is an attempt to help them to focus on what it means to be in an integrated school” (PIII). Dit komt sterk naar voren bij PII, PIII en PV.

Het reflecteren over het waarom van geïntegreerde scholen wordt in het curriculum ingebracht. “We do set aside lessons so often, we talk about integrated education and we highlight how important it is” (TV). Deze gedachte is terug te vinden bij TII, III en IV en bij PII, III en V. Hier wordt het geïntegreerde ethos actief nageleefd.

Uit een klasobservatie in een klas van 7- tot 8-jarigen in een geïntegreerde lagere school wordt dit ook duidelijk. De directeur introduceert me even kort en stelt dat ik onderzoek doe naar geïntegreerd onderwijs, hij vraagt aan de klas: “What means integrated?” De leerlingen vuren allerlei antwoorden af. “Being different”, valt er waardoor er hierop wordt verdergegaan. Wat maakt je anders? De leerlingen werpen alles op: “Shoes”, “skin”, “eyes”, “religion”, “faith”, “language”. Op deze jonge leeftijd hebben de leerlingen al enig idee waarom ze in een geïntegreerde school zitten.

Ook is er in deze school een uniformloze dag waar de kinderen zich moeten kleden met iets waarmee ze zich identificeren. Zo is er een kind die een truitje draagt van een *hurling* ploeg – een typisch Ierse, katholieke sport; een kind die een groen sportshirt draagt met “Ireland” op of een meisje met Zuid-Afrikaanse en Griekse roots die beide vlaggen van de landen op haar wangen heeft getekend. De identiteitsverschillen worden niet in de kast gestopt maar gevierd. Een leerkracht uit deze school vatte het samen als: “To me, the whole point of integration is that you are not shying away for anything” (TIV). Ook volgens Abbott (2010) is het proactieve kenmerk essentieel voor geïntegreerde scholen: “(...) integrated schools provide not only shared education, but proactive acknowledgement of difference” (Abbott, 2010, p. 849).

Een directeur stelde zelfs: “[The] staff [is] (...) constantly monitoring relationships and interactions to make sure to deliver the integrated ethos” (PIII). Al deze voorbeelden en aspecten die worden aangehaald zijn uitingen van een proactieve stijl of kritische integratie volgens de literatuur. Deze stijlen worden voorgeschreven als succesvol (Cavanagh & Topping, 2016, p. 29; Hunter, 2008, p. 239) en door de literatuur over multicultureel onderwijs voorgeschreven als te volgen richtlijn.

Volgens Banks & Banks (2010) kan in multicultureel onderwijs de focus op de feestdagen ook een gevaar zijn. Deze aanpak wordt de contributions approach genoemd. Daarin worden eerder de veilige onderwerpen van culturele diversiteit besproken, daarnaast zorgt het er ook voor dat het bereik van multicultureel onderwijs verkleind wordt en riskeren groepsverschillen geminimaliseerd te worden. Iets waar enkele directeurs en leerkrachten zich voor moeten behoeden. Maar, de directeurs die onder andere de focus leggen op feestdagen volgen net de proactieve stijl of kritische integratie (PII, PIII, PV). Dit kan erop wijzen dat feestdagen in Noord-Ierland wél als moeilijke onderwerpen worden beschouwd, zoals ook zal blijken uit het controversiële gebruik van de ‘poppy’ op Remembrance Day of het feit dat het katholieke geloof meer “high profile” is vanwege Aswoensdag of de sacramenten.

De benaderingen critical multiculturalism en de social action approach die worden voorgeschreven als goede benaderingen van multicultureel onderwijs, zijn echter ook terug te vinden in de interviews. Bij critical multiculturalism analyseren de leerlingen kritisch de socio-politieke context waarin ze leven en leerkrachten moedigen ze aan om meerdere perspectieven aan te nemen. Bij de social action approach proberen de leerkrachten de leerlingen te motiveren om sociale actie te ondernemen om structurele ongelijkheden aan te vallen (Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 245; Kuppens, Sulley, & Langer,

2018, pp. 7-8).<sup>3</sup> Dit stemt overeen met een proactieve stijl of kritische integratie zoals beschreven in de literatuur.

Een mogelijke verklaring voor deze variaties tussen leerkrachten en directeurs kan worden gevonden in de locatie en de context van de school. Is er oppositie of net steun? Zijn er spanningen? Daarnaast bevinden de scholen zich vaak in verschillende stadia van ontwikkeling, gezien sommigen al langer bestaan dan anderen (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, pp. 81-82).

### 7.1.2 Controversiële onderwerpen

Uit de analyse van de interviews blijkt dat zeker zes respondenten aangeven dat het doceren van controversiële onderwerpen ten minste gevoelig is of een evenwichtsoefening is.

“(…) there are subjects that are particularly sensitive for that such as Religious Education and History. Our staff are very finely tuned to the realisation that all cultures and religions may be represented in one class. And the way they explore historical events or aspects of religion are very sensitive and very finely balanced to encourage children again to respect difference but also to think about questions of life and potential grow out of that process stronger than they might have been before. And above all to be willing to ask questions and to think carefully” (PIII).

“You have to be careful to teach both sides of the picture” (TI).

Een leerkracht in het lager onderwijs geeft aan dat zulke onderwerpen moeilijker kunnen zijn als ze meer in de diepte gaan maar “the hardest part is probably giving the children depth in [values and faiths], rather than scratching the surface” (TIII). Een andere leerkracht kan zich hier deels vinden. Hij heeft onlangs lesgegeven over de geschiedenis van Noord-Ierland, de segregatie en de Troubles en waarom geïntegreerd onderwijs is gestart. Hij stelt dat hij het moeilijk vindt omdat het een “sensitive issue” is met twee kanten aan het verhaal:

“At their age we don’t go so much into details because it is such a sensitive issue. (...) You don’t know what their parents are telling them so you don’t want to shake the boat too much. (...) I don’t want to push it too much on them, as long as they know there is a reason for integration and I highlight why it is important” (TV).

Al zegt hij daarna dat niets te uitdagend is in zijn geïntegreerde school want de kinderen kunnen vrij spreken. Een andere leerkracht meent ook dat dit net dankzij geïntegreerd onderwijs is. De onderwerpen worden niet geschuwd. “In an integrated school, the teachers are freer to explore those topics with the children without the worry they might upset the parents or there would be a backlash” (TII).

Uit voorgaand academisch onderzoek van Niens et al. (2013) blijkt dat leerkrachten in Noord-Ierland vaak weigerachtig staan tegenover het doceren van controversiële onderwerpen, maar van de 13 geïnterviewden kwam er slechts een leerkracht uit geïntegreerd onderwijs (Niens et al., 2013, p. 134).

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<sup>3</sup> In het multiculturele onderwijs zijn er gelijkenissen te vinden met het geïntegreerde onderwijs. Banks en Banks (2010) formuleren vijf dimensies van multicultureel onderwijs, namelijk: *content integration*, *knowledge construction*, *prejudice reduction*, *equity pedagogy* en *empowering school culture and social structure* (Banks & Banks, 2010, pp. 20-22). Deze vijf dimensies zijn terug te vinden zijn in het geïntegreerde onderwijs. Daarnaast zijn er nog verschillende benaderingen van multicultureel onderwijs zoals reeds vermeld. In de verschillende benaderingen van multicultureel onderwijs zitten de gelijkenissen in de verschillende stijlen van scholen, lesgeven en het geïntegreerde ethos.

Een ander onderzoek uit 1996 in gesegregeerde scholen stelt dat onderwerpen zoals religie, politiek en identiteit frequent vermeden worden door leerkrachten die onvoldoende getraind zijn voor het werk en die reeds moeite hebben met een overladen curriculum (McGlynn, 2004, p. 86). In een onderzoek van Donnelly (2004) wordt aangegeven dat controversiële en moeilijke onderwerpen worden vermeden door verschillende leerkrachten (Donnelly, 2004, pp. 9-10). Het onderzoek werd slechts in één geïntegreerde school uitgevoerd. Maar ook een onderzoek van Johnson (2001) stelt dat in verschillende scholen leerkrachten aangeven dat ze in plaats van de problemen rechtstreeks aan te pakken, ze een klimaat van acceptatie, tolerantie en respect in hun klassen proberen te creëren (Johnson, 2001, p. 16). Dit sluit aan bij de invulling van het geïntegreerde ethos die verschilt over de scholen heen. Sommige scholen gaan proactief te werk, anderen eerder passief.

Geen enkele ondervraagde leerkracht of directeur heeft aangegeven onderwerpen te vermijden, slechts enkelen vonden het een uitdaging en een evenwichtsoefening. Dit kan een evolutie zijn doorheen de tijd aangezien er bijna twee decennia tussen zitten, maar de meeste respondenten doceren in een lagere school waar, zoals door de leerkrachten zelf aangegeven, er in mindere mate wordt ingegaan op zulke onderwerpen in vergelijking met middelbare scholen.

Niemand had een training gevolgd van CCEA voor Controversial Issues (zie 7.1.3.1 Bestaande Training Programma's). En zoals Johnson (2001) stelt: "According to a number of the teachers with whom I spoke, some of the reticence to discuss conflict and diversity issues up-front through planned curriculum and instruction stems from the lack of formal training or preparation they feel they have in this area" (Johnson, 2001, p. 17).

### 7.1.3 Training

De segregatie tussen beide groepen die in het lager onderwijs en het middelbaar voorkomt, zet zich verder in de teacher training colleges. In Noord-Ierland bestaan er vier instituties die leerkrachten opleiden: Queen's University, University of Ulster en twee colleges voor onderwijs: Stranmillis College en St. Mary's College. Deze twee laatste zijn de facto religieus gesegregeerd. Stranmillis wordt door de overheid gerund en daar gaan dus voornamelijk protestanten naartoe, al is er een aanzienlijk aandeel katholieken die er werken. Naar St. Mary's gaan voornamelijk katholieken (Donnelly, 2004, p. 7; Smith, 2005, p. 91). Een directeur heeft hier een duidelijke visie rond:

"I don't believe teachers should be trained separately for integrated schools. In fact, there are too many providers for trainings for schools. I think there should be one institution where all teachers go to be trained. (...) I believe there should be one training college for everybody. That would mean that they are integrated" (PI).

Zelf gingen de meeste leerkrachten naar een protestantse of katholieke school maar vanuit overtuiging gaan ze lesgeven in een geïntegreerde school (McGlynn, 2003, p. 13). Veel leerkrachten hebben een achtergrond in een enkele identiteit en zijn opgeleid in instituties waar diezelfde identiteit domineert waardoor ze weinig blootgesteld zijn aan pluralistische wereldbeelden (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 29). De meesten liepen zelf school in gesegregeerd onderwijs daardoor moeten ze vaak zelfbewust worden en kennis verkrijgen over 'de ander' (Pickett, 2008, p. 353). Ook Morgan, Dunn, Fraser, & Cairns stelde dit reeds in 1994:

"The majority of those interviewed had never taught any pupils from the 'other' community before coming into an integrated school. From their own comments about their background and their previous teaching experience we gained the impression that a number of them had been dissatisfied in the segregated school system and that quite a lot of them perceived

themselves as 'outsiders' even before they made the move" (Morgan, Dunn, Fraser, & Cairns, 1994, p. 155).

### 7.1.3.1 *Bestaande training programma's*

Specifieke trainingen voor leerkrachten in geïntegreerd onderwijs zijn wenselijk maar niet evident. Training om les te geven in een geïntegreerde school zal leerkrachten de mogelijkheid geven om niet alleen de studenten te onderwijzen maar ook om hen te helpen om vaardigheden te ontwikkelen om problemen op te lossen en te bemiddelen (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 29). Initiatieven uit het verleden die ook aan peacebuilding deden in Noord-Ierland, werden bekritiseerd vanwege het gebrek aan gepaste training om leerkrachten voor te bereiden om controversiële items te onderwijzen (Niens et al., 2013, p. 130). In dezelfde studie van Niens et al. (2013) gaven de leerkrachten aan dat er nood is aan onderwijs op maat (Niens et al., 2013, p. 135). Al hadden de geïnterviewde leerkrachten net een training gevolgd en kwam er slechts een uit een geïntegreerde school.

Hieronder zijn drie opleidingen die zich richten op de contacten tussen protestanten en katholieken in het onderwijs. Enkel de opleidingen van NICIE zijn volledig gefocust op geïntegreerd onderwijs.

- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

NICIE biedt verschillende opleidingen en trainingsdagen aan voor leerkrachten in geïntegreerd onderwijs. Een programma concentreert zich op nieuwe leerkrachten in geïntegreerd onderwijs. In dat programma moeten de deelnemers hun verwachtingen neerschrijven. De verwachtingen zijn meestal: de kennis vergroten van integratie en van het geïntegreerde ethos, het bewustzijn vergroten van de rol van NICIE, praktische ideeën verkrijgen om in de klas te gebruiken, goede oefeningen delen en anderen ontmoeten. Vervolgens tracht men deze verwachtingen in te lossen (NICIE, z.d., Teachers new to integration).

Een ander programma van NICIE focust zich op anti-bias training. Het doel is om zelfbewustzijn te ontwikkelen, een verandering in houding teweeg te brengen en de leerkrachten te voorzien met de nodige kunde, middelen en drijfkracht om zonder vooroordelen les te geven.

“The structure of the course encourages deep reflection on the nature and impact of the integration of education in Northern Ireland, throughout the remaining days of the course” (NICIE, z.d., Anti Bias).

- Corrymeela

Daarnaast organiseert ook Corrymeela, een christelijke gemeenschap die zich inzet voor verzoening en peacebuilding in Noord-Ierland, trainingprogramma's voor leerkrachten van alle scholen. Ze organiseren workshops en seminaries waar leerkrachten van lagere scholen kunnen samenkomen en hun ervaringen delen (Corrymeela, z.d., Primary schools). Ook voor leerkrachten die onderwijzen in post-primary schools zijn er trainingen beschikbaar. Corrymeela organiseert trainingsdagen waar de focus ligt op “helping teachers to develop important skills in classroom pedagogy such as how to conduct a discussion in which students truly talk and listen to one another, how to raise controversial topics and how to establish a classroom atmosphere of trust.” De focus ligt op de geschiedenis onder ogen zien en van daaruit naar de toekomst werken (Corrymeela, z.d., Post-primary schools).

- The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA)

De CCEA behoort tot het Ministerie van Onderwijs van Noord-Ierland. De CCEA organiseert training events om scholen te ondersteunen met het doceren van ‘Controversial Issues’, zoals de geschiedenis

van Noord-Ierland en Religious Education. Controversiële onderwerpen kunnen volgens hen moeilijk te doceren zijn en ze kunnen in alle onderwerpen voorkomen, gepland of niet.

De training bestaat uit deze controversiële onderwerpen ontdekken, de uitdagingen en voordelen te ontdekken van zulke onderwerpen doceren, de rol van de leerkracht versterken, een veilige leeromgeving creëren en methodes en strategieën ontwikkelen (CCEA, 2017, *Controversial Issue Training*).

### 7.1.3.2 *Ervaringen met training*

Van de vijf geïnterviewde leerkrachten hebben er twee een specifieke opleiding gevolgd voor geïntegreerd onderwijs, met name de anti-bias training van NICIE. Daarnaast volgde PV ook een NICIE-training en uitte PIV zich als voorstander van deze trainingen.

Degenen die de training gevolgd hebben, stelden dat het zeer goed was. Het deed ze denken over taalgebruik in de klas en de eigen vooroordelen waar ze zich niet bewust van waren. “I didn’t think the anti-bias training was necessary until I went to it. I didn’t realised I was biased on certain ways. It probably is necessary to make teachers aware of them. (...) [But] I think the sort of teacher needed to work in an integrated school, is almost special itself” (TIII). Dit bevestigt Smith (2005): “The teachers must be self-aware about their own prejudices and capable of talking about these matters to young people. The average teacher does not know how to do this” (Smith, 2005, p. 96).

De leerkracht (TIII) stelde ook dat werken in de school een goede training is. Dat is ook wat de respondenten stelden die geen specifieke training hebben gevolgd. “I think I’m doing fine without training” (TV). Ze leren van elkaar, doen hun eigen onderzoek en al doende leert men (TIV). Dat bevestigt ook een directeur die tegelijk zegt dat er altijd meer training nodig is. “I think the more teachers can get together and share stories, that’s really valuable. We always need more training, but unfortunately, there are financial restrictions” (PIV). Een andere directeur zegt: “I think it really comes from being immersed in the culture of the school and see how we do things” (PIII). Een directeur (PV) die deel uitmaakt van NICIE’s Board of Governors zendt nieuwe leerkrachten die nog nooit in een geïntegreerde school gewerkt hebben naar de trainingsdagen omdat hij de training erg nuttig acht.

