

## 1.0 Introduction

This report is a summative evaluation of the preparatory phase of an Education for Diversity project that has been developed by the Duke of Westminster and St John's High Schools. The two schools – one controlled and one maintained – serve the wide rural and town communities of Dromore, Co Tyrone; Kesh, Co Fermanagh; and their surrounding areas. The project started in 2001 with joint funding from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) Community Bridges Programme and the Community Relations Core Funding Scheme of the Department of Education (DE). A professional partnership spanning many years has existed between the two schools. The partnership was borne out of a series of individual community relations programmes, and it was the positive legacy of these that inspired the preparatory development of what was seen to be a unique joint community relations project aimed at whole school involvement.

IFI literature has stated that the rationale for its previous investments in the education sector have been to achieve *significant strategic objectives*. It was considered that the proposal for the design and delivery of a whole school project in Education for Diversity had *strategic implications in the development of a model for more effective community relations practice in schools*, and that lessons learned could be significant in advancing current community relations practice at school, Board and Departmental levels. This report seeks to identify some of the lessons learned.

The evaluation has been conducted in response to a series of significant events. Firstly, the project has reached the conclusion of its preparatory phase so it is timely to reflect on its implementation and impact with reference to the remit of the original proposals to IFI and DE. Both schools have recently experienced key staffing changes with the retirement of both principals and a member of the core team and the concurrent appointment of new principals. Additionally, the Duke of Westminster High School is undergoing a process of amalgamation with Devennish College. The new school is located within the main county town, Enniskillen, some 15 miles from Kesh and 18 miles from Dromore. The new school will operate over two sites for the next few years until building work is completed. Devennish College will become the largest controlled school in County Fermanagh. The associated process of rationalisation will be a major demand on the new principal and may necessitate shifting priorities. The implications of school restructuring were not evident in the initial funding application to IFI. This is a critical omission as the understanding of what is the constituted community cannot become clear.

### 1.1 Terms of Reference

The purpose of the proposed evaluation was to critically evaluate the development and initial implementation of the project, to identify key issues in policy and practice, to make a series of recommendations to inform stakeholders on the future of the project within an evolving school structure

and to act as a reference to the wider educational community. This translated into the following key objectives:

1. to document the history and policy context of the project;
2. to document and review the administrative and financial operation of the project;
3. to record the aims and objectives of the project;
4. to examine the development of a whole-school approach;
5. to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current practice;
6. to assess the impact of the project at pupil, individual staff and institutional level;
7. to investigate the response to the project at systemic level;
8. to consider the impact of the re-structuring of the Duke of Westminster on the sustainability of the project;
9. to consider the implications of staff changes;
10. to identify recommendations for the development of a whole-school approach towards community relations;
11. to identify possible strategies for the future direction of the project.

## **1.2 Methodology**

A qualitative approach to data collection was considered the most effective means of gaining a broad representation of pupil and professional perspectives within the proposed time line for the evaluation. The following methods were used to complete the evaluation :

- meeting with IFI to clarify terms of reference and negotiate access to data;
- analysis of available documents, statistical records, and any interim evaluations related to the project;
- interviews with all principals from each school based on an agreed semi-structured interview schedule;
- interviews with project co-ordinators and core staff from each school based on an agreed semi-structured interview schedule;
- interviews with representatives of the Board of Governors from each school based on an agreed semi-structured interview schedule;
- interviews with representatives from DE and the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) with responsibility for overseeing community relations;
- focus group interviews with a selected group of pupils from each school based on an agreed semi-structured interview schedule.

## **2.0 Background**

### **2.1 The Local Environment**

The two communities of Dromore and Kesh represent border communities in co-existence within a divided society (Appendix 1). Both communities have been affected directly and indirectly by the Troubles. The bombings in Enniskillen in 1987 and in Omagh in 1998 have had a long lasting impact locally and in the surrounding areas. As a border county, the Protestant/unionist population of Fermanagh has experienced a sense of isolation and vulnerability. Locally, the Duke of Westminster has lost 8 former pupils through sectarian violence, and families have been subject to intimidation in the more remote border areas. Dromore and its surrounding constituencies are mainly Catholic/nationalist, and the community here has also experienced the effects of the conflict. The school was bombed in 1974 and there have been two sectarian murders of Roman Catholics. Instances of tension surrounding the presence of Orange parades in Dromore occurred several years ago, although this was resolved through cross-community dialogue. Within these circumstances the schools have established and maintained a cross-community partnership of many years, from which the Education for Diversity project evolved. The vision, courage and commitment of the two principals operating within this context is recognised.

### **2.2 The School Environment**

The Duke of Westminster High School is a rural split site, co-educational controlled school in Co Fermanagh. The school was established in 1971 by the amalgamation of Kesh and Ballinamallard, neighbouring secondary intermediate schools. This was part of a rationalisation process of educational provision in rural communities that responded to a shifting demographic and economical landscape. Its catchment area of 500 square miles surrounds Lower Lough Erne and extends from the border with Co Leitrim and Co Donegal and to Dromore in Co Tyrone. The Ballinamallard site catchment area ends 3 miles from Enniskillen. The Kesh site is 10 miles in the other direction.

More recently, plans to amalgamate the Duke of Westminster with Devenish College are almost complete. The new school will be situated in Enniskillen. Building work is due to be completed by 2007, with the final transfer of pupils during the academic year 2007-08. In the meantime pupils will continue to be taught on split sites.

In 2001-02, at the start of the Education for Diversity preparatory phase, pupil numbers in the Duke of Westminster were 213. The school operates with parallel Key Stage 3 groups on both sites, drawn from original feeder primary schools. Since the original amalgamation in 1971 there has been an approximate one third – two thirds split in pupil numbers, with the larger group in Kesh where Key Stage 4 pupils are taught and take external examinations. During the academic year 2003-04, at the end

of the preparatory phase, pupil numbers were 174. The school has 16 governors, comprising 4 from the WELB, 4 parents, 2 teachers and 6 transferor (all of whom are ministers from the various Protestant denominations). Currently there are 17 full time members of staff as well as a Youth Tutor attached to the Youth Wing of the school.

St John's High School, Dromore is a rural, co-educational maintained 11-16 school. Its catchment area includes the villages of Dromore, Trillick and Fintona, with some pupils attending from Omagh. The school was built in 1965. During 2001-02 pupil numbers were 321. At the time of the evaluation, pupil numbers were 247. There are 11 governors, comprising 4 priests, 2 lay people nominated by the trustees, 2 nominated by WELB, 2 nominated by DE and 1 parent-teacher governor. Currently, there are 25 full time members of staff and 2 part time members.

Prior to the Education for Diversity project the two schools already had a well-established link running over several years, and had undertaken a series of joint programmes funded by, amongst others, the Schools Community Relations Programme (SCRIP) and Co-operation Ireland.

### **2.3 Policy Context**

The philosophy of the Education for Diversity project is rooted within the aspirational rhetoric of a wider political context. The contribution of schools towards promoting a *culture of tolerance*, outlined in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) was highlighted in the consultation document, *Towards a Culture of Tolerance : Education for Diversity* (1999) produced by the Working Group on the Strategic Promotion of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU). One of the key recommendations of the document was a greater acceptance of the legitimacy of community relations programmes amongst principals and senior management, who should seek to *encourage schools to view and develop EMU and its associated areas in a holistic manner, giving due emphasis to whole school relationships ..... relationships beyond the school .... and to promoting an ethos in the school which contributes to understanding and mutual respect for diversity in all its forms.* A report of a survey of provision for EMU in post-primary schools (1999-00), conducted by the Training and Inspectorate Branch of DE, reiterated a similar finding of the Working Group when it identified that instances of best practice, policy and planning were most evident where EMU was actively promoted throughout the whole school.

