

SHARED EDUCATION

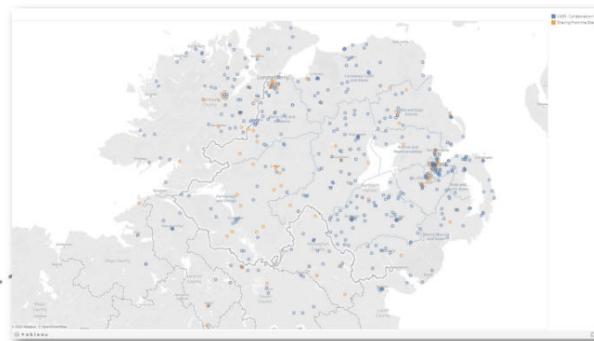


The €33.1m PEACE IV Shared Education projects, delivered across Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, have to date benefited

482 pre-schools/schools i.e. 98 pre-schools and 384 primary/and post-primary schools exceeding PEACE IV target (Target: 350).

Almost 1,500 practitioners/teachers have already completed training and now have the capacity to facilitate Shared Education (Target 2,100 by 2023).

By its conclusion, Shared Education will have benefited 144,000 children.



Thank you to all the pre-schools and schools for leading the way in Shared Education.



Educational Benefits



Access to a wider education/ curriculum experience. Facilitating the sharing of ideas and good practice between education providers.

Societal Benefits



Equipping education providers and children with the skills and attitudes needed to promote a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding, achieved through regular, sustained contact, and learning with those from different community backgrounds and between pre-schools/schools and the wider community.

Economic Benefits



Making more effective and efficient use of limited equipment and resources.

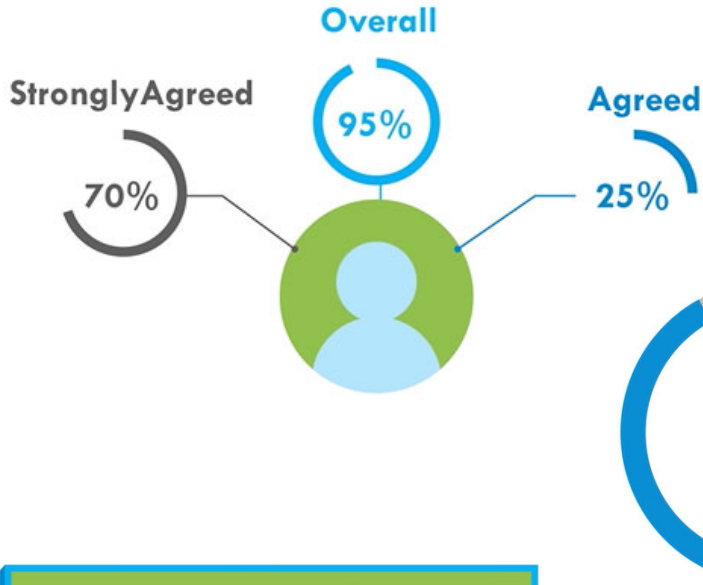
€4.2M
 SHARING FROM THE START (SFTS) INVOLVING EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

€28.9M
 COLLABORATION AND SHARING IN EDUCATION (CASE) INVOLVING PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Children

Educational Benefits

Almost all (95%) agreed that CASE/SFTS has led to **improved educational outcomes** for participating children by providing access to **a wider education/ curriculum experience.**



Those that 'Strongly Agreed' or 'Agreed' with statement: -



Allowed children to do activities they wouldn't have been able to do if there was no Shared Education.



Improved children's confidence.



Improved children's communication skills.

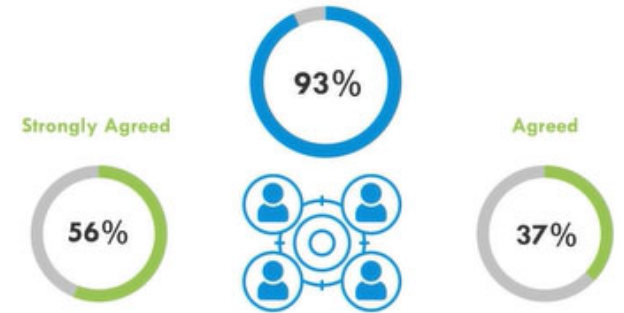


Improved children's social skills.

Cross-Community Friendships



Children have a greater sense of the wider community for example, explore the wider community through shared learning, knowledge of different areas in the locality, travelling on a bus, customs, festivals, celebrations etc.



Has led to children making friends in the shared classroom, with teachers observing social development and many close relationships emerging over the duration of the programme.

Dealing with Differences



Children can describe ways that they are similar and different to others in a shared classroom.



Allowed children to meet other adults and become comfortable with them.



Children feel comfortable and at ease when in their partner pre-school/school.



That these friendships extended into home/community life.

Teachers

Those that 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with statement: -

96% agreed that involvement in CASE/SFTS has enhanced their ability and confidence to lead Shared Education initiatives.



Enhanced teaching and learning in your pre-school or school.



Provided opportunities for peer support and sharing good practice.



Improved professional teaching skills and knowledge.

