

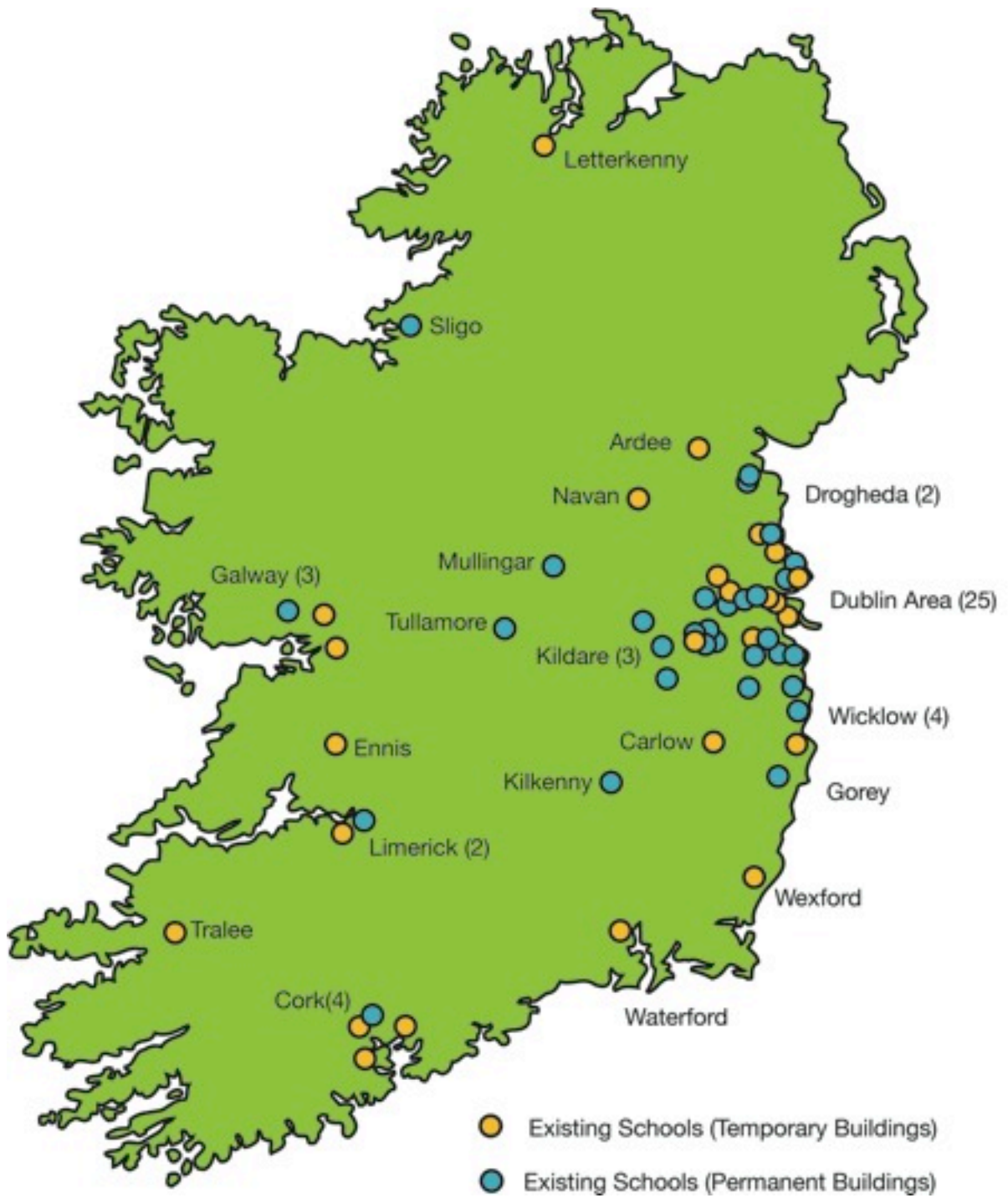
# Educate Together Annual Report of the Board of Directors



This report covers the period January 1st 2009 to December 31st 2009



Over 6,000 signatures in favour of an Educate Together second-level school presented to Minister O'Keeffe at the Dáil in January



## Annual Report of the Board of Directors of Educate Together January 1 2009 - December 31st 2009

### Chief Executive's Summary

2009 was in many ways a watershed year for Educate Together. Following the unprecedented opening of 12 new schools the year before, we consolidated our network and planned hard for an accelerated development programme for the next 5 years. The securing of long term funding investment at the end of 2009 gave us a financial foundation on which to base the future expansion of the network. This also allows for improved services to schools and development of our capacity to create a vibrant, active organization that can achieve a lasting reform of Irish education.

