



Integration and Inclusion in Practice Policy

Article 3 -All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Signature of Chair of Board of Governors: _____

Ratified: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Signature of Integration Coordinator _____

Reviewed and updated: December 2025

Review due: December 2026

1. Introduction
2. School History
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4. Values of Integration and Inclusion
 - Equality
 - Faith and Values
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Appendix 1:

Provides information about links to the following:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Statement of Principles for Integrated Education

1. Introduction

As an integrated Primary School Roe Valley IPS has an embedded ethos based on the 4 core principles of integrated Education:

- Equality and diversity
- Child centred education
- A partnership with parents
- Christian ethos.

Roe Valley IPS has a clear shared vision and direction for the school that is communicated with all of the stakeholders, and our School Development Plan 25-28 cycle holds a range of specific Integration and Inclusion priorities. Roe Valley IPS prioritised an ethos of integration by appointing a marketing committee to lead the promotion and development of integration within the school, local and wider communities. Governors and staff were actively engaged and involved in leading equality, social responsibility, parental involvement and faith and values at a whole school level. Parental workshops facilitated by David Gardiner (Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education – NICIE), to explore the theme of 'Integrated Education in Practice'. One session involved the entire staff team, whilst the other involved parents and governors. This groundwork allows each stakeholder at every level to be actively involved in our integrated ethos and vision, 'Educating Together' and to move our school forward together. We work closely with NICIE with regards policy and training.

RVIPS is proud of the high level of commitment and plans for further provision for an ethos of integration. The school has committed to further developing a culture of continual improvement of the integration ethos through self-evaluation through embarking on the 'Excellence in Integrated Education Award' (EIEA) (2021) to quality assure how we deliver the Statement of Principles of Integrated Education - See Appendix 1.

The purpose of this document is:

- To make the Integrated Principles and Practice of the school clear and explicit
- To ensure Integration and Inclusion remains high on the agenda of the school community and to encourage continuous development and improvement of the schools Integration and Inclusion practice
- To enable the school to provide clear information to existing and prospective parents/children, and the wider public, which serves to both clarify the school's Integrated approach and encourage engagement and dialogue around these constantly evolving matters

2. School History

Integrated education can best be described as the bringing together in one school of pupils, staff and governors, in roughly equal numbers, from Protestant, Catholic, other faiths and none. It is about cultivating the individual's self-respect and therefore respect for other people and other cultures. Integrated Education means bringing children up to live as adults in a pluralist society, recognising what they hold in common as well as what separates them, and accepting both.

Roe Valley Integrated Primary School understands that every child has a unique set of qualities and talents. A child-centred approach gives equal value to all children and takes into consideration their needs and abilities when organising the curriculum and determining teaching strategies. Children will be encouraged to value and respect each other's traditions and beliefs.

Roe Valley Integrated Primary School is a vibrant, inclusive learning community where every child is nurtured to grow with confidence, compassion, and curiosity. Together we are committed to effective, child-centred learning in a safe, happy and respectful environment that leads to improvement. Together we have a team spirit that successfully collaborates with our school and the local and wider community. We celebrate diversity, foster positive relationships, and empower our pupils to value their own and others' cultures, preparing them to thrive and make a meaningful difference in a changing world. Our school community is rooted in the principles of Integrated Education: Equality, Faith & Values, Parental Involvement, and Social Responsibility.

The Integrated Education Act 2022

Strangford MLA Kellie Armstrong brought forward a Private Member's Bill which broadened the definition of Integrated Education and increased the scope of the statutory duty.

She wanted to reflect the changing demographic makeup of Northern Ireland which is evidenced in the results of the 2021 Census. The definition is now:

- (a) those of different cultures and religious beliefs and of none, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons;
- (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not; and
- (c) those of different abilities.

and the duty has been modified "to encourage, facilitate and support"

The Act also includes the provision for the Department to bring forward a strategy which reflects the new statutory duty.

NICIE and RVIPS look forward to seeing the Act being implemented in the coming years.

3. School Vision, Mission Statement, Values

Ethos

Roe Valley Integrated Primary School is a vibrant, inclusive learning community where every child is nurtured to grow with confidence, compassion, and curiosity.

Together we are committed to effective, child-centred learning in a safe, happy and respectful environment that leads to improvement.

Together we have a team spirit that successfully collaborates with our school, local and wider community - we celebrate diversity, foster positive relationships, and empower our pupils to value their own and others' cultures, preparing them to thrive and make a meaningful difference in a changing world.

