

REPORT ON INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE SOCIAL COHESION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the outcomes of the visits to Northern Ireland by Oldham MBC representatives, July and September 2003.
- 1.2 To inform Members about specific initiatives to promote social cohesion in Northern Ireland, and their relevance to the Oldham context.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Links with key personnel and organisations in Northern Ireland are being developed and consolidated.
- 2.2 Conflict Resolution programmes developed in collaboration with Northern Ireland, form an integral part of Oldham's Strategy for Community Cohesion

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note the contents of the Report; and
- 3.2 Members views are sought on the findings and the recommendations made in the Report

**OLDHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**

**REPORT ON INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE
SOCIAL COHESION IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**VISITS BY OLDHAM MBC DELEGATES
JULY & SEPTEMBER 2003**

FOREWORD

In July and September 2003 representatives of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council visited Belfast, Northern Ireland to look at some of the educational initiatives which have been developed to promote social cohesion.

This report, prepared by Alan Lee (Head of Access) and Katharine Rhodes (School Improvement Consultant, Community Cohesion), incorporates the findings and recommendations from both visits.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all our colleagues in Belfast. Particular thanks to Professor Tony Gallagher, Graduate School of Education, Queen's University.

November 2003

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1. INTRODUCTION

The civil unrest that occurred in Oldham in 2001 has been well documented. The resulting close external scrutiny has involved a series of inspections and audits which have consistently raised the issue of what is perceived to be residential and educational segregation, not only as a contributory factor in the disturbances, but as an impediment to future social cohesion within the Borough. Indeed, the Independent Review of 2001 suggests that this is one of the biggest challenges facing Oldham as a community.

Northern Ireland has been developing and implementing educational initiatives to promote social cohesion for a number of years and it was felt that the experience of colleagues working in this field could be of immense value.

Consequently the Chair of Oldham Association of Secondary and Special Headteachers (OASSH) contacted Queen's University, Belfast which had undertaken and published extensive research regarding 'Integrated Education in Northern Ireland'. A two day visit to Belfast was arranged. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about the detail and experience of 'Integrated Education' in Northern Ireland and to establish whether any aspects of this development could be applied to the Oldham context.

Following a recommendation made after this initial visit, a further visit to Belfast was made in September 2003. The purpose of the visit was to consolidate and develop initial contacts by establishing links at corporate level and to focus on a wider spectrum of educational initiatives to promote social cohesion, in order to ascertain the extent to which such initiatives could be effectively deployed within Oldham.

Over the course of the two visits to Belfast it has become clear that the context of Northern Ireland both parallels and differs from our own. There are clear parallels in the segregation of communities in both areas but significant differences in the history and evolution of the current social demography and, of course, in the political infrastructure.

It is essential, when considering how we may utilise the experience of our colleagues in Northern Ireland, that we are mindful of such differences, as well as recognising our shared aims and our shared vision for a more socially cohesive society.

Those involved in the visits to Belfast were privileged to meet colleagues involved in the development and delivery of a wide range of conflict resolution programmes, a number of which have been in place for several years. Nevertheless, aspiration for change remains long-term and successes are largely evidenced in small steps along the way. There is no 'quick fix'. This is reassuring perhaps, without in any sense being a cause for complacency.

We are very grateful to colleagues in Northern Ireland for their hospitality and willingness to share the experience of their inspirational work in challenging circumstances.

1. VISIT TO BELFAST JULY 2003:

Focus of Visit:

Integrated Education in Northern Ireland and the Oldham Context

2.1 Delegates and Programme of Visit

Colin Bell	Headteacher, Grange School
Des Herlihy	Headteacher, Royton & Crompton School
Alan Lee	Head of Access, Education & Cultural Services

Over the two day programme discussions took place with:

- Professor Tony Gallagher;
- Michael Wardlow and colleagues from the NICIE;
- Staff from Hazelwood Integrated College;
- Associates of the Corrymeela Community;
- Joe Campbell from Mediation Northern Ireland;
- Norman Richardson, Stranmillis University College;
- Brian Lampkin (Director for Migration, Omagh and former Principal of Lagan College) and Barbara McCabe (Ulster People's College);
- Paul Smyth (Director of Public Achievement), Michael Arlow (Graduate School of Education) and post-graduate students;
- Chuck Richardson and colleagues at the Spirit of Enniskillen; and
- Lesley McEvoy, Citizenship Education Officer, South Eastern Education and Library Board.

