



Educate  
Together

Educate Together

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 20 16

This report covers the period  
from January 1 to December 31 2016



## Chairperson's Report 2016 in Review

On the financial side of things, Educate Together has successfully stabilised the situation for the time being and the financial report shows a surplus for the year. The same pressures around ongoing funding still exist but as our network grows we do move closer to becoming properly self sustaining. The network had another year of significant growth with the opening of four new primary and five new secondary schools. It is likely that within two years we will have reached the 100 school mark which will definitely be something to celebrate. We are now the second largest provider of primary school places in Ireland and continue to be the fastest growing. Sadly, this does not change the fact that for many areas in the country there is still not a single equality-based Educate Together school.

The board of directors of Educate Together met ten times during the year and I would like to thank the members of the board for their contributions and commitment of time. I think it is important that the members note the amount of work that directors do on a voluntary basis outside meetings and on important sub-committees.

As this is my last year as chair after six years in the role I would like to make a particular acknowledgement of the work done by everyone in the network - the staff in the national office who I have worked closely with over the years, the principals, teachers and boards of management of our schools, the start-up groups, the parents and, of course, our students who are, after all, what it is all about.

Diarmaid Mac Aonghusa  
Chairperson, Educate Together



## Strategic Priorities 2015 - 2016

For the period 2015 - 2016, the Educate Together national office was tasked to advance the organisation's current strategic priorities. These are:

- Increase school places with spread aligned with the national spatial strategy;
- Be leaders in Ethical Education;
- Have systems in place to ensure that all Educate Together schools are fully implementing the Charter;
- Ensure the success of the Educate Together model at second-level;
- Achieve financial sustainability and security.

81 primary schools; 9 second-level schools; Current enrolment >21,000 pupils;  
14% of schools have specialist autism /Special Education Needs facilities;  
National office of 16 professional staff (full time equivalents).

## Strategic Priority 1: Increase School Places

Educate Together opened more schools in September 2016 than any year since 2008. Educate Together was appointed patron of two new primary schools in 2016 as part of a patronage selection process run in 2015: Grace Park ETNS and Broombridge ETNS opened in September. Riverview ETNS opened in Dublin 12 as part of the Government's divestment or 'reconfiguration' process and Castlebar ETNS, Co. Mayo finally opened, having been delayed due to accommodation issues.

September also saw the opening of five second-level schools: Bremore ETSS, Clonturk Community College, Cork ETSS, North Wicklow ETSS and Stepside ETSS.

In June Educate Together applied for six new second-level schools and was appointed patron of four: Malahide/Portmarnock ETSS to open in 2017; Firhouse ETSS, Dublin South City ETSS to open in Dublin in 2018 and a new second-level school in the Castletroy area of Limerick in 2018.

Good progress was made with the Department of Education and Skills in providing new permanent buildings or major extensions for our schools. Ashbourne ETNS, Broombridge ETNS, Hansfield ETSS, Kilcolgan ETNS, Powerstown ETNS, Tullamore ETNS, Wicklow ETNS, and Ballymakenny College all moved into new or augmented homes.



## Strategic Priority 2 Be Leaders in Ethical Education

The Education and Support programme aims to

- position Educate Together as a Leader in Ethical Education.
- ensure the success of the Educate Together model at second level.
- ensure that all Educate Together schools are fully implementing the Educate Together Charter.

Staffed by four individuals, the programme supports the Learn Together Curriculum at primary level, the Ethical Education Curriculum at second-level, provides training and support to teachers, principals and Boards of Management and external representation of the Educate Together Model. The programme aims to be innovative and creative in finding ways to support the network.



### Support for Ethical Education in 2016

- Our DES (Department of Education) approved summer course on the Learn Together curriculum was taken by 93 participants in 2016.
- We continued to run a module on 'Curriculum and Pedagogy' in the Postgraduate Certificate in Ethical and Multi-Denominational Education in DCU.
- The Primary Education Officer along with a panel of Learn Together Advisors delivered modules on Educate Together and the Learn Together curriculum in the following Colleges of Education:

- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick - approximately 200 students.
- Marino Institute of Education, approximately - 160 students
- Froebel College, Maynooth University - 9 students
- Church of Ireland College of Education / DCU - 31 students
- The Second-level Education Officer provided learning opportunities and inputs on Ethical Education at six third-level institutions including TCD, Maynooth University, DCU, DIT and NUI Galway.