Although the Department placed a moratorium on the opening of new schools in 2009, Educate Together is now better placed than ever before to significantly increase its scope and influence. We look to 2010 and beyond with a strong determination to build on the foundations laid in 2009 and achieve success on a number of development fronts. Key future objectives include...

- Significant growth of our primary school network (80 new schools)
- The opening of our first secondary schools
- The launching of a suite of new online courses
- Investment in new staff in the critical areas of fundraising, communications, education and volunteer support
- A sustained awareness programme to drive parent interest
- Increased training for schools in the Learn Together curriculum
- The establishment of a new national office and training centre

We have achieved much to date and the hard work of 2009 has placed us in a strong position for the future. The whole national office team and look forward to working with all our members and supporters to deliver on these objectives.

*Paul Rowe, Chief Executive Officer*

### **New schools - suspension of process**

After opening 12 new primary schools in 2008, 2009 was a year of consolidation for Educate Together. This decision was forced upon us by the suspension of the new school opening process by the incoming Minister for Education and Science. As a result, many parents seeking places for their children in Educate Together schools were left waiting. Educate Together had built a development team to support such parental demand and a critical decision made by the Board of Directors in the early weeks of 2009 was to retain this team to prepare for future development.

### **Retention of development team**

The team of four New School Officers was redeployed to serve the development needs of our existing network and to encourage a programme of regional and local clustering. The 45 areas for which the organisation had served 'notice of intent to apply' to open new schools were divided between this team and work with start-up groups continued.

### **Demographics**

The realities of demographics impinged relentlessly. New and more accurate processes identified the surge in primary enrolments that is taking place in all urban areas in the period 2009-2013. By February, the DES had written to all patron bodies indicating 42 areas in which they anticipated that "more than 24 additional classrooms would be required". As these areas almost exactly reflected Educate Together's applications the previous year, the organisation formally indicated its continued willingness to step forward in these areas and sought a list of the "top ten priorities". This list was issued in October and again Educate Together responded positively.

### **Politics of reviews**

The suspension of the new schools process pending a review of its operation over the past decade, was purely political and highlighted a recurring policy on behalf of the government. Where existing legislation and procedures indicated a result that was unpalatable, the decision process was suspended pending a review so that the rules could be changed to ensure a politically acceptable result.

### **VEC pilot**

The cessation of the new school process allowed the government to forge ahead with its plans to roll out its own model of multi-denominational education based through the VECs. This model is currently operated on a commitment to provide faith-formation classes within school hours. As a result, it continues to struggle with issues of equality that this obligation places on a State school. The model was pioneered in two schools in Dublin with very little public information other than ministerial statements on its aspirations. Educate Together was invited to participate in the Reference Group on the Common Religious Programme for this model and agreed to do so on an advisory basis.

### **Debate on patronage of schools**

During the year there was much media comment about the future of patronage of schools in Ireland and the imbalance in the system as a whole. Senior figures in the Catholic church made



reference to the desirability of increased diversity of school choice and indicated a willingness to see some 'divestment' of denominational schools. However, little progress in these areas actually occurred despite considerable media debate on the matter. Educate Together supported calls for a properly organised national forum to chart a way forward on this issue.

### Development of closer working relationships with partners

2009 saw significant changes in personnel in the leadership of primary management bodies in Ireland and a further strengthening of the cooperation between them. Primary management bodies worked together in issuing statements against government cutbacks and participated in joint lobbying, media and protest activities. Significant adjustments in the manner in which cutbacks in relation to uncertified sick leave and how EAL provisions were implemented were achieved. Joint discussions with the teachers' union also took place. It was regrettable that none of these efforts resulted in the roll back of the cutbacks. Primary management bodies found themselves in an invidious position. On one hand they are the legal employers of teachers and a target for industrial action yet on the other hand are powerless in relation to actions of the teachers' paymaster. In the autumn, increasing concern was expressed over the impact on principal teachers of the moratorium on the filling of vacancies for posts of responsibilities and the countering union embargo on additional duties. Stress levels on these key school leaders increased dramatically as the year came to a close.