More recently, the Costello Report (2004), in setting down future post-primary arrangements in Northern Ireland, advocated an Entitlement Framework for all pupils. The Entitlement Framework included a proposal that the formal curriculum should not be the sole constituent of pupils' educational and personal experiences during their time at school, but that they should also *be enriched by the ethos*

*of the school as a community and by a wide range of enrichment activities that run in parallel with formal learning.*

The initial premise of the project was grounded in an historical partnership and, more recently, in the introduction of an alternative curriculum provision through the School to Work Programme. The School to Work programme evolved from a Departmental initiative (DE Circular 1999/23, superseded by DE Circular 2000/5) that outlined provision for the disapplication of the statutory curriculum requirements in certain circumstances. This included the opportunity for schools to develop a small-scale apprenticeship scheme for those pupils who were disaffected by the demands of the formal school curriculum and who needed alternative educational provision. Initially, five pupils from each school were involved. The success of the initiative, in both educational and community relations terms, encouraged the two principals at the time to approach DE with a proposal to develop a broader project, based around disapplication, for a greater number of pupils for whom the scheme was considered appropriate. Initial meetings were held with DE – and, subsequent to a delay in ratifying the project according to DE funding regulations – with IFI. The experimental and innovative nature of the proposal was acknowledged by both DE and IFI, along with its recognised potential for expansion within a whole school framework. However, the existing operational arrangements at departmental level did not easily facilitate the project.

### **3.0 The Education for Diversity Project**

#### **3.1 The Development of the Project**

In 2001 the two schools submitted a joint proposal to the IFI Community Bridges Programme requesting funding to initiate a preparatory project at Key Stage 4. The proposal emerged from a recurrent belief that community relations and EMU practice were often limited in terms of the level and quality of provision they could offer. Significantly, some of the proposed objectives for the project had no precedent – notably dedicated training for principals and Boards of Governors. The proposal for an inclusive training programme that accommodated members of the senior management team as well as teaching staff underpinned the philosophy that training was essential to support a whole school approach to community relations.

The purpose of the complete 3-year proposal was to create the conditions and capacity to design and implement a project within the two institutions that would prepare pupils for life in a divided society. It was an acknowledgement that the underlying problems faced by young people in society, and particularly in the workplace, had to be dealt with if they were to be equipped socially, personally and vocationally for adult life. Crucially, this would be delivered as part of a community relations strategy that incorporated an increased focus on experiential learning.

The proposal identified Technical Assistance as a necessity for the first year. Technical Assistance was requested to facilitate the development of a core team from each school that would provide a critical capacity within the staff to design and implement a whole school strategy with specific reference to a community relations dimension. It would include a programme of interaction with experienced facilitators and trainers as a means to *increase ownership through a process of basic training in analysis, evaluation, planning, communication and conflict resolution.*

The request for funding was to facilitate a one-year preparatory phase, leading to the design, development and implementation of a 2-year pilot project. The pilot project would deliver a whole school approach to community relations through a creative and innovative joint curriculum programme as an alternative to established provision. It was anticipated that, subject to possible revision, the project would become integrated into the respective core curriculum of each school over subsequent years.

A subsequent successful application to DE Core Funding Scheme requested financial assistance equal to that of IFI. It essentially re-iterated the aims and purpose of the initial application and outlined a proposed methodology that underpinned the existing rationale. Financial assistance was requested to facilitate the release of a co-ordinator from each of the two schools for two and a half days per week as well as some training costs over the duration of the project.

Total grant assistance was £135,495. An award of £66,975 – approximately 50% of the total developmental costs - was approved by IFI (£36,975 eligible project costs and £30,000 sub cover). The balance in funding was met by DE. The funding recognised the innovative nature of the project and its commitment to integrate at each school level. Funding was directed towards supporting the cross-community dimension of the three pilot programmes : the School to Work Programme (Years 11 and 12); Pastoral Programme (Year 8); and Business Studies (Year 11). An approximate breakdown of the proposed budget, based on documents received, is illustrated in Appendix 2. An approximate calculation of the total monies allocated to the Education for Diversity Project is provided in Appendix 3. This does not include grants awarded to community relations programmes that operated outside the project. The budget proposal has been reviewed as part of the application process. A revised funding structure is not currently evident within documents supplied.

### **3.2 The Operation of the Project**

The Education for Diversity project is delivered by a core team of staff and is overseen by the principals and the Boards of Governors. The core team consists of 2 part time project co-ordinators – each a member of the senior management team in their respective school – and 6 other teaching staff who have

specific responsibility for their individual programmes. The core team includes one independent member, appointed to co-ordinate the School to Work Programme. The rationale for the project was to locate it within and to become part of core school planning in a way that necessitated a whole school approach for its implementation. In operational terms it was proposed that the preparatory year would facilitate the completion of the development of a whole school plan that would identify a cohesive and practical implementation strategy for dissemination by the management teams of both schools. It represented an attempt to redefine the role of existing community relations programmes that operated in a perceived non-controversial environment and were delivered in relative isolation. The development and dissemination of this whole school plan is not currently evident.

The specific conditions of grant assistance required a fulfilment of the objectives and associated activities identified in the original proposal. This included a caveat that *rigorous monitoring and self-evaluative systems should be put in place with advice from the Community Bridges Programme*. An interim progress report was submitted to the funders at the end of the preparatory year (2001-02). The report provided a commentary on the evolving nature of the project. Key findings included an identification of the professional requirements considered necessary for its sustainability : notably, continued facilitation in training, planning and evaluation procedures as well as continued development of the skills, capacity, confidence and commitment of those engaged with the delivery of the project. An implementation strategy, based on the findings, was to be developed by the two co-ordinators. Action plans that outlined individual learning objectives for the 3 pilot programmes over each academic year have been produced. Indicators of practice across the three programmes were also identified to facilitate the validation of the proposed collective aims and objectives of the whole school project. The proposed indicators included Key Skills development, employability training, career planning, reflective learning and an ongoing pupil-monitoring programme. Staff engaged in the individual programmes have provided documentary evidence as exemplars of the fulfilment of these targets.

### **3.3 Staffing**

The proposed management, co-ordination and delivery of the project comprised a tiered structure of governors, principals, co-ordinators, a core team and other staff members. The structure, which aspired to be whole school, was intended to facilitate strategic individual and collective roles and outline associated responsibilities :

- **Governors :** The governors were perceived as figure heads of authority for the public profile of the project and, crucially, providers of influential interfaces with the community. It was proposed that governors would receive training to *make them aware of the project and its significance, and to determine their own roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the project.*

- Principals : The principals were considered the main advocates and facilitators of the project, with responsibility for ensuring that it became part of the core business of both schools. Their role was pivotal *in the face of community conflict and the development of an ethos that embraces diversity and multi-culturalism and the relationship between the school as a local institution and the local community.*
- Co-ordinators : The two co-ordinators were the key facilitators, promoting ownership and the day-to-day running, development, monitoring/evaluation and dissemination of the project. Their role was that of internal advocate and advisor/mentor to other teachers within the schools. The co-ordinators would receive skills training in effective community relations practice for transferal into the daily school routine.
- Core team : The core team was to be drawn from the cohort of staff engaged in existing programmes. Their remit was to assist the advancement of the whole school policy. The core team would be responsible for the organisation of new pilots and participation in an associated training programme that would equip them with the necessary skills and confidence to introduce a focussed community relations dimension.
- External Support : This constituted staff beyond the school community who would deliver a specific programme of awareness-raising and skill development, with a particular focus on conflict management and mediation training. It was intended that the training strategy would foster increased ownership as a whole school project.
- Steering Committee : The project was to be managed by a steering committee, comprising staff from both schools, a representative from the WELB and a representative from a training agency. Although the steering committee did meet at the outset of the project, these meetings did not endure.