- As the network of second level schools grew to nine in 2016, the need for teacher support in Ethical Education also increased. Responding to this we provided eight whole-staff induction sessions in Ethical Education and two CPD sessions, along with individual school visits and support.
- Support to second-level principals was provided through induction sessions and the establishment of a Principals Network forum that will meet twice per year into the future.

### Curriculum & Resource Development

- Recognising the gap at primary level in the Learn Together curriculum in relation to philosophical beliefs and outlooks that are independent of a religious framework, Educate Together worked with the Humanist Association of Ireland to develop lessons on Humanism for 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th classes. The completed resource will be available to schools in 2017.

## Strategic Priority 3: Ensure Schools are Implementing the Charter

- At second-level, the Ethical Education Curriculum continued to be developed with input from stakeholders. During 2016 the evolving curriculum was updated and submitted as a Junior Cycle short course to the NCCA. In addition, 20 new lesson outlines were developed and along with practical resources, added to Educate Together's e-Learning Moodle platform.
- Further resource development was planned and made possible due to the award to Educate Together of a substantial grant through a European (Erasmus+) scheme for a project called 'Learn Together to Live Together' - Teachers leading Ethical Education for an inclusive society (LITTLE). Educate Together is the coordinating partner and led the bid involving three European partners, representing the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Petit Philosophy, Croatia and STePS, Italy. The project began in 2016 and will run for three years – key outputs include the design of a high-quality online interactive course in Ethical Education methodologies as well as the development of good practice guides for teachers in Ethical Education.

### Conferences

- The annual Principals Conference took place in April and was attended by over half the Principals in the Network. Fergus Finlay, CEO of Barnardos, was the main guest speaker.
- In November, the 2nd Annual Educate Together Ethical Education Conference took place in Dublin on the theme of Raising Student Voices. Leading voices in Children's Rights, Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children and Prof. Laura Lundy, Director of the Centre for Children's Rights, Queens University, made the keynote addresses. Over 130 delegates participated in the conference which included a #TeachMeet, where teachers shared ideas and resources in an informal atmosphere and quite possibly Ireland's first ever #StudentMeet, where students spoke of initiatives that they introduced into their schools and communities.

### Training for Boards of Management



Deirdre O'Donoghue, School Support Officer; Sandra Irwin-Gowran, Education and Support Programme Manager; Minister Richard Bruton, Fionnuala Ward, Primary Education Officer and Laura Dooley, Second-level Officer at the 2016 Educate Together Ethical Education Conference

- Nearly 200 members of Boards of Management received training over 7 sessions on topics such as:
  - The Board as a Corporate Entity (Dublin, Galway, Portlaoise, Cork online)
  - Contracts of Indefinite Duration (online)
  - Financial Management (Dublin)
- The Education and Support Programme also facilitates and moderates regular online discussion groups and webinars to provide regular and accessible contact and communication between members of Boards of Educate Together Schools.
- Ongoing confidential advice is provided to Principals and Chairpersons through the School Support Clinic.
- The programme represents the interests of the Educate Together Network at relevant forums. Notable initiatives/forums include;
  - Review of Child Protection Procedures; SEN Allocation Model; Financial Support Service Unit (FSSU); School Procurement Advisory Committee (SPAC); Revenue Commissioners (RCT/VAT); Primary Online Pupil Database (POD); and External Staff Relations.

## Strategic Priority 4 Ensure the Success of Educate Together at Second Level

The Governance and Patronage Programme works to fulfil Educate Together's legal duties as a patron and management body for its members. In January, the final appointments of new Primary Boards of Managements were made as Boards commenced their new term until 2019. Boards of Management were also appointed for our new primary and secondary schools in the autumn.

In April, the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016 became law and new processes and procedures for Garda Vetting had to be implemented. Educate Together made the transition to e-vetting in November 2016 and new policies and guidelines were issued to members to reflect the changes to the process and in legislation.

Due to the introduction of Contracts of Indefinite Duration, additional support was provided to schools in relation to staffing and teacher allocation. This was run concurrently with the management of the teacher redeployment panel. Governance and Patronage also oversaw the ongoing approval of staff appointments, selection panel approvals, board of management appointments and school policy approvals. The national office also provided intensive support for a small number of schools where necessary in 2016.

