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**Joint Committee on the  
Implementation of the Good  
Friday Agreement**

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Dr Keir Bloomer,  
Chairperson, Independent Review of Education Team  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
Bangor  
Co Down  
BT19 7PR

Dear Dr Bloomer,

I am writing to you as Cathaoirleach of the Oireachtas Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Joint Committee considers issues arising from Ireland's role as a signatory to the Good Friday Agreement and ongoing developments in the implementation of the Agreement.

The Joint Committee met on 27 January with the Integrated Education Fund and discussed with them the importance of integrated education. As set out in the Good Friday Agreement, *"An essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education and mixed housing."*

The Joint Committee would like to express its concern that, almost a quarter of a century after the Good Friday Agreement, only around 7% of pupils in Northern Ireland attend integrated schools. As a result, many children in Northern Ireland grow up with limited day-to-day contacts with children of other identities and beliefs. This is a real obstacle to the "culture of tolerance" envisaged by the Good Friday Agreement.

On behalf of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement I would urge the panel undertaking the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland to take this opportunity to recommend ambitious actions to facilitate and encourage integrated education. This step is key if the Good Friday Agreement is to deliver lasting peace and a vibrant and tolerant community for all in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Fergus O'Dowd, TD  
Chair to the Committee  
[C-GoodFriday@oireachtas.ie](mailto:C-GoodFriday@oireachtas.ie)

3 February 2022

*Cuirfear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge*