Education reform in Brcko district of Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered successful in terms of integrating and fostering reconciliation between the three main ethnonational groups, Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, after the 1992–1995 war. This article examines the politics of reconciliation as played out in and outside classrooms and challenges assumptions underpinning any notion of institutional reform leading directly to reconciliation. In doing so, it shifts the view from institutions to people, locality and contestation. Findings from empirical fieldwork conducted in 2007 and 2008 demonstrate how the actions of those whom education is supposed to transform in fact mediate and might even subvert the ways in which reform plays out in daily life. The article posits a need to understand this link in order to be able to assess fully the success of such interventions undertaken in the name of transition.