

David M. Tueran,
November 1987.

BRIEFING FOR MINISTER'S MEETING WITH DAVID ALTON MP

LINE TO TAKE

1. GOVERNMENT POLICY

a. Government's general policy on integrated education is that integrated education should be encouraged where there is a local wish for it but there can be no question of forcing integration on anyone who does not want it.

Government does not provide funds which could be seen as directly supporting the advocacy of integrated education nor does it support any school in the period before grant-aided status is approved.

b. New integrated schools wishing to be recognised as grant-aided schools must prove themselves over a period of time by attracting enough pupils to make them potentially viable. The Department would not insist on absolute viability - but rather that enrolment patterns and projections clearly indicate that the school will be viable in due course.

2. TRUST FUNDS FOR INTEGRATED EDUCATION - LOCAL CO-ORDINATING BODY

The Minister could indicate that he understands the Charitable Trusts supporting integrated education in NI [Nuffield Foundation, the Wates Foundation, etc] see a need for a co-ordinated approach to funding arrangements and that the Nuffield Foundation has managed to persuade all the integrated education bodies to form a group for the purpose of providing

INTEGRATED EDUCATION

LEGAL POSITION

1. In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the law requires, subject to certain provisos (for example, the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure), that pupils be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. There is no statutory bar to children of different religions being educated together. In law, every school in Northern Ireland, whether controlled (state) or voluntary, is open to pupils of any, or no religious affiliations.

POLICY

2. The Government's policy (and that of successive administrations in Northern Ireland) has been that integrated education should be encouraged wherever there is a local wish for it, and it will support practical proposals which it is satisfied reflect the wishes of local people and which do not involve undue public expenditure. However, there can be no question of forcing integration on anyone who does not want it and new integrated schools must prove their viability before they can be given grant-aided status.

CONTROLLED INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

3. The Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 (now Article 19 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986) was intended to facilitate the establishment in Northern Ireland of schools likely to be attended by pupils of different religious affiliation or cultural traditions. The Act made provision for existing schools, with the exception of controlled

nursery, grammar or special schools, to opt to become controlled integrated schools. Such schools would have a management committee composed of representatives of the Protestant Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, parents, teachers and Education and Library Boards. To date only one school, the Throne Controlled Primary School in North Belfast, has become a controlled integrated school (on 1 January 1982). However, the request for controlled integrated status was widely recognised as a means of avoiding closure rather than a genuine desire for integrated education. The Belfast Education and Library Board has now closed the school.

PRACTICAL OBSTACLES

4. There are a number of schools which are attended by pupils of different denominations. However, the fact is that most RC parents choose to send their children to schools under RC management (voluntary schools) while most Protestant children are enrolled at schools managed by the 5 Education and Library Boards (controlled schools) or by bodies other than the RC Church. A significant inhibiting factor is the traditional pattern of segregated housing in many areas in Northern Ireland. This trend has been consolidated in recent years. As schools are essentially local institutions reflecting the character of the communities which they serve, this represents a substantial practical obstacle to the development of integrated education.

SPONSORING ORGANISATIONS

5. There are 2 main groups sponsoring integrated education in Northern Ireland. These are All Children Together (ACT) and the Belfast Charitable Trust for Integrated Education. There are also several smaller organisations springing up, eg North Armagh Group for Integrated Education, the North Coast

Charitable Trust, South Ulster Group for Integrated Education. The longest established movement is ACT which sponsored Lagan College and now supports the Forge and a Primary School in Newcastle. BELTIE which emerged as a splinter organisation from ACT operates in Belfast, has similar objectives to ACT and some common membership. It supports Hazelwood Primary School and Hazelwood College. Details of existing maintained (3) and independent (4) integrated schools are shown in Annex 1.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

6. Both BELTIE and ACT have appointed Development Officers and ACT sought grant-aid from the Department of Education in respect of salary. While the Department was not prepared to offer grant assistance for the Development Officer post it did offer grant-aid of £5,000 per annum from its community relations budget to ACT in recognition of the contribution which ACT is making to improve community relations. BELTIE has not approached DENI about a similar grant.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

7. It is difficult to estimate the potential for further integrated schools in Northern Ireland. Two new schools opened in Banbridge and Portrush in September 1987 and details are also shown in Annex 1. It is also known that schools might be established in the Craigavon ^{and Danganoo} areas and an approach will probably be made to the Department in the near future for information.