The 2016 AGM was addressed by the President, Michael D. Higgins. The Educate Together Constitution was approved by Revenue and awaits a special resolution of members to approve the changes at this year's AGM. During 2016 North Kildare ETNS completed the process of transfer from a local patron to Educate Together.



## Strategic Priority 5 Achieve Financial Security and Sustainability

Despite a very difficult start to the year, good progress was made in 2016 towards achieving financial sustainability. Support from members was vital, with voluntary contributions and donations through One Day Together providing a crucial foundation for our other income-generating work. We were particularly grateful to Wexford ETNS parent, Lisa O'Dowd, who nominated Educate Together as Done Deal's charity of the month in May. This resulted in a donation of €12,456 to our new schools work - most welcome in a year when we opened five new second-level schools!

A review of our fundraising work was undertaken in the first part of the year and learning from this was incorporated into a revised plan for financial sustainability. A new campaign - Educate Together 120 - Equality Education for Every Child in Ireland - was launched in September by film director and Educate Together parent Lenny Abrahamson, the campaign's Ambassador. This campaign aims to raise €2 million over the next six years, to make thousands more Educate Together school places available to families all over Ireland, and to take the organisation to financial self-sustainability. The last quarter of 2016 saw us building the infrastructure and resources necessary to drive Educate Together 120.

