



**BRITISH-IRISH
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY BODY**

**COMHLACHT IDIR-PHARLAIMINTEACH
NA BREATAINE AGUS NA hÉIREANN**

REPORT

from

COMMITTEE D (Education & Inter-Community Relations)

on

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1995

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Scope of the enquiry

1. Since the early months of 1998, Committee D of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body has been engaged in an enquiry into Education and Inter-Community relations in the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Great Britain. The terms of reference are:

"To examine the opportunities within the educational systems for increasing mutual understanding and contact among the communities of the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Great Britain in the light of the recommendations made by Committee D in 1995 and with particular reference to integrated education, education for mutual understanding (EMU), teacher and student mobility, teacher training and the teaching of history and the Irish language."

2. In the course of the enquiry we have had discussions with the Ministers for Education and officials in the Republic and the North. We have also held meetings with representatives of the teaching profession on both sides of the border, representatives of the Gaelscoileanna movement, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and with the Catholic and Protestant Churches. We have also been greatly assisted by the memoranda submitted by those organisations listed in Appendix (C) to this Report and by the staff, teachers, pupils and parents who gave up their valuable time to meet with us on the visits that we made to their schools. The Committee is very grateful to all those individuals and organisations who assisted in this enquiry.

3. So far, the work of the Committee has focused upon classroom-based education at primary and secondary levels, with some work on third level education, in particular the role of the teacher training colleges. It is clear to the Committee that there is much scope to explore other issues of "education" in the broader, community-based sense of the word. In particular, we are conscious that we have not had the time to examine in detail the youth and community work which is so important in fostering community relations in the North and the Republic. It is hoped that this Committee might return to this subject at a later date.

The background

4. This report returns to the issues examined by this Committee in its 1995 report into education. Like that report, evidence in this enquiry was taken at an auspicious time for the island of Ireland. The 1995 report was concluded at the time of a long hoped for cessation of violence in Northern Ireland. The work for this second report was carried out before, during and after the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement. Whilst politicians of all political persuasions took centre stage in the negotiations for a peace agreement, the devastating bomb in Omagh showed us how much the determination and resilience of local communities will be the key to lasting peace. We have experienced at first hand the important role that youth and

education will play in these efforts. It is through work in schools with young people who have lived with sectarian violence for most of their lives that the words of politicians will be cemented into practical achievements, fostering mutual understanding and co-operation between long-divided communities. We hope that our recommendations will be seen as a contribution to the process of ensuring that the peace process has a sound base in the communities for which it has been negotiated.

Integrated Education

"We see integrated education holding a real promise for the future... It cannot provide the quick solution to inter-communal strife but we believe that it will play an increasingly valuable role as it develops." [1995 Report][[1](#)]

5. Integrated education has been defined by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) as "education together in school of pupils drawn in approximately equal numbers from the two major traditions with the aim of providing for them an effective education that gives equal recognition to and promotes equal expression of the two major traditions. The integrated school is essentially Christian in character, democratic and open in its procedures and promotes the worth and self-esteem of all individuals within the school community."

6. The integrated education movement in Northern Ireland grew up in the late 1970s. It was primarily a movement of parents from both sides of the community who wanted their children from both traditions in the North to be educated together. In 1981 Lagan College, near Belfast became the first integrated school.

7. In our 1995 report, we devoted considerable time to a study of the movement to establish and develop integrated education in the North. We identified considerable obstacles to its growth, in particular the opposition of the Churches and some members of the teaching profession, but nevertheless expressed the hope that the sensitive development of this field by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (henceforth DENI) could reap significant rewards in the search for better foundation for the development of understanding between the Catholic and Protestant Communities in the North. It has therefore been one of the principal aims of this report to revisit this particular aspect of education in the North and to ascertain whether our earlier optimism was justified.

8. The number of pupils entering integrated education has increased since 1995. In that year there were 21 integrated schools in the North and a total of 4000 pupils on roll (one per cent of total pupil numbers). In November 1998 there were 40 established schools and 3 whose approval for September 1999 will be conditional upon their ability to demonstrate viability by meeting targets for pupil numbers and having suitable sites for their development[[2](#)]. The increase in pupil numbers to the 10,836 quoted to us by NICIE means that 2 per cent of the total pupil numbers in the North are now in integrated education.

Funding of integrated schools

9. The development of integrated schools hinges upon their success in proving viability in order to qualify for recurrent funding from DENI. The Department has a statutory duty to "promote and facilitate" the development of integrated education[3] and does so partly through an independently administered capital fund (the Integrated Education Fund). This fund provides assistance with the capital cost of new schools in the period prior to direct capital grants being made available. Once the school has proved its viability (generally after three years of operation and the fulfilment of admissions criteria), the payment of a capital grant from DENI allows the fund to be reimbursed.

Viability

10. Viability is determined by projections and proof of the number of pupils in each annual intake and the total number of pupils on roll. At the time of our first report on this subject, the required intake and long-term enrolment for an integrated primary school was 15 and 175 pupils respectively, and for a second-level college, 60 and 300 respectively. In 1996 these criteria were raised to 25 and 215 for primary and 100 and 500 for second-level schools. NICIE, the voluntary body which offers information, advice and support to parents and groups interested in integrated education, welcomed the action of Mr Worthington, then Minister of State for Education in Northern Ireland, in reducing the criteria for second level schools to 80 and 400 in February 1998. However, NICIE added that "it must be noted that it is still more difficult to open new integrated schools in 1998 than it was in 1995." They and teachers at the integrated schools we visited told us that they felt that DENI should take a more "proactive" role with regard to integrated education. NICIE cited the need for parents to have "virtually acquired" a site for a school before gaining approval from DENI as a major disincentive to the expansion of the integrated sector.

Problems of cost

11. Following our return to the subject of integrated education and discussions with officials from the Department we have developed our 1995 views on the subject. There is no doubt that DENI is forced to walk a tightrope between its statutory duty to promote and facilitate integrated education, and the need to ensure that those schools which are not integrated still receive adequate provision from the education budget. As we concluded in 1995, this is a task which the Department carries out with sensitivity: it was encouraging to note on our visits to schools of all types that officials from the Department had fostered very good relationships with teachers from the wide range of schools in the North. **They and the schools are to be congratulated on maintaining this relationship in the face of the necessary limitation on funds available to individual schools from the education budget.**

12. On these visits, we were told that the cost of integrated schools in the North had risen since the period covered by our first report. In 1991-92 integrated schools

received £3.8 million in recurrent grant aid and in 1997-98 this figure had risen to £19 million. In the next 3 years £43 million of capital expenditure has been committed to integrated schools - some 20% of the total capital budget for education services. This increase was viewed with concern by some witnesses, given that other schools in the North also have high- priority demands on the education budget. DENI told us that some 120 schemes for repairs and maintenance are on the Capital Priorities Planning List at a total cost of over £350 million and that there is a serious maintenance backlog valued at over £130 million. Teachers and parents at schools where such schemes are waiting to leave the drawing board are understandably concerned that one fifth of the budget should be devoted to a sector which represents some 3 per cent of the school population. A recent example is relevant to this concern. On 12 May 1998 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown MP, announced a package of aid to Northern Ireland made as part of the progress to a peace settlement. £26 million was earmarked for education. Of this, £8 million was devoted to the capital costs of two integrated schools - some 30 % of the total.