GRANT-AIDED STATUS

8. The Department's policy is that new integrated schools, or indeed any

independent schools, wishing to be recognised as grant-aided schools must prove themselves over a period of time by attracting enough pupils to make them potentially viable. The Department does not insist on absolute viability and in relation to the 3 schools which have already received grant-aided status, a decision was based on their potential viability. Decisions in relation to other integrated schools will be taken on the same basis.

9. Statutory procedures have to be followed before a new grant-aided school may be established. These apply whether the proposal to set up the school is being made by a Board or by some other body. When the proposal is being made by a person other than the Board, it must be sent to the appropriate Board, which is then required to submit it to the Department together with its own comments. At the same time the Board must consult with other interested schools about the proposal and must publish notice of the proposal in the press. A period of 2 months is then allowed for anyone with an interest to make objections to the Department, with whom the decision of approval rests.

10. In considering such a proposal, the Department of Education would therefore have regard for the views of the appropriate Board and to any comments made by interested parties or individuals following publication of the proposal. In addition, the Department would also have to be satisfied that the school concerned was educationally viable. In general terms, the Department has suggested in its planning document, published in 1981, that a primary school in an urban area should have at least 200 pupils, and that an 11-16 secondary school should have some 600 pupils.

11. The granting of maintained status to integrated schools is an extremely sensitive issue, particularly with the existing school authorities. These decisions have to be made at a time when school enrolments, particularly in

the secondary sector, are falling rapidly and with a number of existing secondary schools being forced to either close or amalgamate. The situation is particularly sensitive in the Belfast area where the Education and Library Board undertook a major rationalisation programme which involved the closure, with considerable difficulty, of a number of its own controlled secondary schools. In these circumstances the Board viewed with concern the opening of new integrated schools and concern has also been expressed by school authorities about plans for new integrated schools in the rural areas of the Province.

NUFFIELD FOUNDATION

12. The Foundation was established in 1943 by William Richard Morris (Morris Motor Company) later Lord Nuffield. Its involvement with Integrated Education began in 1985 when it grant-aided the Forge Integrated Primary School. Since then the Foundation has provided substantial support by means of grants and interest free loans to integrated schools in the developing stages and also to the ACT for the salary of a Development Officer. Annex 2 provides a list of the grants made by the organisation up to February 1987.

13. DENI has established useful informal links with the Foundation at Assistant Director level and the Foundation keeps the Department informed of proposals coming before the Trust. On occasions DENI has provided general information about Government policy on integrated education and has given some advice in relation to research proposals before the Trust for support.

14. The foundation has reviewed its policy of support towards integrated education and has established 3 objectives to pursue:-

a. to seek additional funds towards integrated education, particularly from the United States;

b. to involve the integrated schools more fully in the planning of the Foundation's own expenditure. This is to try and achieve a co-ordinated approach to the funding arrangements and provide a more long-term indication of the availability of funds;

c. to try and achieve a single local body to provide a more effective means of distributing trust funds. This may be an amalgamation of ACT and BELTIE or the establishment of a representative steering body.

15. The Foundation is also thinking in terms of suggesting that Government should provide some form of matching funds to support integrated education in a more general sense accepting that it would be difficult for DENI to support integrated schools directly other than as maintained schools. This has still to be discussed at official level but it is not likely that support could be given in a way that would not be interpreted as direct support for independent integrated schools in their formative years or even as additional support to those which have achieved maintained status.

WATES FOUNDATION

16. This foundation was established in 1965 by the Wates family whose major commercial interest was in building. It provides grant of around £900,000 per annum usually in the range of £1,000-£10,000; larger grants can be made for special projects. The usual timespan is over 3 years. It concentrates mainly in the United Kingdom and the areas of interest are usually Social Needs, Health, Education and Environment. Particular interest is shown in urban

areas and with young people.

17. Details of the Foundation's interests in Northern Ireland are not fully clear but it is known that a number of community groups in the Belfast area have received small grants (£250) and a project in Poleglass received £10,000. It is also known that Sir John Morton has visited Northern Ireland on a number of occasions and has established contacts with the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust.

18. The Minister met Sir John Morton and Sir Alan Goodison of the Wates Foundation on 26 August 1987 to discuss integrated education in Northern Ireland. The Foundation is considering the possibility of grant-aiding integrated education projects and like the Nuffield Foundation favours a co-ordinated approach to the funding arrangements for integrated education.

