



# Educate Together

## Annual Report of the Board of Directors

The report covers the period January 1st 2007 to December 31st 2007



Artwork by Sarah Cunningham







# Annual Report of the Board of Directors of Educate Together

January 1 2007 - December 31st 2007

## Summary

2007 saw significant progress in Educate Together's work and was the first year in which this was monitored against a formal development plan.

2006 had clearly identified the need for qualitative change in the way that the State interfaced with the changing demands in Irish education. The old system in which central government waited for local need to be expressed was contributing to a succession of crisis situations in new housing estates. Lack of change in planning laws was rendering it virtually impossible to provide new schools on time in rapidly developing areas. School place crises, lack of diversity of school type and rapid demographic changes were leading to serious concern over ethnic segregation in Irish primary education.

2007 saw Educate Together commence its "New Schools for 21st Century Ireland" campaign which called for the State to take responsibility to provide for the increasing and increasingly diverse population. Educate Together held firm to its decision to only open schools when realistic and credible programmes for permanent accommodation were in place and when the State provided funds to ensure that schools were opened in a professional and responsible fashion. At the same time, our schools and National Office received record levels of applications for places.

The year saw the opening of Adamstown Castle Educate Together National School, the first Educate Together National School to open in a permanent building in our 30 year history. For the first time a New Schools Grant was paid to allow Educate Together to employ a manager to establish this school.

It also saw Educate Together taking a responsible attitude when spikes of demand emerged. The emergency recognition of Esker Educate Together National School in Lucan in June and the initiative to open the Bracken Educate Together National School in Balbriggan in September were examples of this.

At the same time, we faced enormous difficulties in negotiating supports for our existing schools, especially in addressing the needs of teachers in Educate Together schools to be trained in the Learn Together ethical education curriculum.

A working group announced by the Minister in 2005 to address this issue finally started work during the year.

Negotiations over a training programme for the volunteers who took up office on Boards of Management were protracted and no training programme was in place by the end of the year. Some progress took place, however, in relation to schools in temporary accommodation and the Minister announced a programme of new school buildings in rapidly developing areas late in the year. A significant number of our schools were at last on this list.

Boards of Management of schools continued to report a rising level of financial strain with State grants increasingly falling below the real costs of running schools and Educate Together commenced a programme to seek an alliance of all primary management bodies to campaign on this issue.





2007 was a year in which the State had an unprecedented level of finance available to make a difference in education. It was disappointing to see little progress on reform of planning legislation to ensure schools were built at the same time as houses in new estates. The same disappointment was felt in relation the promised increase in the capitation grant for primary schools and reduction in class sizes. However significant progress took place in special needs provision and language support in schools.

The Balbriggan events of late August 2007 catapulted the issues of diversity, school patronage and planning for school places into the forefront of the public mind. Educate Together became widely known in the general public in the course of a few weeks. This has led to many advances for the organisation and greatly enhanced its media profile.

Organisationally 2007 was a positive year in terms of income. This allowed us to invest in additional staff in the National Office and extend our