13. The Committee asked teachers in other types of school in Northern Ireland about their feelings towards the integrated sector and their views gave us some cause for concern. One teacher described the perception that integrated schools received a "not necessarily very rational" share of the budget cake. Others in schools which described themselves as fighting to "hold the line" of normality and create secure atmospheres in some of the areas that had been most marked by sectarian violence, feared that integrated schools on greenfield sites would create pockets of privilege and pockets of deprivation which would have the effect of further dividing communities that, paradoxically, they were intended to unite. One witness went so far as to tell us that unless there was money available in the education budget for all types of school, "the fires of sectarianism would be stoked by envy".

14. We have devoted much discussion in Committee to our approach to integrated education in the three years since our last report and we acknowledge that it has been far from easy to reach consensus on the subject. On the one hand, since 1995 concern has grown at the rising costs of the sector, particularly the costs of "new-build" schools and the competition for funds from other types of school in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, we have to weigh these factors which are beyond the scope of economic analyses: **we do not feel that it is at all appropriate to withdraw our support from integrated education at a time when the peace process in Northern Ireland so desperately needs practical demonstrations of what can be achieved if parents, teachers and pupils are prepared to work together, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. Therefore, despite the evidence which we have received concerning the costs of the sector, we continue to endorse the contribution of "new-build" integrated schools to the education system in Northern Ireland whilst ensuring that we examine how the costs of the sector as a whole might, in the longer term, be reduced.**

A Ministerial Working Group

15. What is the way forward for the integrated sector? We are encouraged that the former Minister Tony Worthington announced a Working Group, which he chaired, "to examine ways of further promoting the development of the integrated schools while safeguarding the interests of other schools"[4] and that his successor, John McFall, has continued this work. The original terms of reference of the group were to examine:

- (a) Ways of encouraging more schools to transform to integrated status;
- (b) Capital and recurrent funding arrangements for new integrated schools; and
- (c) Ways of encouraging further integrated school development without damaging existing schools.

16. Since the Good Friday Agreement the terms of reference have been amended to reflect the statement in the Agreement that "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 and mixed housing". The expanded terms of reference build upon this theme of tolerance to include an examination by the working group of the curriculum and the contribution which can be made by Education for Mutual Understanding. To take a recent example, the Committee is encouraged by the recent announcement by the Minister and his Irish counterpart, Michéal Martin TD giving their approval to a new North-South educational exchange project. We are sure this will give impetus to the process of reconciliation[5].

17. The Committee supports the Minister in his work with the Group and applauds the widening of the terms of reference to reflect the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement. On 16th December 1998, during our drafting of this report, the Minister announced the initial findings of the Working Group into integrated education, and launched two more working groups into the promotion of tolerance and a strategy for Education for Mutual Understanding, all subjects which we consider in this report. We note that the Minister has invited submissions on the Working Group's initial views on integrated education by the end of February and we hope that our report will be considered as a contribution to this process, and to the studies conducted by the new Working Groups. **We recommend that the further consultations of the Working Group on integrated education draw strongly on the experience of those outside the integrated movement so that their fears and concerns can be given careful attention. In particular we stress the importance of continuing consultation with the Catholic and Protestant Churches and with schools which have had experience in working in proximity to newly established integrated schools.**

18. We had anticipated that the Churches in the North might be resistant to involvement in a study of the integrated school movement. In our 1995 report we had cause to regret the attitude of the two main denominations to integrated education and saw their attitude as symptomatic of the challenges facing the

integrated movement. We are very pleased that we have to a certain extent been proved wrong on our return to this subject. In the meetings we held with representatives of the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Northern Ireland, participants were positive with regard to the Working Group and keen to participate in discussions to further the Good Friday Agreement within schools. Indeed, in his press release of 16th December 1998 the Minister expressed his particular pleasure that the launch of the Working Group's report was supported by representatives of the main churches in the North.^[6] This is not to say that the Churches did not express preferences for other forms of education - the Catholic Church restated the conviction that parents should be able to find a Catholic school for their children in each parish - but there was a welcome spirit of openness and tolerance of other views which we did not detect on our first visit.

19. During the course of the meeting with the Roman Catholic clergy, the Committee addressed some of the concerns which had been raised by NICIE in its memorandum to the Committee. In particular we asked the Church representatives to give their views on concerns that Chaplains were not appointed to integrated schools and that children attending integrated schools were made to attend "special" confirmation services outside the regular parish services. We were assured that Catholic parents opting to send their children to integrated schools would not be penalised for this by being denied access to the resources of the Church in their home lives, and that shortage of financial and human resources, rather than a decision of principle, meant that provision of Catholic chaplains to integrated schools was restricted. We hope that such evidence will work towards the dispelling of mutual suspicion and open the way for the Catholic Church and NICIE to hold constructive discussions on the future of integrated schools.

Transformation

20. While the Committee has heard reservations expressed about the promotion of "new-build" integrated schools it does not follow that we question the principles of the integrated movement. We agree wholeheartedly with the recent words of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland that "the Good Friday Agreement commits all parties to partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands. By encouraging a greater understanding and appreciation of diversity, our schools are leading the way and the integrated sector sets the standard for all to emulate."^[7] However, there are alternatives to new foundations. Our 1995 report did not address the possibility of *transformation* of existing schools of another type into integrated schools. We turn to this pattern of integration as a possible method of achieving the dual aims of greater integration and fewer demands on the education budget.

21. Most of the integrated schools which have been established since Lagan College have been new creations on newly acquired sites. Their costs, which we have discussed above, are considerable, but the Committee were told that parents prefer to make a "clean break" with other educational establishments in an area rather

than attempting to alter the ethos of an existing school. In starting from scratch pupils cannot claim previous associations with a school building and come to their first lesson on equal terms with classmates from other traditions.

22. This method of establishing integrated schools has developed in popularity counter to the intentions of the 1989 Education Order. The Order incorporated a now little-used mechanism by which schools could *transform* into integrated schools. DENI told us that in 1989 it was anticipated that this, not parental initiative for new-builds, would be the way forward for integration. The idea has obvious economic advantages over the other method of establishing an integrated school, foremost of which is that existing school buildings can be used, removing the need for expensive capital investment in new premises. It is a fast method of satisfying parental desire for integrated education and reduces the potential impact on existing schools.

23. The Department explained that no pre-existing level of integration is required for a school which seeks to transform but schools must provide evidence of their ability to achieve and sustain an acceptable religious balance in their enrolment. At least 10 per cent of the annual intake in the first year must be drawn from the minority religion (Catholic or Protestant) in the school's enrolment, with the objective that over time this will increase to at least 30 per cent. Progress towards transformation is reviewed by DENI after 5 and 10 years. 9 schools sought transformation in 1997 and 7 were approved.

24. NICIE expressed considerable reservations about the Minister's intention to encourage transformation. It pointed to the fact that all transforming schools have so far come from schools within the Protestant community which, it said on the one hand caused resentment in that community about the dilution of the Protestant ethos, and on the other hand established no basis of support and no impetus for transformation within the Catholic community. It also called into question the depth of integration occurring in some recently transformed schools, in particular the curricular developments which were taking place to reflect the new status of a particular school.

