



Educate
Together

annual report 2021

Dublin 7 ETNS Junior infant students survey their new school building



Photo credit Grangegorman Development Agency, www.ggda.ie

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2021 at a glance

- 8 principals appointed
- 8 deputy principals appointed
- 378 teacher appointments approved
- 191 board members trained
- 3 successful summer courses
- 178 independent assessors approved
- 1,143 Garda Vetting applications processed
- 35 schools in our Nurture Schools Project
- 49 schools in temporary accommodation supported

95

primary schools

21

second-level schools

35,000

students nationwide

2

new schools opened in 2021

Gorey Educate Together Secondary School
Blackrock Educate Together Secondary School

The Educate Together school network 2011 - 2021

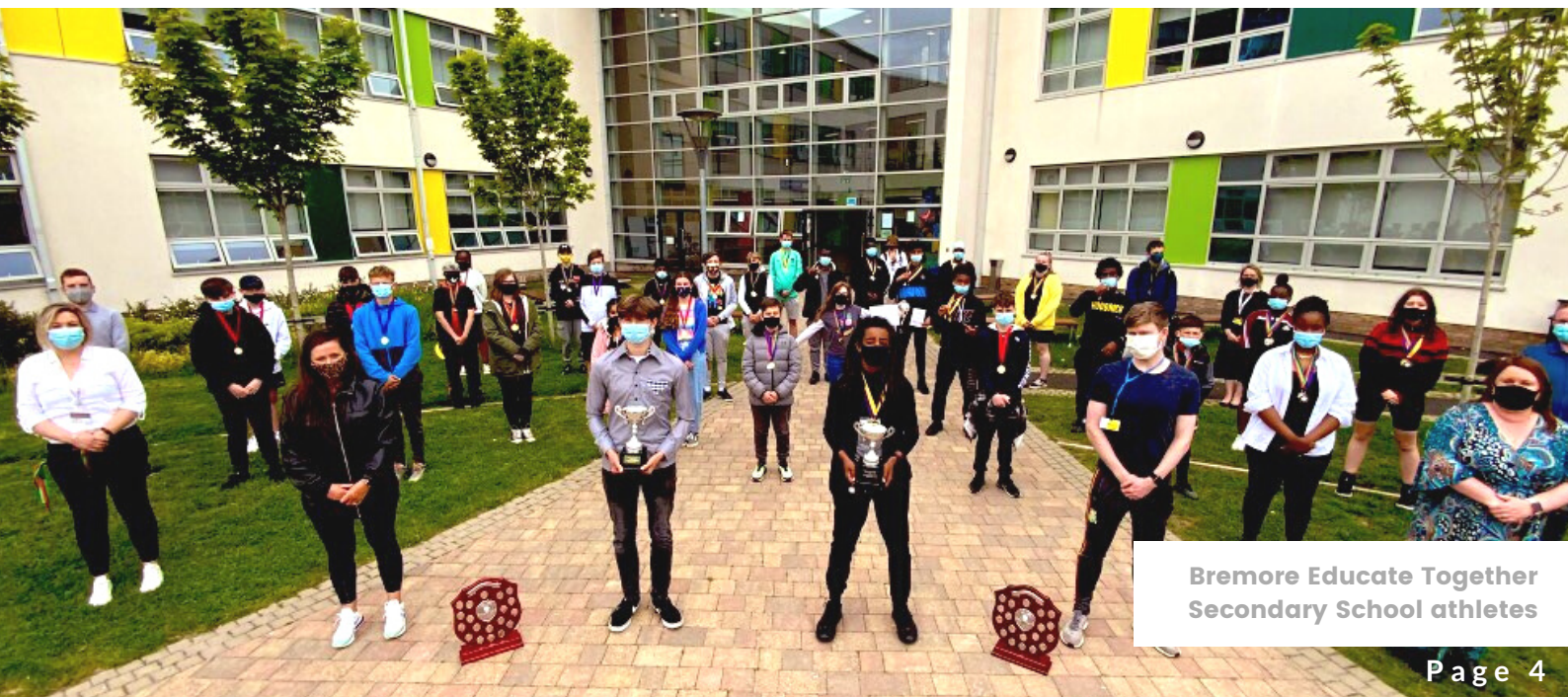


chairperson's report

2021 was another challenging year for children and young people and their education and development. The Educate Together national office worked intensively during this period to support our schools and advocate with the Department of Education. Unfortunately, Covid-19 saw school closures in the early part of the year. Challenges continued for schools in temporary accommodation, and there was also the major problem of staff shortages, which has placed additional pressure on school communities and school leadership in particular. School communities faced not only the absence of staff and children but in some cases the death of loved ones to Covid-19. The effects of Covid-19 on children and their educational outcomes will only be fully understood in the years to come.

But, even in difficult times, there are new initiatives that give us hope. Educate Together's Nurture Schools programme came into its own in 2021. Schools applying a nurture approach address the social, emotional and learning needs of individual students, helping them to feel connected to school life and enabling them to engage in learning. Never was that more needed than during closures and when schools reopened. This programme was set-up with funding from Salesforce in 2020. In 2021 we secured additional funding from Rethink Ireland, the Social Innovation Fund, to extend and deepen the approach to ensure more students could benefit. This investment is enabling the programme to be embedded in a network of 35 primary and second-level schools across the country.

Our network of schools was also extended with the opening of two new second-level schools in Gorey and Blackrock. This brings the overall student numbers attending Educate Together schools to 35,000. An immense amount of work is needed to open a new school, however, these schools had the added challenge of opening during a global pandemic. Congratulations to each person involved in ensuring that the schools opened.