2.2 Integrated Education In Northern Ireland

- The first planned Integrated school in Northern Ireland opened in 1981 when Lagan College began with its first cohort of 28 pupils. In the 1980s Lagan was joined by nine new planned primary schools and an additional 'second level' school Hazelwood College. The rate at which new Integrated Schools were opening increased as a consequence of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which committed Government to supporting the development of integrated education. The commitment manifested itself through financial support for the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), which was charged with providing support and advice for parents who wished to establish a new Integrated school. In addition, the Reform Order established a procedure so that parents of pupils at an existing school could vote to 'transform' it into an Integrated school, subject to certain conditions.
- Within this new climate of statutory support, the number of Integrated schools in Northern Ireland increased significantly during the 1990s. Between 1990 and 1998:
 - the number of integrated primary schools increased from 7 to 22, of which 7 were in the new category of transforming controlled Integrated schools;
 - the number of pupils enrolled in Integrated primary schools increased from 647 to 3,846 (a factor of six);
 - the number of Integrated post-primary (secondary equivalent) schools increased from 2 to 11, of which one was in the new category of transforming controlled Integrated schools; and
 - the number of pupils enrolled in Integrated post-primary schools increased from 1,023 to 3,950 (a factor of four).
- By September 2000, there were 45 Integrated schools (28 primary and 17 post-primary) with approximately 14,000 pupils. However this still represents just over 4% of the school population.
- The Integrated schools generally describe themselves as inclusive schools in terms of religion, gender and ability. Hence there are no Integrated grammar schools.
- Department of Education statistics (April 2002) show that 99% of pupils in 'Catholic Schools' are Catholic and 86% of Protestant schools are Protestant or other denominations; and only 4% of pupils in Protestant schools are recorded as being Catholic, whilst only 1% of pupils in Catholic schools are Protestant. Overall, Integrated schools reflect, to a much greater extent, a religious balance among their pupils, with 40% recorded as Catholic and 50% recorded as Protestant or other denominations.

2.3 The Oldham Context

- Some of Oldham’s secondary schools, and particularly their admission arrangements, have come in for particular criticism around the issue of segregation
- Oldham maintains a mixed economy of provision with a significant proportion of voluntary aided school places. There is a paucity of Church of England school places within the region, leading to very high levels of demand for places at Oldham’s two Church of England secondary schools from outside the Borough. This contributes to an overall situation of significant numbers of children from neighbouring authorities attending Oldham secondary schools.
- Despite this, the figure of 96.2% parental first preferences complied with, compares well with the national average
- Overall, the level of surplus places in Oldham secondary schools is well below the national average at 4.6%. However this masks a developing polarisation between a group of extremely popular schools, which are the subject of increasing numbers of parental appeals, and a small number of schools with significant surplus places.
- A number of Oldham secondary schools are mono-cultural; however there is also a number that have diverse ethnic populations:

School	Total NoR	No Ethnic Minority	% Ethnic Minority
Breeze Hill	756	621	82.1%
Counthill	1255	130	10.4%
Failsworth	1439	74	5.1%
Grange	835	818	98.%
The Hathershaw Technology College	991	395	39.9%
Kaskenmoor	751	105	14.0%
North Chadderton	1499	76	5.1%
The Radclyffe	1342	457	34.1%
Royton & Crompton	1165	47	4.0%
Saddleworth	1281	26	2.0)%
South Chadderton	846	166	19.6%
The Blue Coat CE	1313	39	3.0%
Crompton House CE	1237	20	1.6%
Our Lady’s RC High	1215	18	1.5%
St Augustine’s of Canterbury RC High	857	116	13.5%
Total	16782	3108	18.5%