November saw the culmination of a long campaign to increase the funding available to patrons opening new schools. Over the year, we successfully negotiated the introduction of a new line of state funding for opening new second-level schools, as well as increased levels of funding for opening primary schools. While the funding available still falls well short of the cost of the work involved, the introduction of this new scheme provides much greater clarity and security for the coming years.

We also continued to diversify our income over the year. Notable here was the award of our first major European grant, under the Erasmus+ programme; €284,000 over three years to manage an international Ethical Education project. We were delighted to be successful in securing support again from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government for our New Schools work, under the SSNO 2016 - 2019 programme.

An important aspect to diversifying our income will involve broadening our base of regular supporters. We will be encouraging all those who support our cause and are able to make a financial contribution to consider setting up a monthly direct debit or standing order.



little 

LEARN TOGETHER TO LIVE TOGETHER  
Teachers Leading Ethical Education For An Inclusive Society

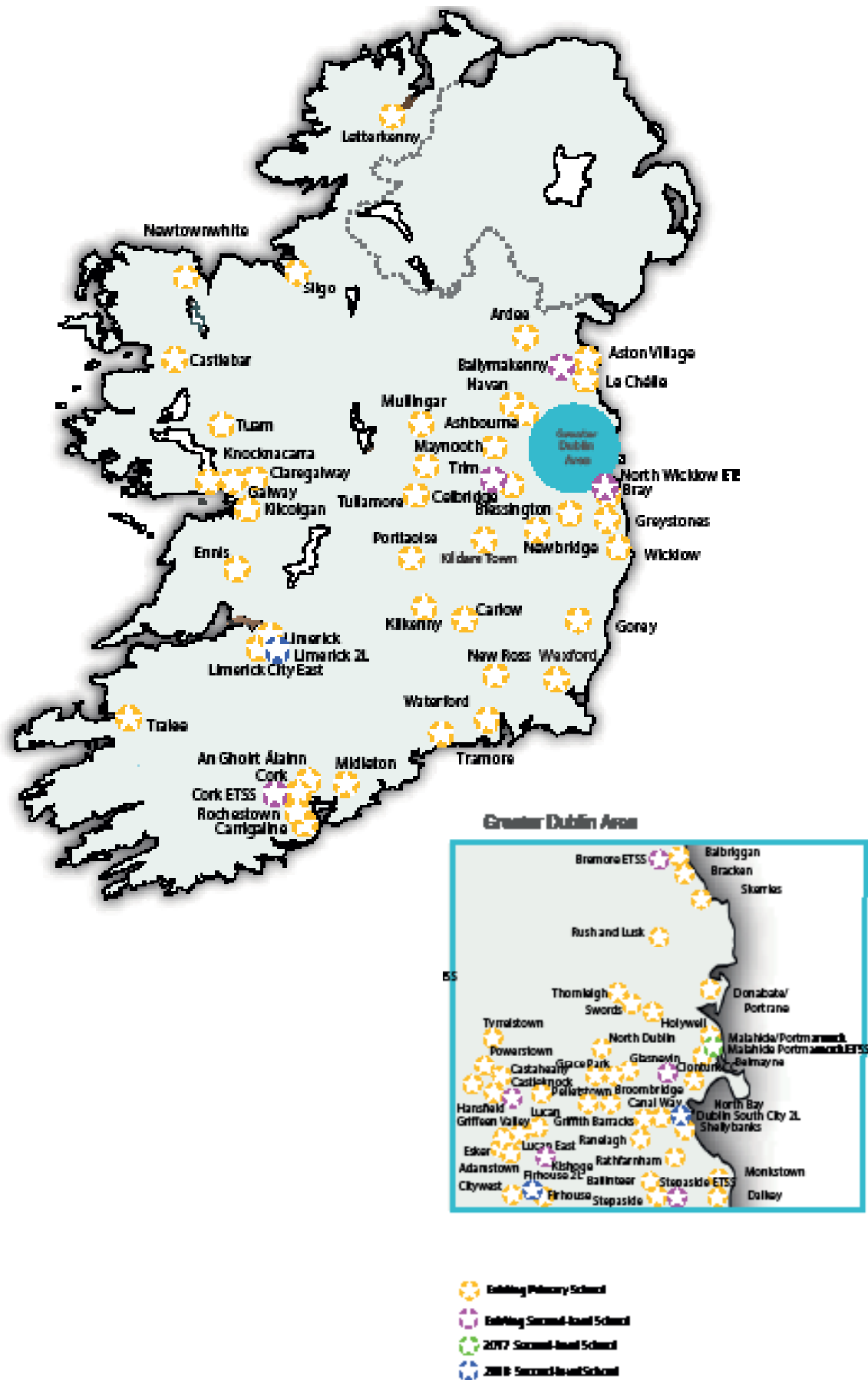
Educate Together's international work grew during 2016. Our UK subsidiary, the Educate Together Academy Trust, continued to develop its first school in Bristol, Redfield Educate Together Primary Academy. The Trust was awarded the sponsorship of two other new schools in the South West of England in Locking Parklands, Weston super Mare, and in Somerdale, Keynsham. The Trust participated in a number of national conferences in the UK and a highlight of the year was the award of the title of Secularist of the Year to Educate Together, by the British National Secular Society in March.