### Progress for Educate Together schools

#### New buildings

##### *Dublin 7*

This building is not the permanent home for Dublin 7 ETNS as it is an interim solution until the full development of the Grangegorman site. However, the new building allows the school to operate in excellent conditions for the first time in its history. It is a great testament to the hard work of the whole school community that this school, opened in Henrietta Street in 2000 is now located on its permanent site.

##### *Gorey second phase*

The second phase of Gorey ETNS was delivered during 2009. This is the second 8 classroom unit which was planned with the original phase. It includes a general purpose room and additional resource and learning support space.

##### *Le Chéile new building*

After years in unused dormitory space and a menagerie of prefabs, Le Chéile finally received their permanent building in time for the start of the new school year in late August 2009. It is a generic repeat design school with general purpose room. It overlooks the Boyne and has advanced energy and water saving features.

##### *Newbridge*

After years in prefabs and spare rooms in Newbridge Rugby Club, Newbridge ETNS moved into a completely refurbished building, formerly a dormitory block of the Sundai School (a Japanese private school that was purchased by the DES when it closed). Right on the edge of

the Curragh, the site is shared with Newbridge Gaelscoil and enjoys idyllic views over the wide open countryside.

### *Rathfarnham*

Rathfarnham ETNS enjoyed the fruits of a full renovation of their building this year. This provided larger teaching spaces and additional rooms.

### **Dramatically improved temporary buildings**

#### *Carrigaline*

Carrigaline ETNS moved into a purpose-built but unused creche building in Herron's Wood. This facility will accommodate the school for another year until its permanent building is completed.

#### *Limerick*

Another success was the move of Limerick ETNS to a new home in the Mungret College complex. This site is bright and set on beautiful parkland and is adjacent to the area of the city for which this school was originally intended.

### **Outstanding buildings issues for ETNS**

Despite these successes, Educate Together was unable to move a significant number of long standing accommodation issues for its schools. Most of these issues relate to schools opened before the 2006 decision to only apply to open schools where there was "concrete and credible plans for permanent accommodation". However a small number relate to schools in which commitments made have not been forthcoming. These schools include, Esker ETNS, Carrigaline ETNS and Midleton ETNS. The wider list of schools which opened before 2007, requiring accommodation includes (in order of length of wait). Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Alainn(17), Griffiths barracks MDS(16), Ennis ETNS(12), Swords ETNS(9), Navan ETNS(8), Waterford ETNS(8), Tralee ETNS(8), Donabate Portrane ETNS(8), Glasnevin ETNS(8), Ardee ETNS(8), Wicklow ETNS(7), Tyrellstown ETNS(5), Balbriggan ETNS(4), Claregalway ETNS(4),

### **Assumption of local patron's responsibilities**

During 2009, Educate Together assumed patronage functions for Galway ETNS. This was carried out with a thorough and amicable consultation process and the full support of the school community.

### **New principals and retirements**

The year saw the retirement of three of our most experienced principal teachers; Paddie Murphy of Rathfarnham ETNS (formerly South City School Project NS), Mary Cawley of Sligo School Project and John Keaveney of Navan ETNS. Educate Together pays tribute to their contributions to our network of schools and wishes them the very best for their retirement.

## **Growth of the Network**

### **Increase in Numbers**

Despite the moratorium on the recognition of new schools, the capacity of the Educate Together primary school network continued to grow strongly. By October 2009, pupil numbers exceeded 11,300. The proportion of Junior infants to Sixth Class pupils remains over 2:1

(indicating potential growth to 22,600 pupils). There were over 750 teachers and 260 SNAs and ancillary staff employed.

## Increase of Services

### School support

A full Board of Management training programme was implemented, with five modules on offer (General Training, Appointments Procedure, Financial Management, Legal Issues and Child Protection). Two interesting statistics: eight schools had representation at all sessions, ten schools did not attend any training at all. At the end of the school year, we put up an online survey, asking for comments on the training delivered, and for suggestions for further training.

Barra Lysaght joined school support in June, and Louise Daly left us (temporarily!) in October, to travel in South America, Australia and Asia.

We continued to offer a confidential support service to Chairpersons and Principals. As the stresses caused by pay cuts, the moratorium on middle management posts and union action increased, this service became heavily over-subscribed.