### **3.4 Training and Evaluation**

Since the project was innovative in its intention, training programmes were necessarily customised to reach the objectives outlined in the original proposal.

Training on whole school approaches to EMU for all staff from both schools was provided by the Corrymeela Teacher Education Project during 2001. The training was identified as an opportunity to build on existing collaborative relationships and to encourage increased staff involvement to deliver a recipe of what the two staffs felt would be necessary for a successful Education for Diversity project. A documented evaluation by the external facilitator noted that teachers welcomed the opportunity to



engage in practical methodologies, valued sharing views and appreciated the driving force of both the core team and co-ordinators. Perceived needs were identified as increased provision of training and support in the exploration of controversial issues; opportunities to meet regularly with EMU co-ordinators; and increased opportunities for the two staff teams to meet and work together through inter-school and inter-departmental relationships. Other areas recommended for attention in the delivery of a whole school approach were coherent planning; sustained development strategies; and the involvement of all teachers.

In summary, the evaluation highlighted good communication systems as a key requisite for the development of institutional ownership leading to whole school participation. Crucially, it stressed the importance of *finding ways to maintain and develop whole school understanding, including the implications for practice*. In concluding, the evaluation recommended the development of an action plan by the core team, *but with plenty of opportunities for others (including staff, pupils and parents) to be involved and feel a sense of ownership of it*.

Training was also delivered to all staff of both schools during 2002 by Mediation Network Northern Ireland (MNNI). The training dealt with conflict in the school environment since conflict management had been identified by all staff as a priority area. To date there is little evaluative documentary evidence in response to this training.

There was also a series of national and international site visits (eg Birmingham, Iceland and Portugal). The aims, learning outcomes and dissemination of these site visits are not currently evident. It would be important to understand how these visits informed and contributed to the development of a whole school Education for Diversity project.

#### **4.0 The Delivery of the Project**

The overall remit for the Education for Diversity project was *to undertake a focussed community relations preparatory project, creating awareness, conditions and capacity within the schools to design and implement a whole school approach*.

In the first instance, the project was directed at the lower ability band of 14-16 year olds in both schools, although it has since been extended to include pupils of other age groups and ability. It was developed within the context of whole curriculum planning and was based on realistic options for those young people who had decided to leave school at 16. For this reason certain parts of the curriculum were disapplied, although pupils were still required to seek to achieve identified and measurable targets that would assist them in the work place and in the wider world.

The 3 pilot programmes within the project were delivered by members of the core team with support and guidance from the co-ordinators and senior management. The core team was composed of staff members who expressed a desire to become actively involved in a specific area of the project. This group of teachers have taken part in a series of dedicated training sessions on sectarianism and controversial issues. The training sessions were delivered in a format that was intended to support subsequent pedagogy. Mentoring was encouraged to support staff engaged in the project and a cascade model of transfer was intended to inform other staff members. Progress was to be reviewed and monitored regularly.

Individual action plans for the three programmes that constituted the project were developed for the academic years 2002-03 and 2003-04. These are largely aspirational, outlining a provisional programme of intent for each academic year. The 2003-04 action plan identified targets for individual pilot programmes that included dedicated training (including human rights training and training for non-teaching staff), staff awareness, staff induction, website development and information dissemination for parents, governors and community.

The three programmes developed as part of the Education for Diversity project were :

1. School to Work Programme
2. Business Studies Pilot Programme
3. Pastoral Care Programme

The programmes ran concurrently and involved mainly pupils from Years 8, 11 and 12. The aims of the pilot programmes were collectively identified *to take existing projects forward, to tackle the issues surrounding segregation and diversity, to travel beyond the safe ground and to provide continuity and contact within the whole school approach.* At the time of the evaluation two of the programmes were operational. The Pastoral Care project did not develop due to changes in staffing, and it has since been subsumed within a programme for Citizenship Education. Using the target groups of the original proposal, the total number of pupils engaged in community relations activity is approximately 110 (26% of the total population of the 2 schools). This is significantly higher than general levels of community relations engagement in post primary schools.

## **4.1 The Pilot Programmes**

### **4.1.1 The School to Work Programme**

The School to Work Programme began with limited funding during the academic year 2000-2001. Recognition that the programme could be expanded and developed further under a community relations remit led to an application for additional funding. A successful application to the Youth Education Social Inclusion Partnership (YESIP) – an initiative within European Union (EU) funding programmes

- provided a grant of £250,000 to be administered over a 3-year period. The grant covered the costs for a co-ordinators salary, nominal pupil allowance and any necessary materials. A total of 10 pupils (5 from each school) took part in the first year of the project. During the academic year 2003-2004, a total of 30 pupils were enrolled in the programme. The programme is subsidised by some IFI funding to provide training, along with costs for a pupil residential and associated substitute teacher costs.

Although the programme began prior to the Education for Diversity project, it was to remain an integral part of its development. Staff members from both schools worked with pupils towards the completion of Key Skills Learning as well as some GCSE achievement. School to Work had, as a particular emphasis, the promotion of a scheme that sought to improve self-esteem, levels of participation and attendance amongst disaffected pupils. Pupils in the programme have had parts of the National Curriculum disapplied, and instead work towards the achievement of City and Guilds Key Skills and units of an NVQ. Those students who applied to become part of the programme were required - in partnership with staff members and parents - to sign a learning contract. The learning contract was a core document for all pupils involved and was developed to identify individual needs. The contract comprised an integrated action plan for work-based learning, along with an outline of learning needs, opportunities for active career planning, and the introduction of personal reflective diaries. Staff have provided exemplars of each document.

#### **4.1.2 The Business Studies Pilot**

The Business Studies pilot programme was a four-month programme involving 24 Year 11 pupils, 2 of whom were also in the School to Work programme. The aim of the programme was *to encourage and develop maturity in opinions and attitudes in a way that facilitated comfort with ones own views and a respect for the views of others*. This was delivered through a scheme of work that sought to raise pupil awareness of conflict within society and within the working environment. The programme of study introduced aspects of political, cultural, sexual, age and religious conflict in a way that was intended to lead to an increased awareness of each other historically and culturally, as well as an acceptance of difference. Staff members have provided documentary exemplars of the programme of study and copies of pupil evaluations.

#### **4.1.3 The Pastoral Care Pilot Programme**

The Pastoral Care pilot programme was designed to deliver to 56 Year 8 pupils a programme that reflected the remit and recommendations of a programme in Personal and Social Education (PSE). However, due to changes in staffing, this pilot programme did not endure and it has since been incorporated within the Citizenship Education programme. This is currently being delivered to Year 8 and Year 9 pupils. The Citizenship programme is located within broader educational policy. Training

has been provided for up to five teachers by the WELB. This is funded outside the remit of the Education for Diversity project.

## **5.0 Findings**

The challenges of developing a whole school programme can generate complexities that are often inter-related and that impact individually and collectively on the implementation of a programme. Some issues are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by associated factors, and so many of the findings cannot be assumed to sit in isolation.

For the purpose of transparency, however, the findings are presented thematically as indicators of the strengths and weaknesses of the project. The findings have been drawn following a systematic collection of data, comprising analysis of documentary evidence, interviews with core staff members, representatives from the two Boards of Governors, pupils and key personnel in WELB and DE . Documentary evidence requested and received is recorded in Appendices 4 and 5 respectively.

### **5.1 Strengths**

#### **5.1.1 The Structure of the Project**

**5.1.1.1** The most significant feature of the project has been the ‘normalisation’ of the relationship between a controlled school and a maintained school in a geographically isolated and politically uncertain area of Northern Ireland.