chairperson's report

Educate Together is defined by our ethos. It captures our values, is an expression of our guiding purpose in education and should permeate every facet and decision of a school. The Ethos Quality Framework was launched in 2021. This Framework will help us to strengthen ethos across the network as we continue to grow.

Educate Together's Board of Directors can report that during 2021 we restructured our organisation, reducing our cost base in line with income and have successfully turned our finances around. As you will see from the report we are now in a healthy financial position following on from a challenging few years. Sadly this required redundancies in 2020, staff reduced their working hours and kept the organisation strong. We give our thanks to all our staff for their commitment during this challenging period.

In 2021 we agreed our five-year strategy following a comprehensive consultation with our network and other stakeholders. This sets out ambitious targets, challenging us to find new ways to meet ever-increasing demand, stay innovative and ensure our ethos is strong as our schools rapidly grow in pupil numbers. We can confirm that we are fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code and are confident that the organisation ends the year 2021 in a stronger state, financially, structurally and strategically.

The AGM was held online again in 2021. Important issues were debated, such as admissions policies, support for schools and for children with additional needs as well as insurance costs. Returning to in-person AGMs in the future, will be a welcome return for many. Staff also continued to work remotely in 2021 and we took the opportunity to reduce and adapt office space in preparation for hybrid working. We also welcomed some new members to the national office team, including to the new role of Finance Officer.

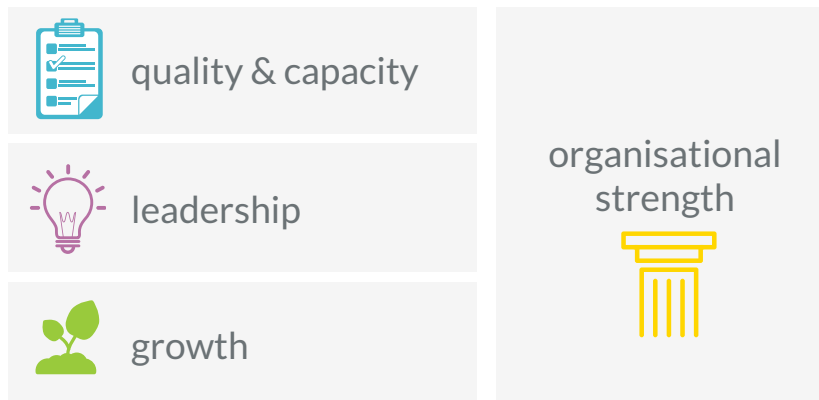
On behalf of the Board and staff, I wish to say thank you to the members of our network for their involvement and ongoing support to the organisation. I also wish to thank our funders including the Department of Education for their continued support of Educate Together. Without their interest, belief in and commitment to Educate Together, the organisation would be unable to deliver for children and young people. Finally, I would like to thank my Board colleagues, all volunteers, for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. I also wish to acknowledge the Chief Executive Officer and the national office staff for their ongoing dedication, energy and drive in delivering our mission, especially during such a challenging