The introduction of new rules for the Redeployment Panel meant that Barra was kept busy from March until well into the summer months, with Panel queries, followed by a flurry of minor queries regarding recruitment processes, with Patron Approvals bringing us up to mid-September.

Intensive support to schools that found themselves in difficult situations was provided (including input from the Regional Development Officers), together with specifically targeted training modules for individual Boards of Management and Patron Bodies. We also facilitated whole school meetings, where school communities can come together to discuss current issues, ethos, school plans, etc.

We would particularly like to thank those volunteers who have worked closely with schools to get them over a particular difficult stretch, who shall remain nameless, but appreciated.

### Education

2009 saw Educate Together's presence in the Colleges grow, albeit from a low base. Successful participation in undergraduate elective and mainstream programmes in St Patrick's College Drumcondra, the Church of Ireland College of Education and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick was continued from the 2008/09 to 2009/10 academic year. In addition, in St Patrick's College, a further post-graduate elective was introduced.

A survey of schools' needs in relation to support for the Learn Together curriculum was carried out in the early part of the year and presented at the Principals' Conference in March. This survey is informing the ongoing development of support and resources for schools.

A new half-day in-service programme for schools was introduced and nine schools availed of this service in 2009. A project to collate resources and references to support the teaching of the Learn Together curriculum in schools was also initiated.

Late in the year, the selection process to appoint a full-time Education Officer was commenced.

## Administration

### New visual identity for Educate Together



Designed by Ocean Advertising (now trading as io) the rationale behind the logotype is 'celebrating difference'. The spherical element of the globe symbol represents the world or a global community. The variety of colours and abstract shapes within the globe were designed to communicate the ideas of difference and diversity. Whilst the imposition of regular, equal sized circular elements on the globe's surface introduces an element of uniformity and order.

### IT Infrastructure

Over the Summer, Simon Lewis of Carlow ETNS volunteered his time to create the template and functionality of our new website. Further work to hone in on user types was undertaken to prepare for its launch in 2010. Intensive work was undertaken on the office knowledge management and calendaring systems.

### Second-level project

During 2009 the most active second-level start-up campaigns were in Gorey, Co Wexford, Lucan and Swords in Dublin, and Waterford. In January 2009, a petition calling on the Minister for Education and Science to recognise Educate Together as a patron of second-level schools was delivered to the Dáil by students from the Students' Union of Griffeen Valley ETNS, Lucan. Over 6,000 signatures had been gathered nationally in online and school-based petitions.

For much of the first half of the year, the focus of the second-level project was on completing the Blueprint for Educate Together second-level school schools. To support this and other ongoing policy development work, an Advisory Panel was established, drawn from various relevant areas and interests. The Blueprint, *Taking the Next Step*, draws on the work of the working groups in 2008 and on national and international research. It was launched by Professor Áine Hyland in June 2009 and it has since received widespread support from educationalists, business leaders, students and parents.

Lobbying activities on the second-level project in 2009 included three significant meetings of the Joint Committee of Education and Science. At the second, in May, Paul Rowe and Emer Nowlan presented Educate Together's plans for second-level schools to the Committee. The meeting was reported in the Irish Times as "a boost" to the campaign, with plans "warmly received" by committee members.

The end of 2009 saw the first meaningful engagement with the Department of Education and Science on the details of how second-level schools would operate. Educate Together explained some of the approaches outlined in the Blueprint at a meeting with officials in November.



## Business Planning Process

During the summer months, we spent considerable time and effort reviewing our strategic options and our organisational capacity. This process was assisted by O'Malley Quirke consultants. This process involved the management team in Educate Together and representatives from the board. As a result of this work, Educate Together developed a new strategic plan for the years 2010-2014 and won significant philanthropic support for its objectives. The business plan set out ambitious objectives for growth of our network and ensuring the high quality of delivery of education in our schools. The plan was adopted by the Board of Directors in October 2009 and was initiated in the final months of the year.

## Financials

Full details on income and expenditure for 2009 can be found in the attached audited accounts.

## Carbon and Environmental Responsibility

*This is a new section of the report, consistent with the fourth strand of our ethical education curriculum, Ethics and the Environment, we will be reporting on the national office's environmental performance in annual reports from now on.*

Annual electrical consumption was sourced from Airtricity, who harness the power of Ireland's wind resources. Thus we ensure that Educate Together's electricity needs are provided from renewable sources.