Our school community is rooted in the principles of Integrated Education: Equality, Faith & Values, Parental Involvement, and Social Responsibility.

Our Vision - *'Educating Together'*

Roe Valley's Mission

At Roe Valley, our vision is clear – 'Educating Together' is at the forefront of everything we do.

R – Respect and Relationships – To have respect for self, others and our community.

O – Opportunity for All - To provide equal opportunities for every child to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally in a nurturing and inclusive environment. Opening hearts and minds through meaningful learning together.

E – Empowerment of children and teams – To empower children to become confident, capable learners with high self-esteem.

V - Values at the Heart - To ensure our school values are present in our children, colleagues, parents/carers and governors.

A – Aspirational Learners – To achieve excellence through high expectations, support and challenge for all.

L - Listening and Learning Together – To shape positive futures together.

L – Leadership at all levels – To aspire to purposeful leadership that empowers improvement and builds capacity.

E – Engagement in Partnership – To promote partnership, mutual understanding and to enrich learning, health and wellbeing.

Y - Young people prepared - To contribute positively to a shared and inclusive society.

I – Integration and Inclusion - To celebrate diversity and promote mutual respect by fostering a community where children from all backgrounds learn together in harmony.

P – Personal Growth and Potential - To support each child in discovering and developing their unique talents, encouraging confidence, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

S – Safe and Supportive Environment - To ensure a safe, caring, and stimulating/inclusive setting where children feel valued, supported with wellbeing, and empowered to succeed.

4. Values of Integrated Education

The Integration and Inclusion practice of RVIPS is informed from a number of important sources and key values. Primary among these are the four core principles of Integrated Education - **Equality, Faith and Values, Parental Involvement** and **Social Responsibility** – representing the cornerstones of the integrated ethos.

The principles of **Equity, Diversity and Interdependence¹ (EDI)** are also regarded as important, and both the practice and the supporting policy of RVIPS has been further influenced and informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Northern Ireland Equality Legislation (See Appendix 1)

Our School Values

Friendship: We build strong, caring relationships.

Respect: We treat everyone with *kindness* and understanding.

Inclusion: Everyone is welcome and valued.

Community: We work together and help each other.

Aspiration: We always try our best and encourage others to do the same - it is okay to make a mistake.

Acceptance: We accept and appreciate our differences.

Diversity: We celebrate our different backgrounds and beliefs.

Equality: We feel like we belong.

Equity: We seek fairness for all, and we all succeed.

Honesty: We are truthful and trustworthy.

Responsibility: We look after ourselves, each other, and our world

Integrity: We are true to our values in all we say and do, we make good choices.

RVIPS seeks to demonstrate its distinctiveness, vision and Integrated Ethos through a commitment to these values and principles, which are further elaborated and related to RVIPS below.

Core principles of Integrated Education

Equality

RVIPS promotes equality, sharing and learning between and within the diverse groups that comprise the school community.

- Equality is reflected in the school admissions criteria. Work to achieve religious / community balance is related not only to pupils but also to staff and governors
- Equality is reflected in school policies and teaching and learning. The Integrated and Inclusive ethos is reinforced through PDMU (Personal Development & Mutual Understanding) in the primary curriculum

- Equality is reflected in the School Curriculum:
E.g. PE – there is and will continue to be provision for a wide range of sports, such as Gaelic games / rugby / hockey, etc, to reflect the diversity within the school community and enable children to try-out and participate in activities they might otherwise feel excluded from
E.g. Literacy or History – texts will be carefully chosen to ensure that a wide / full range of viewpoints are explored
- Equality is reflected in how the school approaches and manages sensitive social, cultural, religious or political events. Provision will be made, where possible, to enable children at key stages and / or the entire school community to explore, experience and learn from a diverse range of such events and occasions, E.g. sporting events (such as All Ireland county GAA victory, European / World Cup soccer games, wearing particular and historically contentious team shirts), State funerals, Remembrance Day, commemoration of the Easter Rising, Ash Wednesday arrangements, Harvest etc. Roman Catholic pupils receive preparation for key sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation if they elect to receive these.
- Equality is reflected in how every individual is encouraged and supported to feel secure in demonstrating aspects of their identity regardless of social or cultural background, ability, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, E.g. Non uniform days that explore and express diversity, celebration of events of personal, cultural or religious significance, explicit permission given and support for those who wish to wear the poppy or shamrock or other non-offensive symbols of religious and/or cultural affiliation, etc
- Equality is reflected in how the schools Uniform Policy – review - which regulates and facilitates individuality, diversity and mutual responsibility (e.g. Health and Safety) in regard to matters such as the wearing of religious accessories, jewellery etc
- RVIPS strive for equality across the entire school community as it aspires to optimum academic achievement for all, within an all-ability, co-educational and Integrated framework that provides equal access and support / care for all