**5.1.1.2** The durability of the partnership between the two schools is recognised and valued by the staff and external stakeholders.

**5.1.1.3** The project is both unique and innovative in design and intention and does not conform to the traditional model of EMU or SCRP. It is representative of a strategically different approach to community relations work than currently exists within the education sector.

**5.1.1.4** The professional and personal relationship between the two former principals and the longevity of tenure of some staff in both schools, have provided an awareness of the two communities that has been a significant contributory factor in the development of the project. Staff members agreed that the common characteristics of the two schools and their wider communities have underpinned and sustained the development of the project.

**5.1.1.5** The structure of the project has a flexibility that may enable new staffing arrangements to positively propel existing programmes in a direction that takes account of the changing

structural, operational and demographic changes. This includes consideration of potential new school partnerships.

**5.1.1.6** The implementation of a whole school approach to community relations is reflected in evidence of a fluency in the use of community relations language amongst both staff and pupils. Most staff acknowledged a working knowledge of the concept of community relations that has developed with increased understanding of the principles of a whole school programme.

## **5.1.2 The Delivery of the Project**

**5.1.2.1** The development of a whole school approach to diversity and community relations has encouraged a process of creativity that may not have been possible within existing educational culture. Staff in both schools acknowledged that the combined funding arrangements created the conditions to pursue the work in an experimental and flexible way.

**5.1.2.2** The experimental nature of the work is a key factor in the development of the project. The project is aspirational in its delivery of a whole school approach and this philosophy has fostered opportunities to explore potential partnerships, leading to the development of potentially sustainable programmes.

**5.1.2.3** The whole school partnership has gained significant enduring support in the wider community, particularly amongst parents and those businesses involved in the School to Work Programme.

**5.1.2.4** The endurance of the School to Work programme and its impact on disaffected pupils cannot be overlooked. The programme has been successfully developed in recognition that academia is not the natural educational choice for every pupil. The fundamental aims and purpose of the programme have been successfully adapted to include a community relations experience whilst continuing to provide a meaningful work placement for those involved.

**5.1.2.5** The inherent value of the School to Work programme was recurrently stated by staff from both schools who had witnessed the immediate and long term benefits in challenging the views and opinions of young people in a secure and controlled setting in preparation for integration into the workplace.

**5.1.2.6** The pilot programmes have introduced a community relations experience to a cohort of pupils within the specific context of their learning needs and in a way that will help prepare them for life in a divided society.

**5.1.2.7** The two new principals, along with the Chairs of both Boards of Governors, are supportive of the ethos and purpose of the Education for Diversity Programme. This allows the project to be potentially sustainable.

### **5.1.3 Training**

**5.1.3.1** The merit of using an external facilitator or trainer and the expertise that they provide is recognised and valued by members of both staffs. Dedicated training that aims to reduce teacher isolation and increase professional interaction has been introduced – albeit in a limited capacity – as a key component of the project.

**5.1.3.2** Training for the core team was considered a valuable exercise. The personal and professional challenges that the training created were viewed positively and constructively by staff, some of whom recognised an educational growth of self as well as that of their pupils.

**5.1.3.3** Core team members acknowledged the training benefits within the limited provision. There was anecdotal evidence of learning, confidence and progression, leading to increased openness amongst members.

**5.1.3.4** The provision of whole school training by the Corrymeela Teacher Education Project provided both staffs with the opportunity to identify what they considered necessary for a successful Education for Diversity project.

### **5.1.4 Staff**

**5.1.4.1** Interviews with the core staff team have indicated a genuine commitment to an ethos of community relations. This is an essential pre-requisite for a whole school approach.

**5.1.4.2** All staff and external stakeholders considered the post of co-ordinator to be pivotal. The appointment of a member of the senior management team to this post is crucial to reinforce the validity and profile of the project within the two schools.

**5.1.4.3** All staff interviewed expressed a hope that the project should continue to operate within any future revisions in funding. There was a recognition, however, that external funding has been a key factor in facilitating breadth and diversity to the content and delivery of the project.

**5.1.4.4** Staff members were very positive about the collaborative opportunities that the project has provided within what is a geographically remote area. The role of the project as a catalyst to increase both professional and community contact and reduce a sense of professional and community isolation was considered significant.

**5.1.4.5** The extent and endurance of both personal and professional relationships amongst the staff of both schools is a significant factor for both the current and future sustainability of the programme. The dedication of members of the two core teams is reflected in a genuine commitment to students and to the continuation of their individual programmes within potentially revised funding arrangements.

**5.1.4.6** The individual and collective expertise of members of the core team, combined with perceived complementary teaching styles has generated a dynamic that has facilitated the development of individual programmes that respond to pupil need.

### **5.1.5 Pupils**

**5.1.5.1** Pupils are the focal point around which the project revolves. The provision of a valid and meaningful experience for the young people is demonstrated through staff efforts to individually match provision to each young person and the environment in which he/she exists.

**5.1.5.2** The benefits to those pupils who have participated have been demonstrably significant, although the number of pupils involved in the various programmes remains limited.

**5.1.5.3** The experience of a meaningful cross-community engagement that fostered a culture of acceptance and respect for diversity was visibly apparent in interviews with pupils.

**5.1.5.4** Interviews with pupils revealed a clear articulation and appreciation of community relations issues in their communities. Pupils responded using the language of community relations and were able to engage in thoughtful dialogue, acknowledging their own capacity for bias within the context of their role in, and contribution to, their community.

**5.1.5.5** All staff members and pupils interviewed gave equal recognition to the personal qualities of esteem, awareness and self-confidence alongside the more explicit objectives of the project.

**5.1.5.6** All staff commended the receptive manner in which pupils from each school entered the project and referred to the open manner with which students approached more sensitive topics.

**5.1.5.7** Staff and pupils considered parents to be supportive of the project and the associated cross community dimension. Although some parental reservations were expressed initially, ongoing communication between the school and parents have sought to address these.

## **5.1.6 Management Structures**

- 5.1.6.1** The public face of the project is important to raise the profile of the programme in the community. Significantly, the sound working relationships between members of the Boards of Governors and principals of both schools has demonstrated the collective support and commitment to the project within the wider communities.
- 5.1.6.2** The impact of community relations funding and the benefits it has generated cannot be overlooked. Funding has enabled the development of a whole school project that may not otherwise have taken place.
- 5.1.6.3** Funding to date has given the schools a certain independence from systemic limitations. In operational terms, senior management and some stakeholders considered that the flexibility facilitated greater opportunity for creativity and innovation in the design and delivery of the project.
- 5.1.6.4** EU funding for the implementation of the School to Work Programme has been significant. The possibility that this funding may be gradually phased out is an operational factor that both schools must seriously consider within any future review of the project.

## **5.2 Weaknesses**

### **5.2.1 The Structure of the Project**

- 5.2.1.1** Staff members and external stakeholders expressed concerns about the long term sustainability of the project. Concerns related to its future position and priority status within the educational framework of a larger school, as well as the changing dynamics in staffing. The establishment of a new secondary college and the impact this may have on the future of the project has caused some uncertainty. Staff from the two schools conceded that they were unfamiliar with the emerging new school ethos and commitment to cross community work. The biggest challenge will be the amalgamation of the Duke of Westminster with Devennish College and the eventual re-location in Enniskillen. Whilst the new school will operate on split sites initially, the implications of amalgamation will impact on operation structures initially. However, the establishment of Devennish College can also be interpreted positively, creating an opportunity to broaden the community base of the project.
- 5.2.1.2** The collective retirement of several members of staff will affect the immediate sustainability and future operation of the project. In addition, any new appointments will impact on the dynamics of existing staff structures. This puts emphasis on the need for the project to have broad core/whole school support, and an action plan with supporting dissemination materials.