25. In the course of this enquiry we visited the first transformed integrated secondary school in Northern Ireland - Brownlow College, which transformed in 1991. The school is situated halfway between Portadown and Lurgan and 4 miles from Drumcree. Unlike Lagan College, where many children told us that they had opted to attend for the very reason that the school was integrated, the headmaster of Brownlow said that it was "an act of courage" for parents to decide to send their children to his school. He gave the example of a boy who habitually hid his school uniform when he got off the bus to walk home: he was a Protestant who was taunted for being "a Catholic" because he went to an integrated school. Brownlow struggled to achieve an intake of Catholic pupils which would maintain an appropriate balance in their enrolment because many chose to go to the Catholic school adjacent to the Brownlow site.

26. The difficulties experienced by Brownlow and the admirable ways in which the staff and pupils seek to rise to these challenges brought home to the Committee the very real difficulties facing genuinely integrated education in all parts of Northern Ireland. For education to be truly integrated, it cannot always start afresh on new-build sites. It has to gain footholds in "difficult" areas where the population is not historically open to integrated schooling. Progress is expanding integrated education more broadly and will therefore be closely linked to the parallel development of integrated housing and equal access to employment opportunities. When communities are accustomed to living and working side by side, education will not be asked to solve problems of integration in isolation from the wider social context.

27. We realise that this will not be a swift or easy process of change. Some witnesses suggested that we could not expect significant change to take place within the next ten years. Nevertheless, the Committee's visit highlighted ways in which the careful allocation of funds to schools in Brownlow's situation could greatly assist their chances of making a success of transformation. In the 1997-98 budget DENI secured £300,000 to support schools that had opted to transform to integrated status, of which Brownlow received £38,000. The school considered that it most needed a Catholic Vice-Principal to encourage Catholic children to join the school but the money available would not sustain that position for 5 years. It was reasonably argued that a shorter tenure would not give the school the ability to plan for the long term future of its transformation. The school had eventually employed a teacher of the Irish language and a Gaelic Sports instructor on a short term basis, but its priority remained the Vice-Principalship.

28. We recommend that DENI establish formal procedures for working with transforming schools to allocate funds for key personnel, including additional personnel as appropriate, to assist the schools in achieving religious balance. The level of funding required for such key posts would be a drop in the ocean of funds allocated to new-build schools but could greatly enhance the long-term prospects of the schools involved. Similarly, we recommend that the secondment from Lagan College to Brownlow of a teacher to advise on the practicalities of integrated education be made a formal initiative funded by the Department. On our visit we were told that this welcome addition to the staff of the school on a temporary basis had been funded by a charitable trust. **We urge DENI to make formal arrangements for the availability of secondees to schools that seek to transform and which are in the process of transforming.** Officials from DENI told us that such matters would be considered by the Ministerial Working Group and we hope that its conclusions will lead to swift assistance for schools such as Brownlow. We are encouraged to anticipate progress given that one of the conclusions of the first Working Group was the need to "assess the scope for expansion of the integrated sector through the transformation of existing schools and [to] consider further ways of facilitating this option where parents and schools are minded to consider it".^[8]

Education for Mutual Understanding

"The Committee shares the widespread enthusiasm and support for EMU and its objectives that we encountered among all those involved in education in Northern Ireland" [1995 Report][9]

29. Our early work for this report concentrated on visits to integrated schools and it was the initial reaction of the Committee that integrated education was the "answer" to many of the questions posed by education in Northern Ireland. The Committee soon realised that there would be no such simple solution. **Witnesses stressed that the education system was founded in parental choice.** Many parents chose to send their children to Protestant or Catholic schools and did not choose or wish to choose an integrated school for their children. As we discussed above, transformation of schools will take time and will require acts of courage on the part of parents, children and teachers to commit to integrated education. The Committee has therefore taken a pragmatic approach and sought ways in which communities can be drawn together whilst continuing to recognise the values of particular traditions within the education system. In the short term, we think that this is the most practical way of achieving the atmosphere of tolerance enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement.

30. The Committee has therefore reviewed Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), which we first examined in our 1995 Report. EMU and its related theme of Cultural Heritage were introduced as part of the curriculum for all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland by the 1989 Education Reform Order and conjoined by statutory order in 1992. Its objectives were to provide pupils with opportunities to:

- learn to respect and value themselves and others;
- understand the interdependence of people in the family, local society and between societies in the wider field;
- learn about and value their own culture and traditions, and the culture and traditions of others;
- learn the importance of resolving differences and conflict by peaceful means.

Teacher Training

31. In the 1995 report the Committee noted the important role which the teacher training colleges played in the development of EMU within schools. We returned to Stranmillis College in November 1998 to meet with representatives from Stranmillis (non-denominational) and St Mary's (Catholic) to find out what developments had taken place in EMU since 1995.

32. The Committee found that impressive work was going on within the two colleges to instil in student teachers an acceptance of EMU as a "whole school" programme. Rather than confining EMU to an isolated slot in each pupil's timetable, emphasis was placed on developing the themes of self-respect, non-violent conflict resolution and toleration of other beliefs through each part of the curriculum. In this way,

neither pupils nor teachers would treat EMU as something which could be forgotten once the door had closed on the "EMU lesson" for that week.

33. The Committee were given copies of a folder which each student was given on his or her arrival at the two colleges. It supplied information on teaching resources and advice for teachers of EMU and each student was expected to add material to the folder as their four year course progressed. Shortly after their arrival at their respective colleges, the students were addressed jointly by the Directors of both colleges to enforce this message of cooperation. This initial contact was followed by joint seminars and study trips abroad to observe at first hand how other cultures coped with EMU-related issues. We were told that students had recently visited the United States of America and Tower Hamlets in London to experience work in schools which drew their pupils from a spectrum of cultures and to learn from their experiences of dealing with issues such as sexism and racism. In addition, the colleges organised exchanges with students from across the European Union, in particular with teacher training colleges in the Republic.

34. The Committee is extremely impressed by these developments since its last report and congratulates the staff and students at both colleges for their work in developing EMU. Their initiatives in this field give us confidence that EMU programmes will be professionally and enthusiastically pursued when today's student teachers move on to their first teaching posts. However, this is not a "solution" to the development of EMU in schools in the North. There will be a need for in-service training to refresh and up-date the skills of those new teachers as they develop their teaching careers, and there is already a more pressing need for in-service training for those teachers for whom EMU was not a part of their initial training. In written evidence to the Committee, Dr Norman Richardson of the staff of Stranmillis, told us that "provision for teacher training in EMU has certainly improved over the past decade but there are still many gaps." He told the Committee that regular or full-time posts in Higher Education in the field of EMU/Cultural Heritage/Community Relations Education were needed to enhance the status of the field. In addition, in-service courses were available to a relatively small number of teachers and it was regrettable that some such courses had only been able to operate on the basis of special additional funding allocated on a case by case basis. **The Committee endorses Dr Richardson's concerns and urges DENI to review the provision of in-service training in this field and the academic posts to provide such courses.** The in-service provision for EMU must move in step with the initiatives of the teacher training colleges so that the investment of time and resources in the teachers of tomorrow is not wasted.