Tegenover de externe trainingen van NICIE die gevolgd werden, stelden PII en PIII dat ze zelf trainingsessies aanbieden vanuit de school. PII stelt dat de NICIE-trainingen gewoonweg te ver weg zijn van waar hun school gelegen is. Daarom hebben ze hun eigen training en vindt de directeur dat de training in de klas begint. PIII organiseert als school een “own training program and training days within the school” (PIII). Ze leren in de klas, praten met collega’s en hij stelt dat reeds bij de sollicitatiegesprekken gepeild wordt naar de capaciteiten en dat dat een bepalende factor is.

Slechts een directeur stelt dat een aparte training niet nodig is. Hij meent dat leerkrachten in geïntegreerd onderwijs “no different” (PI) zijn. Dit is in lijn met de passieve of liberale benadering van het geïntegreerde ethos dat deze directeur hanteert zoals besproken bij 7.1.1.

Teruggekoppeld aan de literatuur stelde Morgan et al. (1994) in het vroege stadium van geïntegreerd onderwijs vast dat in lagere scholen weinig leerkrachten specialisten waren in zake religieuze educatie en de ‘andere’ gemeenschap. “The teachers themselves have, therefore, to become part of the wider learning process. (...) In relation to all these areas teachers have been asked to exercise new skills for which they had no formal training” (Morgan et al., 1994, pp. 158-159). McGlynn argumenteert dat de verantwoordelijkheid van de training valt op de scholen en dat leerkrachtentraining voor diversiteit en integratie een lopend proces is in ontwikkeling (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 84). Iedere school

heeft z'n eigen aanpak volgens de interviews: NICIE-training, eigen trainingsdagen, al doende leren of geen verschil zien met andere scholen.

In tegenstelling tot onderzoek van Donnelly (2004) die stelt: "No teacher believed that his/her initial teacher training had equipped them for teaching in the integrated sector" (Donnelly, 2004, p. 7), geeft geen enkele geïnterviewde aan zich niet geschikt te achten om les te geven in een geïntegreerde school.

Johnson (2001) schrijft: "All integrated school teachers should have training in relevant teaching methods that support building a cooperative classroom ethos such as circle time techniques; group work; discussion and debate methods and cooperative versus competitive methods" (Johnson, 2001, p. 15).

De literatuur (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 30; Johnson, 2001, p. 15; McGlynn, 2003, pp. 21-22; Morgan et al., 1994, pp. 158-159) en de geïnterviewde leerkrachten of directeurs die een training hebben gevolgd blijken te stellen dat training voor geïntegreerd onderwijs uiterst nuttig of zelfs nodig is terwijl ze a priori dat niet dachten. De leerkrachten en directeurs die geen specifieke training gevolgd hebben, menen het zelf goed te doen zonder.

In een onafhankelijk onderzoeksrapport uit 2016 in opdracht van het Ministerie van Onderwijs over het geïntegreerd onderwijs, worden 39 aanbevelingen gemaakt omtrent geïntegreerd onderwijs. Aanbeveling 37 is gericht tot de training van leerkrachten:

"(...) [the Department of Education] should ensure that all student teachers being educated in Northern Ireland shall have substantial, meaningful, cross-community, professional training including cross-community contact, that will prepare them to work in any publicly-funded school in Northern Ireland" (Cavanagh & Topping, 2016, p. 8).

#### **7.1.4 Alle niveaus en sociale klassen**

Een andere uitdaging is het feit dat geïntegreerde scholen ook all ability scholen zijn, ze zijn non-selective. In Noord-Ierland is er in het schoolsysteem naast de religieuze scheiding, een "division by ability" (PIII). Er bestaan grammar schools, die zich richten op de academische hoogvliegers en er zijn middelbare scholen voor diegene die de test voor grammar schools niet slaagden. En daarnaast zijn er geïntegreerde scholen:

"Integrated schools are all ability so our goal is to have children who could have gone to a grammar school [and] who could have gone to a high school. For the children, I tell some sort of a riddle where I ask: is this a grammar school or a high school? And let's see what they say. Eventually someone in the group will say: is it both? And I say: yes correct. This is a high school and a grammar school under one roof" (PIII).

Vier directeurs (PII, PIII, PIV, PV) en een leerkracht (TI) stelden dat een van de uitdagingen of moeilijkheden van een geïntegreerde school is dat er kinderen van "all abilities" komen. Zowel kinderen die het uitmuntend doen als kinderen die speciale noden hebben zijn welkom op de scholen. "Another difficulty at the moment is the high level of children with special needs" (PIV). Kinderen hebben dus verschillende noden waar leerkrachten aan tegemoet moeten komen, wat extra aandacht vereist.

De 'all ability-factor' wordt in de literatuur echter niet besproken als uitdaging voor geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-Ierland.

Naast religie is ook het Noord-Ierse schoolsysteem op basis van klassen gesegregeerd. “[It] is fragmented class wise because we have grammar schools, which are predominantly middleclass people, then we have secondary schools that are non-selective so that there is a real class divide besides the religious divide” (PII). De niveaus van de leerlingen lijken te worden weerspiegeld in de sociale klassen.

Geïntegreerde scholen proberen ook hier tegemoet te komen. Ook al werd er in het verleden geclaimd dat geïntegreerde scholen voornamelijk voor middenklassers is. Dit is ook een uitdaging volgens een directeur (PIV): “The challenge is that we are attractive to lower socio-economic groups” (PIV). Een onderzoek uit 2003 van Gallagher, Smith en Montgomery (2003) die demografische data van geïntegreerde scholen onderzochten, stelt dat dit 15 jaar geleden geen probleem was: “the claim that integrated schools merely represent middle-class alternatives to grammar schools is not supported by the evidence” (Gallagher, Smith & Montgomery, 2003, p. 17). Ook vandaag de dag lijkt dit het geval te zijn. Uit cijfers van het schooljaar 2017-2018 van de Noord-Ierse overheid blijkt dat er 35,7% van de leerlingen in controlled integrated schools aanspraak maken op een gratis schoolmaaltijd en 32,9% van de leerlingen in een grant-maintained integrated school. In de katholieke maintained schools bedraagt dit 36% en in de protestantse controlled school 29% (Department of Education, 2018b).<sup>4</sup> Dit geeft aan dat er ook een aanzienlijk deel leerlingen uit minder goedgezinnen komen.

### 7.1.5 Multiculturalisme

In de definitie van geïntegreerde scholen staat: “The integrated school, while essentially Christian in character, welcomes those of all faiths and none” (NICIE, 2012, Definition). Geïntegreerd onderwijs is ook gericht op 20% ‘anderen’ volgens de 40-40-20 logica.

Als er over multiculturalisme wordt gesproken (McGlynn, 2003) of over “mixed communities” en “mixed marriages” in Noord-Ierland, gaat het over protestanten en katholieken (PIII, PIV, PV, TIII).

“Some wise gentleman pointed out to me that if I would use that term in any other context, people would think about black and white. We don’t have many families like that. When we talk about mixed marriages from back in the seventies, we talk about Protestants and Catholics” (PV).

Maar naast de religieuze tweedeling, is Noord-Ierland ook een groeiende multiculturele samenleving. Al blijkt slechts 1% zich anders te omschrijven als “White”, maar is bijna 10% elders geboren (Abbott, 2010, p. 848). Een perspectief dat in de literatuur minder aan bod komt. McGlynn vraagt zich af in welke mate het nog gepast is dat geïntegreerd onderwijs christelijk is: “As Northern Ireland becomes increasingly multicultural, one might also question the appropriateness of Catholic, de facto Protestant, or integrated Christian education for children of other world faiths and for those of no faith” (McGlynn, 2005, p. 50). Op de problematiek rond deze logica wordt nog verder ingegaan bij 7.3.1.

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<sup>4</sup> De gratis schoolmaaltijden die worden aangeboden door scholen, worden beschouwd als een indicator voor armoede. Kinderen die uit een financieel benadeelde situatie komen en waarvan de ouders aan bepaalde voorwaarden voldoen (Government of Northern Ireland, z.d., Nutrition and school lunches) kunnen hier aanspraak op maken. In e-mailverkeer met Lorna McAlpine, Senior Development Officer bij NICE, legde ze uit dat dit armoede aangeeft in scholen (zie bijlage 10.12 e-mail NICIE).

Een directeur stelde:

“I realised that this school itself was just focussed on the two traditional cultures in Northern Ireland: the Protestants and the Catholics. That was when integrated education was established for back in the seventies and the eighties, but by the time that we got to the 2000’s we had this much more multicultural community” (PV).

Hij stelt dat het in het begin allemaal nieuw was maar nu wil hij een “international integrated school” zijn: “Let’s exploit this opportunity to be more than just an integrated school, let’s be an international integrated school” (PV). Kinderen met diverse achtergronden, komen naar deze scholen. Bij het bezoek aan Glengormley Integrated Primary School, was het duidelijk. In de inkomhal zijn alle vlaggen opgehangen van de landen waar kinderen uit komen. De gang van een twintigtal meter hangt vol met vlaggen. Deze diversiteit wordt ook gevierd zoals hun geïntegreerde ethos voorschrijft.

Slechts een leerkracht stelt dat er moeilijkheden waren. “We get our children call them foreigners and things. (...) Most of them get on well and are successful” (TI). Een directeur stelt: “Another difficulty at the moment is (...) the high level of newcomer children” (PIV). Een andere meent dat er wordt opgelet dat er geen racisme insluipst: “We have children coming in from all nationalities in here, so [we have to watch out for] bringing in some sort of clumsy racist comment. We’re just scanning to make sure that nothing like that creeps into our school” (PIII).

Naast het multiculturalisme bij de kinderen, is er ook een meer diverse groep leerkrachten. Dat brengt op zijn beurt dan weer aandachtspunten mee, zoals gesteld wordt door een directeur: “[When the teachers] try to teach children how to read, they need to hear the right phonics, the right sounds. If you got a Polish classroom assistant with a thick accent, maybe the intonation will not come out as clear as you would like to the children to be it. And that’s what the teachers try to explain to me sometimes, but the way they say it, maybe a bit more crudely, may sound a touch racist” (PV).

## **7.2 Externe aandachtspunten**

### **7.2.1 Gemeenschap**

Allport (1954) definieert in zijn contacthypothese die de geïntegreerde scholen volgen (zie 4.3.2) enkele voorwaarden om een maximaal effect te hebben, namelijk: contactprogramma’s moeten leiden naar gelijkheid in sociale status, moeten voorkomen in alledaagse situaties, niet kunstmatig zijn en als het mogelijk is van de goedkeuring van de gemeenschap genieten (Allport, 1954, p. 454). Dit laatste, de goedkeuring van de gemeenschap, blijkt problematisch te zijn uit de interviews.

Drie van de vijf directeurs (PI, PII, PIII) en twee leerkrachten (TII, TIII) vertelden dat de gemeenschap geïntegreerde scholen beschouwen als een bedreiging. “The challenges in the community is that many other schools see us as a threat. They believe that we are taking students away from them. They are not happy with what we are doing” (PI). Als ze naar een geïntegreerde school gaan, wil dat zeggen dat ze niet naar hun school gaan (PI) of geïntegreerd onderwijs wordt beschouwd als een aanval op de katholieke of protestantse identiteit (TIII).

Het verschilt van gemeenschap tot gemeenschap. Zo bevindt de school van PII zich in een klein dorp met vijf scholen. De directeur stelt dat ze niet veel vrienden hebben en het moeilijk is om contacten aan te gaan en kinderen erin te betrekken. Volgens de directeur komt dat omdat ze in een “uberconservative society” leven.



De tegenstand komt veelal uit de katholieke hoek. “A significant number of schools locally who regard us as stealing students. (...) It has traditionally been the catholic church who has disapproved children coming here”, stelt een directeur (PIII). En ook een andere directeur (PI) stelt dat sommige katholieke scholen weigeren hen te laten spreken voor hun kinderen over geïntegreerd onderwijs. PV, die zelf in een goede gemeenschap is gelegen, meent dat relaties tussen de katholieke kerk en geïntegreerde scholen verschillen doorheen het land.

Dit uit zich in een concreet geval in het afwijzen van de vergunning van een school om bij te bouwen omdat ze kinderen moesten afwijzen:

“It took three attempts to get the permission. But every time we have attempted to do this, it has generated a lot of anger in local schools who said: you are clearly stealing students who have might come to us. But actually, our school is too small to cope with the demand. We are trying to give a place to every child who wants to come to this school. If they want to come to their school, that’s what they will do and that’s absolutely fine” (PIII).

Een ander voorbeeld gegeven door een directeur is dat historisch gezien meer dan twintig scholen getransformeerd zijn van controlled schools naar geïntegreerde scholen, maar geen enkele maintained school is getransformeerd. “So essentially in crude terms, protestant schools turned integrated. There are no catholic schools that turned integrated the other way. Not one” (PV). Volgens een leerkracht komt dit omdat de katholieke scholen zelf met problemen te kampen krijgen. “The catholic church have a problem themselves. Their numbers are dropping. Catholic schools see a fall in their numbers, integrated schools see it go up” (TIII).

Enkele krantenartikelen bevestigen dat de relatie tussen de katholieke gemeenschap en geïntegreerd onderwijs moeilijk verloopt.

“In the early days of integration, the church was unwilling to give the sacraments to children attending those schools” (Taggart, 2006).

Ook stelt Michael Wardlow, voormalige voorzitter van NICIE, reeds in 2002 dat de relaties tussen geïntegreerde scholen en de “Catholic hierarchy” enorm verbeterd zijn. “We have to get across to the hierarchy that integrated schools do not necessarily mean the loss of a Catholic ethos” (McDonald, 2002).

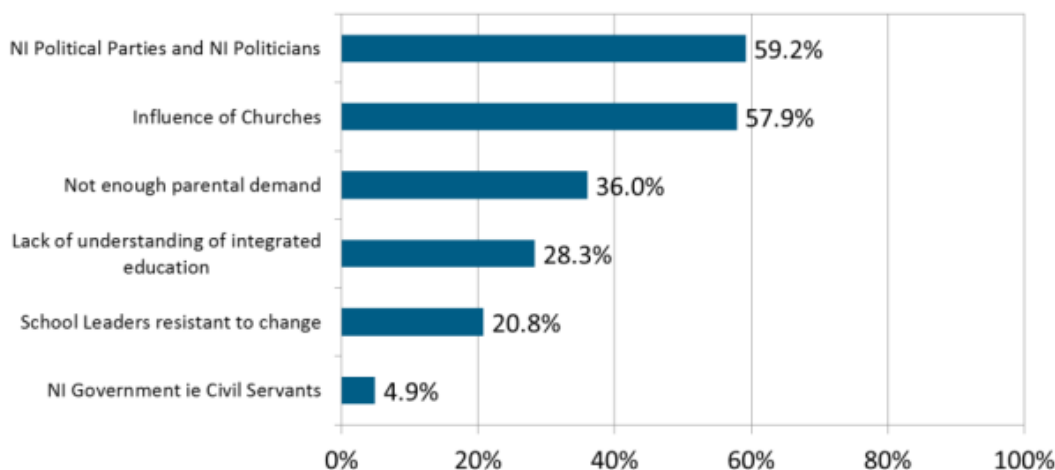
Maar een onderzoek uit 2009 gericht op de relatie kerk-geïntegreerde scholen stelt: “Catholic clergy have discouraged Catholic parents from sending their children to integrated schools. However in recent years, there is evidence of a “softening” to a more “pragmatic” approach towards Catholic parents choosing integrated schools. There is now a range of approaches among different Catholic Dioceses and different Catholic clergy” (Macaulay, 2009, p. 3). Deze tegenstand uit de katholieke hoek zou te wijten kunnen zijn aan het feit dat “they were increasingly marginalized and disadvantaged in every sphere after 1921” (Todd, 2016, p. 321). Ook al zijn vandaag de verhoudingen gelijk getrokken en is er geen sprake meer van een katholieke minderheid (Todd, 2016, p. 333).

Tegelijk argumenteer Macaulay (2009) ook dat het de kerken zijn die de bestaande scholen beschermen omdat ze daar inbreng in hebben. Zo hebben de protestantse geestelijken zich al uitgedrukt dat ze geïntegreerd onderwijs kunnen steunen als het geen bedreiging vormt voor de controlled schools (Macaulay, 2009, p. 3).