## **5.2.2 The Delivery of the Project**

**5.2.2.1** The composite nature of the project has required a clear structure that outlined the overall purpose, remit and operation of a whole school initiative, and that also provided coherent reference for the individual programmes. The development and dissemination of a joint whole school strategy in the form of a project development plan has not been apparent in documentary evidence, nor has it been particularly evident in interviews.

**5.2.2.2** Interim reporting for evaluative and planning purposes, and as a tool of accountability, was not evident. There was little documentary evidence of sustained reporting structures for the duration of the project.

**5.2.2.3** Concern was expressed by some staff about a lack of regular dissemination procedures. This was considered an important mechanism to challenge staff, to maintain the momentum of the project and to sustain its profile within both schools and communities.

**5.2.2.4** Some external stakeholders expressed concern about the frequency and location, as well as the organisation and co-ordination of meetings, which detrimentally impacted on the dissemination strategy and on the pace and progress of the project and resulted in a lack of consensus and transparency in the allocation of funding.

**5.2.2.5** Some staff and some external stakeholders expressed a concern about the individualistic nature of the three pilot programmes that existed independently from each other. The visibility and continuity of a common strand was less than transparent. Enhanced communication and dissemination will remove some of this. Some external stakeholders also considered that the existing number of programmes exceeded current staff capacity and expressed concern that this could lead to potential shortcomings in community relations learning.

**5.2.2.6** Efforts to disseminate and connect the project amongst increasing numbers of parents and the wider community have been limited. A questionnaire survey was mailed to parents to measure awareness of the project, parental attitudes and levels of involvement. To date, there is no record of the findings of the survey, nor evidence that they have been disseminated to inform staff.

**5.2.2.7** In both schools there is little visible, centrally placed display material or literature that promoted Education for Diversity and celebrates the achievements of individual programmes. A recent newspaper article reported the collaboration between the two schools. However, it was not referred to as an Education for Diversity project. A clear action plan will allow for a monitoring and evaluation strategy that informs a focused approach to project dissemination.

### **5.2.3 Training**

- 5.2.3.1** To date, a formal training programme for members of the Boards of Governors – as stipulated in the original application - has not been set in place. Members of both Boards of Governors have been regularly kept informed of the various programmes within the Education for Diversity initiative. This does not however, constitute training and involvement.
- 5.2.3.2** The principals did not participate in the core group training for controversial issues. Whilst it is recognised that this did not constitute dedicated principal training, a willingness to attend in the interim could serve to reinforce the priority and status of the project within the two school structures.
- 5.2.3.3** Some external stakeholders considered that the provision of dedicated training was insufficient to address the nature of the work that was to be undertaken. An audit by staff members – based on genuine needs – should have been collated and recorded for reference prior to the commencement of the project. The evaluation conducted by the Corrymeela Teacher Education Project could provide the base for a future training action plan.
- 5.2.3.4** Training for the core team – though valued by members - has been limited. Dedicated training has been delivered approximately four times since the introduction of the Education for Diversity project. Crucially, external stakeholders expressed concern that training had been inadequate to enable staff to confidently facilitate teaching around controversial issues.
- 5.2.3.5** The remit of a whole school project is to encourage the contribution of all staff members in a collaborative series of programmes. To date, there is little evidence of training methodologies that could cascade learning to the whole school community in a connected and cohesive manner.
- 5.2.3.6** Some external stakeholders expressed uncertainty if training in human rights had been delivered.
- 5.2.3.7** Some staff expressed concern about a lack of purpose for whole school training. To date there have been two sessions. The main reservation was a perceived lack of educational focus to meaningfully address school issues in a way that would equip staff to translate learning into effective classroom practice.
- 5.2.3.8** The opportunity for evaluation and reflection – on an individual, group and school basis - was considered limited by some staff members. Although training days included the completion of

an evaluation form, some staff considered that little opportunity existed beyond this for follow-up discussion.

#### **5.2.4 Staffing**

**5.2.4.1** Some external stakeholders expressed concern that lack of motivation among staff members could impact detrimentally on the implementation strategy of the project.

**5.2.4.2** Although a draft job description was drawn up for the position of co-ordinator, the post in both schools was decided without formalised recruitment and interview procedures. The position of co-ordinator is crucial to the implementation of the project and carries significant managerial and administrative responsibilities. To recruit on an ad hoc basis inhibited the credibility and professional status of the project.

**5.2.4.3** Some staff and some external stakeholders considered that the two co-ordinators were not centrally placed within the operational structures of their respective schools and did not have the requisite management control within the hierarchy of school structures that enabled them to operate effectively as agents of change. Lack of ownership at this level could potentially impact on individual commitment and on the synergy of the core team, reinforcing marginalisation and reducing the capacity of the project to influence at whole school level.

**5.2.4.4** Some staff and some external stakeholders expressed concern that the dedicated time allocated to the two co-ordinators could be interpreted negatively by other staff members and damage the credibility of the project if it was not seen to be spent transparently and meaningfully.

**5.2.4.5** The purpose, frequency and outcomes of core team meetings are unclear. Some staff and some external stakeholders expressed reservations about the value of core team meetings. Reservations included a lack of organisation in focus and direction along with a shifting agenda that frequently did not reflect the original purpose of the meeting. This led to a sense of frustration and time wasted.

#### **5.2.5 Management Structures**

**5.2.5.1** Lack of disclosure in the initial proposal of the imminent amalgamation has been a serious oversight. The need for transparency is paramount at all times. Prior knowledge of the amalgamation should have been available to assist in the development of a relevant whole school programme that recognised the forthcoming changing school constituencies. As the project re-defines itself and identifies a way forward, there exists an opportunity to redress this omission.

- 5.2.5.2** Current administrative arrangements do not easily facilitate a transparent financial system. An initiative on this scale cannot operate successfully without clear administrative procedures. Lack of planning has led to instances of mislaid cheques and, more critically, a missed deadline for the most recent application to DE core funding.
- 5.2.5.3** Some external stakeholders have expressed concern about the potential risk of dependency that large amounts of funding may induce. High levels of funding, without transparent monitoring and evaluation strategies could encourage schools in a culture of spending rather than focus on the content of the project.
- 5.2.5.4** Lack of collaboration, due to a variety of factors, with Departmental and Board personnel has reduced the capacity for strategic co-operation – significantly with regard to training, monitoring and meaningful dissemination to the wider educational community.
- 5.2.5.5** The management framework of combined programmes appears somewhat fragmented within the hierarchical structures of the schools. Whilst it is recognised that the principals were the original managers of the whole school project, there is less transparency regarding responsibility for the day-to-day management. Some staff and some external stakeholders noted that lack of clarity relating to ownership and leadership at co-ordinator and core team levels had caused a certain amount of confusion and frustration that impeded individual and collective progress.
- 5.2.5.6** The benefits for staff to meet in a neutral and relaxed environment were acknowledged although concerns existed about the perceived over-use of external facilities. Some staff and most external stakeholders considered that money spent on hospitality could potentially have been re-directed elsewhere.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

The Education for Diversity project has come to the end of its pilot phase. Due to retirements there have been staff changes within senior management and the amalgamation process between the Duke of Westminster and Devenish College is ongoing. The amalgamation will probably be one of the most significant factors that determine the long term future and direction of the project. It is in the context of the evaluation process that the schools must ask themselves if they genuinely wish to continue working towards whole school participation in Education for Diversity and, within the changing school environment, if the current arrangements are the most appropriate for its sustainability.