Jennifer Cummins
Chairperson

2022– 2026 strategic goals

Educate Together's Strategy Statement from 2019 - 2021 set out three strategic goals relating to Quality and Capacity, Leadership and Growth. During 2020 and 2021, a new strategic plan was developed based on these goals, which is due to be launched in 2022. The planning process involved an analysis of current context and consultation with key internal and external stakeholders. The resulting plan sets out the following objectives:



Goal 1 - Quality and capacity

Strengthen the network and shared values across Educate Together schools.

Objectives:

- Improve the processes and systems in place to support quality in schools
- Support, promote and continually develop the Educate Together ethos
- Enhance Continuing Professional Development (CPD) across the network

Goal 2 - Leadership

Be a leading voice for innovation and reform in education, continually striving for wider system change.

Objectives:

- Continue to support and pioneer innovation in education
- Advocate for systemic education reforms
- Work with partners to enhance teacher education

Goal 3 - Growth

Increase the number of Educate Together school places.

Objectives:

- Develop pathways to choice in areas of stable population
- Increase access to Educate Together schools in areas of growing population

Goal 4 - Organisational strength

Strengthen our organisation through continually reviewing and improving our systems and practice,

- Strengthen company and charity governance
- Ensure effective systems that enhance our ethos
- Build financial sustainability

2021 key achievements

Educate Together further adapted its operations and services to work productively through 2021, achieving all the company's core objectives and targets, and providing intensive support to our network of schools during another year of pandemic-related uncertainty and upheaval.

Two new Educate Together schools were successfully opened in 2021, which will provide an additional 1,500 equality-based school places when these schools are fully established - Gorey ETSS and Blackrock ETSS.

By the end of 2021, there were 35,000 pupils accessing equality-based education in 116 Educate Together schools (95 primary and 21 second-level). Educate Together has opened a total of 27 new primary and 21 new second-level schools over the past eight years.

Educate Together launched its innovative Ethos Quality Framework in 2021 after a number of years of consultation, development, testing and review, and members adopted agreed Ethos Quality Standards at the AGM in May.

The Framework was developed with DCU's Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection and is designed to support schools to evaluate how they are implementing the network's equality-based ethos.

Funding was secured from Rethink Ireland's Education Innovation Fund in 2021 to extend and deepen Educate Together's Nurture Schools programme across 35 Educate Together schools (27 primary and 8 post-primary schools). The programme, which was established with funding from Salesforce, is improving school experiences and outcomes for students at risk of educational disadvantage through developing social and emotional skills and relationships.

The Educate Together Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum was published in December 2021, accompanied by an online teachers guide. This was the culmination of three years' development work, supported by Salesforce and Worldwide Global Schools, and completes the continuum so that Ethical Education is now available from junior infants (age 4) to sixth year (age 18).



Clogher Road Community College mural



UN Rights Respective School - Midleton ETNS

2021 key achievements

In February 2021 Educate Together was awarded patronage of a new primary school in South Dublin. Uncertainty around the school's accommodation led the opening of this school to be postponed, and Sallynoggin Killiney ETNS will open in 2022.

Maynooth Educate Together National School took delivery of the final phase of their new school building in 2021, which facilitated the school to grow to another stream.

Educate Together's growing network of second-level schools hosted a number of innovative online student engagement events in 2021, including the first ever Educate Together All-Ireland Debating competition, the first ever Irish Ethics Bowl competition, and an online Model United Nations event.

Educate Together has been an active participant in Irish Aid's World Wise Global Schools programme for a number of years and in 2021 a further grant to support Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in Educate Together schools was awarded. This enabled Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to be provided for 221 teachers in 19 Educate Together second-level schools in 2021 in online and in-person formats.