- Oldham has well-established school admission arrangements, based upon expressions of parental preference. This is founded upon the importance of the three-way relationship between parent/s, pupil and school. The criteria that are used to discriminate between applicants when a school is over-subscribed adhere to DfES guidance. Oldham's arrangements are generally about neighbourhood schools for local children. Therefore, school populations tend to reflect their surrounding community. It is extremely rare that a pupil is required to travel beyond the maximum statutory walking distance, other than if parents choose to send their children to a school beyond their immediate locality

2.4 Key Findings

- There are some similarities between Northern Ireland and Oldham, and many very clear contrasts. Segregation clearly exists in both areas, both in terms of residence and schooling and there is a clear commitment to addressing the issues. Difference is recognised and exploited and conflict is deep rooted.
- However educational segregation exists in many forms in Northern Ireland including religion, gender (single sex schools) and ability (grammar schools). In contrast to Oldham, parents in Northern Ireland have been very active and have driven through proposals for Integrated schools, demonstrating a clear commitment to making them succeed.
- The authorities have supported the establishment of Integrated schools through the introduction of quotas, which ensure a religious balance within the school population: 40% Catholic; 40% Protestant and 20% other. However, this has followed a rigorous and multi-faceted education programme aimed at supporting children and staff in recognising and dealing with issues around diversity. The issue of quotas has, perhaps, been less contentious generally as many of the Integrated schools have been 'planned'. In other words they were new schools, admitting children whose parents knew what they were subscribing to, and employing staff who knew the type of school that they had applied for.
- Integrated schools do tend to draw children from a wide catchment area, in contrast to the majority of Oldham schools. However, in Northern Ireland parents are used to their children travelling to access particular types of education, e.g. grammar schools, single sex schools.
- The Integrated Education Programme has taken a long time to have any degree of impact; after 20 years, less than 5% of children are on the roll of an Integrated school. While this is major progress in the Northern Ireland context it demonstrates unequivocally that integration cannot be achieved overnight.
- Much of the preparatory work required to enable the establishment of Integrated schools has involved high quality curricular and staff development activities, delivered in a variety of forms, both through the statutory channels of the Government and ELBs and through other providers.

2.5 Key Conclusions

- We need to benchmark our current position, which may be developed further than has been suggested.
- We need to determine what it is we wish to achieve, and to develop a clear and consistent strategy. Is our focus really on 'integrated schooling' which is what external bodies have tended to highlight, or integrated education and the bigger picture of social/community cohesion?
- The term 'integrated' needs to be defined and understood, so that consideration can be given as to how it is measured and how we know if and when we have achieved it. Unless this is agreed, then it is impossible to determine our baseline, be clear about our ultimate target, monitor progress or review impact.
- Segregation will not be addressed overnight; it requires a long term and consistent strategy, with a sustainable commitment from a whole range of service providers from all sectors over many years.
- Simply amending school admission arrangements will not in itself achieve integration, nor will it guarantee harmony within the community. Indeed, it is more likely to promote tensions and further divisions.
- There would certainly seem to be some value in continuing the relationship that has been developed with colleagues in Northern Ireland around their experience of Integrated Education. They have clearly achieved a number of successes, contributing directly to community cohesion, and these experiences are likely to prove to be an invaluable resource in the Oldham context.