EMU in Schools

35. The Committee visited schools to talk to teachers about their experiences of EMU. Our visits were extremely thought provoking. The majority of the work described to us took the form of "contact" with children of other cultures and communities rather than EMU through the school curriculum in lessons, although it was clear that some teachers were keen to encourage children to think of ways in

which, for example, a maths lesson on sets of data or a science lesson on genetics could encourage children to think about factors that groups might hold in common and features which might distinguish them. In many cases we were shown impressive examples of how teachers and pupils had organised joint events with students from schools in other communities in Belfast. The peace process had given added impetus to this sort of co-operation - several peace vigils and similar events had been developed and attended by committees of pupils from all parts of Belfast. On each of its visits to schools both North and South of the Border the Committee was impressed by the understanding of and commitment to the peace process which was given practical expression by the actions of the students with whom we met.

36. However, this is not to imply that the development of EMU in schools will be an easy process. Many of the teachers with whom we met worked in schools in parts of Belfast where sectarian divisions held firm and where teachers were struggling, as one put it to us, to "hold the line" of a stable and reassuring environment against the dangers of violence and drugs outside the school gates. Other teachers, both North and South of the border, spoke of the difficulties of giving priority to promoting EMU when children frequently came to school hungry. When we asked those teachers for their views on EMU they were not the positive ones which we had obtained from schools in more stable areas. Where children were not confident in the identity of their own community, the school had to work to foster self-respect before it could begin to introduce children to the beliefs of other communities. Without such self-respect, the children could not explain their communities to others or begin to participate as equals in exchanges with schools in other parts of Belfast, the island of Ireland or other parts of Europe. For these teachers, work on EMU began at a much more basic level than we had previously appreciated.

37. The Committee recognises that it will be a long time before difficulties such as these can be fully overcome. The development of self-confidence within communities is not a swift process and it is not a matter for teachers alone: it is a matter for parents, peer groups, youth workers and community leaders and their chances of progress are dependent upon peace. Teachers with whom we met were realistic that progress would not be swift but gave examples ways in which DENI could assist with their work in this area. **It was suggested that a system of community awards could be established to reward those schools which had established valuable community projects.** Teachers explained that children might recognise their own self-worth through newspaper reports of their achievements. Schools in areas where EMU had the greatest difficulties in taking root were not generally those which received awards for their positions in league tables, but might be eligible for such community recognition. We agree with this analysis, **and recommend that DENI examines the possibility of establishing such a scheme.** It may be that it is an appropriate subject for the new Working Group on EMU.

Holiday Clubs

38. Teachers in both the Republic and the North also described to us the work which their schools carried out during long school holidays. Some ran holiday clubs which

gave children the opportunity to do sports, art, craft, cooking and music activities. The teachers saw these clubs as essential for ensuring that children did not fall prey to local temptations such as drugs and crime and for bolstering children's self-confidence by enabling them to tackle new activities in a relaxed, secure environment. The holiday clubs relied on the good will, energy and ingenuity of the teachers who gave up their holiday time to devise attractive activities on very limited budgets. Like the community awards discussed above, schemes such as these can provide valuable ground work to enable EMU projects to succeed: teachers involved in one holiday club in the Dublin suburbs told us that if they had more money, they would like to incorporate visits to places of local interest to develop children's appreciation of their past and to allow them to experience relationships outside their communities. **We recommend that the Departments of Education in both the North and the Republic consider giving additional funding to holiday clubs which work with children in disadvantaged areas.** Teachers told us that the sums involved need not be great - enough to take 60 children to the beach or a museum - and we are convinced that the dividend for the peace process would be great.

The Internet

39. We also recommend that both Governments continue to develop access to the Internet for schools in the North and the Republic. On many of our visits to schools we were shown impressive Internet home pages developed by pupils to describe their schools. Lessons were built around responses received from schools in other parts of Ireland and abroad. For example, we saw information exchanged on St Patrick's Day with schools in the United States. This is an aspect of EMU which has developed rapidly since our 1995 report and it is clear that whilst some schools have had the resources to harness its potential for cross-community contact work, other teachers would greatly appreciate guidance before embarking upon more sophisticated use such as the development of home pages. We note that the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett MP, and the Minister for Education and Science, Micheál Martin TD met one year ago for discussions incorporating their respective initiatives to promote the use of information and communications technology in education[[10](#)] and followed this with agreement in principal to introduce a link between the National Grid[[11](#)] for learning and Ireland's Scoilnet in October 1998[[12](#)]. **We hope that both Governments will move quickly to give practical effect to these agreements and to enhance the training available for teachers to make the most of rapidly developing opportunities for cross-border cooperation in this field.**

Evaluation of EMU

40. It is clear to the Committee that EMU will assume an increasing importance within the school curriculum in the next few years. The work of the teacher training colleges and the impressive commitment of individual members of staff reassure us that its future will be in good hands. However, we believe that the time is right for this individual commitment to be supported by a systematic review of EMU leading to clear guidelines for how the programme should develop. In 1995 the Committee

recommended that an evaluation of EMU be undertaken by an external body. We said that "the aim of the evaluation study should be to assess what EMU is achieving, how it is affecting children's attitudes, how it is perceived by teachers and how it is regarded in the communities at large."^[13] In evidence to this inquiry, witnesses told us that such an evaluation was still needed^[14] and evidence gained from our visits reinforces this view. **We therefore repeat our recommendation and suggest that the Working Group on EMU might be the appropriate forum to begin an investigation of the themes that we outlined in 1995.**

Co-operation Ireland

41. In 1995 the Committee highlighted the work of Co-operation North (now Co-operation Ireland) in facilitating North-South exchanges. As we explained in our first report, Co-operation Ireland is a charity which was established in 1979 by businessmen, trade unionists and academics from both sides of the border and from both traditions in the North. Its core work is with projects to bring together youth organisations, schools and community groups across the border in projects of mutual concern ranging from unemployment to environment. Seminars are also provided for training teachers, youth leaders and community workers to equip them with skills to reduce prejudice and resolve conflicts in their fields of work. In 1995 we strongly endorsed the work of Co-operation Ireland and supported its request for additional funding from both Governments. We gave our support because we felt that it provided precisely the sort of training for core skills and opportunities for cross-community contact which were essential if EMU was to succeed in the long term.

42. We are therefore concerned by written evidence which we received from the Chief Executive, Tony Kennedy. He explained that the organisation was reducing the number of youth community and education exchanges which it supported from 470 in 1997 to 150 in 1998 "due to the continuing difficulty of raising adequate funds." Mr Kennedy acknowledged "There is some hope. We have had some soundings from the Governments and have submitted a proposal for maintaining the programme. As yet however there has been no response."^[15] **The Committee urges both Governments to act with urgency to give assistance to Co-operation Ireland so that projects for 1999 and 2000 can be secured.** Co-operation Ireland has an excellent record of facilitating exchanges throughout some of the most difficult times of the last 20 years on the Island of Ireland. It would be paradoxical for it to be forced to cut back during the peace process.

Teacher Training and Mobility

"The Committee feels that the educational authorities in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic should consider how teaching qualifications can be made compatible across the educational jurisdictions in order to achieve greater mobility between students in training colleges and between qualified teachers."^[16]

43. In our discussion of EMU we have examined contacts between schools in the North and the Republic and shown how student teachers make exchange visits to expand their teaching experience. This section examines the difficulties facing qualified teachers who wish to work across the border.