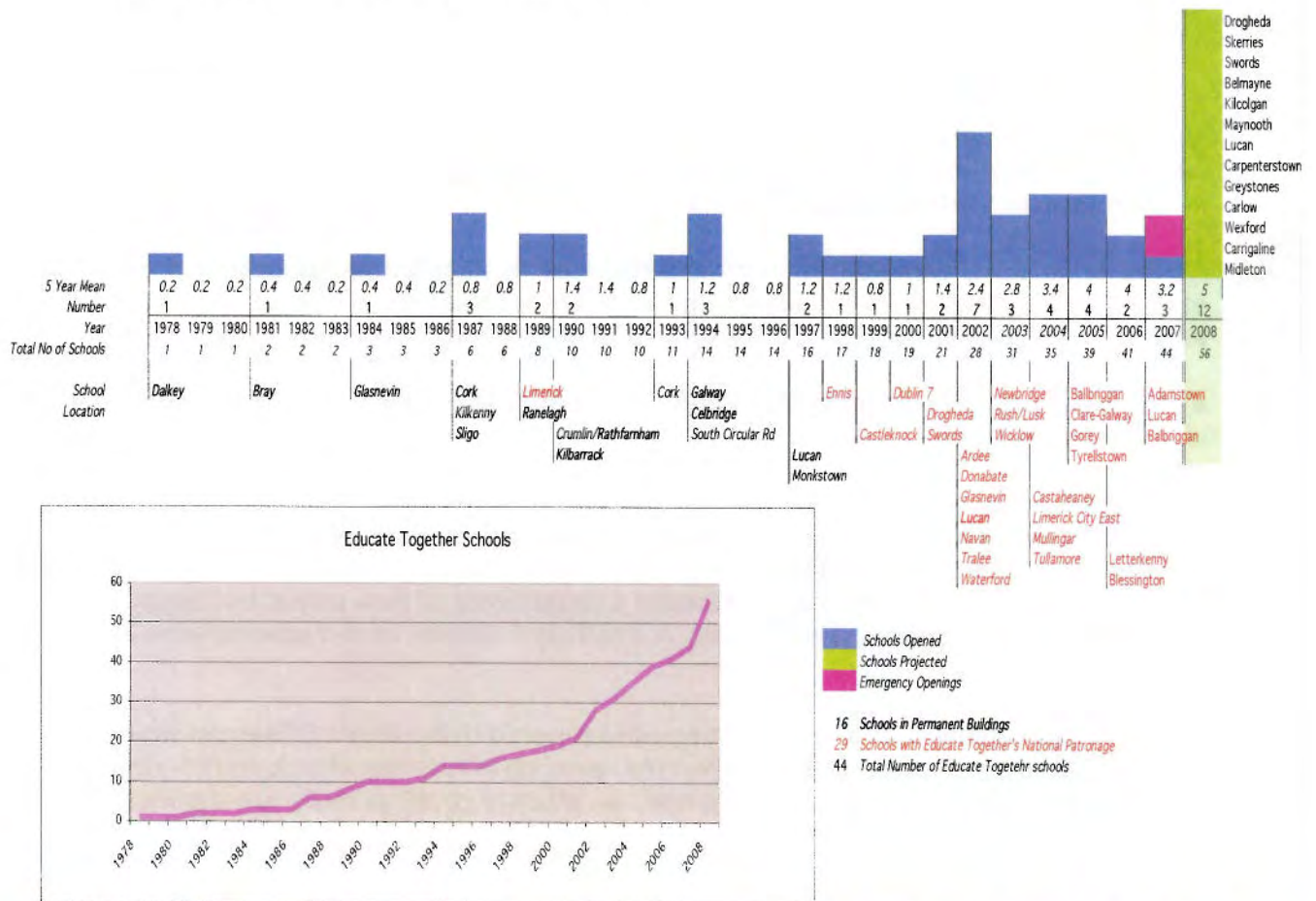
programmes.

In particular, it allowed us to employ a Second-level Project Manager to pilot our move into second-level education and to create a number of posts of New Schools Officer to support new and developing schools throughout our network.

The Board also engaged intensively in work on governance. It commenced a thorough overhaul of the company Human Resources policies and its Education Sub-committee continued sterling work providing an in-service programme in the Learn Together ethical education programme.

A summary chronology of the year follows.

### School Openings Educate Together Sector 1978 - 2007





## 2007 Chronology

### January

#### Translations of the 'What is an Educate Together School?' brochure published.

"What is an Educate Together school?" brochure became available in Arabic, French, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Spanish.

#### Permanent Recognitions

Gorey Educate Together N.S. & Rush/Lusk Educate Together N.S. were granted permanent recognition by the Department of Education and Science.