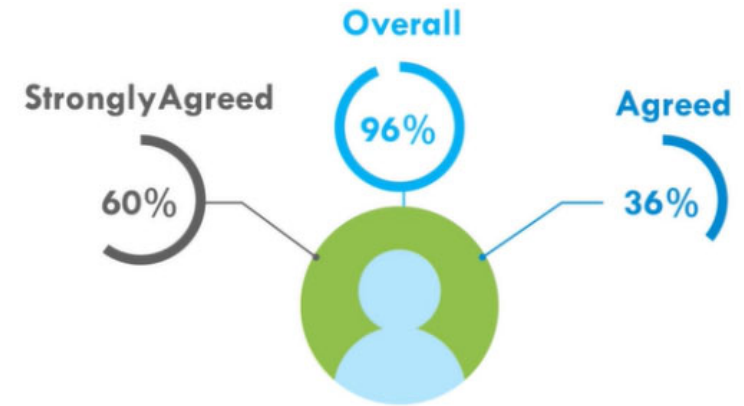


Increased access to curriculum resources.

Increased access to external professional expertise.



Increased access to CPD opportunities and training.



For practitioners/teachers, improved cross-community understanding and relationships.

Pre-school/School/Governors/Parents

Overall

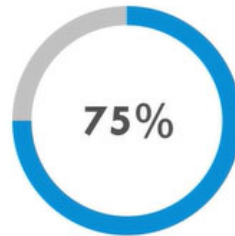
Strongly Agreed



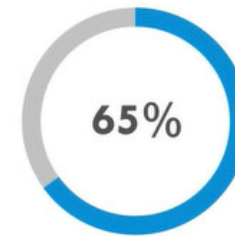
Agreed



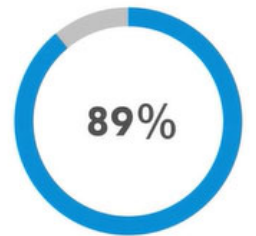
Agreed that there has been increased integration of our pre-school/school within the wider community.



Agreed that there has been increased opportunities for cross-community engagement for parents.



Agreed that feedback from Boards of Governors /Management was very positive (41%) or positive (48%).



Problem Solving in Numeracy was a key area, and pupils benefited from a variety of practical STEM based activities to achieve educational objectives.

Improved teaching skills and knowledge from collaborating with teachers from another school - sharing ideas, learning new strategies for teaching and learning.

Children have access to a wide range of resources and learning styles that they would never have been exposed to had they not been involved in Shared Education.

Pupils who have been partnering for three consecutive years have developed strong friendships which have had a very positive impact on them and their understanding of children from different religious backgrounds.

My own confidence has grown, and I have been pushed out of my comfort zone which has been very good for professional and personal development.

The shared sessions were brilliant. The children had the opportunity to share normal daily activities such as story time, song time, play time, snack time and news time together. Sharing these activities which the children were already comfortable with allowed the children to be more open to make new friends.

I've noticed that the bond between the mainstream and special education schools has been phenomenal. The mainstream children have really taken the special children under 'their wing'.

The training gave me a better understanding of other religions, it created good relationships between practitioners and improved our skills and knowledge of other cultures.

Due to the nature of play-based learning friendships naturally developed. No pressure on pupils, informal approach worked well to develop connections.

Enjoying real and meaningful friendships with staff in partner school. We can support each other in practical ways. Getting to know better each other's faith and culture.

My pupils referred to their partner nursery as their 'other classroom' or their 'other teachers' or their 'other friends'. They see it as an extension of their own environment.

This project has taught them tolerance much more than we could in our individual settings - they have learned to share space, time, and resources like they have never shared before, they have learned to adapt to new surroundings when we visit each other, they have learned to cope with changes in routines and boundaries during visits.

Children had the opportunity to have a greater sense of the wider community, people, traditions, children from different backgrounds, travelling on buses, respect for others, rules in society etc.

Parents were able to partake in the trips which enabled them to meet and socialise with the other setting's parents which would not normally have happened, but they were given the opportunity through Shared Education.

This programme allows children and their parents at this very young age to realise that uniforms do not make us any different, we all experience the same activities and interactions, and all of our schools are warm and welcoming environments for everyone regardless of age, culture, religion etc.

It has given parents the opportunity to network with one another and to visit settings that they have perhaps never been in.

Parents have spoken highly of children's Shared Education. It is vital in allowing communities to feel secure in their own faiths and traditions whilst developing relationships and partnerships that will in time form a much better-connected society in Northern Ireland. Thank you.

During COVID we were able to share online, distance resources and ideas between our three settings so glad we have this network of support. We got some great ideas.

The children availed of the many opportunities to explore the wider community particularly cross border communities through this wonderful programme.

Children had the opportunity to take part in cross border curricula thus providing a wider early years education learning and experience.

Since lockdown we have switched to online distance contact, but this is working successfully much to our delight. We would never have thought of this but as a consequence, we will do more online preparation sharing resources, ideas. We will certainly think about using this medium more e.g. virtual walks around our settings, playgrounds etc. maybe without children, maybe just with staff to start with.

Having a cross border collaboration added an additional dimension to the experience. Pupils were able to gain a better understanding and awareness of similarities and differences in their own school experiences.

It has been great to become involved in a project that has a cross border element as well to learn about their curriculum and how it is implemented and incorporating that alongside ours has enhanced our practice as practitioners.

We have a strong partnership. Shared Ed has placed us in a good place to meet the demands of our current situation with regards COVID-19 as staff have had access to training that other schools do not have. Even though schools are closed physically and open virtually we are looking as a partnership about how we can continue our shared journey in the virtual world - although nothing however can replace the face to face human interaction.