Both general and recycling refuse was collected by Ozo, who adhere to guidelines stipulated by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency).

South Dublin County Council provided the national office's water supply.

## Personnel Changes

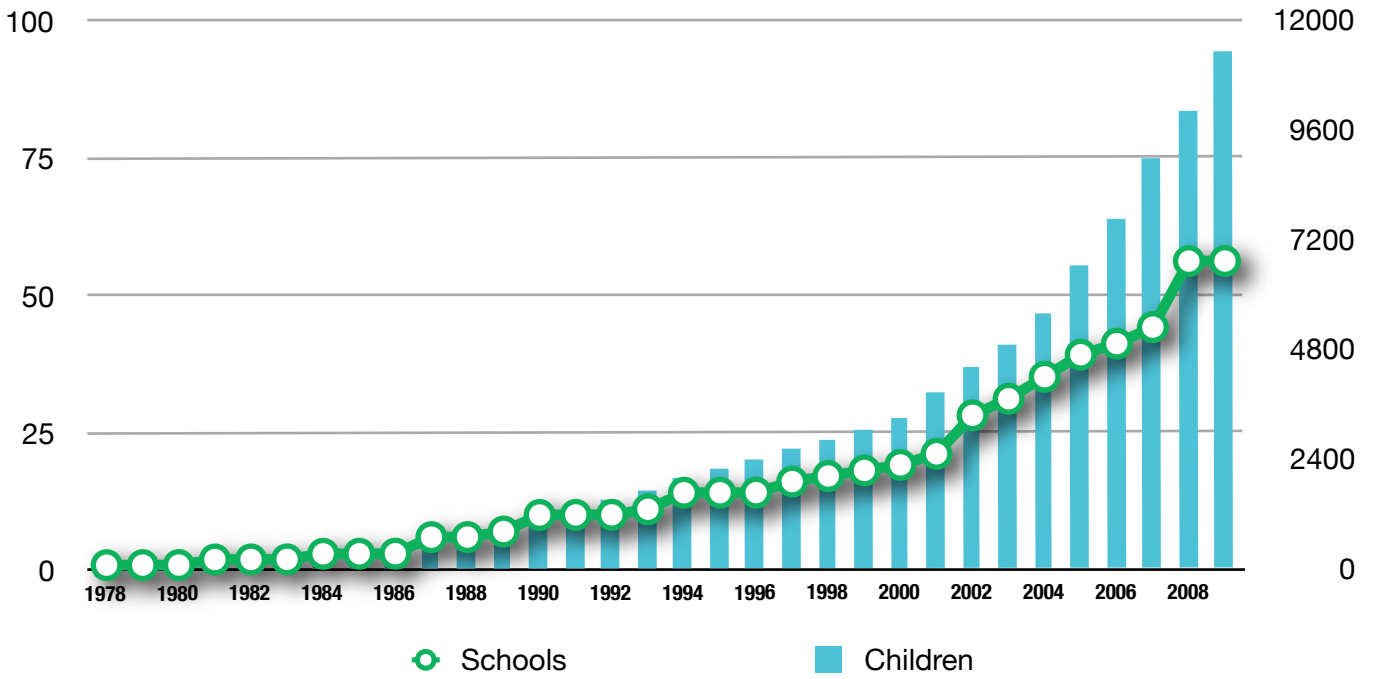
July: Barra Lysaght took on the role of School Support Officer to replace Louise Daly (on career break). Seònaid Dunne began employment as Administration Assistant to replace Barra.

August: Jennifer O'Gorman began employment as Fundraising Officer - maternity cover for Masina Johnston. Second-level Education Officer Fiona Richardson returned to her teaching position.