Other international developments were the visit of the CEO to Colombia to take part in an education conference on the ramifications of the Colombian peace process and his visit to the United National University in Tokyo.

In relation to work in other jurisdictions, Educate Together also maintained its strong relationship with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. Senior officials of NICIE visited during the year and Educate Together was delighted to be represented at the NICIE AGM.







## National Office Staff Changes 2016

The year saw some big changes in personnel in the National Office. We said goodbye to Louise Daly, Ruth Doggett, Amy Mulvihill, Jarlath Munnelly and Sarah Williams. We wish them all well in their new careers in the public service and elsewhere, and thank them for their contribution to Educate Together over many difficult and exciting years.

At the same time, we welcomed Jennifer Buttner, Adrienne Flynn, Sandra Irwin-Gowran, Paddy Monahan, Adelaide Nic Chárthaigh and Eimhin Walsh, all outstanding people who bring a range of skills, experience and new perspectives to our work. In the office, Jessica Simpson was also promoted from Assistant to the position of Governance and Patronage Officer.



Jennifer Buttner  
Regional  
Development  
Officer



Adrienne Flynn  
Governance  
and Patronage  
Manager



Sandra Irwin-Gowran  
Education and  
Support Programme  
Manager



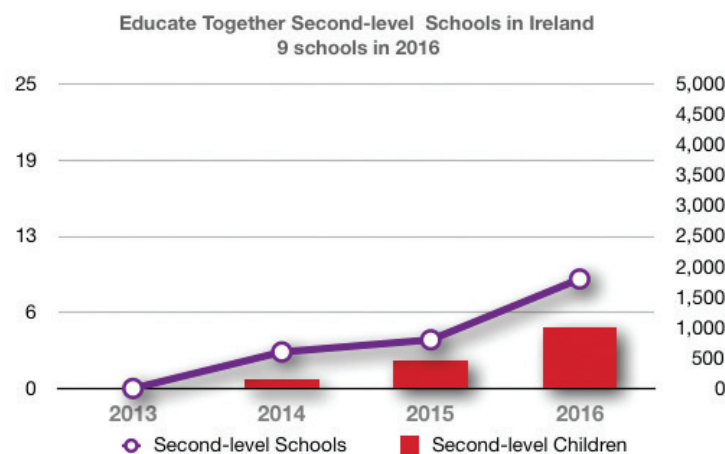
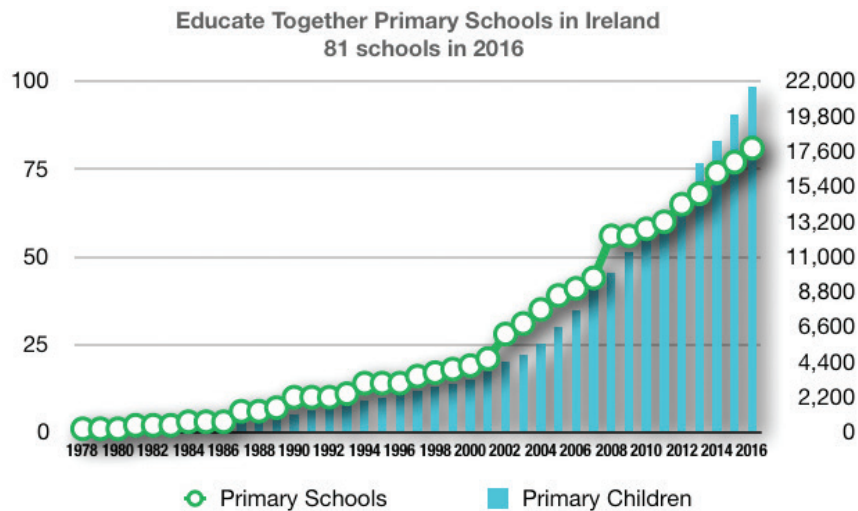
Paddy Monahan  
Regional  
Development  
Officer



Adelaide Nic  
Chárthaigh  
New Schools  
Manager



Eimhin Walsh  
Development  
and Fundraising  
Manager



## Meetings of the Board of Directors and attendance 2016

Meetings of the Board of Directors and attendance 2016

Date	Type of Meeting	Location	Diarmaid Mac Aonghusa (Chair)	Jennifer Cummins (Vice-chair)	Robert Cochran (Secretary)	Paddie Murphy	Martina von Richter	Maurice Hurley	Mary O'Rourke	Simon Bradshaw	Meena Baskarasubramanian	Marie Gordon	Alex Vargens	Vacancy
Jan 17th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Jan 17th	EGM	Drumcondra Ed Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Feb 17th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Resigned	✓		✓			
Mar 16th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		
Apr 20th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
May 11th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓	
May 21st	AGM	Donabate Portrane	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Danny Haskins Appointed			✓		Alex Vargens resigned Paul Croghan Appointed	
June 15th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Sept 21st	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Oct 19th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
Nov 16th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Dec 14th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		

### Formal Statement by the Board of Directors on Fundraising Principles

We at Educate Together are fully committed to achieving the standards contained within the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising. We commit to doing this by:

- Maintaining good fundraising practice;
- Providing high levels of accountability and transparency to our donors and prospective donors from the public;
- Providing clarity and assurances to you about how we spend your money.

### Formal Statement by the Board of Directors on Governance

The Board of Directors of Educate Together is committed to the following principles of good governance, in accordance with the Governance Code for the community, voluntary and charity sector in Ireland:

Principle 1: Leading our organisation;

Principle 2: Exercising control over our organisation;

Principle 3: Being transparent and accountable;

Principle 4: Working effectively;

Principle 5: Behaving with integrity.

More information can be found on [www.educatetogether.ie/finances-and-governance](http://www.educatetogether.ie/finances-and-governance)

In July, 2016 with extremely limited funds available and a desire to keep the Educate Together National Office in Dublin city centre, a lease for a smaller office space was negotiated.

While the office was initially somewhat of a squeeze, budget became available to purchase new smaller desks. The only other costs related to this move were for the furniture removal company and some small spends on cabling to ensure the effective running of our telecoms and ICT infrastructure. A lower-cost broadband solution became available due to choice of supplier and improved signal strength at the new office location.

In 2017, budget has been assigned for new signage to be placed at the top balcony for maximum exposure.