44. In our 1995 report we expressed concern that the mandatory Irish language qualification for teachers in the Republic might act as a disincentive for teachers from the North and further afield to apply for positions in the South. We recognise, however, that this concern must be balanced against the constitutional position of Irish as the first official language. We do not underestimate the difficulty of the task facing any Minister who attempts to reconcile increased access to teaching positions and the safeguarding of the Irish language skills of the teaching profession in the South. During our visit to Dublin in May 1998 we asked the Minister for Education and Science, Micheál Martin TD, how the situation had developed since our last report. The Minister explained that a White Paper "Charting our Education Future" had recognised the significant potential contribution of teachers within the island of Ireland to the enhancement of mutual understanding, and that new provisions regarding teacher employment had therefore been introduced.

45. In secondary schools it was now necessary for an applicant to have passed only the Ceard Teastas Gaelige Oral Examination (rather than the oral and written examinations) in order to satisfy the Irish requirement for appointment to a teaching position in all second level schools. In addition, teachers who did not satisfy that requirement at the time of appointment, could be appointed provisionally, subject to their obtaining the required qualification within a period of three years. Previously they had been obliged to acquire the qualification within one year of appointment.^[17] In primary schools where teachers teach across the curriculum, applicants were still required to pass both oral and written components of the Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge but were allowed two years of provisional status in which to complete the qualification.^[18] The need for Irish for special needs primary teachers had been abolished.

46. The Minister told the Committee that a working group was being established to review the mandatory Irish qualification. It was his intention that the centre for education being established under the recent Education Bill would play a role in in-service training for the Irish language. There were already summer in-service programmes for secondary teaching in the medium of Irish run with the co-operation of trainers in the North. The Minister explained that during the period of provisional recognition, teachers were able to earn their full salary and were given financial support and special language courses to enable them to pass. Bord na Gaelige and Conradh na Gaelige were partially funded by the Government to provide such support. The most recent cohort of teachers (in May 1998) were sitting a simplified language test, the results of which would be examined with the possibility that unsuccessful candidates would be given support for re-sits. In addition, a recent development had enabled St Mary's Teacher Training College in the North to award the language qualification so that successful graduates would have no need for further examination if they applied for posts in the South.

47. **The Committee welcomes the efforts of the Minister to facilitate access for teachers from other jurisdictions to teaching positions in the Republic.** We received evidence from teachers' representatives who argued strongly that the language qualification should be abolished and we have debated the question within the Committee at some length. **We do not, at this time, consider it appropriate for the qualification to be abolished, given the constitutional and cultural importance of the Irish language, provided that measures such as those described above are fully implemented and funded and that they are reviewed regularly to eliminate unnecessary restrictions on mobility.**

48. One such question which we believe needs urgent review is a discrepancy between the evidence which we received from the Minister and the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) concerning teachers' salaries during the period of provisional recognition. We understood from our meeting with the Minister that teachers received their full salary during the two year period for obtaining the language qualification. Later the same day, the Committee met with the INTO who disputed this information. In written supplementary evidence, the INTO told the Committee that "Irrespective of the level of experience of teachers from Northern Ireland, they are only paid £13,135 per annum (if working in either temporary or permanent positions), during their period of provisional recognition prior to passing the Irish qualification exam." The INTO called the situation "grossly unfair" given that a teacher with a B.Ed degree would start on the second point of the salary scale, that is £14,485.^[19] The Committee is concerned that the situation outlined by the INTO would act as a disincentive to all but the most newly qualified to take up teaching posts in the South. We suggest that it is precisely those teachers with wide experience of teaching in the North that would bring most benefit to schools in the South, particularly if they have developed expertise in the development of curriculum materials and EMU. **We therefore urge the Minister to ensure that the position regarding salaries for those accorded provisional recognition is clarified, and that the remuneration for this period is maintained at the same level as the salary of a similarly qualified teacher in the South.**

Teaching in the Medium of Irish

"Given the importance of the Irish Language to many in Northern Ireland, every effort should be made to facilitate its development, including appropriate assistance in the provision of Irish Language teaching materials for Irish-medium schools."^[20]

49. When we visited Irish-medium schools in 1995, staff criticised DENI for a lack of forward thinking for Irish-medium schools. They complained that there was little forward planning and evaluation and few curriculum materials. We noted that "supporters of Irish-medium education saw Government policy as consistently frustrating efforts to promote Irish language education".^[21] We were therefore concerned to see what changes had occurred on our return in 1998.

50. One of the concerns which teachers continued to raise with us on our second visit was their sense that there was little overall planning for Irish-medium schools. Although relationships with the visiting DENI officials appeared to us to be good, two principals told us that the Department responded to problems rather than acting to anticipate them—little change from our experiences in 1995. However, when we questioned officials about this discontent, they were reluctant to comment given the place of Irish-medium education within the on-going peace talks. On our return to Belfast in November 1998 we were pleased to find that there had been a substantial step forward. The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 places upon DENI a duty to "encourage and facilitate" the development of Irish-medium schools in the same way as the 1989 Order had placed this duty on the Department with regard to Integrated schools.^[22] On our visit to Meanscoil Feirste, a grant-aided secondary school on the Falls Road, this was precisely the sort of support for which staff had pressed. Officials told us that DENI was now considering the establishment of a body to fund such development in the same way that NICIE gave support and advice to the integrated sector. **The Committee congratulates the Department for responding to concerns of the Irish-medium sector in this way and hopes that progress on the development of the funding body will be rapid.**

Resources

51. We also found that progress was being made on the development of resources for teaching in the medium of Irish. Primary schools and secondary schools had slightly different needs in this respect. At primary level, teachers told us that they were required to produce most of their teaching materials "in-house" because curriculum material from the South was not available in the appropriate dialects. DENI had funded a desktop publishing unit, photocopier and laminator for Gaelscoil na Bhfal and we were shown examples of the work carried out there. **We were impressed by the range of the resources which teachers and volunteers had produced and the experience which they had developed in knowing what was commercially available and supplementing it with their own material.** We were told that the most colourful commercially available resources did not always contain the best content for teaching young children, so teachers adapted printed material by supplementing it with their own booklets.

52. During our visit, DENI told the Committee that a unit to provide teaching resources for Irish medium schools was to be established in St Mary's Teacher Training College. A manager had been appointed who took up post in June 1998. It was intended that the unit would remove the burden of the development of resources from teachers and would coordinate and distribute materials and advise on their use in the classroom. **The Committee welcomes this much-needed recognition of the problems facing the development of resources in this sector.** We have not yet had the opportunity to see the work of the unit at first hand, but we hope that it has found ways of incorporating the valuable work of the volunteers in schools within its own development work.