3. VISIT TO BELFAST SEPTEMBER 2003

Focus of Visit: Conflict Resolution and Social Cohesion Programmes

3.1 Delegates (*alphabetical order*)

Cllr Shoab Akhtar	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Regeneration & Life -Long Learning
Cllr Jim Greenwood	Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Diversity & Community Cohesion
Bill Grundy	Headteacher, Crompton House CE School
Des Herlihy	Headteacher, Royton & Crompton School
Nick Hudson	Director, Excellence in Cities
Cllr David Jones	Leader of the Council with Portfolio for Community Cohesion and External Relations
Cllr David Jones	Leader of the Council with Portfolio for Community Cohesion and External Relations
Bernard Phillips	Headteacher, Breeze Hill School
Katharine Rhodes	School Improvement Consultant, Community Cohesion
Andy Samson	Assistant Director – Inclusion
Jayne Taylor	Deputy Head of Youth Service

3.2 Programme of Two Day Visit

Monday 22nd September

9:30 am	Meeting with Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) Gerry McGuinness Youth Service Geraldine McGreevy Community Relations & Social Inclusion John McCullough Special Education Eithne Mullen Literacy Adviser (includes ethnic minorities)
10:30 am	Visit to St Gabriel's school (maintained secondary school, mainly Catholic enrolment)
12:30 pm	Lunch with Lord Mayor and officials, Belfast City Hall
2:00 pm	Visit to Mount Gilbert School (controlled secondary school, mainly Protestant enrolment) Meeting with officials in Belfast City Hall
4:00 pm	Meeting with James Cuthbert Education and Training Inspectorate Jim Clarke Deputy Director, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
7:30 pm	Dinner and discussion with: Tony Gallagher Graduate School of Education Queen's University, Belfast Barbara McCabe Ulster People's College and NI Women's Coalition Brian Lampkin Centre for Migration Studies Lesley McEvoy S. Eastern Education and Library Board (Citizenship Officer) Yvonne Naylor Corrymeela Community Norman Richardson Stranmillis University College Paul Connolly Graduate School of Education, Queens University, Belfast Paul Smyth Director of Public Achievement

Tuesday 23rd September

10:00 am	Visit to Hazelwood College
12:00 noon	Meeting with officials from Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) Paul Connolly Mike Arlow Jannette Elwood Ruth Leitch Tony Gallagher Paul Smyth
2:00 pm	Meeting with Spirit of Enniskillen Group
4:00 pm	Debriefing meeting with Graduate School of Education

3.3 Outline Of Initiatives and Key Findings

3.3.1 Education For Mutual Understanding

Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage (EMU) – was introduced in the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, as part of the curriculum for all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. From August 1992, the inclusion of EMU in the curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1,2 and 3 and in the first year of Key Stage 4, became statutory.

Objectives of EMU state that as an integral part of their education the themes of the programme should enable pupils:-

- 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
- to appreciate how conflict may be handled in non-violent ways.

The four key themes of EMU are

- fostering respect for self and others and building relationships
- understanding conflict
- interdependence
- cultural traditions

Findings

- EMU has been evolving since the early 1980s, a decade before it was made statutory. It is implemented throughout Northern Ireland and supported by Central Department of Education (Northern Ireland) funding. The effectiveness of delivery of EMU themes in schools is formally assessed by the Education and Training Inspectorate. EMU has been the subject of several funded research projects and is currently undergoing a major review, the findings of which will inform the development of the Citizenship curriculum for Northern Ireland.
- As EMU is currently undergoing a review, it is therefore, in a transition phase. Colleagues in Northern Ireland are looking at how to take forward proven effective practice developed from the implementation of EMU.
- This is a well-established programme and would undoubtedly warrant further exploration with a view to the themes and methodologies being incorporated into the Citizenship curriculum for Oldham secondary schools. The outcomes of the current review are not yet in the public domain, but will obviously be crucial in informing the development of any similar work in Oldham.

3.3.2 Cross-Community Relations Scheme

Introduced by Department of Education (Northern Ireland) in 1987 to enhance EMU programmes, this is a voluntary inter-school contact scheme. Funding is provided to support contact programmes between schools. Cross-school contact is encouraged as a valuable dimension of EMU but is not required by law.

A review of the scheme was conducted in 2000 and the programme is currently undergoing a further review.

Findings

- 'Contact programmes', which bring together young people from the different communities, have been an optional strand of the EMU programme. Evaluations of this aspect to date suggest that while approximately 50% of schools in Northern Ireland have been involved in contact work the quality has been variable and it has been difficult to ascertain the numbers of children involved or the frequency of contact.