Maar uit de gesprekken met de directeurs en leerkrachten blijkt dat deze verbeteringen toch voorbarig zijn. Ook uit een opiniepeiling van LucidTalks in opdracht van Integrated Education Fund (IEF) die gepubliceerd is in maart 2018, blijkt dat dit nog steeds een probleem vormt (White, 2018, p. 10).

57,9% van de responderende ouders stelt dat de invloed van de kerk de groei van geïntegreerd onderwijs tegenhoudt (Figuur 2).

**QUESTION 7: Currently only around 8% of pupils in Northern Ireland go to integrated schools. Given that integrated education is supported in the Belfast/Good Friday agreement, - What do you think has held up the growth of integrated education? Please pick UP TO 4 answers ie 1,2, 3, or 4 answers**



Figuur 2.

Bron: LucidTalks

## 7.2.2 Overheidssteun

Een directeur vat het beeld samen dat heerst in geïntegreerd onderwijs: “I think it is appalling that there is so little political support for integrated education. It seems to me that Northern Ireland has not reached the point where they say: we are so committed to peace that we’ll make sacrifices elsewhere in order to achieve this urgent goal” (PIII).

Desondanks staat in het Goede Vrijdag Akkoord uit 1998:

“An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing” (Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, 1998).

Maar dit werd niet bevestigd door de geïnterviewde directeurs en leerkrachten. Elke directeur was het eens met elkaar: geïntegreerd onderwijs krijgt geen overheidssteun. “You are on your own” (PII). Daarnaast stelt PIV dat ze financieel worden verhinderd door het Ministerie van Onderwijs. Hij meent dat er een proactieve beweging vooruit nodig is vanuit het Ministerie van Onderwijs en de politici.

Een directeur (PI) en een leerkracht (TI) stellen dat geïntegreerd onderwijs de problemen zou oplossen: “You have integrated education but there is too much money wasted between all schools. You have catholic, protestant and integrated schools. If they would all be integrated, there would be so much money saved” (TI).

Ulf Hansson, een docent Politiek aan de School of Education in Dalarna University te Zweden, stelt in het magazine VIEW: “Amongst the two largest parties, Sinn Féin has referred to parental choice and has not fully endorsed Integrated Education, whereas the DUP – has remained critical of

Integrated Education. None of the two parties referred to or discussed integrated education in their manifestos of 2016 and 2017” (Hansson, 2018, p. 24). De DUP, de unionistische partij, steunt shared education eerder dan integrated education (Doyle, 2017), zodat ze hun eigen belangen, ethos en onafhankelijkheid bewaren. BBC News schreef in 2016 als gevolg: “So it is unlikely that the integrated sector, which educates about 7% of pupils, will grow significantly in the coming years” (Meredith, 2016, Challenges).

Ook de recente opiniepeiling van LucidTalks (Figuur 2) reflecteert dit: 59,2% van de ondervraagde ouders vinden dat politieke partijen en politici in Noord-Ierland de oorzaak zijn die de groei van geïntegreerd onderwijs tegenhouden (White, 2018, p.10).

### **7.2.3 Ouders**

Ouders hebben altijd een grote rol gespeeld in het geïntegreerde onderwijs in Noord-Ierland. Zo zijn veel scholen ontstaan als resultaat van een “parent-driven, grassroots initiative” (Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007, p. 24) en is “parental involvement” (NICIE, 2012, Parental Involvement) een van de vier pijlers van geïntegreerd onderwijs. Zo zitten er in een geïntegreerde school dubbel zoveel ouders in de Board of Governors dan in niet-geïntegreerde scholen (PV) en vertelt een leerkracht over een directe communicatie app met de ouders (TV).

Dat zorgt ervoor dat ouders een factor zijn waarmee rekening moet gehouden worden. “Parents are really involved in integrated schools, so they really feel like they work with the teachers. For some teachers that can be challenging” (PIV).

Bij de vraag over gevoelige onderwerpen doceren, antwoordde een leerkracht: “You don’t know what their parents are telling them so you don’t want to shake the boat too much” (TV). Een directeur expliceert in een voorbeeld dat ouders een factor zijn om rekening mee te houden. In een voorbeeld waar hij NICIE-trainingen promoot, stelde het senior management: “I don’t think that [the anti-bias trainings] will go well with the parents” (PV).

Moeilijke ouders werden als een occasioneel probleem vermeld door een directeur en een leerkracht. Zo stelde de directeur: “Parents on one occasion think that one faith gets more look in than the other” (PV). Volgens hem komt dit omdat het katholieke geloof meer opvalt, maar ook de zogenaamde ‘poppy’ die protestanten dragen op Remembrance Day heeft al een enkele keer voor strubbeling gezorgd volgens de directeur. Een leerkracht uit dezelfde school meent ook dat dit al eens is voorgevallen: “I think it is very rare that we had this, but we had parents that maybe haven’t been as embracing or open as you nearly would expect them to be” (TIV).

Beide benadrukken dat dit uitzonderingen zijn.

## **7.3 Overige aandachtspunten**

### **7.3.1 40-40-20 principe**

Een directeur stelde dat het 40-40-20 principe dat gevolgd wordt in het geïntegreerde onderwijs niet altijd het beste is. De pioniers van geïntegreerd onderwijs willen volgens hem dit principe behouden want het gaat terug op de tweedeling protestanten en katholieken, waarvoor geïntegreerd onderwijs is ontstaan.

“But the reality is, and I tend to side by this because my school is a reflection of this, our community is quite a mixed community. Particular because our doors are open every year for 60 primary 1 coming in. I have never reached that 60, only 52 at the most. So we turn nobody away. I don’t have to apply that criteria” (PV).

Als de school toch de grens van 60 zou overschrijden, zou hij dit principe niet willen hanteren. Volgens hem worden de inschrijvingen dan een spel, zeker voor kinderen van gemengde huwelijken tussen protestanten en katholieken. “What category has our child the most chance to get into the school? Should we declare ourselves protestant, catholic or ‘other’? They are playing a game because they can be what they want to be. They write on the paper what they think will give them the highest chance” (PV).

In het onafhankelijke onderzoeksrapport in opdracht van het Ministerie van Onderwijs, wordt ook een aanbeveling gemaakt voor de toekomst over deze kwestie. Het probleem wordt erkend en lijkt aangepakt te worden.

“(…) [The Department of Education] should review the religious balance criteria for integrated schools to take greater account of our more diverse society and regional and local demographics, including the balance of the community in which a school is located” (Cavanagh & Topping, 2016, p. 2).

### 7.3.2 Perceptie

Een ander probleem dat werd vermeld is de perceptie van geïntegreerde scholen. “The difficulties can be what other people perceive” (PIV). De directeur stelt: “A lot of it is people’s perception, that they think: “Oh it is just a catholic school.” Nobody has to do something they don’t want to do, there is always a choice” (PIV). Maar dit is dubieus. Zoals eerder aangehaald komt er voornamelijk veel tegenwind uit de katholieke hoek en is nog geen enkele katholieke maintained school getransformeerd tot een geïntegreerde school in tegenstelling tot vele protestantse controlled scholen. Volgens een andere directeur kom dat “simply because [the catholic faith is] more high profile because these events take place” (PV). Met “these events” bedoelt hij gebeurtenissen als de sacramenten, de communie en Aswoensdag.

Naast een kijk dat gefocust is op een religie, bekijken sommigen het ook verkeerdelijk als een school waar er geen religie is. “[People] think that [integrated education] is no religion. They are worried about this. They think religion will be diluted down” (TII).

Er zijn richtlijnen van NICIE die stellen dat in de Board of Governors minstens 40% van de leden een katholieke achtergrond moeten hebben en minstens 40% een protestantse. “(…) [The] active recruitment of teachers whose cultural or traditional background reflects that of existing or potential pupils” (NICIE, 2012, Equality). Dat stellen ook de directeurs die zeggen dat er gezocht wordt naar een evenwicht in religieuze groepen (PII, PIV). Zo kunnen ze de misvattingen tegengaan en zorgen voor een correcte perceptie.

## 7.4 Nuance

Bij de interviews werden vele nuances gemaakt door de geïnterviewden. Het is een gecompliceerde situatie of zoals een directeur vertelde: “Even writing a thesis from somewhere else [about this], no disrespect, but you’re only scratching the surface” (PV).

Een nuance die vaak gemaakt werd, is het feit dat kinderen die naar geïntegreerde scholen gaan, vaak al uit milieus komen waar ze dezelfde ideologie uitdragen. De ouders maken een bewuste keuze om hun kind naar een geïntegreerde school te sturen. Er is dus een self-selection dynamiek. “People who go to an integrated school, have made that choice” (PIV). “They come from families who are forward thinking and openminded” (TV). Daarnaast komen veel kinderen uit zogenaamde “mixed marriages”, waar een van de ouders katholiek is en de ander protestants (PII).

Op vlak van de leerkrachten zijn er ook meestal geen grote problemen want de leerkrachten die worden aangenomen gaan al door een selectieprocedure om te kijken of ze geschikt zijn. Als ze geschikt worden geacht, worden ze aangenomen. “When we’re recruiting staff, one of our central criteria is always what they would address, what they believe in, what needs to be applied in an integrated school. In an interview we always ask the question what they understand is different in working in an integrated school. We listen careful to the answers that they give us” (PIII).

Dit zijn de belangrijkste nuances die relevant zijn voor de resultaten van de analyse.

## 8 Conclusie

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In de interviews met directeurs en leerkrachten werd gepeild naar hun persoonlijke ervaringen en gevoelens bij geïntegreerd onderwijs. De antwoorden kunnen tweeledig gecategoriseerd worden: interne aandachtspunten en externe aandachtspunten. De interne aandachtspunten bestaan uit het variërende geïntegreerde ethos, de controversiële onderwerpen onderwijzen, de training of net het gebrek aan training en het feit dat geïntegreerde scholen ‘all ability’ zijn en veel nieuwkomers verwelkomen. De externe aandachtspunten zijn de relaties met de gemeenschappen, de steun van de overheid en de ouders.

De meest urgente en expliciete problemen, werden door hen naar voren geschoven als de externe problemen. De moeilijke relaties met de gemeenschap – in veel gevallen de katholieke gemeenschap en het gebrek aan steun dat ze krijgen van de overheid werd door vrijwel iedereen erkend. Bij zulke zaken is het makkelijker de vinger op de wonde te leggen.

Over de interne problemen werd voorzichtiger en omslachtiger gesproken. De manier van de implementatie van het geïntegreerde ethos kwam in verschillende vragen naar boven waar er uiteenlopende antwoorden op gegeven werden en over de controversiële onderwerpen werd even gevoelig gesproken dan ze werden geacht. Interessant is dat ondanks men aangeeft dat zulke onderwerpen niet altijd eenvoudig zijn, niemand a priori denkt training nodig te hebben. Diegene die een specifieke training hebben gevolgd, zeggen retrospectief dat het zelfs noodzakelijk was.

Bepaalde aspecten in deze thesis over geïntegreerd onderwijs werden minder uitvoerig belicht omdat ze relatief nieuw zijn. Zo zijn de moeilijkheden die de scholen krijgen voorgeschoteld door een grote groep nieuwkomers, minder belicht net zoals in de bestaande academische literatuur. Al werd ook aangegeven dat het 40-40-20 principe, waar de ‘20’ ook nieuwkomers zijn, een achterhaald principe kan zijn, maar dat kan niet worden bevestigd aangezien het slechts weinig naar voren kwam.

Op vlak van de leerkrachten zijn er ook meestal geen grote problemen want de leerkrachten die worden aangenomen gaan al door een selectieprocedure om te kijken of ze geschikt zijn. Als ze geschikt worden geacht, worden ze aangenomen. “When we’re recruiting staff, one of our central criteria is always what they would address what they believe in what needs to be applied in an integrated school. In an interview we always ask the question what they understand is different in working in an integrated school. We listen careful to the answers that they give us” (PIII). Self-selection blijkt een belangrijke dynamiek te zijn.

Om daarna nog de geïnterviewden kritisch te bekijken, zijn er voornamelijk veel leerkrachten vanuit het lager onderwijs geïnterviewd, waar het evenwicht tussen de directeurs beter was. Leerkrachten hebben beter inzicht in de noden van de kinderen, net zoals de nood aan training en de eventuele moeilijkheden of gevoeligheden bij het doceren van controversiële onderwerpen zoals geschiedenis of religie. Directeurs hebben dan weer een beter inzicht op het beleidsniveau.

Uit de analyse blijkt dat sommige onderzoeken kort door de bocht zijn gegaan waar het onderwerp nuance en omzichtigheid vereist. Toch bevestigt de analyse onderzoek dat reeds van een decennium geleden dateert en tegelijk geeft het ook nieuwe pistes aan zoals de ‘all ability’-factor, de nieuwkomers en de verschillen in het naleven van het geïntegreerde ethos. Het interne perspectief van de leerkrachten en de directeurs kan relevant zijn voor de verdere ontwikkeling van geïntegreerd onderwijs.

Geïntegreerd onderwijs is een volwaardige vorm van peace education. Wat Reardon (1988) stelt, is een reflectie van deze onderwijsvorm: “The methods [of peace education] (...) must be student-centered and require sensitivity to the thinking styles and developmental levels of the students” (Reardon, 1988, p. 91). *En plus*, wat Hunter (2008) in haar doctoraat stelt, vat samen wat enorm belangrijk is in geïntegreerd onderwijs: “Integrated schools must not become complacent, and must constantly look at what they do and why they do it” (Hunter, 2008, p. 239).

Desondanks is er enige negativiteit bij geïnterviewden (PI, PV, TIII) te bespeuren: “One of the most destructive things in Northern Ireland is our education system” (PI). Toch kunnen we stellen dat het geïntegreerd onderwijs in Noord-Ierland timmert – soms met enkele roestige nagels – aan de weg om de verdeeldheid in de samenleving te verkleinen.

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# 10 Bijlagen

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## 10.1 Principal I

### **Is in an integrated school additional efforts needed?**

Well, there is no additional effort needed by the very fact that the students of all different cultures and backgrounds are working together, and they develop friendships naturally.

### **Do you still notice clear divisions between the students?**

It's not explicit.

### **Do the children know for instance which child is Protestant or Christian?**

The children are aware of that. For instance, it starts with their names, if you come from a catholic community, you will have a different name than when you come from a protestant community, your name might be for instance Samuel.

### **What are the major challenges that integrated education still faces?**

The challenges in the community is that many other schools see us as a threat. They believe that we are taking students away from them. They are not happy with what we are doing.

There are 35 primary schools in our neighbourhood, we would visit them to try and recruit children from other schools to come to us. Some of the catholic schools would not give us access to their children. They will say: no you are not allowed to come in and talk to them.

Meanwhile, there are also long waiting lists to enter an integrated school.

It's the other schools that perceive us as a threat. Coming to our schools means that they are not going to their schools.

### **Do the teachers got specific teacher trainings for integrated schools?**

They go to the same teacher training schools, they are no different. Those programs are a voluntary asset, they are not a requirement. If there is a course that is worthwhile, then we can make the teachers aware of that.

### **Is there a need for special trainings for teachers in integrated education?**

I don't believe teachers should be trained separately for integrated schools. In fact, there are too many providers for trainings for schools. I think there should be one institution where all teachers go to be trained. At the moment you have separate catholic and protestant training colleges, they are both part of Queens University but they are distinct in the sense that they provide for each community. I believe there should be one training college for everybody. That would mean that they are integrated.

### **Is there then more government efforts needed?**

Yes, I think the government needs to intervene and rationalise the whole trainings in Northern Ireland.

The government needs to take more of a leading role and put things in place to support.

**What is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

I think the most important thing is that it are children of all ability, from all different backgrounds, boys and girls learning and playing together. I think that can only benefit society for the future. I myself went to a single sex secondary school, post-primary school, it is only when I went to university I started mixing with girls, with people from different religious backgrounds,... I don't think that that is good for society.

**What is the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

I don't think there is anything harder of teaching in an integrated school. I actually think in some ways it is easier and better. The hardest part is the other community and other schools. Working in a school itself is not the problem.

**How can integrated education be improved?**

Well, what I think what needs to happen is that the structures of education need to be rationalised. I think we should just have 'schools', no catholic, protestant, controlled schools,... The fact that we have integrated schools in an indictment against society. Why can't we just have schools where everyone goes to?

**What is the role of the teacher outside of classroom?**

If a teacher sees a student treating someone unfairly or on a discriminatory or racist manner, then they have the duty and responsibility to challenge that. But that is in any school, be it controlled or maintained, all teachers have that duty. It's not unique to an integrated school.

**Anything else that you would like to add?**

One of the most destructive things in Northern Ireland is our education system.