Availability of Secondary Irish-medium education

53. In secondary schools the problem of resources was not so acute. Material was available from the South because pupils' language skills were sophisticated enough to make the changes required. The Irish Minister for Education and Science told us that their development of teaching resources and exchange with the North had improved substantially over the period between our reports and that a Departmental publishing house was to be established which would improve the situation still further. We found that the main concern of teachers in the North at this level was the availability of translated A-level papers for their final year pupils. In order for Irish-medium education to be seen by pupils to be of equal status to English-medium education, they had to feel that they had similar opportunities at the level of pre-university examinations. To be required to revert to English for certain subjects was to feel that Irish-medium education was second best. DENI acknowledged that the long term development of the Irish-medium sector was dependent upon the development of an infrastructure of setting and marking examinations and that it was not easy to find people who were qualified to do so. **The Committee acknowledges the difficulties experienced by the Department, but recommends that the availability of examination papers is given high priority in order to enhance the status of Irish-medium education within the minds of present and would-be pupils.**

54. Problems of the status of Irish-medium education at secondary level were more acute outside Belfast. In Londonderry and in the border counties, there were Irish-medium primary schools but little provision for secondary education. Pupils often had to revert to English-medium schools at secondary level and parents were proving reluctant to commit their children to Irish-medium education at primary level if there was little prospect of its continuity. In Derry the secondary school, Meanscoil Dhoire, had an enrolment of 66 pupils which fell well short of the viability criteria for grant-aid status[23]. On our first visit to Belfast we were told that discussions were continuing in an effort to find a compromise solution to the problem of maintaining secondary education in Irish in this area. We were pleased to find that by our return in November, DENI had identified an English-medium school that was prepared to take on the Meanscoil as a satellite stream to work on the Meanscoil premises. **We congratulate the Department and the schools involved on reaching this conclusion which should ensure the continuation of Irish-medium education in this region.**

55. During its meetings, the Committee has also discussed the provision of Irish-medium education in the Border counties. In County Monaghan there is no Irish-medium secondary education but three Irish-medium primary schools. Similarly, in Armagh there is an Irish-medium primary but no secondary school. The Committee discussed this situation with officials from the Department of Education and Science in Dublin and suggested that a jointly funded school for Irish-medium education might be established by both Governments in the border area. **The Committee considers that such an initiative would be a timely way of ensuring that the peace brings a tangible dividend to the young people in this region and we recommend that a joint feasibility study be carried out by both education departments.**

Particular attention would need to be paid to the different curricula and education

systems at post-primary level and the extent to which teaching towards the different examinations could be combined. To this end, we are encouraged that it is often possible to share teaching materials at post-primary level between Irish-medium schools in the North and South.

Ireland and Great Britain

56. The terms of reference of this enquiry also invite the Committee to look at ways in which cooperation between the island of Ireland and Great Britain can be enhanced in the field of education. We have not been able to develop this strand of the report as fully as we had originally intended but we hope that the projects which we highlight will give an indication of the potential for development of British/Irish cooperation.

The Columba Initiative

57. On 9 June 1997 the British Government launched the Columba Initiative to foster closer cultural and linguistic ties between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Scotland and the island of Ireland. The development of the project is intended to facilitate exchanges between the Gaelic-speaking communities and to develop links in the arts, particularly in music. To underline its commitment to the promotion of Gaelic, the Government appointed Calum MacDonald MP as Minister with special responsibility for Gaelic on 29 July 1998. The Committee hopes that the new Scottish Parliament and a British-Irish Council convened under the Good Friday Agreement will take forward these projects. We note, in particular, the potential for exchange of information on teaching methods. The Scottish Office is currently investigating ways of promoting secondary and pre-school education in Gaelic and the experiences of Irish-medium educators would be invaluable in assisting them in the development of suitable materials. On our visits to schools in Dublin, teachers told us that they would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with teachers in Welsh-medium schools their experiences of theoretical issues such as "total immersion" teaching of the very young. **We recommend that consideration be given to establishing a forum for teachers working in non-English medium schools which could meet on a regular basis for seminars and discussion forums.**

The Warrington Project

58. The Warrington Project was launched by President Mary Robinson and the Prince of Wales on 9th-10th October 1993. It was inspired by the efforts of the Warrington community to ensure that it made a constructive response to the deaths of Johnathan Ball and Tim Parry as a result of IRA bombing in March 1993. The project works both on the island of Ireland, promoting EMU projects and in Britain through "Ireland in Schools" which encourages teachers to draw on appropriate Irish examples in the teaching of main subject areas with the National Curriculum, GCSE and A-level syllabuses. In particular it develops material in the fields of language and literature (promoting the use of Irish literature in schools to develop understanding of multi-cultural societies and investigating the desirability of its incorporation into

the "literacy hour" in British schools), Citizenship and Tolerance, and History. In the NEAB history syllabus, it offers three units entitled "Understanding Anglo-Irish relations: Catholic Emancipation 1823-1829 and the role of Daniel O'Connell, Understanding Anglo-Irish Relations; Gladstone and Ireland 1863-1893 and Investigating the condition of towns; Irish Migrants in early Victorian Britain." In each case pupils are encouraged to reassess the roles of individuals, weigh the merits of differing source materials and challenge common historical "myths". The Committee hopes to visit the offices of the Warrington project in Britain to see at first hand the curriculum development work that has been described to us. In the meantime, following our meeting in London with members of the project **we recommend that the Irish Minister for Education and Science finances the secondment of a teacher from Ireland to the Warrington project. This teacher would work on the development of themes of Irish literature within the National Literacy Strategy.**

59. We also welcome the decision of Mr Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in Britain, to add the Irish Language to the list of those languages recognised as part of the English national curriculum.^[24] **We hope that this recognition will be seen as a significant acknowledgement of the cultural importance of the Irish language and that it will help to strengthen the work being carried out by projects such as those based in Warrington.**

60. Before hearing about the work of the Warrington project, we discussed the development of the history syllabus with the Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) who are carrying out similar work on the Irish history curriculum. The NCCA told us that they had already developed successful relations with the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum Assessment and that they now met twice a year in full session rather than at chief executive level only. **We endorse their hopes of developing the Curriculum Councils Liaison Group to act as a means of co-operation with curriculum bodies in Wales, Scotland and England** and hope that projects such as Warrington will be encouraged to participate so that the impetus for imaginative development of the curriculum is maintained.

Conclusion

61. By Spring 1999 it is envisaged that a Minister for Education with a constituency in Northern Ireland will have been appointed by the Assembly to deal directly with issues which have previously been the responsibility of a Minister from Westminster. We anticipate that this new accountability will provide the opportunity for a renewed discussion amongst all parties involved in education in the North as to how resources might best be distributed and how cross-community and cross-border contacts might be developed. We hope that this report will be a contribution to such discussions

62. The Committee has developed its views on many of the topics covered in this Report since 1995. At the beginning of this enquiry we were perhaps over-optimistic in thinking that one education system might solve the problems of inter-community relations which have so long defined much of the life of the North. Our first visit to

integrated schools in Belfast in March 1998 tended to reinforce this view. However, as a result of over a year of visits and meetings, we are now somewhat better informed. We see integration as a valuable contribution to parental choice within the Northern Ireland education system and we wholeheartedly support its aims, but it is only part of the answer. We have seen excellent work towards tolerance and mutual understanding carried out in other types of school.

63. In the short term we have high hopes for the development of a carefully planned programme of Education for Mutual Understanding which can draw together children from all traditions through their curriculum, through drama and literature and through visits and exchanges both within the North and with children from the Republic and further afield. We are under no illusion that progress will be anything but slow in some areas. We have seen at first hand how in many schools it is still one of the teachers' most difficult tasks to create a safe environment for their pupils and to give them self-confidence before any work towards understanding others can take place. We have nothing but praise and admiration for the teachers on both sides of the border who give up so much of their time to this work and to the development of EMU and for the pupils who participate with such enthusiasm. Their determination to press ahead during some of the most difficult times for Anglo-Irish politics gives us great confidence that the principles of the Good Friday Agreement are reaching the young people who will be responsible for the success of the Agreement in years to come.