A review of the quality of the Community Relations programme has recently been conducted but impact on attitudinal change has not been assessed.

- In the short time allotted there was no opportunity to explore this programme in depth. Undoubtedly it would merit further investigation, as there are obvious parallels with the Oldham Schools Linking Project and work done through the Unity programme. In addition, it may be mutually advantageous to look together at the possibility of developing a methodology for evaluating attitudinal change, which is fundamental to both programmes.

3.3.3 The Spirit Of Enniskillen

The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust was established after the horrific Remembrance Day bomb in Enniskillen. The Trust provides one of the highest quality programmes for joint work between Protestant and Catholic young people.

Aimed at young people from 16-19 years old, programmes run from April to October. There are two residentials for participants, each of 2 weeks' duration. 50 places are available per year and applicants are shortlisted and interviewed. Past participants are involved in the interviewing process. To date, 850 young people have completed the programme, which is accredited by the Irish Open College Network.

Future Voices

This is a more recent development within the 'Spirit of Enniskillen' group. It involves representatives of the organisation, including young people who have completed the programme, visiting schools and conducting a series of workshops on Citizenship, which are both challenging and fun.

Findings

- This programme is proving extremely effective. The OMBC delegation met young people who had participated in the residentials and who had progressed to become trainers and mediators for future programmes. The infrastructure supporting the programme has been carefully and skilfully developed. Personnel are appropriately trained and procedures meticulously planned and followed. The status of this initiative is now such that it is over-subscribed with over 200 applicants this year for 50 places.
- While residential experience has been available to primary schools in Oldham as part of the Oldham Schools Linking Project, opportunities for older children and young adults are felt to be limited. Furthermore, the Spirit of Enniskillen model is explicitly designed to challenge the 'culture of avoidance'. The combination of recreational activities with a structured programme of challenging mixed group discussions is potentially transformative, It could be of great value in the Oldham context.

3.3.4 Youth Workers In Schools Scheme

The 'Youth Workers in Schools Scheme' is funded by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland and involves six secondary schools in Belfast. Three are Catholic and three are Protestant. Each school has been assigned a Youth Worker who is based part of the time in school and part of the time in the community. Often attached to Youth Centres, the Youth Workers also operate across the communities facilitating links between groups of young people. Last year's work culminated in a residential for representatives of the six participating schools, organised and led by the Youth Workers.

Finding

- This looked a very interesting scheme. However, because of time constraints, the delegation gained only a brief insight into work in progress. While the Youth Workers in Schools Scheme is relatively new, early indications are that it is working well. In order to make an informed decision about its value for Oldham, more detail is needed. There may be an opportunity for the Youth Service and Excellence in Cities to develop a similar model, building on existing practice.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOTH VISITS

4.1 Strategic Partnerships

- 4.1.1 That links with colleagues in Northern Ireland should be maintained and developed by inviting key personnel from Belfast for a reciprocal visit.
- 4.1.2 That a presentation by key individuals from Northern Ireland be made to Council Members / representatives from Secondary schools, the Colleges, and the Youth Service.
- 4.1.3 That Oldham Youth Service should develop links with the Corrymeela Community, the Spirit of Enniskillen and the Office of Public Achievement
- 4.1.4 That the work of Mediation Northern Ireland, aimed at developing community interaction and cohesion in Oldham should be actively supported and more widely publicised.

4.2 Strategic Developments

- 4.2.1 That a steering group be established in order to co-ordinate activity generated through links with Northern Ireland. This could be an existing group, such as 'Excellence in Oldham', or a smaller sub-group.
- 4.2.2 That a clearly articulated strategy and action plan be drawn up by the steering group and put forward for consideration by the Local Learning Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 4.2.3 That 'Excellence in Oldham' should consider how it might influence Initial Teacher Training for Newly Qualified Teachers employed within Oldham, to try to provide experience of teaching within schools with a range of ethnic intakes.