Faith and Values

- RVIPS provides Religious Education in accordance with the Department of Education and NICIE guidelines. While essentially Christian in ethos, we seek to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged, and accepted as equally valued members of the school community
- RVIPS observes a range of different celebrations and seeks to acknowledge significant religious and cultural events, which are representative of other faiths. We also

encourage selected religious / community leaders, who respect our ethos, to visit to share their own views and experiences and / or participate in worship.

- RVIPS uses school assemblies to explore and reflect on different religious and / or cultural events and explore key elements of the 6 main world religions
- RVIPS supports and facilitates those who wish to prepare for particular sacramental milestones or events, E.g. First Communion
- RVIPS supports pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in specific religious activities through liaison and providing appropriate and agreed alternatives

Parental Involvement

The support and commitment of parents has been a fundamentally important element for the development of Integrated Education, and remains so.

- RVIPS maintains significant levels of parental representation on the Board of Governors (in accordance with legislative requirements and structures).
- RVIPS works to sustain and further develop effective parental involvement in the life of the school, at all levels, E.g. Board of Governors, Parents & Friends of RVIPS and seeking parent's views on key school policy or practice issues
- RVIPS ensures that parents (and prospective parents) are made fully aware of the Integrated Ethos, through specific reference to Integration and our ethos with written information provided for parents
- RVIPS is cognisant of the need to provide school related information in a range of formats and languages, E.g. Braille, enlarged text and home languages, to meet the needs of the parent population of the school, and will take all reasonable measures to do so

Social Responsibility

- RVIPS delivers the curriculum on an all - ability and inclusive basis to all of its pupils. It respects the uniqueness of every pupil and acknowledges their entitlement to personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development in the attainment of their individual potential, and places a particular emphasis on creating a 'safe' learning environment and nurturing self confidence and self-respect
- RVIPS uses and promotes non violent methods of conflict resolution (eg. peer mediation, buddy systems)

- RVIPS supports and promotes a wide range of charities and causes, selected in order to reflect the Integrated Ethos of the school. Pupils are therefore encouraged to be aware of and seek, where possible, to support / help those less fortunate than themselves
- RVIPS is open to being used for appropriate community events, organised by groups supporting the integrated ethos. In this way the school is keen to be considered and used as a shared civic space. Furthermore, RVIPS is an active member of the wider community and will seek to play a meaningful and responsible role in the wider community development and capacity building through continued partnership with community groups such as LCDI, Dry Arch as well as CCAGBC (Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council).
- RVIPS actively engages with other Integrated schools through APTIS and the Integrated Schools Teachers Committee, School Improvement Integrated Cluster Groups etc.

Equity, Diversity and Interdependence - EDI

It is further proposed that the principles of 'Equity, Diversity and Interdependence' underpin a just and inclusive society.

- Equity is about ensuring that all sections of society have equal opportunities to participate in economic, political and social life through the addressing and redressing of inequalities - fairness
- Diversity is about acknowledging how our differences as individual human beings and as members of groups can improve the quality of our lives
- Interdependence is about recognising that we are shaped by our relationships, and that our potential as human beings and as a society is dependent on the quality of our relationships with one another

At RVIPS we believe this means we should seek to:

- Actively include those from marginalised backgrounds and minority perspectives (**Equity**)
- Value the diversity of local communities and give space, expression and respect to the unique contributions of all our children (**Diversity**)
- Develop a relational understanding of our place and purpose in the community (**Interdependence**)

5. Integration and Inclusion in Practice

Balance of Pupils (diversity in community/religious/ethnic/class background)

Principles: Intentionally diverse; valuing diverse experiences and perspectives; actively seeking learning and personal & group development opportunities that recognise the diversity within the school, the community and beyond; committed to the active recruitment of pupils in order to work towards and achieve community/religious balances as described by NICIE and DE.