CO-ORDINATING GROUP

19. The Nuffield foundation has managed to persuade all the integrated education bodies to form a group for the purpose of providing advice to Trusts about the criteria and priority to be attached to particular projects. The co-ordinating group comprises delegates from each integrated school and delegates from the following organisations:-

ACT

BELTIE

South Ulster Trust for Integrated Education

North Armagh Group for Integrated Education

North Coast Charitable Trust for Integrated Education

INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

LAGAN COLLEGE

Lagan College was the first truly integrated school to be established in Northern Ireland. Set up as an independent school in 1981 under the auspices of the All Children Together movement, its object is to provide inter-denominational all ability secondary education for boys and girls. Its initial intake was 28 and it has grown to a present enrolment of some 500 pupils divided roughly equally between Protestants and Roman Catholics. From 1 April 1984 the College has been recognised as a grant-aided voluntary maintained secondary school which means that the salaries of the teachers are paid in full by the Department, with other day-to-day running costs being met by the South-Eastern Education and Library Board. In addition, the College is eligible for 85% grant from the Department on approved capital expenditure. The College is presently operating from temporary accommodation on 2 sites but has plans for a phased co-ordinated development. The initial stage of this development is now underway at an estimated cost of £687,000 and DENI has offered grant-aid.

HAZELWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

This school was founded as an independent school in 1985 by a group of Protestant and Catholic parents in North Belfast with the active support of BELTIE. Maintained status was granted with effect from 1 January 1987 and the enrolment at January 1987 was 160, including 25 children at a nursery unit.

HAZELWOOD COLLEGE

This school opened in 1985 and the enrolment in September 1987 was 146. This is considerably lower than the minimum enrolment of 600 recommended by the Department for a viable urban 11-16 secondary school and is also lower than the enrolment at Lagan College when it was given maintained status in May 1984.

On 1 June BELB published a Development Proposal to provide for the recognition of Hazelwood College (which occupies the former Graymount Girls' Secondary School premises) as a grant-aided voluntary school providing secondary education for both boys and girls of all abilities. The statutory 2-month objection period has now expired and the Department is presently considering the Proposal. The BELB has expressed reservations about the development and there have also been objections by other schools.

FORGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Forge Primary School was founded as an independent school in 1985 under the auspices of ACT. It opened in September 1985 in the old Malone Primary School which was acquired from the Belfast Education and Library Board at a cost of £110,000. The enrolment at September 1987 was 120 (excluding the nursery section) and the school anticipates an enrolment of 200 by 1990. Maintained status was approved from 1 July 1987.

ALL CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SCHOOL NEWCASTLE

This school opened in September 1986 at 84 Dundrum Road, Newcastle. The enrolment then was 65 but is now 75. The school was registered as an Independent School in November 1986.

NUFFIELD FOUNDATION

Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland -
grants & loans at February 1987

July 1985

EDU/301 Forge Integrated Primary School, Belfast
Grant of £45,000 over two years towards running costs

July 1986

AT/8 All Children's Integrated Primary School, Newcastle
Co Down
Grant of £45,000 over two years towards running costs

AT/9 Hazelwood Primary School, Belfast
Grant of £34,500 over one year towards equipment and
running costs

AT/10 Hazelwood Primary School
Loan of £100,000 - (Interest free loan for purchase
of school premises)

EDU/301(a) Forge School
Loan of £110,000 - (interest free loan for purchase
of school premises)

December 1986

AT/21 All Children Together
Grant of £5,000 towards initial expenses of proposed
new integrated schools in Banbridge and Coleraine

January 1987

- AT/22 All Children Together
Grant of £16,586 over two years to meet salary of
development officer
- AT/23 Hazelwood College, Belfast
Grant of £49,602 over one year towards running costs
- AT/24 Hazelwood College, Belfast
Grant of £12,000 to meet interest charges on part of
bank loan for purchase of premises
- AT/25 Proposed Integrated School in Banbridge, Co Down
Loan of £125,000 - (interest free loan for purchase of
school premises)
- AT/26 Proposed integrated school in Coleraine, Co Antrim
Loan of £125,000 - (interest-free loan for purchase of
school premises)

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Two new integrated primary schools opened in September 1987 and have been provisionally registered as independent schools. Bridge Integrated School, Banbridge, has an enrolment of 75 pupils and Millstrand Integrated School, Portrush, 58 pupils. There has also been some discussions about the possibility of a school being promoted in the Craigavon area.