The recommendations that have emerged have been informed by an analysis of available documentary evidence and by interviews with key personnel in the schools, WELB, DE and IFI. The findings have been formulated into a series of recommendations that are intended to inform the two schools on the prospective direction of the project. They have also been prepared to include points of guidance that will be of use to the wider educational community. This includes other schools that may be considering the development of a whole school initiative. It is anticipated that the recommendations will also assist to inform at systemic level : as a contribution towards the overall review of community relations policy; as a contribution to the Working Group established to implement changes within the education sector following the review of the *Schools Community Relations Programme* (2002); and as a commentary for funding agencies.

## **6.1 Recommendations for the Education for Diversity Project**

### **6.2 The Structure of the Project**

- 6.2.1** Interviews with staff members suggest that the Education for Diversity project will continue, certainly whilst the Kesh site remains open. The long term prospect, however, remains uncertain. It is recommended that the intervening 3-4 years, leading to the completion of the amalgamation process, be used as a period of definition, reflection and forward planning.
- 6.2.2** The shifting demographics that amalgamation will create are acknowledged. Significantly, relocation will impact on the existing dynamics between staff, pupils, the community and on the programmes delivered. These factors should be considered within the context of any revision of the project and in consultation with all staff involved. Several options exist with regard to a review of the project :
- It is recommended that any review of the project include a process of collegiate reflection to critically and constructively take stock. The review process should include a realistic assessment of the long term sustainability of the project as part of any aspirational planning for the future.
  - Any review of the project should consider the strategic implications of a period of phased and progressive integration within the operational structures of the new school. If accepted, this should be initiated as soon as possible to audit the interest and commitment of old and new staff. The roles of the senior management team and project co-ordinators will be crucial and funding will be a priority.
  - The two schools may wish to consider a properly prepared, planned and re-defined expansion of the project. The introduction of another maintained school to ensure parity in numbers is an option – St Mary’s, Irvinestown has been a suggested possibility. Negotiations to effect any kind of change in the constitution and operation of the project should be undertaken in close consultation with funding bodies and the senior management and staff of all schools.

- 6.2.3** The profile and prominence of the overarching purpose of the project is not immediately apparent. There is a need for the project to be strategically documented and connected as part of the educational framework of both schools. It is recommended that a mission statement on the project be explicitly referenced and promoted as part of any literature produced by the two schools.
- 6.2.4** The roles of the two co-ordinators and of core team members should be actively visible within both schools. The remit of a management structure should define individual and composite responsibilities that maintain accountability measures at senior management level and facilitate greater ownership for appointed co-ordinators and core team members.
- 6.2.5** Core staff should consider developmental strategies that explicitly promote a cross-community dimension across and beyond the framework of the project to establish a whole school profile and reinforce continuity of purpose at Departmental, Board and funding levels.
- 6.2.6** The opportunity for all children to participate in, and benefit from, an Education for Diversity project is restricted to a significant core group of pupils. Any revision to whole school planning should seek to investigate strategies that maximise the potential for all pupils to have an Education for Diversity experience. This does not imply the need for additional programmes; rather a review of the potential to accommodate increased pupil participation. This will, however, require support from other members of staff.
- 6.2.7** Pupils' experience has not been widely promoted within and beyond the two school communities. Pupil evaluations and evidence of exemplar lessons should be shared institutionally and disseminated to all stakeholders as indicators of experiential learning and examples of best practice.
- 6.2.8** It is clear from initial focus interviews with staff and students that some significant learning has happened occurred. Learning outcomes should be actively acknowledged, promoted and disseminated to all stakeholders as a key outcome of the project.
- 6.2.9** The learning experience of pupils is an area that merits further research. A case study analysis of the synergy between pupil engagement, experiential learning and community relations may reveal a pedagogy for dissemination to the wider educational community.

### **6.3 Training Provision**

- 6.3.1** Training programmes that equip staff with the necessary skills to confidently engage in a project on diversity cannot be delivered satisfactorily through minimal provision. Training programmes should be developed in the first instance to address the particular needs of the staff group and to facilitate learning through sustained, progressive provision.
- 6.3.2** Raising whole school awareness is necessary to sustain the profile of the project within both schools. The nature and purpose of future whole school training should be considered realistically against desired outcomes. It is recommended that any review of whole school training should consider the following alternative methodologies to engage and inform staff :
- The introduction of regular information sessions could be considered as an alternative option. To be effective however, this strategy will require compliance with an agreed reporting strategy that gives visibility to the project within school staff meetings.
  - It is acknowledged that exceptional closure days must accommodate a variety of school issues and that school timetabling is, by necessity, restrictive. Senior management should, in consultation with the external facilitator and relevant staff, identify the maximum opportunity for meaningful contact for all staff members during these times.
- 6.3.3** The specific training needs of co-ordinators and core staff should be clearly identified by both schools, in consultation and agreement with the external facilitator and other stakeholders. It is recommended that any review of training for co-ordinators and core team members should include a development strategy and associated action plan that articulates a commitment to ongoing support. The purpose and desired outcome of each training programme should be agreed in consultation with the external facilitator.
- 6.3.4** Consideration should be given to the potential merits of cascaded training to promote greater ownership amongst staff members. The benefits of a cascade model should be considered against the limitations on individual teachers' time. The co-ordinators will have a key role in the development of a strategic plan. This will have implications in the development of the job specifications for the co-ordinators' posts.
- 6.3.5** Any revised training programme should include the development of a clear implementation, dissemination and evaluation strategy that fosters a culture of reflection and facilitates a system of feedback to inform future training. This is an opportunity to communicate to training agencies that school-based programmes need to include a component on how to transfer skills into everyday classroom practice. In other words, training should support the development of an education for diversity pedagogy.

## **6.4 Staffing**

- 6.4.1** Staff motivation should be a recognised and implicit factor in the overall management of the project. The contribution of staff should be acknowledged and encouraged within a supportive and collegiate environment. This extends to the induction and integration of any additional members of staff.
- 6.4.2** The commitment of the core team is essential for the implementation of the project. It is recommended that the existing remit of the core team be reviewed to clearly define roles and responsibilities on an individual and collaborative basis, and to reinforce ownership within the hierarchy of the school.
- 6.4.3** The role of co-ordinator is pivotal to the project, and the recruitment process should reflect the importance of the position.
- 6.4.4** Recruitment procedures for the position of co-ordinator should not be formalised on an ad hoc basis. Future job specifications should clearly articulate essential skills and criteria within the infrastructure of the project and the wider school hierarchy. Criteria for consideration could include number of years teaching experience, seniority within the school, demonstrable evidence in the planning of community relations programmes and knowledge of administrative and budgetary procedures.
- 6.4.5** The job specification for the position of co-ordinator should be developed and agreed in consultation with relevant funding bodies, staff, principals, members of the Boards of Governors, DE and WELB.
- 6.4.6** It is recommended that the job description for the post of co-ordinator include pre-agreed conditions of devolved ownership and responsibility within the hierarchical management structures of the schools. Regulatory arrangements should reinforce the status of the role within both schools to reduce unnecessary duplication in management.
- 6.4.7** It is recommended that both schools consider the feasibility of recruiting one full-time co-ordinator. The holistic benefits of a single appointment should be considered in comparison to the current bi-partisan arrangement.
- 6.4.8** Should existing arrangements for the role of co-ordinator continue, it is recommended that the time allocated to the post is explicitly directed towards the fulfilment of whole school objectives and is accountable and transparent within the broad remit of the project.



**6.4.9** A job description for all members of staff and members of Boards of Governors involved in the project should be considered. These should be developed in consultation with staff members to ensure that those involved operate within pre-agreed job specifications. Job descriptions should be reviewed as part of any annual review and amended according to changes in the programme and/or staff. The role of all staff should be detailed within a project action plan.