## **10.2 Principal II**

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed to foster friendships etc.?**

We do quite some work around dealing with conflicts and diversity, so a lot of our work is planned. For example, an assembly and the curriculum, to make sure that everything in the school happens as it should be and that the children are able to work together. It comes on different levels. First of all, we would have a lot of equality policies around the structures and systems in the school. At governance level for example, we would make sure that there is a balance between religious groups and gender equality between all the staff.

Within the curriculum, we make sure that for example that the children are exposed to a lot of different sorts of cultures, every day. And then the sources of history come from different points of view, there is a lot of planned work within the curriculum that the children are taught diversity.

Then, beyond the curriculum, we have assemblies going to theatres, different types of museums. We have different cultural experiences that children normally not be involved in. We commemorate and celebrate everything in Northern Ireland, from Remembrance and St. Patricks Day to Easter. Things that are equal across all.

Sports even in NI are very divided, we have Gaelic football for example that would be something that belongs to the catholic community. Hockey would be associated with the protestant community. So in our school, every child gets the opportunity to play all of those sports.

### **Are students aware of each other's religion?**

I think some would know because names here belong to one tradition or the other. So if somebody would have a traditional Irish name, it would be a catholic. But a lot of children are from mixed marriages and they do not identify with either side.

### **How do you feel about teacher trainings for integrated schools?**

We do our own training. Anybody new would have an introduction program. We think that when you enter a classroom, that is really when your training begins. Before I was a principle, I taught History here and our history department we would do training about interchangeable language. We would learn to say Derry or Londonderry, what makes you most comfortable. We would have sources from lots of different perspectives. Same in English or any subject. You just don't look at it from a catholic or protestant perspective. We try to train our children to look at many aspects. How to deal with conflicts... We do not want to water down their view, if they have a view on something, that's fine, but they have to respect persons with other views. You don't have to like what we say, but you have to respect the difference. That is what the teachers should train, but it is difficult and we do have issues from time to time, but teachers become very skilled at that. We don't really avail to any trainings from NICIE because we are 40 miles away from where they are.

### **Experience teaches a lot as well?**

Experience is a great teacher.

### **What are the major challenges you and your school face?**

This has nothing to do with the conflict challenge. But one of the key problems is that we live in a small town with 5 schools. We opened in 2002 as a new school, we don't really have too many friends

because we are taking children of the other schools. It is very difficult for people to truly engage with you. So that is a big challenge. Also, most integrated schools in Northern Ireland are very small, our challenge is also to attract people in. Because people are incredibly conservative in here, and they don't want to send their children. That's why a lot of our children are already from mixed marriages.

In terms of conflict, we do not have an awful lot of conflicts among our students in relation to sectarianism or anything. It is just the normal teenage thing we would be dealing with, social issues, mental health,... Which I don't think are different in integrated schools. There is a very negative perception of integrated schools that we do something completely different, in fact we feel we do something normal. Segregation is different. It is an uberconservative society. Uber.

### **How does the society feel about integrated education?**

The school system is extremely segregated. So it is fragmented classwise because we have grammar schools, which are predominantly middleclass people, then we have secondary schools that are non-selective so that there is a real class divide besides the religious divide. So you have a grammar school catholic, a grammar school protestant, a secondary school catholic and a secondary school protestant and then you have us. Some of those schools are 300 years old, some of them 50 years old, we have only been open since 2002. They feel that we are trying to steal their people, that kind of thing. It is very difficult. Each one of those schools have a non-governmental agency. They have all got lobby groups that work very closely with the Department of Education. Even though the department has an obligation to develop integrated schools. Most of the people who are in there come from a grammar school, so there is a class issue as well.

### **On the other hand, according to statistics there is a great support for integrated schools. Is that due to the differences in communities? Is the majority is pro?**

They want to send their child send to the best school. I think that there is integrated education at the moment. We put a lot of energy into developing our school, getting our buildings sorted, all those practical things. You will find that there is a massive amount of new principles in integrated schools, myself it is only my second year and what we try to do is we try to improve the quality that we provide for our young people. We try to make sure we are the best school that we could be while being integrated. We are working strongly together to make it better. When you have a strong and good school, that is very attractive.

The problem with that is that because we are non-selective, we get children from all abilities. The grammar schools are selective so the rest of us are struggling to get children across the line.

### **Hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

Well, I have taught in catholic schools and there is a very clear difference between teaching in a catholic school and teaching in an integrated school. The challenge is when you are teaching in a catholic school, you are teaching from a very particular perspective. I taught history. There was maybe a bit of an English slant on things, it's much easier when everyone has a similar opinion. When you are teaching in an integrated school, you need to be better prepared, ready for challenging questions, you need to learn the young people to express their views, you need to be able to make sure that respect has given to the young people who are listening and have an opposing view. So it is definitely much more challenging.

And you actually feel when you start in an integrated school: oh my goodness, this is hard. But that's what I have been saying about experience.

### **What is the best aspect of teaching in an integrated school?**

The fact is that we are making a very significant difference to these young people. We are providing an opportunity that is completely new and we would hope that these young people would act as ambassadors and really have a positive impact. We really see that the last year students, our endproduct as you would say, they are much more openminded, respectful, they are very opinionated, they have the view that society has to move on.

One of the biggest problems is that they can't tolerate the polarization here in this country and they go to England. That's an issue.

**Do you feel supported by the government as principal of an integrated school?**

There is no support. You are on your own. There has been particular changes. The first principals who set up integrated schools have retired. There is an whole new set of people, including myself. What we have done, because there is no support, we have come together and said: look, we have to make things better here for ourselves. The government needs to step up.

It's functional because they don't do anything. They should be advocates of integrated education, but they are not.

## 10.3 Principal III

### Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed?

It doesn't happen naturally. What we do is plan very carefully for a number of key aspects what happens within the school. To begin with, even before the children have arrived to school, we ask them to complete a piece of work, where we simply ask them to tell us what they think it means to be in an integrated school. It is usually artwork. They come in with globes, jigsaw pieces, quotations. But it is an attempt to help them to focus on what it means to be in an integrated school. Normally, the results are quite inspiring. We do display them in our reception area.

There are certain key events during the year which are sensitive and important, including Remembrance every November where we're thinking back to previous conflicts around the world and in particular the two World Wars. It is traditional the protestant community who wears the poppy. So we redefine what the poppy means within the school for the children. For example, we say: Remembrance is the time to think of defending our freedom and the ones who sacrificed their lives for it. But it is also a moment to reflect on the mess that the human race has made and to be determined that we will do a better job in the future and to make a positive difference in the world.

So having them taken through that, we give them the choice to wear the poppy or not. It is their decision entirely. We do take part in the Remembrance Day parade on Sunday in the town, so that is a whole community event. But again it is the protestant community who tend to be involved and it is the protestant schools who normally go along as well. We make sure that we're there as well, so we are representing. We're not only representing the protestant children in our school, but we make a statement of the school that we are part of this and we are part of the community.

Moving on to Ash Wednesday, we invite both protestant and catholic clergy to come along to the service. We hold services for the entire school, we open the service by explaining that it is an opportunity to reflect on the way we live our lives. And for all of us there might be changes we need to make, or things we could do better. We have the whole school community together, we don't use the word 'protestant' or 'catholic'. Half way through the service, we say: if you would like to receive the ashes this afternoon, we have a priest here who is happy to provide this for you. And equally, who would not like to receive the ashes, remain in your seat. We play some reflective music, we run a PowerPoint presentation with images and quotations. We invite the children to reflect, to think or to pray, whatever they choose. What you have there, friends potentially, sitting and watching their friends go up and receive the ashes. They stay there. But the minute that they think that, they think: that's cool. It's okay. Then actually something quite powerful is happening in the Northern Irish context. They are discovering that the barriers don't matter. They respect and reverence, they accept that there is something different than their own culture right here. It develops mutual respect for the difference.

It is important to avoid bias in every classroom. But there are subjects that are particularly sensitive for that such as Religious Education and History. Our staff are very finely tuned to the realisation that all cultures and religions may be represented in one class. And the way they explore historical events or aspects of religion are very sensitive and very finely balanced to encourage children again to respect difference but also to think about questions of life and potential grow out of that process stronger than they might have been before. And above all to be willing to ask questions and to think carefully.

So across the school there is an awareness that this is a sensitive finding balance process. It is very strategic and we do think very carefully.

This is our integration week, where we focus on our integrated ethos, and tomorrow we have a day where they all have been invited to bring something that is culturally relevant to them. That represents a sense of identity. And during our first class tomorrow, they will sit with their teachers and explain why they brought the item they chose. And explain what it means to them in sense of identity. We're asking them to listen respectfully to each other and that this is an opportunity to explore identity and what it means.

We have a number of ceremonies during the year including harvest, Easter and Christmas and we always invite clergy of both protestant and catholic denominations to help with the services.

### **Encouraged to celebrate and respect?**

We don't promote the suggestion that we're all the same. In fact we go the other way: of course we're different. Let's celebrate that we're different but above all we need to respect people who think differently than ourselves.

### **Did the teachers receive a specific training for integrated education?**

NICIE does offer anti-bias training, that training is freely available to all integrated schools. We also have our own training program and training days within the school and we can focus on it there. But I think also by simply the way what we do and teachers being in those assemblies and working with their colleagues in school, they pick up very quickly. At all of those levels, there is a key of awareness of what it means to be in an integrated school. Also when we're recruiting staff, one of our central criteria is always what they would address what they believe in what needs to be applying in an integrated school. In an interview we always ask the question what they understand is different in working in an integrated school. We listen careful to the answers that they give us.

### **Is there a need for training?**

I think that there are different views of delivering integration. I am aware that there are different interpretations of how it is done. Sometimes it is because a slightly different ethos is involved. I think sometimes it is also a response to what kind of the community the school is placed. Sometimes the needs are more acute because of the communities around the school. We have never had to sit down and have to explain to our staff in a very kind of explicit way, what they should do. I think it is a developing, evolving awareness through discussing with each other and in the training days we discuss our ethos we discuss our vision and development plan for the future. I think there is a clarity that comes out of those discussions. We don't really organise training sessions how they need to work in an integrated school. Our staff would probably look at us: why are you doing this? We get it, we understand it. I think it really comes from being immersed in the culture of the school and see how we do things.

### **What is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

Above all, it is still to have a skilled teacher. That is what we would have in common with other schools. A teacher who is engaging, who is an expert in their subject, in the relationships with the children. The understanding of integrating comes naturally in a way. Primary, when we recruit, we are looking for an outstanding teacher.

There is something slightly less traditional in integrated schools. And it is that we put a very strong emphasis on child-centred education and building relationships with children. That creates a warm atmosphere which visitors regularly comment on. They sometimes even ask where that feeling comes from. Above all it is this balance of pushing for high standards academically but at the same time every child feeling comfortable and accepted, knowing that the staff care about them. I think this

creates this warmth. The children feel confident to come and tell us if there is a problem or if they're hurt. It has been noted that they are confident talking about their own needs, expressing a view on something. At the heart of it are the relations between staff and students.

### **What is the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

Within the Northern Irish context where we have this segregated education system, not only along cultural lines, but also this division by ability where you have grammar schools who are taking the academic highfliers and high schools for whom did not pass the transfer test and integrated schools are all ability so our goal is to have children who could have gone to a grammar school, who could have gone to a high school. For the children, I tell some sort of a riddle where I ask: is this a grammar school or a high school? And let's see what they say. Eventually someone in the group will say: is it both? And I say: yes correct. This is a high school and a grammar school under one roof.

One of the challenges for us is to persuade parents who are locked into this traditional thinking where grammar schools is where children go when they are academically bright, to persuade them to think again and to look at what we're offering and think: actually my child could go to the integrated school and receive an education that is as good as a grammar school and also develop a more integrated outlook. Relentlessly, we are representing that thought and message to the community. But Northern Ireland is steep to this traditional view.

That's one aspects of it, that we're constantly pushing for potential grammar applicants to consider coming to us instead.

The other is the care where the staff have to not only think about delivering their own subject, but constantly monitoring relationships and interactions between children to make sure that they are delivering the integrated ethos. That they're not coming up with a comment that is insensitive or biased or bringing into school something that they have heard in their own community. We have children coming in from all nationalities in here, so bringing in some sort of clumsy racist comment. We're just scanning to make sure that nothing like that creeps into our school.

### **Do you get supported by the communities?**

We have a significant number of schools locally who regard us as stealing students who might have come to them. It has applied to us recently because we have asked permission to expand, because we had to turn children away. It took three attempts to get the permission. But every time we have attempted to do this, it has generated a lot of anger in local schools who said: you are clearly stealing students who have might come to us. But actually, our school is too small to cope with the demand. We are trying to give a place to every child who wants to come to this school. If they want to come to their school, that's what they will do and that's absolutely fine. So that's been a difficult relationship with those schools who try to manage their anger.

Within the broader community, it has traditionally been the catholic church who has disapproved children coming here. And I can only think that they think we are going to water down or dilute the catholic beliefs of those children. Whereas in reality we say: if you have catholic beliefs, you are welcome to have those beliefs. We also ask to think what you believe and why you believe, which we think is very healthy. There has been a level of opposition of the catholic church.

The other problem we've had is that the protestant community looking at the fact that it's a catholic majority. They think to themselves: is my protestant child going to be comfortable in a school where the majority is catholic. These are a number of sensitive issues, and we are constantly trying to give a response to those questions.

### **Are there divisions between teachers themselves?**

I am not aware that it has existed. As I know, the staff has integrated quite good. I think they understand. Even the fact that we insist on it in the application form and interview, are very clear indicators for the staff that this is a central acquirement. It is a selection tool and a message.

### **What is the best aspect of integrated education?**

Well, there are so many things I am proud of. The first thing to say, personally I believe that every school in Northern Ireland should be integrated. That's my starting point. For the simple reason that this country has traditionally been troubled by division and violence and surely, young people are one of the key components to the pathway to peace. If you are not education children from protestant, catholic and various cultures together, there seems to be that you are not doing your full job of reconciliation to society. These children are both the society of today and the society of the future. They are going to shape that society. If they go to a single faith school, what we have found that these young people can reach university before they encounter or interact someone with a different religion. By then, some of their views might have become engraved to their thinking. It is harder to change those attitudes. But also because we are all ability. I don't approve the transfer test, I don't approve the labels, I don't approve the pressure that brings. I think it is a flawed system anyway. I am a fan of all ability education.

I also like the fact that we are addressing education in the broader sense, that this is the education of a whole child. It is a journey where they are shaping their values, their attitudes, their responses to those around them, the way they treat people. I think there is something very positive and very healthy that it is a rounded approach to education, not just an academic one.

### **Something else I should know?**

I think it is appalling that there is so little political support for integrated education. It seems to me that Northern Ireland has not reached the point where they say: we are so committed to peace that we'll make sacrifices elsewhere in order to achieve this urgent goal. In fact, what we see, there isn't an agreement. There is still far too much squabbling about people wanting their own ground. Personally I think it is shameful that politicians do not start their own integrated schools, that the department of education does not start integrated schools. In fact, grant maintained integrated schools are started predominately by parents, who in each different situation fight for integrated education for their child. It is inspiring that they do that, but it is appalling that politicians have not embraced that. I think history will reflect on that with embarrassment.

## 10.4 Principal IV

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed?**

My experience is when you're working with children, it all happens quite naturally. Children don't see any differences among themselves. They don't see colour, race as a barrier to having a friendship. And those are visual differences, in integrated schools we have a lot of hidden differences. Children don't see that, adults create barriers.

### **My next question would be: are the children aware of those differences, but you would say no?**

Children don't see differences.

### **When do the differences come up?**

Fundamentally, children are all the same. If the choices that they make in for example school activities, the language they might learn, the church they go to... Those are the fundamental differences the children may see. In school we say that it is okay to be different, it's okay to play Gaelic football and rugby, it is okay to go to your church on Sunday and me to go to my church on the same day. We teach the children that it is okay to be different. Those would be the fundamental differences in those choices when they come in to school. We will try to introduce them to the Irish language, we will try to do things that some children wouldn't necessarily see, but if we can do that in an environment as a school which is safe, that's fine. In school, the fundamental differences are what you do and the activities you do afterwards, but that would be the same for any child from any school.

We teach them it is okay to be different through some very young children stories such as the ugly duckly and Elmut the elephant.

