

# Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School and St Patrick's Primary School, Aghacommon

## Schools involved

Ballycarrickmaddy PS [Lisburn]

St Patrick's PS [Aghacommon]



Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School (BCM) and St Patrick's Primary School, Aghacommon are located within the same regional locality. The partnership has been established for eight years and builds on previous involvement in the CASE project. Together, the schools engage pupils from P5 and P7 in a sustained programme of shared learning experiences.

## What Shared Education activities have you organised/ taken part in?

The Shared Education activities have been delivered across PDMU, Literacy, Numeracy, Art, PE and UIC. Pupils have participated in joint classroom sessions, collaborative group work exploring identity, culture, diversity and respect, and structured discussions addressing sectarianism, racism and prejudice. Digital collaboration has supported both face-to-face and online learning through the use of iPads, Chromebooks, Google Workspace, Adobe Express, Google Forms enabling pupils to work together across schools throughout the years.

## How have these activities benefitted the educators and children/ young people?

Children and young people have developed positive relationships with peers from a different community, increased confidence, and improved collaboration, communication and digital skills. The children are now developing a deeper understanding of the cultural similarities and difference between the two school communities. School staff have benefitted from shared planning, professional collaboration, and increased confidence in using digital technology to enhance learning. Teachers have benefited from working with a school from a different community in

Northern Ireland by gaining fresh perspectives, building stronger cross-community understanding, and enriching their teaching through shared ideas and collaborative experiences.

## **What have been the challenges?**

The distance between the schools (greater than 10 miles) has created transport and timetabling challenges. There are a lack of opportunities to explore incidental learning experiences other than those formally planned for the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Programme. Careful planning has been required to coordinate shared sessions and maximise opportunities for meaningful engagement.

## **Let's hear from the children/young people**

"I really enjoyed learning about the weather cycle and cricket. I especially found meeting new friends fun, learning an going into Ballycarrickmaddy's forest and I found our similar yet different cultures fascinating."

"I loved how many different friendships I made and doing shared education has made me more confident and less shy i personally loved it and would love to have an experience like this again."

"I think to make Shared Education better we could meet them more. I liked meeting new people. We all have different cultures, but we all go to school. I liked meeting new friends."

"I liked the feeling of knowing an unfamiliar face but feeling a familiar friendly feeling. I enjoyed working with different partners and making new friends as well as learning the different cultures between us."

## **How has your partnership engaged with your local community and what has been the impact?**

The partnership has engaged parents and the wider community through involvement with local sports organisations. We made use of community facilities at Crewe F.C. a cross community Football Club who are opening their facilities to build relationships with organisations beyond solely football. We created visibility via school websites and newsletters. This has strengthened community relationships and promoted awareness and understanding of Shared Education.

## **Top tips for others**

Develop strong, long-term partnerships and ensure activities are clearly linked to the curriculum. Make effective use of digital technology to support collaboration, particularly where distance and transport present challenges. Start simple and allow the partnership to develop and evolve. Relationships between staff need to come first and foremost to allow for a successful partnership, so they can gain the confidence to have open discussions on cultural diversity. Then having the confidence to incorporate this into the teaching programme being delivered, in a meaningful, yet subtle way to engage the children.

## **Project details**

Type of Project  
ASPIRE

Academic Year  
2025-26