### February

#### Educate Together supports call for increased funding for all National Schools

Educate Together supported the call made at the conference of the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) for increased funding for national schools. Educate Together worked with all education partners to ensure cross party support for a doubling of the primary capitation grant.

#### Educate Together launches the New Schools for 21st Century Ireland campaign.

Educate Together called on the Government to take responsibility and supply the hundreds of new schools that our country will need in the next ten years. This campaign included the innovative use of an on-line petition.

#### General Members Meeting- February 10th 2007- Swords Educate Together National School

The second General Members Meeting of school year 2006/2007 was held in Swords Educate Together N.S. on Saturday February 10th.



Jane McCarthy at the Swords GMM

#### DES Allocates 200 Additional Language Support Teachers

On the 21st February the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin announced the allocation of 200 additional language support teachers. Over the past number of years Educate Together has been lobbying for this and it welcomes the increase in language services in schools.

### March

#### "The Future Starts Here Every Day"

On 29th March Educate Together launched its new three year Business Plan - "The Future Starts Here Every Day" at a well-attended event at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle. The plan was formerly launched by Fergus Finlay of Barnardos with introductions from Educate Together's Chairperson, David Denny and CEO, Paul Rowe.



Launch of Educate Together's Business Plan 'The Future Starts Here' Michael Johnston, Catherine O'Brien, Jill Steer, Paul Rowe and David Denny 5 of the 7 Chairpersons of Educate Together

### April

#### Permanent Building for Castlknock ETNS

Castlknock Educate Together National School moved into their permanent building in April 2007 after opening its doors in temporary accommodation in September 1999. Building programmes also commenced for Monkstown and Castaheaney Educate Together National Schools.

### May

#### Educate Together Holds Successful AGM

The 10th Annual General Meeting of Educate Together was held at Kilkenny School Project N.S. on May 26th. This was an important meeting of the 41 Educate Together school communities. The meeting unanimously approved Educate Together's three year Business Plan "The Future Starts Here Every Day" which charts an exciting programme of development for the organisation.





### Emergency School in Dublin 15

DES recognised Scoil Choilm on an emergency basis and the Archbishop publicly stated that he had reluctantly agreed to be patron of the school as no other patron was available. Educate Together was not approached and would have responded as this is an area where we have had extensive demand over some years.

### June

#### New Schools Grant

Educate Together held detailed discussions with the Department of Education and Science over a grant to cover to the Patron's costs of setting up a new school. The DES decided to make such a grant available in order to support the opening of the Adamstown Castle Educate Together National School.

This grant, which was confirmed during the speech of the Secretary General of the Department, Brigid McManus at Educate Together's AGM, has been a core aim of Educate Together's policy campaign over the past year. Up until this development, the State had provided no funding to enable school patrons to undertake the complex and detailed work involved in setting up schools.

#### Emergency School in Lucan

Esker ETNS was recognised on an emergency basis.

Educate Together appointed Jane McCarthy as Manager of Adamstown and Esker ETNS – the first time ET had appointed a manager of a school.



Colette Kavanagh and Tom Moriarty during construction of Adamstown Castle Educate Together N.S in 2007

### July

Catherine Hensley joined the office for the summer as an intern from North Carolina. She worked extensively on pre-enrolments for Adamstown and Esker schools.

### August

#### Emergency School in Balbriggan

Educate Together was approached to open an emergency school in Balbriggan with just a three-week ramp-up schedule. Frieda McGovern was appointed temporary Principal of the school. Later Marian Griffin was appointed to the post on a permanent basis. Marian comes to the school from many years experience teaching in the Balbriggan area.

#### Educate Together appoints New Schools Officer:

As a result of improvements in the system of opening new national schools, Educate Together employed additional professional staff to open new schools. During the summer, the first of these posts was filled when Gerry McKeivitt was appointed as New Schools Officer. His first major project was to be appointed as Manager of the Bracken ETNS, to be opened in Balbriggan on an emergency basis.