4.3 Integrated Schools

- 4.3.1 That the current position of OMBC regarding educational integration be established and bench-marked against similar authorities.
- 4.3.2 That, in the light of the strategy and action plan and taking account of the Authority's baseline position, school admission arrangements should be kept under review.

- 4.3.3 That consideration should be given to aligning Oldham's primary and secondary schools with Northern Ireland's Integrated schools to work on:
- leadership and management;
 - curriculum development and management;
 - learning and teaching;
 - climate, ethos and culture within and between schools;
 - community cohesion; and
 - inter-school contact and collaboration.
- 4.3.4 That appropriate links should be developed between Hazelwood College and Oldham schools.
- 4.3.5 That within Oldham, consideration should be given to inter-school staff development days between schools with diverse pupil populations.

4.4 Education For Mutual Understanding

- 4.4.1 That further exploration is carried out as to how themes and methodologies of the EMU programme could contribute to the development of the Citizenship curriculum for secondary schools in Oldham.
- 4.4.2 That a small group of secondary schools work collaboratively to devise and implement a pilot programme which could then be evaluated and inform future development.
- 4.4.3 That in order to support the above recommendations, the possibility of teacher visits / exchanges should be considered.
- 4.4.4 That relevant personnel from Northern Ireland should be invited to speak to Secondary Headteachers (e.g. Secondary Headteachers Conference) about EMU and other related programmes

4.5 Community Relations Programme

- 4.5.1 That the conclusions of the review (currently underway) of this programme are considered in order to make informed decisions about its applicability to the Oldham context.
- 4.5.2 That links should be maintained with key individuals in Northern Ireland currently involved on this programme with a view to collaborating on the development of a mechanism for evaluating attitudinal change.

4.6. Spirit of Enniskillen

- 4.6.1 That we should utilise and build on the experience of the 'Spirit of Enniskillen' organisation with a view to setting up residential programmes for mixed groups of young people 14-19 years, supported by the Oldham Schools Linking Project.

4.6.2 That members of the 'Spirit of Enniskillen' organisation should be invited to visit and share their expertise with Council Members, representatives from Secondary Schools, Oldham Colleges and the Youth Service.

4.6.3 That funding sources for cross-cultural linking be explored, e.g. 'Causeway' (funding from British Council), in order to support a pilot residential programme in Summer 2004 and to facilitate future developments.

4.7 Youth Workers in Schools Scheme

That the possibility of setting up a Youth Workers in Schools Scheme should be explored by the Youth Service, EIC and other relevant bodies. This could perhaps be facilitated by an enhanced Learning Mentor role.

4.8 Peace-Centre, Warrington

That links with the Peace-Centre, Warrington should be further developed with particular focus on:

- utilisation of programmes available such as mediation training, peer mentoring
- opportunities for mixed-group residential programmes for primary and secondary schools, supported by the Oldham Schools Linking Project.
- possibilities of joint links with Northern Ireland.

4.9 Voluntary Sector/ Community Groups

That voluntary sector community groups should be involved, where appropriate, in the implementation of the above recommendations.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Arlow

Michael Arlow is a recently appointed lecturer at the Graduate School of Education, before which he worked on the Citizenship Education Programme of the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. Michael helped to establish the pilot programme to develop citizenship education materials and practice and has played a leading role in this new proposed element of the Northern Ireland statutory curriculum.

Tony Gallagher

Tony Gallagher is a Professor of Education at the Graduate School of Education, Queen's University, Belfast. Tony has written extensively on the subject of conflict resolution and education.

Brian Lampkin

Brian Lampkin is the Director of the Centre for Migration Studies, Omagh, before which he was Principal of Lagan College, the first integrated school in Northern Ireland. Currently he is a member of the board of the Integrated Education Fund, a trust established to provide financial support for new integrated schools.

Barbara McCabe

Barbara McCabe works in the Ulster Peoples' College (UPC), which runs many programmes on social and political themes for community and trade union groups. The UPC has provided important political training for many of the smaller political groups in Northern Ireland. Barbara is also a member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and a member of the board of an integrated primary school.