### **Is it difficult to teach it?**

People who go to an integrated school have made that choice. They want that their children are educated in an atmosphere where all children are nurtured, with the commitment to access for all children coming and experience activities where their tradition haven't necessarily been exposed to. So parents are coming to make that conscious decision, I think the issues with society is that obviously not everybody wants that environment for their children. We still have groups of society in Northern Ireland who are still entrenched in their political, nationalist and are sceptical and would not necessarily trust our side. As long as we are educating our children in a segregated school, they are never going to get the opportunity to see Gaelic football transfer those skills to the rugby fans, all transfer of skills. For some people it's all about the unknown, people don't like the unknown. My parents didn't do it, my grant-parents didn't do it so why should I? What happens is, our political leaders show cooperation, show respect for each other, that for the moment is not present in our society. It re-enforces the opinions the people have and that reflects on the integrated schools.

### **If parents send their children to an integrated school, does that mean that they are already open-minded?**

If they're not open-minded, they have made the decision that they want that for their children. I suppose that those are people who are changing themselves. "What I have as norm, I don't want my children to have that as norm." Children are children, doesn't matter where you're from in the world.

### **What are the major challenges you and your school face in this area?**



The challenge is people that are being suspicious of what is not the norm. The challenge is that integrated schools are for everybody, and it doesn't have to be the parents who are mixed marriage who have catholic and protestant backgrounds. Some parents come to us because we are a local school, some because of academic access. We would be happy if all schools are integrated that our school wasn't needed anymore. The challenges really lie on the government level, there has to be a proactive move forward from the department of education and from our politicians. If parents want integrated, then we have integration.

Another of our big challenges is how to grow. We could grow, we have more children coming in but then again we are finically restricted through the Department of Education.

We don't have challenges of people who are against of what we do. Our challenges will be about promoting.

### **Other schools say they have experienced challenges from the community.**

Our school is based in a quite middleclass community. I suppose the challenge is that we are attractive to lower socio-economic groups. To do that we try to arrange that families could travel to school for free. We are trying to make sure we cover all socio-economic groups.

### **Is there a need for training for teachers in an integrated school?**

I think NICIE are particularly good in providing training. If it gets done by principals who try to get funding for commitment excellence. We are bringing are teachers to work together with shared education funding, which means teachers work together with the maintained sector, which will be the catholic sector.

I think the more teachers can get together and share stories, that's really valuable. We always need more training, but unfortunately, there are financial restrictions.

### **What do you think is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

When our children come in at the age of 4 and they sit in front of the teacher, I think it is lovely that the teacher doesn't know what religious background these children are from. It is just a group of children. There is a lot more emphasis on the parents providing a religious education for the children. I think children are children, no matter what regarding your colour, religion, disability. They're just like everybody else, everyone gets treated the same. Teachers are dealing with children who have special needs, therefor parents are coming to integrated schools because we are all ability. If their child has special needs, and is being victimized in other schools or not treated the same or unfairly. They still need to keep that positivity and encompassing that no matter what your ability is, you are welcome in this school.

(Conversation is interrupted because someone comes asking something about bicycles) See, even that. New families come in and become a part of the community and we can help them with providing bicycles. Community can help each other. I think we make a significant difference.

Our attitude is encompassing for the children's self-esteem and self-worth. Parents are really involved in integrated schools, so they really feel like they work with the teachers. For some teachers that can be challenging.

The day in school that I realised the importance of working in an integrated school is when we have first communion. We actually celebrate together, we celebrate difference. So we go dine together and we all go, parents and children, to celebrate first communion with them. Children of other faiths come

up to the altar and sing with their friends. So not only are you living the difference, we actually celebrate it. And at first communion I said: "That's why I am here."

### **What is the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

The difficulties can be what other people perceive. A lot of it is people's perception, that they think: "Oh it is just a catholic school." Nobody has to do something they don't want to do, there is always a choice.

Another difficulty at the moment is the high level of children with special needs, the high level of newcomer children, they bring challenges not only to the children's ability. You have to do everything according to the integrated ethos with a smile on your face. Sometimes the demand on the teachers can be high. Some teachers who come in from another school, find it difficult that parents are a part of what we do on a daily basis. Parents are up and down the corridors at all times. Some teachers who move up into the integrated sector find that a threat.

The other one is that integrated schools are always trying to be one step ahead. We're always trying to improve, we try to get the funding. The commitment and work ethic of teachers and non-teaching staff is high.

### **What might be points for improvement in integrated education?**

I think finances are the big stumbling box. We can get all the training in the world for our teachers but there is still the concern of finances.

And smaller classes would be a point for improvement as well.

### **Do you feel sufficiently supported by the government?**

We are at a moment of austerity, so everything is tightened. It all goes into funding. Every principal would say there is insufficient funding.

We also need to challenge our very bright children. We need to make sure that every child gets the help they need to make their potential. I think a lot goes back to the fact that there is not enough money.

### **What is the best aspect of integrated education?**

The best for me is seeing on a daily basis, children playing with each other who don't see any differences and it is something I would love other people to see. Here it is comfortable for anybody to see themselves, learn together, play together in a comfortable environment. In the end of the day we're just a school. Let children just be children.

### **Anything further?**

I am also in this position as a parent. I have two children who went to an integrated school and I can just see the open-mindedness to go outside the box. The ability to see people without prejudice, to try new things, when people meet new people.

## 10.5 Principal V

### **He starts by running me through the principles of integrated education.**

The equality for us runs throughout the whole school. Equality is an easy word to use, I think if you are an advocate of equality... Interestingly, I was on an inclusion collaborative shared education yesterday, a conference with communities in schools hold, one of the things a professor of an English university was talking about, was all about inclusion. He talked about the 'British values', and he started to say that it would be offensive to other democracies in the western world to find this British values because they are not. Things like fairness and equality, justice, democracy... Does Belgium has those values? It doesn't change from one reasonable western country to another. But they still talk about it as British values, and it is a bit stupid because how can you say you propose inclusiveness and you have a vast diversity, and obviously you do because particularly in England, more so than here. You got such a range of different people with different backgrounds, that would all consider themselves British. In the same way you guys and the French in your country are a multicultural society, when you buy in those values as a citizen of that country, you are expected to uphold them. The rule of law was another one of those. Yet no one is always happy all the time, let's face it. About equality, we want our children to understand what it means, we want them to feel equal with each other and feel respected, against the backdrop of an institutional hierarchy. There is a principal, there is a vice-principal, there's teachers, cleaners, cooks and there's children. We all have our different rule and different responsibilities, but we are all in the end of the day human and we are all hopeful that we are treated with those values and respect in our capacity and in our rules, so we as the stakeholders of the school, we try to make sure that everything we do from an integrated point of view try to get it across all layers of the school so not just the children or their parents, but it is about the governors, the staff, the non-teaching staff,... The whole school community. NICIE directed it to us that there is no point just having your teachers bind into this, you've got to have your whole school bind into this.

Faith and values, this is a big one for us because obviously there is a distinct difference in our schoolsystem in the integrated sector. It is not even a sector. Formally, there are two sectors in Northern Ireland. There is controlled and maintained, which are in a crude sense protestant and catholic schools. From your perspective, you look at that system and say: that's a segregated education system. We would argue that, within the integrated movement, we are actually more a movement than a sector, we are now have been called a sector but we don't actually hold formal status of a sector. The education authorities are still responsible for us as they are for schools. Each of the sectors has a representative body and this is Northern Ireland through and through. This will help explain the human nature of jealousy: they have something we haven't got. For a long time we had controlled schools, essentially managed by the education authority. The one education authority in Northern Ireland, would function as a local education authority in England, for say Yorkshire. We say: we don't need 5 people doing the same job across Northern Ireland, so there has been a lot of structural change here. If you set that aside, the EA (Education Authority) looks after controlled schools, in the past. They did it in in a superficial way. When the controlled schools realised the work that went on behind the scenes with NICIE for the integrated schools movement, with an organisation called CNG (?), who look after the Irish-medium schools, that are a very limited number of schools who teach only in Gaelic, that is another level. There is one close to us, because the area where it's near to be a predominantly nationalist, catholic area. The children would go to school and speak in Gaelic the whole day.

Our local politics has come to a standstill at the moment. One of the stumbling blocks is that Sinn Féin, which is the nationalist largest party, want to have an Irish language act passed the government. DUP who would be the protestant, unionist party are opposed to that. So the Irish language has

become a football. It's not good because the people who value language, don't want it to be used politically and now it is being used politically. That is one of the big issues. But meanwhile, Irish-medium thrives quite well for those who want it. We only have 7% of all the children in Northern Ireland. I know more people would like to, because our schools are nearly all full, which means they can't get in. 20,000 children get in integrated education every year plus there are new ones coming in, so it is a healthy number of kids and family. But the Irish medium is much much smaller, but they have a body which represents them. The integrated system has NICIE which represents them, they advocate and promote and do a lot of policy work. I am actually on the NICIE board of directors as well, so I get involved and I see that first hand. CCMS, which is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has been around since catholic schools has been established so they have a council that is very strong. The protestant schools only recently decided that 'if they got a body that represents them, then we would like one too'. So they have now established a body CSSC, the Controlled School Support Council. I have access to that, which makes it quite interesting for me because the identity has like a dual identity. Our school has a dual identity, it was built in 1935 as a new controlled school, so it was a protestant school although it had a mix of different traditional backgrounds. But this area was generally speaking a mixed area but there were enough catholic schools to sustain the area. Traditionally, this would be seen as a protestant school. The community in this area has changed, the demographic has changed a little bit. We think in colour terms sometimes, where green represents the nationalist communities and orange represents the loyalist communities. So it would now be seen much more as green than orange, it has changed a little bit.

Some of them maybe felt at that time, that they are being squeezed out. And I speak on behalf of my parents in that respect. They grew up in North Belfast, I was born there. In the mid 90's we've moved out there like many families, it felt like an indirect pressure on them. As a kid I didn't experience it. I just played along in my street. It was a middle class area, there were no issues but there must have been something deep-rooted that made them move away. So that continues to happen, that population movement and schools become a product of that in some respects.

In 2003, this school had had a continuous decline in numbers. From its heyday (shows a magazine for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary which was in 1958) at its peak, there would have been 800 pupils in this school. It was a big and successful primary school, most kids would have gone to a grammar school. By 2003, there were less than a 100 children in this school. It came as no surprise to me that the whole conversation of a transformation to an integrated status came around. Part and parcel of that would have been the finances of the school were crippled. The number of kids reflects the budget of the school. So if the number of children is declining, the budget is declining. And with less than a 100 children, you're not bringing in a budget that is enough to sustain the school. You're not making enough for the upkeep of the school, the lighting, the cleaning, the maintenance,... All of that and the cost of your teachers' salary, which is about 90% of your budget. So the principal and the governors were faced with a situation which was rapidly declining in terms of sustainability. When I arrived here, the school had actually faced the threat of closure. The board had decided that we had to close the school. There were too many controlled schools in the area.

The principal of this school before me, Joe, and his wife Jill was the principal of Hazelwood integrated primary school, which is two miles down the road. Hazelwood was one of the first integrated primary schools which was established in Northern Ireland. It is a very different demographic. It is in North Belfast, it is in an interface area. They have a peace wall still built on the side of the school, it is a disappointment to them but there was still community tensions right up the 2000's. One side of their school would be stodgily loyalist and protestant, the other side is the exact opposite. The school is the perfect place for it to have children unite together and be educated under one roof together. We were very different up here. But with Jill down there and John up here, and them being married, it is no surprise that conversations came around about how Glengormely could be saved. The opportunity to transform to an integrated primary school can be initiated by the governors and the parents, that's

all it takes. If the parents and the governors get 51% vote in favour, it goes to the department for consultation and consideration and it is highly likely they will eventually approve it. So they did transform in 2003, with 5 years of additional funding because it is a journey but you don't know the destination. You don't know if we'll get there.

We're a bit different from what they call a GMI school, a grant maintained integrated school, those started as a grassroots school with a few parents as a steering group who would lobby at the government to say: we want an integrated school here. If they get the green light, the government needs to give funding to grow it from grassroots. Here we are a school that was already there, having financial difficulties and the time was right to consider this as a new step forward. For a few years you wouldn't get a huge change, it is not an overnight success. You will get some families who were here that would object to it, they're not ready for integration yet, that is understandable. But on the whole it seemed a positive step.

When I arrived here in 2007, there was still only 126 children, so it has grown a little bit, but not massively. It has come through this consultation of closure that appointed me as a new principal with only six staff plus myself so I was taken on quite a challenge. I know they were looking at us to say: prove to us that this is going to work Mr. Arnold. I was brought to some sort of a finance committee and the board said: right, this is the state of affairs: you're a 140,000 pounds in withdrawal, we're keeping you afloat because there are schools here who have surplus money and you don't. But you got to start some work here, what are you going to do? I didn't have a great big thesis strategy. I knew that in 2007, our borders were quite open at the time and there was a huge influx of new eastern Europeans for example. We got a lot of Polish people, Slovakian, Latvian. New cultures and races were coming to Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a very welcoming place, it always has. There be pockets of sectarianism, there be pockets of racism but you get those in any big city in any country. The Polish people and the Northern Irish people had an affinity for well before the war. They seem to be very similar in many ways and values, culture, their work ethics. Generally our work ethic is good in NI. The Polish settled very quickly here. Now, my wife is Polish. She migrated to Canada and her family settled there. When I met her, she decided that she felt more European than North American. She decided to come back and settle with me. Love does these things, you know. I had experience with her Polish family in Canada. Many evenings I would sit together with her Polish family. Everybody that she brought to the table to a house party, were all Polish. I would sit there and they would all talk Polish and I wouldn't understand a word. Eventually, my wife would have said: guys, don't forget, Nigel doesn't speak Polish. He's not part of the conversation. And this is something we have to be careful of in our own school. We have quite a few Polish people here. If a member of the staff comes into the staff room who doesn't speak Polish and there is two or three Polish of the staff there, they do have the tendency to slip back into their mother tongue and talk together in Polish. If you are that one person who doesn't speak Polish in that company and you hear them chabbering away in Polish, there is something inside that doesn't make you feel comfortable or intimidated. So I always remind them: it is okay if you three are together but be conscious if there is somebody that doesn't speak Polish, they might feel not comfortable, because I felt that myself. But what I experienced, because I felt so closely connected to this community, I realised that this school itself was just focussed on the two traditional cultures in Northern Ireland: the Protestants and the Catholics. That was when integrated education was established for back in the seventies and the eighties, but by the time that we got to the 2000's we had this much more multicultural community. And I thought: what about all these other newcomers, as we call them – the Department of Education still uses the term newcomer, but I wonder sometimes: when do they stop being a newcomer? If they've been here and settled for ten years, are they still a newcomer? Because they weren't born here, we still think of them as newcomers, until second or third generations and they have lost their accent. Their accent has an impact. Also in the infant classes here, when they try to teach children how to read, they need to hear the right phonics, the right sounds. If you got a Polish classroom

assistant with a thick accent, maybe the intonation will not come out as clear as you would like to the children to be it. And that's what the teachers try to explain to me sometimes, but the way they say it, maybe a bit more crudely, may sound a touch racist. When they say: I don't think that classroom assistant would be suitable for working with that class. I say: why not? And then they'll say: well they're Polish... Well stop. Because they're Polish? 'No, no it's the accent I am saying.' Just be careful, that's not the integrated way. Let's face it you know. Those are all conversations. I suppose that that's living integration. That takes us back to the principles, we touched upon 'faith and values' of the school.

Bringing in this new group of nations was a novelty at the start, because we had no other nationalities here at all. There were a few, but they weren't really recognised. They were just grey. Again, something bigger than the traditional faiths was. Let's exploit this opportunity to be more than just an integrated school, let's be an international integrated school. This is something we really worked hard on from an international dimension. I don't know if you noticed or not but that whole corridor is lying with about 22 different flags. Those flags are not there accidentally. They represent the communities present at this school. Every time someone new comes in from somewhere else, I will purchase a flag and put it up for them. So they actually started at the one end of the corridor and the school started growing in numbers and different diverse cultures. When you get to the other end, you get people from countries... When I was a kid, I remember standing when I saw a black person: 'A black person?' (baffled) You had only three or four channels on tv which were very British centred, although England was moving fast – when you got off the plane in London, there were black people everywhere, it was a culture shock for people from Belfast. When I went to school, I never had a black teacher before. And now, there is diversity already here. A teacher of P1 is from the Caribbean. And actually is a great day for you being here today, I tell you why. March 2018 has been identified for us as the integrated movement as integrated month. We used to have an integrated week. So you're now right in the middle of integrated education month. Every integrated school in Northern Ireland in some small ways focussing on integration and celebrating it. It overlaps this week also with anti-bullying week, we've been looking at anti-bullying through the eyes of identity, all week the children have been doing various activities around identity. To help them understand they're unique, an individual, each one has their own features, their own background, their own culture. From the little ones right through and it expands on the content as the children get older. It links to bullying. A lot of reasons why children bully is because of difference. Because a person is black, because a person is protestant or catholic.