### September

#### Adamstown Castle Educate Together N.S.

Adamstown Castle ETNS opened its doors on Wednesday 5th September in its permanent building on Station Road, Adamstown, Co. Dublin. Approximately 76 children started school on this day. Tom Moriarty was appointed Principal of the school, joining Adamstown from North Kildare ETNS.

#### Esker Educate Together N.S.

Esker ETNS also opened on the 5th of September and in the same building as the Adamstown Castle ETNS. Esker ETNS was opened in response to the huge demand for places in the Lucan area. The two schools are expected to share the building for the next 2 years until Esker ETNS moves to its own permanent building in the Lucan area in September 2009. Colette Kavanagh was appointed principal of Esker ETNS, joining Esker ETNS from the Bray School Project N.S. where she taught for a number of years. Esker ETNS opened with 125 children enrolled in the school.

#### Bracken Educate Together N.S.

Bracken Educate Together National School opened for children at 8:30am Monday 24th September at Sunshine House, Balbriggan. This school was configured in record time to provide places for a considerable number of local children who had no school to go to. The school opened with 4 classes, 2 of Junior Infants, and two other classes. This received a great deal of media coverage with the school at





one stage being described as a “school for blacks”. It became an International story with media reports from Washington Post, Le Monde, British media, Al Jazeera and many other international outlets. Attention became focused on religious priority in denominational school enrolments and on the failure of State planning. Gerry McKeivitt, New Schools Officer in our National Office is appointed manager of the school.



Part of the start-up team, the night before Bracken Educate Together National School opened

### Educate Together lodges its intent to apply to open new schools in 20 areas in 2008.

Educate Together submitted formal notifications of its intention to apply to open schools in September 2008.



Parents lining up to pre-enrol their children for Greystones Educate Together National School on 3rd November 2007

## October

### New Staff at National Office

Emer Nowlan started as Second Level Project Manager at Educate Together on the 1st October 2007.



Masina Johnston started as Administrative Assistant at Educate Together on the 8th October 2007.



Amy Mulvihill started as New Schools Officer at Educate Together on the 11th October 2007.



## November

### Educate Together Announces Move into Second-level

Educate Together announced the start of its programme to extend its ethos into second level education on the 19th November 2007.

### General Members’ Meeting- 10th November 2007 Castleknock Educate Together National School

The first General Members Meeting of school year 2007/2008 was held in Castleknock Educate Together N.S. on Saturday November 10th.

Castleknock Educate Together N.S. hosted the event in their new building. The school was officially opened the day before by Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin. The event debated in detail the Balbriggan events and the proposed VEC pilot community national school.





Children at Castleknock on their Official Opening Day 9th November 2007

## December

### Jane McCarthy

Jane finished working for Educate Together after 5 years' outstanding work for the organisation.



### Educate Together Interactive Forum

Educate Together completed the development of an online forum. [www.educatetogetherforum.ie](http://www.educatetogetherforum.ie)

### Second Level Educate Together in Waterford Public Meeting

A meeting was held in the Viking Ramada Hotel in Waterford on 6th November. The meeting was very well attended and a committee was formed to progress towards establishing a school.



Waterford Second Level Public Meeting

### Application for Recognition as Second Level Patron

A letter was sent to the Minister for Education informing her of Educate Together's intention to apply to open second-level schools.

## Receive the Latest News from Educate Together Direct to your Desktop!

Educate Together is going through a phase of rapid and exciting development. We are campaigning for significant system change in Irish education and delivering services which impact on the quality of education provided in our schools. We regularly publish newsletters, news alerts and other information through email. You may subscribe to our newsletter, which is a free email service by sending a simple message to:-

[subscribe-eten@educatetogether.ie](mailto:subscribe-eten@educatetogether.ie)

Archives of previous newsletters and extensive information on the sector can be seen at our website:-

<http://www.educatetogether.ie>

## Educate Together

8Ha CentrePoint, Oak Drive Dublin 12

tel: +353 01 4292500