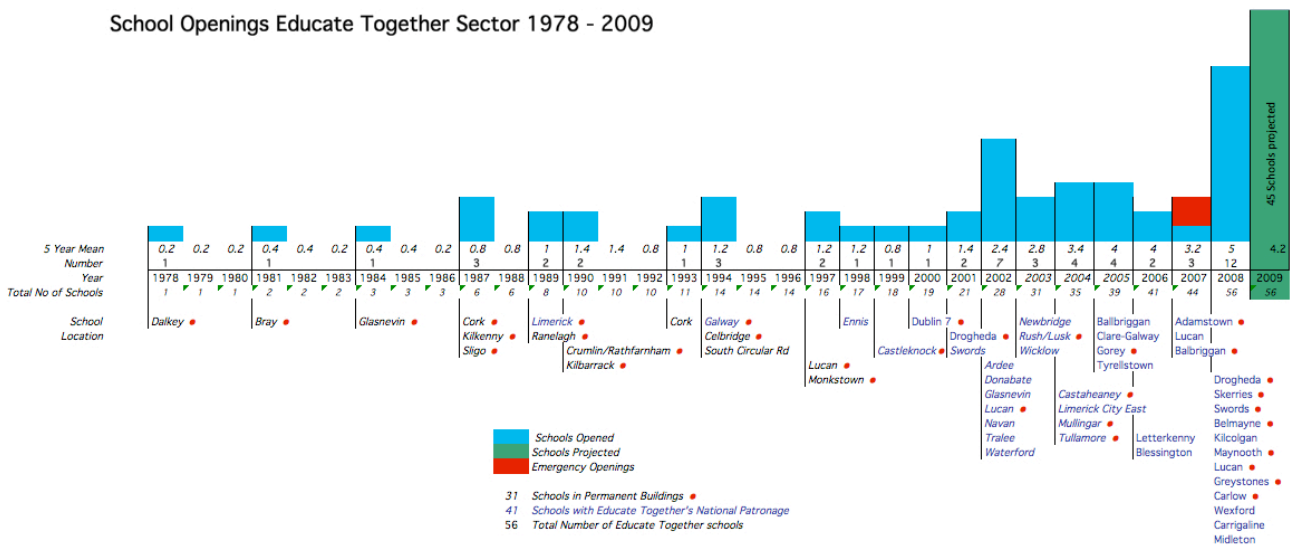
September: Ann Ryan began part time employment as Second-level Education Officer.

Statistics

Educate Together Schools



School Openings Educate Together Sector 1978 - 2009



## 2009 Chronology

### January

#### New Board of Management training scheme commences

First session is held in Kilkenny School Project.

#### Petition delivered to Batt O'Keefe

Asking for Educate Together to be recognised as a patron of second-level schools



Griffen Valley ETNS students deliver petition

#### Protests against Budget Cuts

Primary Management Bodies issue a joint statement against budget cuts.



Swords ETNS demonstrate against budget cuts

### February

#### Rathfarnham Official Opening of Renovated building

After year's of hard work RETNS has a complete overhaul.



Liza Toye, Deirdre O'Donoghue, Paul Rowe, Paddie Murphy & Catherine O'Brien

### DES alerts patrons to scale of expansion required in next two years

42 areas where more than 24 additional classrooms will be required.

### March

#### GMM in Castaheaney

GMM called to discuss a review of enrolment policy for Educate Together schools and other issues.

#### Principals Conference

Portlaoise conference has record attendance of newly appointed principals.

#### Minister Conor Lenihan visits Adamstown and Esker

Conor Lenihan discusses migration and intercultural issues with children from the schools.



Minister Lenihan & Tom Moriarty, Principal of Adamstown ETNS

### April

#### Oireachtas Joint Committee

Discusses Educate Together second-level application.

#### Belmayne ETNS Open Day

Lord Mayor of Dublin officiates.

#### Representation at ICCPR conference in Dublin

Tom Collins (NUI Maynooth) addressed conference.

#### Educate Together national office staff training

Formal intercultural training for all staff completed.

### May

#### Oireachtas Joint Committee

Further meetings with the committee on Educate Together's second-level applications.

#### Forward Planning

Meeting with the Forward Planning unit of the DES to identify areas for new schools in 2010-2014.

#### Documentary on NPR (US national public radio)

Documentary broadcast on intercultural education issues in Ireland featuring Educate Together.

### June

#### Mini-marathon and JUMP!

Female staff in office run in mini-marathon to raise funds for Educate Together. CEO is thrown out of a plane but survives.

#### Start of Business Planning Process

Intensive work starts on the new 2010-2014 plan.





**Monkstown ETNS official opening**

Mary Hanafin officiates on her birthday.