## History of the national office

1995 - 1999 Player Wills, Dublin 8  
Staff count: 1 (Not full time)

1999 - 2001 Park West, Dublin 12  
Staff count: 2 (Not all full time)

2002 - 2013 H8A Centrepoint, Dublin 12  
Staff & Volunteer Count: 5 - 20

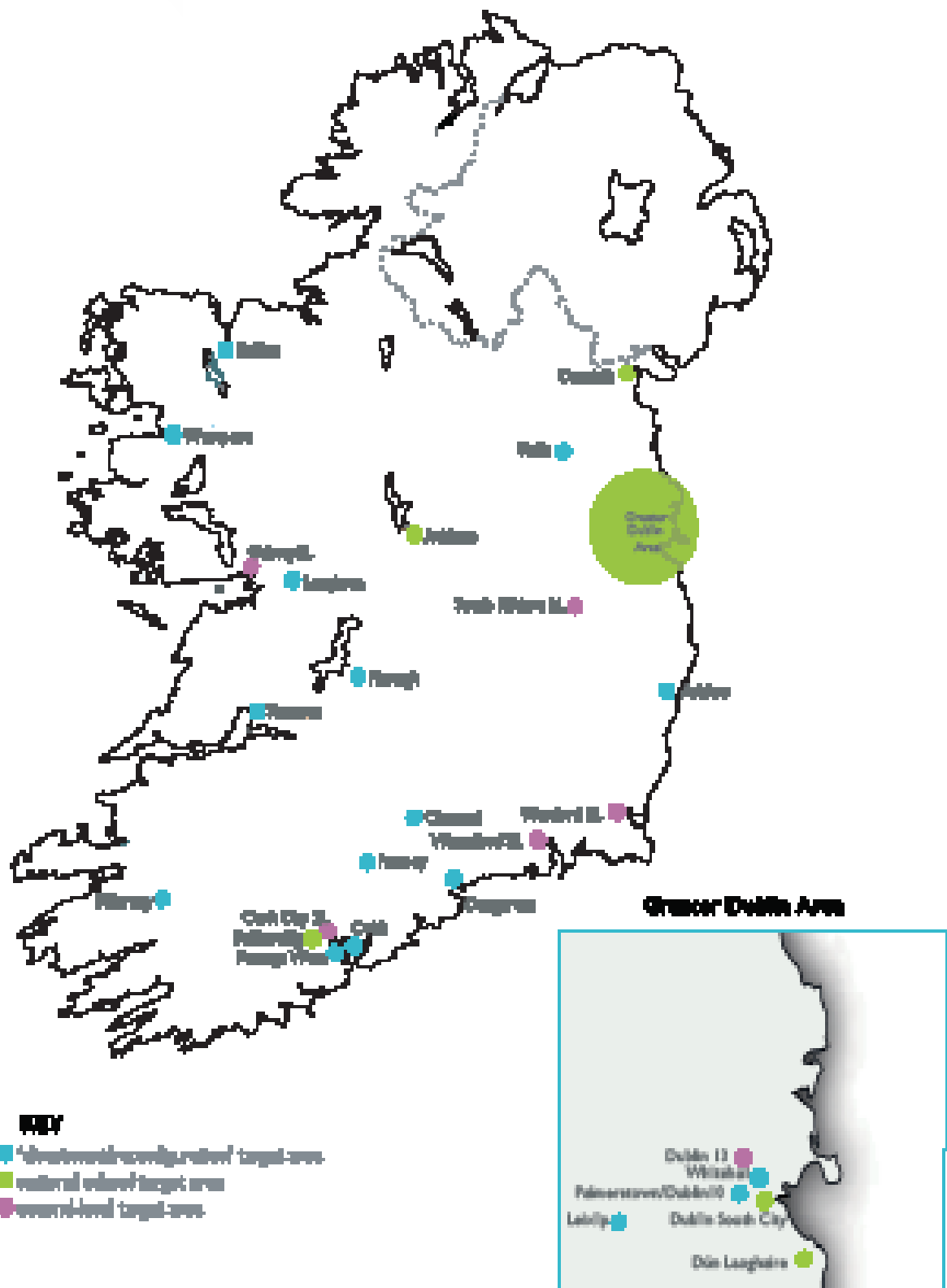
2008 - 2013 NetVoyage, H2A  
Team split over 2 offices

2013 - 2016 Hogan Place, Dublin 2  
Staff count: 24; 24 desk spaces available  
Onsite training & meeting rooms available

In January 2013 the National Office relocated to Hogan Place, Dublin 2. This brought the previously split offices back to one open plan office, with a number of separate meeting rooms. The centralised location enables ease of access for all, and a number of evening events, training sessions and meetings were held onsite in 2013

In 2016, work demolishing Hogan Place began, to begin construction of the Sharp Building.