1 Report from Committee D (Culture, Education and Environment) on *Education and Inter-Community Relations* 1995, paragraph 23, p.6.

2 The three schools are Oakwood Integrated Primary School, Derriaghy, Spires Integrated Primary School, Magherafelt and Strangford Integrated College, Carrowdore. Their go-ahead was announced by the Minister, John McFall, on 9 December 1998.

3 A duty placed upon the Department by the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. Section 63(1) states, "It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, that is to say the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils."

4 Northern Ireland Information Service Press Release, 11th February 1998, "Tony Worthington Announces a New Boost for Integrated Schools".

5 "McFall announces new North-South Educational Exchange Project", Northern Ireland Information Service press release, 3rd February 1999.

6 "John McFall launches consultation on promotion of tolerance in schools", DENI press release, 16th December 1998.

7 Dr Marjorie Mowlam at the opening of the new Integrated College in Dungannon, 7th December 1998.

8 DENI press release, 16th December 1998.

9 1995 report, paragraph 33, p.8.

10 Joint Statement, 17th December 1997.

11 The National Grid for Learning consultation paper was launched by the British

Government on 7th October 1997. The Grid was described by the Prime Minister as "a way of finding and using on-line learning and teaching materials, it will encourage the development of a rich mosaic of interconnected networks and education services".

12 Department for Education press release 487/98, 28th October 1998. Mr Blunkett said "During my visit [to Dublin] we have looked at other areas where greater cooperation would be beneficial. As a result, we have agreed in principle to establish a link between the National Grid for learning and Ireland's Scoilnet."

13 1995 Report, paragraph 33, p.8.

14 Meeting with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Dublin 13th May 1998. The INTO represents 27,000 members, 5,000 of whom come from the North.

15 Letter from Tony Kennedy, Chief Executive, Co-operation North to the Irish Clerk, 16th April 1998 and 29th January 1999.

16 1995 Report, paragraph 45, p.10.

17 Press release from the Minister for Education and Science, Micheál Martin TD, "Irish Requirement for second level teaching", 21st November 1997.

18 Press release from the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach TD, "New provisions governing Northern Ireland and European teachers", 10th November 1995.

19 Letter to the Irish Clerk to the Committee from Senator Joe O'Toole, General Secretary of the INTO, 22nd May 1998.

20 1995 Report, paragraph 62, p.13.

21 1995 Report, paragraph 59, p.12.

22 "89: It shall be the duty of the Department to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education. The Department may, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, pay grants to any body appearing to the Department to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of Irish-medium education." Education (NI) Order 1998, SI 1998/1759 (NI 13).

23 80 pupils per annum are required to meet the grant-aid requirements.

24 Department of Education and Employment press release 487/98: Decision announced by the Secretary of State on his visit to Dublin on 28th October 1998.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

64. The Committee congratulates the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI) and the schools with which it works for the excellent working relationship which they have developed. [Paragraph 11]

Integrated Education

65. We do not feel that it is at all appropriate to withdraw our support from integrated education at a time when the peace process in Northern Ireland so desperately needs practical demonstrations of what can be achieved if parents, teachers and pupils are prepared to work together, regardless of their religious or cultural backgrounds. Therefore, despite the evidence which we have received concerning the costs of the sector, we continue to endorse the contribution of "new-build" integrated schools to the education system in Northern Ireland whilst

ensuring that we examine how the costs of the sector as a whole might, in the longer term, be reduced. [Paragraph 14]

66. The Committee supports the Minister, John McFall in his expansion of the remit of the Working Group on integrated education to include studies of how tolerance can be promoted. The Committee applauds this widening of the terms of reference to reflect the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement. [Paragraph 17]

67. We recommend that the further consultations of the Working Group on integrated education draw strongly on the experience of those outside the integrated movement so that their fears and concerns can be given careful attention. In particular we stress the importance of continuing consultation with the Catholic and Protestant Churches and with schools which have had experience in working in proximity to newly established integrated schools. [Paragraph 17]

68. We recommend that DENI establishes formal procedures for working with transforming schools to allocate funds for key personnel, including additional personnel if appropriate, to assist the schools in achieving religious balance. [Paragraph 28]

69. We urge DENI to make formal arrangements for the availability of teacher advisors as secondees to schools that seek to transform and which are in the process of transforming. [Paragraph 28]

Education for Mutual Understanding

70. The Committee congratulates the staff of Stranmillis and St. Mary's teacher training colleges for their work on developing teacher training in the field of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU). [Paragraph 34]

71. The Committee endorses the concerns of Dr Norman Richardson on the availability of in-service training and Higher Education posts for the study of EMU and urges DENI to review the provision of these courses and posts. [Paragraph 34]

72. We recommend that DENI examines the possibility of establishing community awards for schools which have made a notable contribution to the development of mutual understanding and inter-community relations. [Paragraph 37]

73. We recommend that the Departments of Education in both the North and the Republic consider giving additional funding to holiday clubs which work with children in disadvantaged areas. [Paragraph 38]

74. We hope that both Governments will move quickly to give practical effect to their agreements concerning cooperation in the development of teaching resources on the internet and to enhance the training available for teachers to make the most of rapidly developing opportunities for cross-border cooperation in this field.. [Paragraph 39]

75. We repeat our 1995 recommendation that there should be a full evaluation of EMU and suggest that the Working Group on EMU might be the appropriate forum in which to begin an investigation of the themes which we outlined in 1995. [Paragraph 40]

76. Both Governments should act with urgency to give assistance to Co-operation Ireland (formerly Co-operation North) so that projects for 1999 and 2000 can be secured. [Paragraph 42]

Teacher Mobility

77. The Committee welcomes the efforts of the Minister to facilitate access for teachers from other jurisdictions to teaching positions in the Republic. We do not, at this time, consider it appropriate for the mandatory Irish language qualification to be abolished, given the constitutional and cultural importance of the Irish language, provided that measures to assist teachers to gain the qualifications are fully implemented and funded and that they are regularly reviewed to eliminate unnecessary restrictions on mobility. [Paragraph 47]

78. We urge the Minister to ensure that the position regarding salaries for those accorded provisional recognition to teach in the Republic is clarified, and that the remuneration for this period is maintained at the same level as the salary of a similarly qualified teacher in the South. [Paragraph 48]

Irish-Medium Education

79. DENI is to be congratulated for responding to the concerns of the Irish-medium sector by giving consideration to the establishment of a body to give support and advice in the same way that the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education provides support to the integrated sector. We hope that progress on the development of the funding body will be rapid. [Paragraph 50]

80. We were impressed by the range of the resources which teachers and volunteers in the Irish-medium sector had produced and by the experience which they had developed, their knowledge of what was commercially available and the way in which they supplemented it with their own material. We welcome the establishment of a unit at St. Mary's College to develop further the provision of resources, to co-ordinate their distribution to schools and to advise on their use. [Paragraph 51]

81. The Committee acknowledges that there are problems with the availability of resources for the setting and marking of examination papers in the Irish language but we recommend that the problem is given high priority in order to enhance the status of Irish-medium education within the minds of present and would-be pupils. [Paragraph 53]

82. We congratulate DENI and the schools involved on making arrangements for the continuation of Meanscoil Dhoire as an Irish-medium stream of an English-medium school in Londonderry. [Paragraph 54]