### **Is the anti-bullying week also in controlled and maintained schools?**

Yes, the whole of Northern Ireland. Actually, I think the whole of Britain is participating in the anti-bullying week. Just to draw attention. We've overlapped it with the integration month. Bullying is often a consequence of. So let's look at identity and celebrate that. It's all about celebration. Some schools in Northern Ireland, although they have diversity, they don't celebrate it. They don't talk about it. My son goes to a grammar school around here, which is a mixed school. Not far from here. It would have protestant, it would have catholic, it would have background cultural different races and nations. But to me it is a very passive model of integration. They are not integrated formally in name, though they are in culture, in background, in ethos. But I heard the principal speak a few years ago and I thought it was a very interesting language he used. They had all the lads huddled down, they are a rugby school. His language was: "If the culture or the background of someone, or the socio-economic background", because that is also an issue, "is a problem to you or is an issue to you, maybe this is not the school for you." It was the way that it's turned, it was kind of like: "We are conscious, we are diverse, but we kind of don't want to talk about it. We just accept everyone who they are." But it's a bit more neutral. It's grey, whereas I prefer colour. I would say: if you're catholic, let's explore that. Tell us what it means, what is Catholicism all about? How does it feel being Presbyterian? Let's explain that, let's talk about that in class. Having the confidence as a teacher to

start those conversations, are places that a lot of teachers don't want to go to. Those taboo topics. That's where NICIE trainings are very good at that. They look at discrimination and anti-bias and so forth. They do workshops, prepare teaching staff to tackle the difficult subject. I think that's in many cases what sets us apart from other schools.

### **Do you promote the trainings from NICIE?**

Yes, they would send it to us and we would get substitute cover quite often covered to us. We would send especially new staff that I have recruited in, that never have worked in an integrated school maybe before. It was new once to me as well 11 years ago, I never taught in an integrated school before so I didn't know what it really meant. So it was just by coincidence right up my street because I've been married to a Polish Canadian who is catholic also, and I have been brought up in Ulster Presbyterian here, so I have been perceived as a protestant although I am not practising in any way. I consider myself of no faith. That's also interesting. We often have debates in school with the teachers who you are and what you are perceived to be. Some teachers in this school who are clearly catholic perceive me as protestant. I would take offense of that, I would say to them that I am no protestant. If they want to put me in a box, put me in a very loose Christian box perhaps. Slightly when I get older with my children, I get swiped a little bit more towards Christianity. I am not comfortable at home what has to do with Christian faith. The academic in me – I am no academic by any means, I am more pragmatic and a doer than a thinker most of the time, and as I grow older I become more a thinker. That's because of age, like they like to think that wisdom comes with age (laughs). I think a lot more than I used to. I am not a spontaneous and overreactive, but I definitely would still think that if somebody refers to me as a Protestant and I don't refer to myself as a Protestant, then they've got it wrong. They use things like: you were brought up as a Presbyterian, so you must be and you still are. I am like: no. If I decide tomorrow to be a Buddhist, who are you to tell me I am not. So we have a lot of interesting conversations from time to time, sometimes we engineer them so we have those conversations, sometimes they just come up. Rather than just be scared of having them, we have them. We talk about those things, comfortably in a polite, respectful way. And those are all the values that we try to give with the children. This whole idea of social responsibility.

Parent involvement (one of NICIE's integrated principles). Every school tries to involve parents, if I have thought that I would be better than other schools, I would be full of myself. We've got an active PTA in this school, they help fundraise for us. We have four governors as parents in our school as board, which is twice as many a non-integrated school. That shows the commitment that the integrated schools want to have on parental involvement. There is more parental influence at governance level. I think that's important. We have 14 governors in our school, where most controlled schools have 8 or 9 governors, we have there extra teachers and extra parents.

That's the integrated holy bible if you like that. That's the four pillars of integration as I see them. If you handed them to any school principal, they would argue they would do it as well. But I would suggest that they don't do it as pro-actively. They are a bit more passive on some of these things and it's not the centre of importance. If I'm trying to maintain the ethos for me of this school, that's what it's all about for me. From the day they arrive here, visiting to consider P1 for their four year old child, I am selling that to them and saying: that is what you are signing up for. Whenever someone gets to P3 or P4, they can't really object to. They try to, I'll give you some examples. Because of being a controlled school as well, you bring catholic children into the school. You have commitments to make to train those children in the school in a catholic way. Catholic schools deliver the sacraments, the three holy sacraments. It's something post-primaries don't have to dabble with because by the time the children are 11 or 12 they've done the holy communion and the confirmation. In the eyes of the catholic church, they're already seen as adults. They don't have to tackle those issues. But in a primary school the only way that an integrated school was going to survive was to tell the catholic parents that if the catholic schools deliver the sacraments in conjunction with the catholic churches,

we will do the same. We have to bring catholic staff into our staff, to make sure we have a nice balance, which we will do anyway because it is the right integrated thing to do. But they have the commitments to make to try to support those children, through the sacraments. Let's say in a primary 4 class when you're doing the holy communion, when there is 25-30 children who are catholic and prescribe themselves as such, they expect to see holy communion on the calendar. So we have to work with the local catholic church. The relationships between the catholic church and the integrated schools differ across the country. Some have very good relationships, some have no relationships, some struggle to deliver the sacraments because the church objects. Which is quite insulting to the families who feel open to the integration and don't feel to water down their faith in any shape or form. But because the catholic church has such a strong grip on the catholic education system, that's a struggle we are up against. Historically, we have now 20+ schools which have transformed from controlled status to integrated status. So essentially in crude terms, protestant schools turned integrated. There are no catholic schools that turned integrated the other way. Not one.

### **Why is there this difference?**

The parents wanted it to happen. There are parents out there who are in small catholic schools, that are not sustainable and that would look at integrated education as a viable option but the local clergy and the CCMS oppose. CCMS would rather close schools than turn them integrated. They represent the catholic sector and they want to uphold and maintain the catholic schools. To lose one to the integrated movement, is a failure to their part. They might struggle and maybe it is in crude terms, but that's the way I see it. To weigh it up, you could understand that the protestant people feel they are losing grip or are getting overruled.

As an example where I am sitting with an integrated audience and many come from a catholic background, when we are talking about the statistics where 20+ schools are transformed one way from being called Protestant to welcome Catholics into their school, alternative cultures in their school. Yet not one single school in the other direction. There is something wrong there you know. We have to deal with the objections to that and why we can't make that happen. It is a two way street. For me, as sitting on the board of directors of NICIE, I felt we could do more about that. Try to continue and promote the cause and explore those in a respectful way in the catholic house. At the time with no money for education, the country's crippled, would you not open your mind to the idea of doing this? Interestingly, they have become part of that journey. Yesterday's experience was relevant, the conference where I was at was about shared education. Shared education is not integrated education, they are two entirely different creatures. Shared is a relatively new concept. It is and it isn't, it has been branded different things throughout the years. It started in the early eighties with Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), where a class of kids of a protestant school would get some money and a class of kids of a catholic school would get some money and they come together for a few days a year and do some activities together. Quite often that's all it was. They all went for a visit at the museum. They all went around the museum in two different uniforms, two different schools and had very brief acquaintance. "Hello, what's your name?" "Hallo, my name is..." There was no understanding in learning. That's probably the poorest example of it. Some places worked harder, but some other schools still have a healthy relationship.

The whole model changed, a huge amount of money went into that. But in fact it is just the same thing but with more money into it. Then in the last few years, there was a huge pot of money for shared education. Not integrated education. The nationalist and unionist parties, DUP and Sinn Féin, don't see shared education as a threat. It's not threatening. It maintains institutions, it maintains schools. You're still a catholic school, you're still a protestant school. You will collaborate together, maybe we could save some money, share some teachers, share some facilities, maybe we could even share a building. Even in some areas, schools are built where children of one community enter the same building at one end in their own uniform, and on the other end enter a protestant school in their



uniform in the same building. There are two schools, living under the same roof. To me that is crazy, absolutely crazy. Not only did we have an separated system, but we'll bring them all together under one roof but keep their own identities. We'll divide the school in bits, and say: that is your part of the school, that is mine. You could argue that it's a step in the right direction, but it's a very small step. If they are not going to intermingle, if they are not going to properly immersive integrate. We talk often about immersive integration, which is different from shared education.

We also participate interestingly as an integrated school, because shared education got huge amounts of money, we're talking billions of money from North America. The government invested in it. We work along with three other schools, it is great from an educational point of view. We share best practise, resources, we're developing our staff together, we're doing teacher professional learning units,... We've got it all under one roof here, while other schools don't have it. But the reason we wanted to be a part of it was because otherwise we would have been left out and not have access to that great trainings and opportunities. Also we felt that if we were a player and a participant in this, we could share our best integrated practise with them and make them better in those things. Tackling bias, discrimination, equality issues, social responsibility,... That they're passive about and we're active about. We could promote involvement. But I already notice it takes a very long time to do that, unless there is someone to facilitate. NICIE has a great team of facilitators, or other agencies as well. We work together with something called Peace Players, it is an American funding which is themed on basketball. We participate in this with another maintained school, so a catholic school down the road. We play basketball together, so sports are used to break down the boundaries. They also do workshops where they look at signs and flags and stuff like that, so some of the sensitive stuff. If it is just us and another school who isn't at the same place of the journey as we are, there is a reluctance to do those things. We promoted the idea to go to NICIE and do anti-bias trainings, and the senior management was actually quite negative to that. "I don't think we're ready for that. "I don't think that will go well with the parents." How do you know if you don't try? Why not take a risk? Let's try and see, don't you think your school is ready for it? We're 25 years into the peace process right here. Yesterday they we're talking about being 25 years down of a 50 year peace process. I thought, this is going to be a 150 year process. It's going to take a lot longer, because people will not take the risk. When you scratch the surface, it will still come out after a couple of generations. It is more important to protect your institution and identity then try to open the mind of the children that you serve. We've gone that extra mile so we can say that, but for the ones who are on the outside, I am looking at them and thinking: this isn't about you, this is about your children and your grandchildren. This is about your communities. The only way to filtrate that is by working through the grassroots level.

It frustrates me sometimes. All that sharing is wonderful, what happens when the money runs out? Because it costs an awful lot of money to bus children back and forward between schools and each other and venues. We are taking that because we are already integrated, but for those other schools I am thinking: will you be able to keep it going when the money runs out? The answer is no. They will just become how it was, the institutions will still be independent. They still be protestant and catholic schools, until somebody transforms the structure. It's got to be systemic and a transformation from the highest level down. The politicians will get behind that. Some of them do. The Alliance Party, which is the liberal easy going, who want everyone to share. They are seen as friendly people, nicie-nicie. But nobody votes for them. They get a good support, don't get me wrong but it's all the openminded middle class people. It's the idealists. People say that they want a shared future, but when they go to the ballot box they go back to traditional politics. It's them or us. It also reflects on housing. Of the 60.000 new homes that were built in Northern Ireland, some 3 to 5% of them were considered shared housing developments. The rest are for protestant or catholic people. Yet in all the public state institutions, it would be illegal to discriminate based on your faith. You couldn't discriminate Catholics or Protestants in the public service, police service, health service. It would be unheard of. When you look at the rest of the world, you scratch your head: I don't understand. 20 odd

years and you still got a segregated education system? What's happened? The answer probably is: stubborn determination to keep the status quo. They're scared. There's fear that one might take over or overrule the other.

It is a very complex thing. My wife has been here for 15 years and we joke sometimes when she talks like she really understands it. And I tell her: "You don't get it. I was born here, I've been living here for 45 years. And I don't fully understand it. It is so complex." Even writing a thesis from somewhere else, no disrespect, but you're only scratching the surface. You could spend your life on this and don't get it all. It's phenomenal how complex it is for such a small place that we are. How deep all this goes. It has all to do with identity and feelings.

Coming back to the core, integrated education, no one can be critical of from the point of view, it does what it says on the tin, the principals are right. We haven't changed or modified the principals for a long time, although we have reviewed them recently. In 2006-2007. Some of the things, like the original way they bring in the children at the school, was based on a 40-40-20 theory. If you have 40% catholic, 40% protestant and 20% other, such as interfaith relations or Buddhists or all the different faiths, I think statistically, the other faiths couldn't get any smaller or people would feel like a minority. That ratio has been in a lot of deliberation over the last few years because you got the pioneers of integrated education who still stand by that because they feel it's all about Protestants and Catholics. That's why it started and how it should stay. But the reality, and I tend to side by this because my school is a reflection of this, our community is quite a mixed community. Our school reflects our community. Particular because our doors are open every year for 60 primary 1 coming in. I have never reached that 60, only 52 at the most. So we turn nobody away. I don't have to apply that criteria. If I do get to the point of 60+, I wouldn't feel comfortable by using this 40-40-20. I don't want to turn somebody away based on their faith. Then comes a game. Especially when daddy is Protestant and mom is Catholic or vice versa. What category has our child the most chance to get into the school? If we want to get in? Should we declare ourselves Protestant, Catholic or 'other'? They are playing a game because they can be what they want to be. They write on the paper what they think will give them the highest chance. For me, I have the blessing not to be oversubscribed. By the 446 places we have in here 340 something at the minute. We have space for another 100 or so. But that's another conversation because I don't know where I would put them, because the infrastructure doesn't lend itself. It wasn't built in the 1930's to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

I don't have to define or prescribe as protestant or catholic. They come in at the start and we're pretty relaxed at what they are. Declare if they want, don't declare if they don't want. The department always asks us what they are. I'm comfortable with any family writing down they are Christian. There is no box who says interfaith marriage, mixed marriage. If that's what they want to be defined as, we use the term mixed marriage. But I have to be very careful with that. Some wise gentleman pointed out to me that if I would use that term in any other context, people will think about black and white. We don't have many families like that. When we talk about mixed marriages from back in the seventies, we talk about Protestants and Catholics. We've lots of families of mixed faith. I have four children and no one of them wants to be called Protestant or Catholic at the minute. They're old enough to know what they want to be. They've had experience in a catholic church, they've had experience in a protestant church. We are not regular churchgoers, so we don't go regularly either. They know what they are.

### **Are the children in the school aware of the different beliefs of the children?**

Yes, absolutely. One of the things you start to embed in the practise of the school, is again making sure fairness and equality, we want everyone to be valued be it Protestant or Catholic. Because the children who take the sacraments, through the school, the children are easily identified. They will be withdrawn several times a year to prepare for the sacraments, it's the only way we can do it. But when

we teach religion, it is taught as a whole class. I've insisted on that. I've said: only withdraw the catholic children when it's absolutely necessary for the sustained period you need to prepare them for the sacraments sufficiently. And they're always well prepared. But any other time, I want them all together. Let's look at world faith, let's look at Christianity, shared Christianity, let's look at Islam, let's look at Buddhism. Let's look at social and moral, good people regardless what their background is. What they stood for. For me, that is what religion is about. The whole blend of that in an integrated school. But there are still kids who stand out in the class because they take the sacraments. In the same sense the parents on one occasion think that one faith gets more look in than the others. I knew they meant the catholic faith, simply because it's more high profile because these events take place. So we try to think what can we do to make a balance there? One of this, a lot of controlled schools would do, I have never realised this growing up in a controlled school, we would have had annual services in our churches called harvest services. Be like a thanksgiving at harvest time, October time. But I never realised in my naivety that that was perceived in Northern Ireland as a protestant thing. There's a lot of things you don't realise. Anecdotally, with NICIE we dig in into things like that. Let's look at perceptions of people they said. Protestant teachers were put in one side of the room and catholic people were put in the other side of the room. And they said to the Catholics: write down all the stereotypical things you think about Protestants. There's little silly things that came up. The all favourite that came up was that people's eyes were set closer or further apart. Honestly. My grandmother told me that Catholics had their eyes closer together. By faith your eyes are closer together. But when you're a child and your granny says that, you believe it. And when someone down the road who was with his catholic granny, she would say that all the Protestants would have their eyes closer together. We're told the same thing. But there are also other things. When you do home baking, apparently Protestants are all into traybakes, we like to do our baking on trays. Catholics don't do that, they use cupcakes. I was just wetting myself with that. This is all stereotyping and false judgement that goes on. As a child you grow up believing this.

