



FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE MINISTER
TONY WORTHINGTON MP



E1013/97

DATE: 19 September 1997

To: 1. Secretary - for approval
2. PS/Secretary of State

cc Tony Worthington (O/r)
PS/Sir David Fell
Mr Hill
Mr McVeigh (O/R)
Mr Canavan
Mr Watkins

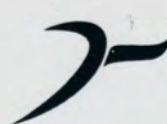
INTEGRATED EDUCATION

1. Following correspondence from Mr Alan Johnson MP about Shimna College, the Secretary of State asked for a note about integrated education. The attached letter explains the position with regard to Shimna, and the Government's general policy on integrated education is outlined below.

Background

2. In law, all schools in Northern Ireland are open to all pupils regardless of religion. In practice, the vast majority of Protestant pupils attend "state" (controlled) schools, while most Roman Catholic children are enrolled in separate Catholic schools. To date, this has been accepted as an expression of parental wishes and no Government has attempted to impose integrated schools.

3. The first planned integrated school in Northern Ireland was set up in 1981 by a group known as "All Children Together". The school was Lagan College and it opened with 28 pupils. As the law then stood, the Department of Education had to be satisfied as to the viability of such schools before providing funds, and it was not until 1984 that Lagan College qualified for grants. Six more integrated schools were set up on the same pattern during the period from 1985 to 1988.



Education Reform Order (NI) 1989

4. Since 1990, the Education Reform Order places a statutory duty on the Department to “encourage and facilitate” the development of integrated education. Integrated education is defined as “the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils”. Under this legislation, new integrated schools qualify for Government grants immediately provided they meet the minimum viability criteria. (These have been revised (upwards) recently and are: 25-pupil intake and long-term enrolment of 175 for primary schools; 100-pupil intake and long-term enrolment of 500 for secondary schools.) In addition, procedures are in place for transforming existing schools to integrated status and these may be initiated directly by parents. (These procedures are modelled on the grant-maintained [“opt-out”] provisions of the 1988 Education Act.)

5. Integrated schools are eligible for 100% funding for their running costs. In the case of new schools, grants for capital development are not available until viability has been established (usually after 2-3 years) but the schools can get assistance with their initial capital costs from the Integrated Education Fund.

6. The Education Reform Order provides for 2 types of integrated school; Grant Maintained Integrated schools (GMI), which are 100% funded by the Department, and Controlled Integrated schools (CI), which are 100% funded by the Education and Library Boards.

Additional Support

7. Promotional services are provided to parents and schools by a voluntary body, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), which receives grants from DENI (£436,000 in the 1996/97 financial year). In 1992, DENI was a co-founder, along with the Nuffield Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, of an independently administered capital fund (the Integrated Education Fund) for the promotion of integrated education (£2.4m). An additional £2m has since been contributed by DENI. The Fund provides assistance with the capital cost of



new schools in the period prior to capital grants being available. The payment of capital grant by DENI then allows the school to reimburse the Fund, in turn allowing the funds to be re-cycled in support of other schools.

Development

8. There are now 32 integrated schools (25 GMI and 7 CI) of which 11 are secondary schools. Their aggregate enrolment is over 7,000 pupils which is just over 2% of total pupil numbers.

Review of Arrangements

9. Given the increasing maturity of this sector, a review of the arrangements for establishing new schools was conducted in 1996. The review had 3 strands:

- a review of the criteria against which proposals for new schools are assessed: revised criteria were made public in July 1996;
- a review of arrangements to encourage existing schools to seek transformation to integrated status in order to shift the emphasis away from the creation of costly new integrated schools; and
- research into the impact of Integrated Education.

Transformation

10. Following the review a policy document, "Integrated Education: A Framework for Transformation" was issued to all schools on 12 March setting out the revised procedures for transformation. In examining proposals for transformation the Department takes account of various factors including, the viability of the school; whether it appears that the school would be



likely to be attended by reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils; evidence of the school's awareness of, commitment to, and preparation for the process of integration; and, the impact of the change on other schools. In particular, evidence is required that at least 10% of the school's annual intake in the first year of transformation will be drawn from the local minority community and that this is likely to increase over time to a minimum of 30% before approval can be given. In 1996/97, 7 schools (5 secondary and 2 primary) sought transformation and 4 were approved (2 primary and 2 secondary).