83. We suggest that an inter-governmental initiative to establish a jointly funded school for Irish-medium secondary education in the border area would be a tangible means of bringing the peace dividend to the young people of this region. A feasibility study is recommended. [Paragraph 55]

84. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to establishing a forum for teachers working in non-English medium schools. It should meet on a regular basis for seminars and discussions on teaching methods and exchange of resources. [Paragraph 57]

Curriculum development

85. We recommend that the Irish Minister for Education and Science finances the secondment of a teacher from Ireland to the Warrington project. The teacher would work on the development of themes of Irish literature for the National Literacy Strategy. [Paragraph 58]

86. We also welcome the decision of Mr Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in Britain, to add the Irish Language to the list of those languages recognised as part of the English national curriculum. We hope that this recognition will be seen as a significant acknowledgement of the cultural importance of the Irish language and that it will help to strengthen the work being carried out by projects such as those based in Warrington. [Paragraph 59]

87. We endorse the hope of the Irish National Council for Curriculum and Assessment that the Curriculum Councils Liaison Group be developed to act as a means of co-operation with curriculum bodies in Wales, Scotland and England. [Paragraph 60]

DRAFT RESOLUTION

88. That the Body welcomes the report of the Committee on Education, Culture and the Environment on Education and Inter-Community Relations and agrees with the recommendations of the report which should be forwarded to both Governments for their observations.

Appendix A

Types of School in Northern Ireland

(Source: DENI Information Sheet)

The main types of school management at present are:

Controlled

Controlled schools are managed by Education and Library Boards through Boards of Governors. The Primary and Secondary school Boards of Governors consist of

representatives of transferors (mainly the Protestant Churches) together with representatives of parents, teachers, and the Education and Library Boards. Nursery, grammar and special school Boards of Governors consist of representatives of the latter three categories.

Within the controlled sector there is a small but growing number of controlled integrated schools.

Voluntary (Maintained)

Managed by Boards of Governors which consist of members nominated by trustees (mainly Roman Catholic) along with representatives of parents, teachers and Education and Library Boards.

Voluntary schools vary in the rates of capital grant to which they are entitled, depending on the management structures they have adopted. A majority are entitled to capital grants at 100%.

Voluntary (Non-maintained)

Mainly voluntary grammar schools managed by Boards of Governors which consist of persons appointed as provided in each school's scheme of management along with representatives of parents, and in most cases, members appointed by the Department or the ELBs. Voluntary Grammar Schools have been funded directly by the Department but under the 1998 Education Order.

Grant Maintained Integrated Schools

In recent years a number of grant-maintained integrated schools have been established at primary level and post-primary levels. Such schools have been funded directly by the Department but, under the 1998 Education Order, responsibility will pass to the Education and Library Boards.

The practical operation of all schools has increasingly become a matter for Boards of Governors. They are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum, admission of pupils, and in the case of schools with delegated budgets, for the management of their own financial affairs, including staffing matters.

Appendix B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Jimmy Deenihan TD
Senator Edward Haughey
Jean Corston MP (replacing Kate Hoey MP)

Conor Lenihan TD
Brendan McGahon TD
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)
The Rt Hon the Lord Merlyn-Rees
William O'Brien MP
Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD
Lembit Opik MP
Andrew Robathan MP
Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)

Appendix C

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS RELATING TO THE REPORT

Leinster House, Dublin, 18 February 1998

Members present:

Jimmy Deenihan TD	Brendan McGahon TD
Conor Lenihan TD	William O'Brien MP
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)

Adjourned to 22 March 1998.

Belfast, 22-24 March 1998

Members present:

Jimmy Deenihan TD	Brendan McGahon TD
Conor Lenihan TD	William O'Brien MP
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)

The Committee were assisted in their inquiry by DENI officials. The Committee visited Lagan College, Brownlow College, Meanscoil Feirste, Bunscoil Na Fuisioige and Gaelscoil na Bhfal and met with representatives of teachers' unions, NICIE, Gaeloiliúint and Minister Tony Worthington MP.

Adjourned to 31 March 1999.

Cavan, 31 March 1998 (Plenary)

Members present:

Conor Lenihan TD
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)

Lord Merlyn Rees
Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD
Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)

Adjourned to 13 May 1998.

Dublin, 13-14 May 1998

Members present:

Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD	Brendan McGahon TD
Jean Corston MP*	Lord Merlyn Rees
Jimmy Deenihan TD	William O'Brien MP
Conor Lenihan TD	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)	

The Committee visited the Teachers resource centre at St Patrick's College, Taney School, Scoil Naithí, St Michael's Primary School and the High School and met with Minister Michaél Martin TD, officials from the Department of Education and Science, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Gaelscoileanna, Father Joe McCann and the British Ambassador.

Adjourned to 22 September 1998.

YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER 1998 (PLENARY)

Members present:

Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD	Brendan McGahon TD
Jean Corston MP*	Lord Merlyn Rees
Jimmy Deenihan TD	William O'Brien MP
Sean Doherty TD*	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)
Conor Lenihan TD	David Tredinnick MP*

Adjourned to 11 November 1998.

Belfast, 11-13 November 1998

(There was no quorum on the British side and this was therefore an informal meeting of the Committee)

Members present:

Jimmy Deenihan TD	Brendan McGahon TD
Conor Lenihan TD	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)	

The Committee met with DENI officials, the Minister John McFall MP, Officials from Stranmillis and St Mary's Teacher training colleges, the EMU promoting schools project, representatives from the Transferor Representatives Council (Protestant Churches) and the Chairmen of the Diocesan Education Committees (Catholic Church). The Committee visited St. Louise's Comprehensive College, Castle High School, Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School and Orangefield High School.

Adjourned to a date and time to be fixed by the Chairman.

London, 1st March 1999

Members present:

Jimmy Deenihan TD	William O'Brien MP
Conor Lenihan TD	Roger Stott CBE MP (Chairman)
Marian McGennis TD (Vice-Chair)	

Draft Report [Education], proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 10 read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 11 to 17 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 18 to 19 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 20 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 21 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 22 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 23 to 27 read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 28 to 35 read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 36 to 37 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 38 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 39 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraph 40 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 41 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 42 to 46 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 47 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 48 to 53 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 54 read, amended and agreed to.

Paragraphs 55 to 58 read and agreed to.

New paragraph 58A read and agreed to.

Paragraphs 59 to 60 read and agreed to.
Paragraphs 61 to 62 read, amended and agreed to.
Paragraphs 63 to 84 read, amended and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be made to the Body.

* Denotes an Associate member of the Committee. Jean Corston MP has now replaced Kate Hoey MP as a member of the Committee.

Appendix D

WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Memoranda were received from:

Catholic Primary School Managers' Association
Co-operation Ireland (formerly Co-operation North)
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
DENI
Department of Education and Science
EMU promoting school project
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Gaeloiliúint
Gaelscoileanna
Irish National Teaching Organisation
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
Norman Richardson, Stranmillis College
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
Professor Patrick Buckland, Chairman, Ireland in Schools, the
Warrington Project
Robert Lee, Peace People Youth Department
Scottish Office
Stranmillis College
Warrington Project

The Committee thanks those schools and organisations for the brochures and folders of information which they were given but which were too bulky or colourful to reproduce with this report.