Getting back to the school. We have our shared RE classes, we do our harvest classes which serve the protestant side of the house and we have the sacraments for the Catholics as you like. And the other things we do as well, again it is identified as a catholic thing as well, we do the ashes on Ash Wednesday. Someone from the catholic church comes in and delivers the ashes to who wants to. The parents are asked: would you like your child to receive the ashes? Yes or no. On the flipside, it was lovely a few years back that we say that one of our Indian families, who are Hindu by faith, decided to be included into that. So these little Indian children came back out with the catholic ashes on their head. I thought: there is integration. That is beautiful. There is a family who has opened their minds. Their kids are only 10 years old, they don't know what it means but they don't want to be excluded. Let them take the ashes like all the other kids in the school are doing it. Their friends are doing it, so why can't they? They are not going to convert overnight. That fear and intimidation was gone. On the flipside of that, we had a contentious issue and it's typical of Northern Ireland. We use the poppy, the flower that resembles Remembrance. Because you would know the fields of Flanders. Unfortunately, that poppy is also used politically. People who come from a nationalist stroke, catholic persuasion, if they have historically had bad experiences of the British army, where they patrolled the streets for peacekeeping. There were things that went wrong. The British army treated some people badly, there were some bad people in it. That poppy has been identified as a political tool now as well. With the British legion coming into the school for armistice day and invite us to circulate the poppy and ask the children: would you like to put 20 pence into the jar and have a poppy? I had a parent object to that. Who said: "I don't believe in that. I don't want my child to be forced to buy a poppy." We are not forcing your child doing that, it's an option. I had to take the position that this school was a protestant school, I don't want to throw everything out of this school that came before me and integration. You can't have it both ways. You can't bring Catholics into your school and deliver the ashes and whenever poppy's come in, you ask them to throw it out? For a lot of families, that would be offensive to throw the poppies out. It went all the way to the board of governors, they

deliberated over that and they stuck to the policy. And they said that the poppies are never forced on any one. They are made available as they should be. It's a bit like the ashes. If your child is 4 or 5 and their best friend decides to put the money into the tin and pin a poppy onto their shirt for the day. If you are so objectionable for that, you have to stop and ask: it's me who has a problem with that, my child doesn't have a problem with that. They do it because their friends are doing it. I have got two choices here. You either tell your child: we don't do poppy's and you explain it to them, if they are old enough to understand. Or you just go with it. You know what: he's only four. When he is older, we help them you understand why we don't do it in our family. There might be a better reason for it, maybe they had a very bad experience. They don't need to force it on to our entire institution.

If you don't like it, go to another school. Maybe you are not ready for integration yet.

**Do you get a lot of those remarks?**

Most of them are already openminded enough. It might be just one particular thing like the poppy, that triggers it. Because the same person who brought the issue with the poppy up, is actually very supportive for the rest of our school.

You want another cup of coffee and go for a walk?

## 10.6 Teacher I

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed?**

I think it all happens quite naturally. First years get an introduction programme for making friends and things, but a lot happens naturally.

### **Do you still see divisions between students?**

The kids who come in are born after the year 2000, which is six years after the ceasefire, they know very little about the Troubles. It depends on the houses where they live in or the family who influences them. They know very little about it, it is not an issue for them.

### **Is integrated education needed then?**

There is a lot of money wasted in the schools of this country. Kids go to two different schools, a catholic school and a protestant school. There is money wasted on busses and transport to getting them to different schools. I think integration is key.

### **What are the major challenges that you as a teacher face in an integrated school?**

The big thing is the budget, because the government in Northern Ireland because the Protestants and the Catholics, Sinn Féin on government level can't sort it out. We are suffering. Again Brexit plays a role into it as well.

### **Is there a need for an overarching institution then on government level?**

Our government don't really want to promote integrated education. There is another thing now, called shared education, where you there are still catholic and protestant schools but they share accommodations such as the sports hall. They still be divided but share facilities, it is not integration. Our government doesn't really want to support integrated education.

Another thing, is that nowadays we have Eastern European children, they are a big part in integrated schools. Some Polish kids would go to catholic schools, but we would get a lot of Eastern Europeans, Polish, Bulgarian, Lithuanian.

### **How does that work out?**

We like to see it because every child means more money at the end of the day. A lot of them are hardworking children and we would get our children call them foreigners and things but they came to get a better life and they are working hard. Most of them get on well and they are successful.

### **Did you receive a special training for teaching in an integrated school?**

I went to a catholic primary school, then I went to a mixed school where there was still a division between Catholics and Protestants, it was not really integrated. Then I went to a catholic university for teacher training. I worked in different schools, but then I got a job in an integrated school.

### **Is there a need for special training?**

Not really necessary, it just comes out of respect for other people and their opinions and views. I would have taught history before and you have to look at different sides of the argument. You have to be careful to teach both sides of the picture.

**Is there a difference between teaching in a catholic school and in an integrated school?**

There is not a real big difference, it is just the catholic ethos in catholic schools. You just have assemblies and not a priest coming in as in a catholic school. The Catholics get their ashes on their forehead.

**What is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

Just giving tolerance and respect. You have different cultures. Catholics would have their sports, Protestants their things. It is respect from both sides. There is no special training needed.

**What would be the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

I wouldn't say it is any harder. You have all abilities in an integrated school. We have a system here of academic selection, where the brightest kids would go to grammar schools, we get kids in our integrated school of all abilities. We get high achievers and children with more needs. That can be different, the whole mixed ability you get in integrated education.

**How could integrated education be improved?**

I think the government needs to back it more. The government doesn't do enough. You have integrated education but there is too much money wasted between all schools. You have catholic, protestant and integrated schools. If they would all be integrated, there would be so much money saved.

**What is the best aspect of integrated education?**

Just seeing the kids get along and that they don't even care anymore about the troubles in Northern Ireland. Religion is not a big thing. They don't know about the troubles, they don't know the IRA or UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force). Seeing them get along, the things that divided us in the past isn't there in the present generation. They are moving along.

**Something you would like to add?**

Some of the sports that they do. There is great cross-community work, there would be days where the Catholics attract kids from the protestant community and try to involve them in what has been seen as a catholic game.

**Does the teacher also plays a role outside the classroom?**

We would encourage them to go to clubs and try the different experiences. But a lot of that has been done by the community and set up by the community, to encourage them to be active and involved.

**Is it also in the curriculum, that they learn about the Troubles in an objective manner?**

It is in the curriculum. It is called 'Learning for life and work', it is about communities getting along. But some children wouldn't know if they are catholic or protestant, they don't go to church anymore. They moved on with the year 2000-generation coming through. There is some kids where their family influences them. In general they don't care about it anymore.

## 10.7 Teacher II

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed to foster contact, friendships,...?**

I teach primary 5, so 8 year olds and 9 year olds, that what we need to put the effort into, they automatically become friends and they automatically don't see the differences, but it is our job to make them aware of the differences. People think in integration that everybody is the same, everybody is treated equally. Yes we are all the same, but we also have many differences. And it's about being aware of each other's differences. So they foster respect and just knowledge, this may be my best friend, but their religious beliefs are totally different to my own beliefs. I think it is our job to create opportunities to become aware of those differences. Equally, we try to focus on the fact that children are the same. For the minute it is anti-bullying week so our theme is: all different, but all unique. I think it is about children making aware, but we're not all the same. It's about celebrating difference and respecting difference.

### **So the children are aware that their friend might be from another religion?**

Yes, absolutely. It's more about that. It's hard to maybe plan those opportunities. For example, with Christmas, we make sure we talk about their Christmas day and some have prayers in the morning before they open any presents, some come in and breakfast first. So everyone comes in and talk about their day and we realise that everybody has a different tradition or routine. Even the basics of Christmas day. Or Easter, what does Easter mean to you and your house? Some will have an Easter hunt, not related to the church. Some will go to church first. We talk about their tradition and their family approach.

### **Did you receive a specific training for integrated education?**

Yes, I had the anti-bias training of NICIE. It was a three day course, you had a project to do for them. It was very good, it made you think about the language you use in class and even your own bias that you weren't aware of. You thought you were quite integrated yourself but when you went to the course you thought: oh, actually I am. I do have my own biases. That course made us all acknowledge that we all are biased. And NICIE does a VP form, for Vice-Principals, and I do that every term. That's really useful.

### **What does the function Vice-President mean?**

I would plan all the curriculum development within the school. So Mr. Arnold be more the management, while I do the curriculum focus. So I make sure that each area of the curriculum is being developed and moving forward. I would try to bring staff together and make sure staff have time whether to talk about their own well-being and saying: I am finding this stressful or finding this tough. Or that they all feel that they have time to work on their own curriculum areas. I would link them with the key stage leaders. Each class is in a key stage. I work with the key stage leaders and they look after their own key stage, so it's like a pyramid effect. And for anti-bullying week and "all different, all unique", we've been looking at it through the whole school. I pick more themes for the school.

### **Do you think that there is a need for training in integrated education?**

I think the anti-bias training NICIE ran, is very specific to integrated education and very valuable. I'd say anyone working in an integrated school should attend and it is available every year. I think everyone upstairs, from key stage 2, participated it except Mr. Kelleher who is relatively new, I don't think he has attended it, but he's on the list for next year.

**What do you think is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school as a teacher?**

I have taught in a controlled school and I have taught here and I find that the difference is, even at the minute we do shared education as well and we would link with the controlled school. We do P5, DP and PDMU, there we would talk about difference or talk about symbols, emblems. And the other schools were worried about that: I am not trained, I can't talk about that. So I think in an integrated school, there is an atmosphere, an ethos that it is okay to talk about those things. In a controlled school, you can't talk about that in case you would upset the parents. Whereas in an integrated school, the teachers are freer to explore those topics with the children without the worry they might upset the parents or there would be a backlash.

**Do you teach controversial topics?**

It's more for the older children. When the children come up to P5, we start to focus more on the religious element. Up until P5, they are taught about world religions and about Christian ethos and Christian believe but we don't break it down into catholic and protestant. Whereas in P5, it's the first year we introduce that. For November, we say: in November we remember and we would then link it in with the poppy so that's for the protestant side. And for the month of the dead, for the catholic church so we talk about how they have special ceremonies and masses, we would start to introduce more: this is what the catholic church would believe, and this is what the protestants would believe. Make the children more aware of those two differences. But we would not say: this is what happened between protestants and catholics. That's more for P6 and P7. We make them aware of catholic and protestant, whereas before it would have been Christian.

**Do you think some people find it harder to teach those topics?**

Yes, I think if they are a teacher in an integrated school, they are more willing. I definitely find that colleagues in controlled schools just couldn't, they don't feel like they couldn't tackle it themselves or don't know what language to use. There is more chance to talk about it and a willingness to tackle those subjects.

**What do you think is the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school?**

I think it is about your open-mindedness and challenging yourself to be openminded. There are more issues coming in our school you wouldn't have to deal with, or I haven't dealt with it in my personal life. We have a child in our school and her daddy has gone through the process of haze nine cursty life. We have never had that experience before. I have no personal experience of that, we have to be very openminded. Do we have interviews or meeting? How are other parents going to react? They will acknowledge the change and see the change. See that now curstian mom will pick the child up. Will that cause questions or worries on the playground? Will the other children ask questions too? It's about challenging myself to constantly move on and what differences are there.

**What is the best aspect of teaching in an integrated school?**

I think the children are much more open. I have a little boy in my class for the minute, he is very much from a protestant background and we have a gentleman who introduced him to the Irish language and he's really enjoyed it. He wouldn't be exposed to that in his home life. Because he enjoyed it so much, he said to his mom and that: "I would like to learn more of this. Can I use the laptop?" And he has been doing his own course. His mommy is doing it with him. I don't think that would have happened when he didn't went to an integrated school. You do see that the children are



much more open and when you talk to them, they talk about some issues more maturely sometimes than you would expect.

**What do you think are points for improvements in integrated education?**

There would be some people that feel integrated education is a threat to their own. As suppose, it takes children away from the controlled sector or the maintained sector. I sometimes think that integrated education is seen as a threat, when I would like to think if more schools became integrated, that's just the way forward. We would be saving resources. Money could be put in one joint pub, than being divided. One school is sitting half empty because it is a controlled school and another school is sitting half empty because it is a maintained school. We should put those teachers together, the experience they could share, the money they could share.

**Do you think that the teacher also plays a role outside the classroom?**

I am a Christian, so whenever I attend my own church, it is a protestant church. People think that if you work in an integrated school, they think that it is no religion. They are worried about this. They think religion will be diluted down. They forget that there is a Christian ethos and it's not that my own believe doesn't mean that I couldn't accept. There is a child in my class with a Buddhist background, you know. The more I've spoken about integrated education, it has opened the eyes of my friends in church. I think there is a lack of understanding, they have misunderstanding of the system. Even my own husband, he was more secular than he thought.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

With my experience of work in a controlled school and in an integrated school, the children in a primary school in a very controlled environment aren't exposed to lots of different religion. When they go to their next school, it's such a shock for them. Then they're coming home and have all the question then. While our children are so mixed and they know families come in all shapes and sizes. Home life is so different that when they go to their next school and they are exposed to more, that's not as much a shock. That they can focus much more on the people, than their situation.

## 10.8 Teacher III

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed to foster contact, friendships etc.?**

I think it is more natural, you don't have to put a lot of effort in it for relationships to form. Because they come in at four or five years old, they don't have any premeditated sort of thought about the other side. There is no work to do to get it out of them. I think that the parents make the choice by sending them to an integrated school, so they come from families where both sides are respected and valued in their opinions or cultures. I don't think there is no real additional effort. But we do things to celebrate, and make an effort to talk about culture and identities. But I think that should be common place in all schools.

### **Are the children aware of the other children's beliefs or identities?**

At this stage in the school, they definitively do know. Partly because we separate children for religious education, catholic children have to receive the sacraments so we have to teach them outside class once a week to prepare for the sacraments. So the children know, those are the catholic children for the sacraments. Generally, when I receive a class of P7, I don't know who is catholic or who is protestant. Honestly, I don't think the children even think about it. If you ask about it, they might say: yes, I know Liam is catholic because he made his first communion when he was 7.

### **What's the age of the kids you teach?**

Ten and eleven.

### **Do you need to teach them history about the Troubles?**

Not in any great deal. We would talk about why there are differences, that there are people who want to remain with the UK and some people want Ireland to be united. We discuss that both opinions are fine and everyone is entitled to it. But we don't teach any big history about the Troubles. I know the curriculum in secondary school covers it.

### **Do you think it is difficult to teach it?**

It might be a difficult subject if you go into a lot of depth in it but I think we sort of drawn that there are differences in opinion. You might hear something at home, but you might hear something different in school, but that doesn't mean that they are against each other. I think if you went into more depth in it about what one side did, or what the other side did, it might become difficult.

### **Did you receive a specific training for integrated education?**

I attended a three day training course by NICIE, its's called anti-bias training. It was really about my upbringing and the side of the community where I am from. I might have some predistilled biases in the things say, the things I do, the things I think. They try to make me aware of that. I have to leave biases at the door. Even working in this school is training as well. You almost forget, I certainly have my own identity and I would associate myself with one side of the community but it doesn't play a part in my teaching at all. I have been here for 6 or 7 months before I received that training.

You might say something in class that may cause offense. I think definitely working in the school is the best opportunity to...

### **Do you think this training should be mandatory?**

I think the sort of teacher needed to work in an integrated school, is almost special itself. I know teachers who are my friends, who wouldn't be suitable for teaching in an integrated school because their opinions are so strong. They wouldn't be willing to take on the opinions of the other side. I think training would apply to those people, but I don't know if it would work because they are so strong in their opinion. They don't want to work in integrated education, just on their side of the community. I didn't think the anti-bias training was necessary until I went to it. I didn't realise I was biased on certain ways. It probably is necessary to make teachers aware of them.

**What do you think is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

I think encouraging the children and making the children aware that there are so many differences of opinion, different cultures, different things people enjoy doing, that have to be accepted. If the children leave here with a little bit more confidence to say that their hobby's, opinions, talents are special to them and that's fine. I think it helps our whole society move on. I think the younger generation is becoming more progressive and if we continue to push children with progressive views, it's really important.

**On the other side, what is the hardest part of teaching in an integrated school? And is it any different from teaching in a controlled or maintained school?**

The biggest difference is that we don't place such huge value, we do value it, but we also have time for other things like the holistic part of the child. Making sure to cover a wide variety of the curriculum, that the child can experience cultures and faiths and values. The hardest part is probably giving the children depth in those things, rather than scratching the surface. You want to go into things in detail, but you might not have so much time. You don't have so much time to cover all the values and faiths that you have. So you're paying attention on each one but maybe not enough. You might have a child who is Hindu in your class, and you have a child who is Muslim, do you spend as much time into that as the other? Personally I feel like if I do one thing, I have to treat the other equally, otherwise someone might feel left out.