## **6.5 Recommendations for Key Stakeholders**

### **6.6 Strategies for Implementation**

**6.6.1** Individual stakeholders should critically examine the nature and extent of their responsibility and contribution to the development, delivery and monitoring of the Education for Diversity project. Deficiencies in ensuring accountability should be addressed immediately. A series of accountability measures for policy makers and funding agencies should be identified as part of an agreed Code of Practice. This should be disseminated to schools and key stakeholders.

**6.6.2** There is a need for greater clarity in terminology. For example, the term *whole school* is often used at both school and stakeholder level. Does *whole school* mean all staff? This may not be realistic or even possible as dissenters will always be present. The term *core school* may offer a more accurate definition. A definition of *whole school*, *core school* and *diversity* should be clearly articulated in supporting literature for schools. A vision statement, agreed by partner schools, that reflects the definition within the particular context of individual communities should be the key requisite of future applications. This supports one of the key recommendations in the review of SCRP.

**6.6.3** The philosophy of a whole school programme should be visibly apparent in all aspects of school life. Schools should be required, in the first instance, to produce and disseminate individual mission statements that demonstrate an existing ethos to promote the core values of respect for self and others, respect for diversity, understanding and self-awareness.

**6.6.4** Stakeholders should consider the merits of implementing a whole school strategy and critically examine and justify the learning benefits that are offered beyond regular community relations initiatives. The definition of a whole school programme could be construed as misleading, particularly when staff and pupil involvement is limited. Consideration should be given to a re-definition that is representative of what is an evolving process. This is not to diminish the purpose of a whole school programme in any way; its aim, rather, is to encourage schools to work progressively towards whole school involvement utilising existing resources. Several options exist :

- Consideration should be given in the first instance to the contribution of community relations programmes that already exist between partner schools. Stakeholders should investigate strategies to integrate and, where possible and/or necessary, adapt established programmes within the context of a whole school programme.
- A series of 3 short programmes (over one term each) may be a preferable management strategy. Demands on teacher time could be reduced if direct involvement was limited to one term, creating flexibility for planning and preparation. This approach would require good communication amongst teachers to agree an order of delivery and the role of the co-ordinator would be crucial.
- Consideration should be given to the role and contribution of Citizenship Education in a whole school programme. The cohort of teachers who undertake the training programme delivered by ELBs, should be actively encouraged to contribute to whole school planning and implementation.

**6.6.5** The working relationship between funding agencies, DE and ELBs should be a strategic partnership that recognises and utilises the expertise of individual stakeholders. Lack of engagement by one or more party could significantly reduce the potential for meaningful collaboration and undermine the direction and delivery of a whole school programme. It is recommended that an agreed remit be disseminated between all stakeholders prior to the commencement of a programme. A co-ordinated communication system that informs facilitation, monitoring and dissemination should be established prior to and throughout the duration. This should be reviewed at regular intervals.

**6.6.6** Stakeholders should conduct an independent audit of school capacity to implement a whole school programme. This should include an assessment of historical and experiential involvement in community relations work. Any audit should also include a rigorous investigation of potential changes to the profile or constituency of the schools that may affect implementation.

**6.6.7** The logistics and manpower required to deliver a programme within the demands and constraints of a school timetable should be included in a capacity audit. Alternative options should be considered for schools who cannot fully meet capacity requirements :

- Schools should be encouraged initially to streamline a whole school plan and associated programmes to realistically match staff capacity;
- Schools should be encouraged to consider in the first instance a progressive 2-year or 3-year programme with a select number of classes that facilitates a gradual transition to whole school involvement.

- Schools should be encouraged to consider the productivity of a dedicated training programme prior to commencing whole school delivery. The potential to increase staff capacity in the first instance should be investigated with all stakeholders.

**6.6.8** A whole school approach implies the involvement and commitment of all staff. Consideration should be given to the potentially detrimental impact that lack of engagement may have on the capacity to deliver a whole school programme. Remedial and intervention strategies should be agreed and developed by all stakeholders and included in guidance materials to schools.

## **6.7 Guidance for Schools**

**6.7.1** It is recommended that whole school programmes be developed, in the first instance, in consideration of the perceived community relations benefits for the pupils involved.

**6.7.2** Schools should be required to develop an institutional plan that articulates the whole school dimension with clear reference to pupil participation, programme content and the range and extent of involvement with staff members, parents and the wider community.

**6.7.3** Schools should be required to conduct a baseline audit of their capacity to deliver a whole school initiative prior to the submission of an application for funding. This should include historical evidence of staff engagement and experience in the delivery of community relations programmes. The audit should be included as part of the application process. An agreement should be reached with stakeholders if the school audit differs from the independent audit.

**6.7.4** Schools should be required to identify perceived training needs as part of the application process. A needs assessment should be representative of intended outcomes and should be conducted in consultation with all staff members.

**6.7.5** A proposed action plan should be a pre-requisite of the application process. Schools should be advised that plans clearly articulate the aim and purpose of a whole school programme. The action plan should outline the remit of individual programmes and, crucially, identify the inclusive community relations agenda that they will collectively promote. The inclusion of realistic and achievable targets within the parameters of existing school capacity should be clearly outlined.

**6.7.6** It is recommended that access to appropriate support and guidance be available for all schools. Schools should be made aware of the relevant advisory personnel within educational departments and funding agencies, and contact should be established prior to the start of a programme. The production of a handbook for teachers may facilitate this.

**6.7.7** INSET training and associated staff development provided by ELBs should be utilised and seen as an extension of in-house training capacity. The expertise provided by Board Officers (and, in certain ELBs, the dedicated Field Officer) should be promoted as part of the strategic partnership between stakeholders.

## **6.8 Provision for Training**

**6.8.1** Lack of training for some members of senior management – notably principals and Boards of Governors – should be addressed promptly, not least to fulfil the aims of the original proposal. The hierarchical structures of both schools should reflect the training experiences of other staff members. This is crucial to the central premise of whole school involvement and to reinforce the profile of a programme within schools and in the wider educational community. The deficiency in the provision of training on controversial issues for principals and members of the Board of Governors should be addressed within the context of the educational review of community relations practice. It is recommended that DE and ELBs consider the introduction of dedicated senior management training as part of their review strategy. This recommendation supports the earlier suggestion in the Education for Diversity Consultation Document that *the management board of the Regional Training Unit (RTU) should consider and implement arrangements to ensure that senior personnel in schools and, in particular, head teachers and governors are adequately trained in promoting EMU and have opportunities to develop supportive management strategies in this area.*

**6.8.2** Alternative training provision for whole staff and core team members should be considered within the context of each school partnership. Several options exist :

- The introduction of group training, whereby teachers are trained in groups rather than as a whole staff. In some schools it may be easier to streamline the pre-agreed needs of a group into a more meaningful training session; this could also minimise disruption to pupil learning.
- Schools with a restricted capacity should be encouraged to undertake a dedicated training programme with external facilitators prior to the start of the programme.
- Evidence of previous involvement in externally facilitated training should be a condition of the application process. The nature and extent of training should be stipulated in future guidelines.

**6.8.3** All future training programmes should be required to include developmental strategies that facilitate reflection and evaluation and that will inform future training.