Lesley McEvoy

The Department of Education has established a major training programme for citizenship education teachers across schools in Northern Ireland. The training is being provided by specially recruited officers in the Education and Library Boards (ELBs). Lesley McEvoy is the Citizenship Education Officer in the South Eastern ELB (which includes parts of Belfast and the south-eastern part of Northern Ireland) and has particular expertise in human rights. Formerly she worked as a teacher in Malone Integrated College and worked with pupils to establish the first Bill of Human Rights adopted by a school in Northern Ireland.

Norman Richardson

Norman is a Religious Education lecturer at Stranmillis University College. He is also convenor of the Inter-Faith Forum in Northern Ireland and is probably the most experienced practitioner in reconciliation work in education in Northern Ireland. Formerly he worked for the Church's Peace Education Programme and he has produced many curriculum materials for work in schools.

Paul Smyth

Paul Smyth is the Director of Public Achievement (Northern Ireland) and formerly worked for the Peace People, the Youth Council and the University of Ulster. Public Achievement is a civic engagement programme, originating in the University of Minnesota, USA, which encourages young people to engage with civic organisations in order to promote democratic participation.

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council has been the scene of fractious disputes between Sinn Fein and Unionist councillors leading to the completion of very little business. In recent years this has changed and the Council has promoted a range of measures designed to improve the City and promote a greater sense of a united City. The current Lord Mayor is a member of the SDLP and represents a constituency in North Belfast.

Belfast Education & Library Board

The Belfast Education and Library Board is similar to LEAs in England, but with a significantly lower level of political involvement and no policy-making authority: the role of the Boards is to ensure the effective and efficient administration of education in their areas. BELB differs from the other four in Northern Ireland by dealing with an urban area and all the challenges that that presents. In addition, over recent years the BELB has played a significant role in helping schools (particularly in North Belfast) deal with the consequences of rioting and political violence.

Corrymeela Community

The Corrymeela Community was established in the 1960s, mainly by liberal Presbyterians, as a demonstration that reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland was possible. The Community has a residential facility on the North Coast, which has run many programmes for schools and other groups. Members of the Community have unrivalled experience in running these programmes and continue to make an important contribution to reconciliation work in Northern Ireland.

Hazelwood Integrated College

Hazelwood Integrated College was the second integrated school to be established in Northern Ireland. The school is in North Belfast, one of the areas with the highest experience of violence during the conflict. In recent years, there has been significant social conflict in the area around the school, mainly at interfaces between Protestant and Catholic communities, impacting upon many members of the school community. However, the school itself has remained remarkably free from attack.

Mediation Northern Ireland

Mediation Northern Ireland is a registered charitable organisation based in Belfast, whose mission is to offer creative approaches to better relations. During the summer of 2002, the Officer of the Deputy Prime Minister suggested that Mediation Northern Ireland might provide assistance in consideration of Oldham's Community Empowerment Network's potential contribution to good relations in Oldham.

Mount Gilbert School

This is a Controlled secondary school with a mainly Protestant enrolment. Mount Gilbert draws most of its pupils from the Shankill Road, which has seen significant violent paramilitary groups over recent years.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

NICIE is funded by the Department of Education to promote new integrated schools and to aid parents wishing to establish these schools. NICIE can advise schools considering transforming to integrated status. Although NICIE can represent the interests of the integrated schools to the Department, it has no formal role in school management. In recent years, NICIE has provided support and training for the schools.

Spirit of Enniskillen

The Spirit of Enniskillen Trust was established after the horrific Remembrance Day bomb in Enniskillen. The Trust provides one of the highest quality programmes for joint work between Protestant and Catholic young people.

St Gabriel's School

A Maintained secondary school with a mainly Catholic enrolment situated in the Ardoyne area of Belfast, St Gabriel's stands near the scene of recent dispute over access to Holy Cross Primary School.

Under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, St Gabriel's and Mount Gilbert school have been engaged in productive, if unheralded, contact work over the past few years.