Current approach: The school's admissions policy reflects its Integrated nature. RVIPS is committed to educating Protestant, Catholic and 'Other' children together, and strives to maintain a balanced enrolment, with a minimum of 40% of pupils from the Protestant tradition, 40% from the Catholic tradition and up to 20% from Other traditions (in accordance with the Statement of Principles of NICIE).

Balance of Staff and Governors (diversity in community/religious/ethnic/class background)

Principles: Intentionally diverse; valuing diverse experiences and perspectives; actively seeking to include the views, interests and needs of minority perspectives in the staff and governance structures of the school community; committed to the active recruitment of staff and Governors in order to work towards and achieve community/religious balances as described by NICIE and DE.

Current approach: RVIPS ensures (at recruitment and through on-going in-service training and support) that all staff embrace and support the principles and practice of Integrated Education. The school aspires to a balance of staff across the whole school, in-line with the 40/40/20 recommendations of NICIE. The same is true of Governors, with appropriate attention being paid in both instances to a necessary and healthy gender balance, and representation of skills and experience.

Integrated Education

Principles: Deliberate provision of an ethnically/religiously diverse and balanced school community; Provision of creative and supportive learning for children around issues of cultural, political and religious diversity (i.e. *learning with and from each other*); Clear and explicit communication about the school's Integrated and Inclusive values and approaches to both parents and the wider community.

Current approach: RVIPS is an intentional and planned Integrated school, which encourages and supports pupils and staff to explore, value and seek to learn from ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The Integrated nature of RVIPS is both explicit (*deliberately explored and expressed through the curriculum and other planned activities*) and implicit (*found in the relationships and ways of relating to each other that have developed and continue to evolve within the Integrated Ethos of the school*). RVIPS ensures that the whole school has opportunity to review and refresh its Integrated Ethos through the provision of training (e.g. via NICIE) and inter-school activities (e.g. Audits)

Christian Ethos

Principle: In-line with the NICIE Statement of Principles, RVIPS “*is essentially Christian in character...and shall provide a Christian rather than a secular approach and context*”.

Current approach: As such RVIPS teaches the prescribed (DE) Christian curriculum, with a particular focus on exploring other world religions. Provision is made for any children who wish to prepare for the Christian sacraments. Local clergy/ministers from all denominations are invited to contribute to whole school assemblies, as well as representatives from the Humanist community.

Provision is also made for any child whose parents request that their children not participate in any of the religious events or activities of the school community through liaison and partnership with parents.

Sport

Principle: Deliberate provision of a diverse range of sporting opportunities to reflect the diversity of the local community and beyond

Current approach: RVIPS provides sport and PE in-line with the prescribed (DE) curriculum. Additionally, RVIPS provides extra-curricular PE and sports related opportunities designed to enable the pupils to engage in PE and sports related activities that are new to them and representative of communities other than their own.

Symbols (of cultural, religious or ethnic significance/affiliation)

Principle: Whilst RVIPS is conscious that some symbols and/or emblems may be perceived as controversial, it is also keen to create and nurture an environment within the school where individuals feel able to wear/display symbols or emblems of religious or cultural significance, that are important to them, without fear. As such, the whole school community is encouraged to be curious and seek understanding, and those who wish to wear any symbols or emblems, which might be perceived as controversial, are encouraged to do so mindful of the potential impact of what they wear and prepared to engage constructively with their colleagues and pupils.

Current approach: Explicit permission exists within the school’s community for individual pupils and/or staff to wear/display symbols and/or emblems that represent their affiliations or beliefs and may have particular religious or cultural significance for them.

Symbols or emblems that are deemed by the Board of Governors to be inappropriate or sectarian are not allowed to be worn or displayed.

Pupils are permitted to express their individuality through the wearing of Sport’s Tops at specified times or on specific days.

Events (of cultural, religious or ethnic significance)

Principle: RVIPS is committed to providing pupils with a diverse range of opportunities to explore and learn from and about events that have some social, cultural and/or religious significance within the local community and, if appropriate, more widely in society.

Current approach: RVIPS provides pupils with a diverse range of opportunities to explore and learn from and about events that have some social, cultural and/or religious significance within the local

community and, if appropriate, more widely in society. These may include: St Patrick's Day; Remembrance Day Services; Christmas; Easter; British Royal events (e.g. Platinum Jubilee); Irish Presidential events (e.g. visit); All-Ireland GAA Final; Commonwealth Games; etc.

Appendix 1