## **6.9 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 6.9.1** Monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure progression and impact. Any monitoring and evaluation strategy should inform at school, Board and external stakeholder level.
- 6.9.2** A steering committee should be a constitutional requirement of whole school programmes. The remit of the committee should be agreed in consultation with schools and all stakeholders. An agenda and minutes should be circulated prior to and after each meeting. Representatives of the steering committee could include : principals (2), governors (4), co-ordinators (2), representation from the core team (2), student representatives (2), parents (2), IFI (1), DE (1), WELB (1), independent (1).
- 6.9.3** Efficient monitoring instruments should be developed in consultation with all stakeholders to clarify the terms and conditions of funding and to promote consistent practice. This should be disseminated to all schools.
- 6.9.4** It is recommended that accountability measures be articulated as a condition of funding. Measures should be agreed in consultation with all stakeholders. Remedial action to address non-adherence to the conditions of funding should be clearly stipulated to all schools.
- 6.9.5** Schools should be required to maintain transparent financial and administrative systems that can be accessed on request by stakeholders. Intervention strategies to help schools that request guidance should be investigated.
- 6.9.6** Accountability measures should also include an agreed timetable for the submission and dissemination of interim and summative reports. Reporting requirements should be included as a condition of funding. The purpose of an interim report that informs an existing programme and a summative report that critically reflects on experiential learning should be explicitly outlined in funding guidelines.

## **6.10 Funding Procedures**

- 6.10.1** Funding agencies should carefully consider the *value for money* of proposed projected budgets. It is inevitable that a whole school programme will accrue increased costs. All costs, however, should be critically assessed within the context of what schools are seeking to achieve. Funders should consider the implication of developing programmes on a capped budget as a benchmark for future practice.
- 6.10.2** Stakeholders should consider a funding process that recognises, in the first instance, schools that have a well established partnership and have demonstrated consistent good practice in

community relations work. An established link, with strong professional relationships can significantly reduce the preparatory phase of a programme and minimise operational costs. Such partnerships may be in a position to introduce a more progressive programme that aims to reach all students and places diversity at the core of school activity.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The future of the Education for Diversity project is now at the end of its preparatory phase. The two new principals and staff from both schools have expressed a commitment to its continuation, although acknowledge the shifting educational and demographic landscape. There exists then an opportunity between now and 2007 to develop a successful model of whole school practice drawn from the learnings of the preparatory phase and the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

The Education for Diversity project is clearly innovative and has the potential to become sustainable in terms of the partnership and in terms of the learning model it can offer to other schools, who may be considering the theme of diversity as part of their core development.

The clearest evidence of the projects success was derived from the focus interviews with the principals and young students. The students, previously regarded as being ill-served by the statutory curriculum, were confident, articulate and aware young citizens. These students are no longer dismissive of learning; now they are committed to personal development and achievement. They understand their community and recognise the issues that both they and the broader community will face in the future. These *young achievers* are the success story of the Education for Diversity project. It is clear these students have gained significant learning benefits from a meaningful community relations experience. There is not yet the evidence to illustrate the *how* and the *why* of the learning process. It is this crucial gap in information that provides a major research reason for continuing the project; it is also the reason that it should be re-established in a more focused way.

Research into educational innovation indicates that the role of the principal is key. What research has not yet investigated and published is an effective process for transferring the vision of dedicated principals into whole school or core school activity. Within the two schools the commitment of the principals was clear. The principals saw their role and their success (which indeed it was) in the development of the proposal and in securing initial funding. Yet it was the implementation of the proposal, its recording, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination that had the potential to provide real learning.

Taking the key recommendations already contained in this report, the researchers recommend a strategy to take the work forward in a way that allows it to become sustainable and to emerge as a learning

model. The strategy is developed around four key areas : the establishment of a steering group; the language of the project; the development of an action plan until 2007; and financial considerations.

### **1. Steering Group**

A properly considered and constituted steering group should be established. The group should arrange to meet as soon as possible. Membership should include current new principals and vice principals of both schools, an active governor from each school, EMU coordinators, Citizenship coordinators, Education for Diversity coordinators and representatives from WELB, DE and IFI. The membership and terms of reference of the steering group should be negotiated with the current stakeholders. The group should meet twice per year in order to receive a copy of, and make comments on, the schools' diversity strategy for the year ahead. They should also be provided with a progress report and summary evaluation at end of each year.

The first meeting of the steering group should consider the implications of this evaluation and to make recommendations for next steps. This could be an opportunity for the two departing principals to make a presentation on the vision and strategy of the initial project and to detail strengths, weaknesses and opportunities from **their** perspective.

### **2. The Language of the Project**

The language used to explain, define and disseminate the project needs clarity. Clarity of understanding will help with the achievement of objectives, but also with the dissemination of the project to the wider community. The project should be disseminated through visual display in both schools, on the internet (ELB or NINE may offer a way forward) and through the publicity and guidance materials supplied by both schools to parents. Additionally, an Education for Diversity handbook should be developed. The handbook could collate the learnings of this evaluation and serve as a guide document to the wider school community.

The development of a series of unambiguous and aspirational statements that provide an understanding of the principle and, crucially, the practice of the project should be one of the first tasks of the Steering Group. Greater definition is needed to explain to pupils, staff, parents and the wider community what is meant by *whole school* and *diversity*.

### **3. Action Plan September 2004-June 2007**

Once the Steering Group has established clarity of aspiration and definition, it can then begin to work towards clearly defining an action plan that contains a series of broad, realistic goals to be reached by

2007. This period of time could be characterised by the progressive development of Education for Diversity as a greater aspect of the schools' core business, with an aim to draw in more pupils, more staff and more community.

The two schools should consider the development of annual objectives that contribute to the overall goals for 2007. The objectives would be achieved through the delivery of a range of projects and core school activities. This will necessarily require the identification of staff with specific responsibility for delivery, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination. Monitoring and evaluation should not be perceived as a burden on the teaching workload; but rather an opportunity for recording best practice that can be shared amongst all staff and disseminated within the wider educational community.

The action plan should include a detailed and transparent management/facilitation structure that clearly articulates the contribution of Governors, Principals, Vice Principals, Education for Diversity coordinator(s), EMU Coordinators, Citizenship teachers, other teaching staff, non teaching staff, past pupils, parents and the wider community.

With the completion of the action plan it will be appropriate to identify the *training needs* of staff to ensure quality in delivery and monitoring, but also *training capacity* within the immediate staff resource of the project. There will clearly be training needs on a range of issues : induction of new staff, teaching controversial issues; and skills in monitoring, evaluation and dissemination. Some of this training will be sourced externally and will carry a cost. However there should be the opportunity to use existing in-house and ELB expertise to introduce a cascade model of training.

#### **4. Financial Considerations**

With the project clearly defined over a progressive three-year period, it will be appropriate to consider cost. It would be expected that cost should also be progressive. Funders may wish to consider a number of issues :

- By 2007 a revised diversity project should be in place. The scope and remit of the project should correspond with what will be a recurrent and realistic budget. The core project should be sustainable within this budget.
- In addition to the establishment of a sustainable Education for Diversity project that offers visible educational and community relations outcomes, a number of *added value* outcomes should be delivered by 2007 :
  - A training report that details the input required to develop a sustainable schools diversity partnership;
  - A report on the pedagogy (learning and teaching) within a range of educational contexts that was considered the most appropriate and/or successful for the delivery of a diversity programme;



- An evaluation report that provides guidance to other schools on the establishment of a meaningful and sustainable education for diversity project. The report should detail the learning experience of pupils, the profession development of staff, the strategy for delivering a core school/whole school approach and the role of the wider community;
- The project should gather evidence (training may be needed on research methodology). Meaningful evidence should include an identification of successful contributors, resources and pedagogy to the development of a school community that has an understanding and appreciation of diversity at its core.

In summary then, the researchers see real value in a strategy that :

- Clearly defines its mission and terms of reference;
- Has a clear direction and agreed objectives;
- Manages in a transparent and professional way;
- Implements a regular and focused system of monitoring and evaluation;
- Considers dissemination as an ongoing process;
- Considers sustainability as a target;
- Seeks partnership within the local community and within the broader educational community.