**AGM of Educate Together**

Held in Monkstown, ETNS Brigid McManus, Secretary General of DES attends with Ambassador of South Africa.



Ruari Quinn



Dolores O'Donnell



H.E. Priscilla Jana, Paul Rowe, Sean Bond & Brigid McManus

**Official Opening of Bracken ETNS**

The emergency school of 2007 comes of age in their new building with a tremendous display of student talent.

**Launch of Blueprint for Educate Together's second-level schools**

Professor Áine Hyland launches document in Morrison Hotel.



Professor Áine Hyland



Niall Crowley & Fiona Richardson

**Formal Meeting with Batt O'Keeffe, Minister**

Delegation discussed second-level applications and other matters.

**CEO attends Castleknock, Galway, Claregalway and North Kildare Graduations**

Superb shows put on by 6th classes in all the schools.

**Display of Muralistas project in Ardgillan Demesne**

Muralistas project display opened. Joint project by the "M1 cluster" of Educate Together schools.



Fintan McCutcheon speaks at the launch

**Educate Together meets IBEC**

Discusses support of Educate Together's second-level project.

**July**

**Start of business planning review**

Educate Together's planning team start intensive planning review to develop strategy for period 2010-2014.

**Meeting Senators**

More lobbying for the second-level project.

**August**

**Handover of new building for Le Chéile ETNS**

Super new building delivered on time!



The handover of Le Chéile's new building

**Training delivered for Irish Autism Action**

Schools support team provides training for another NGO for the first time.

**Intensive work on planning review**

On-going work with planning consultants.

**September**

**Limerick School Project Celebrates 20 Years**

CEO speaks and meets with old founding friends.



#### President Barroso of EU Commission visits Limerick ETNS

President Barroso visits the Comenius project in Limerick ETNS in their new premises at Mungret College.

#### Co-operation with NGO for Learn Together materials

Work starts with Plan Ireland and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and Ashoka to develop lesson plans for the Learn Together curriculum.

#### Primary Management Alliance meets INTO

The primary management bodies meet with the INTO to discuss strategy in relation to education cutbacks.

#### Dublin 7 key handover

After years in Henrietta Street and at St. Joseph's School for the Deaf, Dublin 7 ETNS moves at last to its permanent home as part of the redevelopment of the Grangegorman site.



Paul Rowe hands over the keys to Dublin 7 ETNS

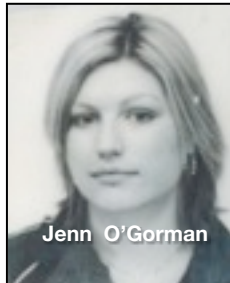
#### Launch of Ranelagh MDS book

Superb book produced by RMDS, launched by Mary O'Rourke.

#### Staff changes



Seonaid Dunne



Jenn O'Gorman

Louise Daly (School support officer) heads off on a year's career break. Barra Lysaght takes over her role. Seonaid Dunne joins as Administration Assistant. Masina Johnston went on maternity leave. Jennifer O'Gorman takes over as Fundraising Officer.

#### Intensive work on business planning review

Even more intensive work with planning consultants.

#### October

##### Educate Together business plan 2009-2014

Plan is successfully presented to potential investors and supporters.

##### Castaheany wins inaugural Yellow Flag

After a year of hard work, Castaheany ETNS is awarded the inaugural Yellow Flag for inclusion by Mary Hanafin T.D.

##### Educate Together national office staff away day

Lunch and walks in Mount Usher Gardens.

#### November

##### Galway roadshow

Meetings with Galway business people and school community in relation to Educate Together's new plan and second-level developments.



Jarlath Munnelly & Parents from Claregalway

##### Oireachtas Joint Committee

Committee members examine Educate Together's case for second-level recognition in more detail.

##### Formal meeting with DES on second-level application

First formal meeting with officials to examine our application.

##### Leinster House roadshow

Mary O'Rourke sponsors an information seminar for members of the Oireachtas on Educate Together's second-level plans.

#### December

##### Lease for new state-owned schools finally agreed

10 years and 9 months of considerations finally produce an agreed document.

##### Educate Together seeks applications for new posts

Advertisements are issued seeking a Communications Manager, Fundraising Manager and Full-time Education Officer.





Bracken Educate Together Official Opening June 19 2009

Join us on



&



check out our new website

<http://www.educatetogether.ie>



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