Finance

11. Recurrent and capital expenditure on GMI schools (expenditure on Controlled Integrated schools is not readily available) for the last 3 years and capital commitment for the next 3 years are as follows (£m):-

	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00
Recurrent	8.9	12.2	14.6	17.3	*	*
Capital	1.9	3.5	4.7	12.7	17.3	2.9

* *unquantifiable at present: budget will depend on pupil numbers in schools at that time.*

Capital costs over the next 3 years are particularly significant. The figures quoted represent 63% of the available budget for new major works and 27% of the total major works budget (new and ongoing). Policy on the provision of accommodation for new integrated is that the initial phase should be in permanent form with further development being in mobile accommodation or such the form as may be agreed. The primary objectives in this approach is to ensure that the accommodation meets acceptable educational and building standards and is affordable in public expenditure terms.



It could be possible for schools to pay the additional costs of enhanced provision but as the Shimna case demonstrates, this is by no means a straightforward procedure.

The Way Forward

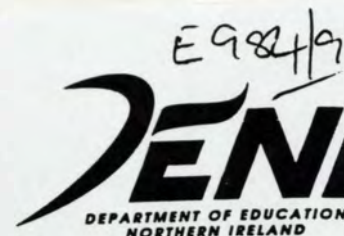
12. Following the change in Government the Department is currently engaged in a further round of consultations with integrated education interests to determine if current arrangements are still appropriate. —

Mark Anderson

PP K SMITH



FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY
TO THE MINISTER
TONY WORTHINGTON MP



E984/97

Alan Johnson Esq MP
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LONDON
SW1A 0AA

/o September 1997

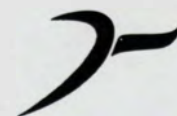
Thank for your further letter of 26 August about Shimna College.

At the outset can I say that my Department has not rejected the possibility of future development of Shimna being in the form of permanent as opposed to temporary accommodation. As indicated in my earlier letter, our normal policy on the provision of accommodation for new integrated schools is that the initial core should be in permanent form with further development being in mobile accommodation or such other form as may be agreed. Our primary objective in all of this is to ensure that the accommodation meets acceptable educational and building standards and is affordable in public expenditure terms.

At the meeting in the Department on 22 July, the Department undertook to give further consideration to the school's proposal to sell-off a portion of the school site for private development. In view of the fact that the total area of the existing site was already below that recommended for a school of 400-500 pupils, my Department considered that the land in question was not surplus to requirements. The Building Handbook standard for a secondary school of 400-500 pupils, is 5.4 hectares (equivalent to about 13.25 acres). The area of the Shimna site - chosen whenever the long-term enrolment for the school was 300 but which is now planned to rise to 500 - was 4.31 hectares. Following the sale of the plot in question the area of the site has now been reduced to 3.42 hectares (about 8.5 acres). The resultant deficiency in area is perhaps best illustrated by the following comparison between the recommended area for a school of 500 and that which will exist at Shimna:

AM/PO/23614

RATHGAEL HOUSE, 43 BALLOO ROAD, BANGOR, COUNTY DOWN BT19 7PR. ¹ TELEPHONE 01247 279279. FAX: 01247 279266.



Provision	Recommended	Shimna
Site	5.43 hectares	3.418 hectares
PE spaces	4 pitches 4 courts 1 pitch 2 courts	
Hard play area	2,400 sq m	800 sq m

This reveals that not only will the school be deficient in playing pitches (which it might possibly overcome by using facilities elsewhere) but it will also be seriously deficient in hard play area around the school. This is not a position we are happy about in a new school situation. We accept that there are many existing schools (including Down Academy) which do not meet the current area standards but this does not imply that we should be planning new schools to those standards. Consequently, we cannot easily accept the school's actions in this matter and we will need to be satisfied about the school's plans for meeting its deficiencies in sports provision and its plans for coping with 500 pupils with a hard play area of only 800 sq metres before we can reach a decision on this matter.

I must also emphasise that before it can commit any public funds to this venture, my Department needs to be satisfied about Shimna's plans for meeting the cost differential between the target cost figure for temporary accommodation and the school's plans for a permanent building. In its discussions with the College, so far my Department has not been assured about this and it needs clear unambiguous answers, costed plans and firm written evidence of how the difference will be met before it can agree to any package. The Department is already committed to meeting the capital development costs of some £3m for the first phase of Shimna's development and provision has been made for this in the current financial year, hence the need for vesting of the school premises to be completed urgently.

Since the Department's letter of 15 August to Kevin Lamb, there have been further exchanges of correspondence with the school culminating in a recent letter from the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Governors undertaking to submit further information about the school's plans. On receipt of this a further meeting with the school representatives will be convened.

Best wishes
Tony

TONY WORTHINGTON
Minister for Education