2016 - Present Equity House, Dublin 7  
Staff count: 19 (Not all full time)  
16 desk spaces available, 2 meeting rooms



# The New York Times

## Intolerable Bias in Ireland's Schools

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD JAN. 29, 2016



## Catholic Church's Hold on Schools at Issue in Changing Ireland

By DOUGLAS DALBY JAN. 21, 2016



Nikki Murphy with her 4-year-old son, Reuben, at their home in Dublin. Reuben was refused entry into nine schools because he was not baptized by a Catholic church.  
Photo: Nomes die Santos for The New York Times

### RELATED COVERAGE

-  Catholic Church Ponders Future After Same-Sex Marriage Vote in Ireland NOV 24, 2015
-  Ireland Votes to Approve Gay Marriage, Putting Country in Vanguard NOV 23, 2015
-  YES Referendum in Ireland Could Complete a Rapid Shift on Same-Sex Marriage NOV 23, 2015



Friday January 22, 2016

## How Ireland's 'baptism barrier' is keeping this boy out of school



Nicky Murphy was forced to delay the start of 5-year-old Reuben's primary education when he was rejected by nine religious schools. (Nicky Murphy)

# THE IRISH TIMES

## No tantrums for infants at new Educate Together school

Powerstown school in west Dublin has a new campus for its 220 pupils

© Tue, Aug 30, 2016, 01:00

Ronan McGreevy



Ryan Ardelean arriving for his first day of junior infants in Powerstown Educate Together National School, Tyrrelstown, Dublin 15. Photograph: Dara Mac Dónail

## Should students be able to run their own schools?

Yes, says a Cork school where students are represented on the board of management

© Mon, Dec 5, 2016, 01:00

Carl O'Brien  
Follow @carlobrien



The Message: It Is Time to Educate Together

# theguardian

## Healing division in schools: the lessons from Ireland

As racism rears its head after the EU referendum, a chain set up to counter sectarian education is offering solutions for the UK



Pupils at Redfield Educate Together academy in Bristol, which offers an 'ethical education curriculum'. Photograph: Adrian Sherratt for the Guardian

# thejournal.ie

READ, SHARE AND SHAPE THE NEWS

## Nine new Educate Together schools opening this week only 'scratching the surface'

The schools will open in Cork, Dublin, Mayo and Wicklow.

# RTE

## Balbriggan school marks 1916 Rising

0 tweets 0 Facebook shares 0 Google+ shares

Broadcast on: March 14th, 2016



## Castlebar Educate Together classes begin despite school row

Updated / Thursday, 8 Sep 2016 16:13



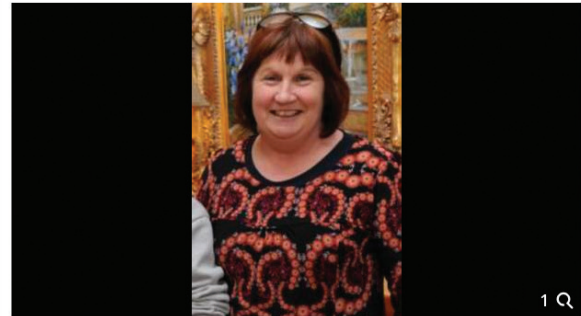
# Irish Independent

## Mum rushes to register baby for local school just four hours after he's born

John Manning

April 30 2016 12:00 AM

Facebook Twitter Google+ Email



Donabate Educate Together school principal Maeve Corish

A local woman who registered her new born son for a school place in Donabate just four hours after he was born still found that the entry list for that school for the year 2020, was already oversubscribed.

## Queues of parents are evidence that more school choice is needed



Katherine Donnelly

October 4 2016 2:30 AM

Facebook Twitter Google+ Email



Parents queue outside Clonturk College to enrol for the 2017/2018 school year. Photo: Kyran O'Brien

## Ethical education helps pupils to live in an open, diverse society

In my opinion... by Sandra Irwin-Gowran

November 24 2016 2:30 AM

Facebook Twitter Google+ Email





Educate  
Together

Educate Together

16/17 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin 7

T +353 1 429 2500

[info@educatetogether.ie](mailto:info@educatetogether.ie)

[www.educatetogether.ie](http://www.educatetogether.ie)

Company No. 286202

Charity No. CHY 11816