**Do teachers also play a role outside their classroom?**

I am very involved in hurling. I come from a catholic background. It's traditionally played by nationalists and people of catholic faith. I want children to experience that, so we started an extracurricular hurling team in school. The children who play it in school, maybe never had the opportunity to play it before. Rather than talk about cultures and people doing it differently, we now introduce them to a sport that they now try to play it. They might never play it again, but if they now see it on tv they now what it is and talk about it rather than look at it as 'that sport Catholics play'. Because they played it. I think that is really important. We only introduced it because we play it. If it was hockey, or tennis, we would maybe introduce that. Traditionally, children who come from families who value the sport would be send to catholic schools, because they schools would definitely play it. So the catholic children would not play it outside this school, especially the protestant children and children of other faiths.

We really enjoy it too because you start with kids who've never played it before and you see them getting better and better. We also play against other schools, we beat other schools sometimes. Those kids play it twice a week, and our kids play it once a year.

**When you play to other schools, are those catholic schools?**

Yes, we are the only primary integrated hurling team. There is another sport, Gaelic football, there are some other integrated schools that also play Gaelic football. But hurling is a bit more technical and difficult. We're the only team that plays it.

### **What is on the other hand a 'protestant' sport?**

Traditionally, probably field hockey and rugby would be the two traditional sports. Soccer is played in both communities, but traditionally Gaelic games would be catholic, nationalist sport whereas rugby and field hockey be unionist, British, protestant sport if you put it that way.

### **Is there anything that you would like to add?**

I know there is a comedy called Lucid Talk, if you use twitter, they released yesterday a poll of statistics in Northern Ireland of how much the people would like their children to go to an integrated school. 67% of the parents that they questioned they would like the opportunity to send their children to an integrated school. For the moment, the provision isn't there. It looks like there is demand, but there is no opportunity created.

### **Do you think these opportunities should be created by the government or by the parents?**

It's almost left to the parents to do that job themselves. I think the challenge is in the communities, the schools have become a very central hub to some communities. If you come from a catholic community, your primary school is central to that. If someone suggests an integrated school, some see that as an attack on their catholic identity or the protestant identity. I think that's my background. I came from a small village, where the catholic primary school is named after the catholic church. Everybody goes to the same primary school, to the same church. We never had to be taught our faith through school, we all went to the same church. Whereas people feel that if you take the catholic school away, you ruin their faith. Some I would say, prefer to leave it up to the school rather than do it at home.

### **In what kind of community is Glengormley set in?**

I am not from here, I am not a local. This is my fourth year here in the school, I do think that it's sort of built up as a commuter area, it's close to Belfast. It's almost a part of Belfast. So there is a lot of housing development going up. There are a lot of mixed marriages. They choose to send their children here. I think there is a need for integrated school in areas like this. But the catholic school down the road has three classes for every single year, so they are a much bigger school. There seems to be a bigger want for either catholic or protestant, there's not as big a need for an integrated school here. I think it's probably going. The catholic church have a problem themselves. Their numbers are dropping. Catholic schools see fall in their numbers, integrated schools see it go up.

The area I am from is traditionally nationalist. People who are unionist are a 29 minute radius from that. So there is no need for an integrated school, but why does it have to be catholic school? Why does it have to be a faith school? It can be just a school.

I don't think we'll ever get away from the segregated situation we're in. I wouldn't think in the next 50 years it changes. We have faith based schools but it's probably evolving.

## 10.9 Teacher IV

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed to foster contacts and friendships?**

I suppose the students just grow up with it. The students who start in this school don't know any different than any other kind of school. I think it probably lends to make it easier because we have more to learn, more to talk about. To me, the whole point integration is that you are not shying away for anything. You should be learning about each other. It's a learning experience.

### **Are the children aware of their different beliefs?**

I think as they get older: yes. Particularly, the catholic kids who go through the sacraments. So once you get to P3, P4 and P7, there are sacramental classes so they go out for their sacraments. The children are a little bit more aware of that there is one group of children who do this, I go to a different church or I don't go to church at all. So I suppose they are aware of those cultural differences that way. And of course, we have children coming from all over the world. There are quite a few from Poland, my own class got a girl from India, Chinese people. But in terms of awareness: yeah, I think they are. And a lot of the children are very proud of their own children. I would say it are rather the children who are not catholic or protestant born here, but children who come from different places around the world.

### **Did you receive a specific training for integrated education?**

My previous job to this one was in an integrated school as well. I was there for two years and before that I had no experience working in an integrated school. I came up to the catholic schoolsystem. I was in a catholic school teaching prior to that. I suppose, it is not to say that one is better than the other. They all got their own merits, I suppose there is no actual training for it as such, like 'this is the way we do this'. You just do your own research, you pick things up as you come along, you learn from your colleagues, you pick up on the expertise of others. I think I would find it difficult to go to another system now. Like my own little girl, she's coming here next year and we made a conscious decision that we want her to go to an integrated school.

### **Do you think teaching in an integrated school is any different from teaching in a controlled or maintained school?**

Yes. Looking at the catholic school I was in, over 10 years ago, the amount of religious education compared to an integrated school. Just from my own experience, we had to teach RE 30-40 minutes a day, every day, 4 days a week. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day we took children to mass. That's completely different. Religion here, is broadly taught as a Christian ethos. You have some of the kids that are atheist, there is a girl who is Hindu. In a catholic school I feel like you are almost preaching to the children, whereas here it is more of the point of view: this is what Christians believe, it's not secular but at the same time I feel like we're not preaching to them.

### **What do you think is the most important feature of teaching in an integrated school?**

I suppose it's respect. Not shying away from things. For example, couple of years ago, as well as teaching a class I also coordinate PE, they were discussing the policy: should we have a uniform? If we don't have a uniform, should the children be allowed to wear their own choice of clothing? One of the debates was about football. Most of the kids are a fan of Man United, apart from that are the Celtic Rangers are quite popular over here. One of the things was: is it okay if the children come in in Celtic tops or Rangers tops or republic tops or Northern Ireland tops? I think some people thought: is that somewhere we want to go? I had a chat with mister Arnold and he agreed: look, we're here

telling them not to wear a Rangers top or a Celtic top, sure we are avoiding what we are all about. That it's okay for somebody to wear shirts of teams who are religious affiliated as well. It's okay for people what they want to wear. To me, the whole point of integrated education is to break that barriers.

### **Do you think it is difficult to teach such difficult topics?**

I suppose you just have to be respectful of everyone. Again, when you're talking about religion or anything political, this is what certain people believe. I am using my primary 5 base here. Whenever it comes to November, they have Remembrance day which is by a lot of people seen as a protestant, British military thing. Maybe that's an unfair representation, but that's just the way that it's going. You also have running parallel in the catholic church saying "in November, we remember", which is like the month of the dead people. So miss Smyth and I decided that we would combine the two. We discuss both and then leave it up to the children. We give them literally a blank page and say: "we're going to make a little thing about remembering people, whatever you want to do, I completely fine." Some of them do poppies, some of them do relatives, some of them soldiers and some both. We presented them with everything. Obviously their parents will tell them things as well. And then they can go their own direct with that?

### **What do you think is the best aspect of teaching in an integrated school?**

Okay, the best aspect? Okay. There's a lot of things. I suppose it broadens your horizon just a bit. You look beyond your own traditional community norms and you learn a bit more. I think integrated education is more than just catholic and protestant stuff. I like it when the kids come in from Poland or Spain and the learning opportunities you get from them. With a little guy in last year, he was Spanish. My Spanish isn't great but I love being able to practise with him. There are of course Polish and Spanish students in other schools as well, but I think it is more celebrated here. There is a constant effort to include.

### **What is the most difficult part of teaching in integrated education?**

I suppose, I think it is very rare that we had this but we had parents that maybe haven't been as embracing or open as you nearly would expect them to be. I can remember, it was Queens jubilee and there was a parent coming in and giving off to Mr. Arnold. "Why did you not have red white blue flag outside the school?" His response was: "We're doing lots in school. We are celebrating this but we have to draw lines somewhere." I think we really do try to find this balance but people see what they want to see and don't see other things. That could be a little bit frustrating.

I can only think of one pupil where this happened with. We had a little game and the pupil was giving him a hard time because he was from a catholic background. "Why are you not wearing a republic top?" It was a little bit heated between two of them. But in general, we have no problems. I have been here 8 years and I can count those problems on one hand. I am just trying to think of these things for you.

In general, there is a really good, happy, positive atmosphere in this school. In our class, we do Irish and every parent has been supportive, which is great.

### **Is there something you would like to add?**

Maybe I have given you more extreme examples, but at the end of the day I think it's the way forward. I waited until an integrated school close to me was advocating teachers because I really wanted to work in an integrated school although I had no experience in it. I've made a conscious decision. It's what I believe in. I think the majority of the staff is the same, obviously there will be some staff that were here when the school transferred to integrated status. But they're all on board.

## **10.10 Teacher V**

### **Is in an integrated school additional work effort needed to foster contacts, friendships etc?**

I think it is all naturally. The children are so used to each other that differences aren't spoken about or they don't see each other as 'different'. I asked: do you know if your friends are catholic or protestant or something different? And most of them said: no. One girl said, as long as we got the same likes and hobbies, that's what makes us friends not what religion we are or what community we come from. There are no real issues. They are together since they are 4 or 5 years of age so when they come to us, they are 10, 11 years old. There are no underlying issues, thankfully. As well, they come from families who want their children to go to integrated education. So they come from families who are forward thinking and openminded, that hatches well. There doesn't need to be extra work. We do set aside lessons so often we talk about integrated education and we highlight how important it is and how lucky they are that they go to an integrated school. But other than that, week by week might be the same as any other school.

### **Did you do something special during this integrated education month?**

We're making a video. We did one two years ago. It is about what integration means to you. Other children talk about what it means to them. If you go lower down the school, the children will more talk about the cultural issues like children from different countries who speak different languages. Whereas now I think they are at the age where we could have discussions about religious stuff in Northern Ireland. We can talk about it in a secure way, in a way that children can speak freely. This week we talked briefly about the history of Northern Ireland. The divide, the Troubles and why integrated education started. Then after that, it changed to more like a multicultural environment which it obviously is. In that class alone you hear Olivia talk, she was born in Poland, and Christina is from Greece. We've got Romanian heritage, lots of Polish. In other classes Indian, Pakistani, lots of Eastern Europeans.

### **Do you think it is sometimes difficult to teach these subjects?**

Yeah it is. It is a sensitive issue. There are two sides to the story. We were talking about the Titanic, there is one story. I suppose at their age we don't go so much into much details because it is such a sensitive issue. It wasn't that long ago. Their parents would have lived through the Troubles. You don't know what their parents are telling them so you don't want to shake the boat too much. It is their local history and it has shaped the world they live in so it is important that they know what happened. It is interesting that when you open up the discussion, you know some have talked about it at home. Whereas some children just don't know. I don't want to push it too much on them, as long as they know there is a reason for integration and highlight why it is important. How going forward is the only way things can get better. One of the children this week, talked about if someone went to a catholic or protestant school and a catholic or protestant secondary school and all their friends and family are of one side of the community, that they wouldn't know anybody outside their community. This happens a lot. They can have misconceptions about Catholics or Protestants because they didn't have the chance to be friendly or meet any of them. Whereas these children, all their friends are mixed. It doesn't matter. It's so normal that it doesn't matter which secondary school they go to, they are not going to revert to that thinking. You know how important it is. The future is the only thing that can help, generation after generation.

### **Do you think teacher training for integrated education is needed?**

I haven't had any NICIE training. I know they do anti-bias training. I have had no training, and never worked in integrated schools before I came here. I think I'm doing fine without training. I think you

learn on the job I suppose and through discussion with other colleagues. But there is nothing too challenging in an integrated school. Maybe there are other parts of Belfast that might be more challenging. The families have good backgrounds here, there might be areas with a more challenging community.

**In what kind of community is this school set in?**

It's a mixed community. They've got integrated schools in protestants and catholic area's where they meet. This is very mixed. I'm guessing that that is more challenging for the teachers. I haven't had any situations of sectarianism or children arguing or fighting about those subjects.

**Where did you teach before this school?**

In London and Abu Dabi before I moved here. This is the only school I've worked here, so I never worked in a maintained or controlled school in Northern Ireland.

**Why did you come to an integrated school?**

To be honest, the reason I ended up here was luck. There are not many teaching jobs in Northern Ireland and when I moved in here I send my cv and I could come in. Whoever came to me, I would've worked for them. But saying this, my opinion has changed since I've been here. I see how barred it is here now that I am inside an integrated school, rather than looking from the outside in. I can see how these children see each other as the same, while in a maintained school, the children would say: they are not the same as me. I now see the benefits of it and how important it is. If I would move on, I would stay in integrated education. It's interesting as well, you do learn from other people and their backgrounds.

**What do you think might be a point of improvement for integrated education?**

To be honest, no. I can't really see any negative aspects of it or I could point my finger at. Maybe Mr. Arnold could give a better answer to it from an administrative point of view.

**Does a teacher also play a role outside the classroom?**

I coach hurling. It's an Irish sport. It's interesting. It's an Irish sport so in Northern Ireland it would be associated with catholic people, you wouldn't really have protestant people playing hurling because it's Irish. Mr. Arnold, knew that Mr. Dunghee and I play it and we started two years ago a hurling team in this school. Which is great because catholic and protestant children play hurling together. I know I may sound strange to you because it's just a sport, but it's because it is associated with Catholics. So it is nice to see children from all communities play this sport together. Other than that, you are more than just a teacher. Children might have dark thoughts, things that go on at home. Thankfully there are children that do talk to you about it. Sometimes you work as a counsellor or social worker these days at school. We do focus about talking about your problems. Mental health is a big issue today. Children keep issues inside. It's not an integrated focus, but it's modern day teaching I guess.

We try and communicate as much with the parents. We have this social media tool where the parents will have this app at home and can see videos of children I record while they do a presentation. It's a way of inviting parents into the classroom without taking them into the classroom. That's one of the cornerstones of integrated education, parental involvement. Also Christina's mother lets me know through this app that she has a doctor's appointment. They have better access and at the same time they are not disrupting the class.



**Is there anything you would like to add?**

You probably going to have a good idea of what the school is like by talking to everyone. You compare it to other Belgian schools?

**I just wanted to see it in real life and I already had contact with other principals. So that's why.**

And like I said, there are no real challenges in this school because the children are so being used to it. Maybe it happens all so smooth because we discuss it in class. It is a great thing, like you I am technically an outsider but I can only see good things of it. All schools should be integrated, but that takes time.

## 10.11 Brief aan leerkrachten

**KU LEUVEN**

FACULTY OF ARTS  
FACULTY OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dear teachers of school X,

I am Simon, a student of the masterprogram European Studies at the KU Leuven in Belgium. The topic of my thesis is about peace education in Northern Ireland, more specifically about how integrated education works from the perspective of the teachers.

Obviously, teachers play a major role in peace education and are therefore of utter importance for the Northern Irish society, that is why this is the topic of my research. Thus I need the help of teachers in integrated schools.

My research will consist of classroom observations and, if you are willing to, interviews with teachers. In the interviews I will ask about your experience in integrated schools, how you view the interactions between the children, if there maybe are any points for prone to improvement etc. No difficult questions, just about your day-to-day experiences. The interviews should not take too long, since I understand that your time is valuable. The interviews could go via telephone or Skype, as you wish.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope that you are willing to partake in my research and contribute to the literature of integrated education.

I am looking forward for your answer.

Kind regards,

Simon Thys  
Masterstudent European Studies  
KU Leuven, Belgium

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Phone: +32476861672

## 10.12 E-mail NICIE

Lorna McAlpine <lmcalpine@nicie.org.uk>

vr 11-5-2018 00:59

Simon,

The statistics about enrolments are collected from the schools each October and then analysed and placed on the Department of Education's website. Children in receipt of Free School Meals FSME are indicative of poverty. Newcomer statistics and religious balance is also collected. Unfortunately I do not have the figures for all the integrated schools collated, but I will ask my administrative colleagues to send you a list of the schools and you could do some analysis for yourself if you wanted to. Each February the Department also publishes a summary of the statistics. <http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/> is the Department's website. If you scroll down you will see the Statistics and Research section. Select it and you will see the School Enrolment bulletin 2017/18. That will give you the total percentage of children with FSME and also gives figures about diversity in schools. On that page you will also see School enrolments. If you select that you will see School enrolments school level data for individual schools on an Excel spreadsheet.

I am sorry I do not have the figures collated for you.

Good luck with your thesis.

Lorna