Educate Together worked on a number of advocacy campaigns throughout the year, supporting new and developing schools in particular. Educate Together led on a campaign with other primary school management organisations to secure additional staffing for children with additional needs in developing schools, highlighting issues around the current model for allocating Special Education Teacher (SET) posts.

Sites were acquired for nine new Educate Together school buildings in 2021, including for Ennis ETNS and Tralee ETNS, the two Educate Together schools that have been waiting longest for permanent building plans. Contractors were appointed to commence construction on a further six permanent school buildings throughout the year.

In April 2021, Educate Together launched Professor Áine Hyland's book, 'A Brave New Vision for Education in Ireland: The Dalkey School Project 1974-1984', which documents the founding of Ireland's first equality based school. Áine's book gives an insight into how the school came to open its doors, and how the equality-based school movement in Ireland came into being and its publication is an important milestone for the organisation. A recording of the virtual launch can be viewed on the Educate Together website.



As a company and a charity, Educate Together continued to maintain high standards of governance in 2021, reporting full compliance with the Charities Governance Code to the Charities Regulator.

in the media

16 December 2021

Integrated and equality-based school movements call for new approaches to accelerate change to make choice a reality for all



State on a go-slow in moving primary education from majority Catholic grip

Noteworthy spotlights a lack of coherence, communication and progress in the State promise to provide 400 multi-denominational primary schools by 2030.

BY PETER MCQUIRE
JUNE 16TH 2021 | 30 MIN READ

New beginnings at Gorey Educate Together



Emer Nowlan CEO Educate Together, Gerry McKeivitt - School manager, Niall Wall Building Officer and Joanne O Grady parents start up committee at the new Educate Together Secondary School, Gorey

Presidential praise for integrated education efforts



Inclusive: Michael D Higgins said he is a supporter of integrated education

Overview of the Second-Level Education Sector in 2021

This article provides an overview of the second-level education sector in Ireland as the Covid-19 pandemic hampers progress towards important reforms. Touching on major themes that feature in the chapter as a whole, it shows how ongoing inequality and underinvestment in education are intrinsically connected, and it argues that, instead of returning to 'business as usual', we now need to make the investment necessary to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all.



Dr Emer Nowlan
CEO of Educate Together

**President
Michael D
Higgins**

**Belfast
Telegraph
June 2021**

"Sabina and I have been long-time supporters of the Educate Together movement. We were founding members and active Board members of the Galway School Project. We remain convinced that the ethos of practical equality that informs the Integrated Education and Educate Together movements is pivotal for our common future."

in the media

Cork students' billboard calls for direct provision to end now



Students from Cork Educate Together Secondary School at the installation of their billboard at Lower Glanmire Road, Cork, saying that four more years of Direct Provision is too many (from left) Sofya Abashko, Luke McDonnell, Rachel Young, Ella Harrington and David Diogo.

School bodies raise concerns over special needs supports

Updated / Monday, 29 Mar 2021 21:45



Students celebrate new beginnings at Clogher Road Community College



Photo: Mark Stedman

Why are there so few migrant teachers in Ireland?

One in ten students is from a minority ethnic background, but this diversity is not reflected in the teaching profession

© Tue, Sep 14, 2021, 00:00 | Updated: Tue, Sep 14, 2021, 00:24

Peter McGuire



Josna Joy, a teacher at North Wicklow Educates Together secondary school in Bray, Co Wicklow. "The principal was so kind and open to giving migrants a chance. I'm so glad that I kept trying and didn't give up." Photograph: Dara Mac Dónaill

Leitrim one of six counties without multi-denominational schools



27 September 2021

Educate Together awarded Education Innovation Fund grant for groundbreaking Nurture Schools project

RETHINK IRELAND

EDUCATION INNOVATION FUND
AWARDEE 2021

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



supporting school leaders



Out and about with Ballinteer ETNS students

Annual General Meeting

Educate Together's Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on 8 May 2021. For the second year due to Covid-19 restrictions, the meeting took place on an online platform rather than in an Educate Together school building with representatives from 69 of our members in attendance. A total of 20 motions were debated, including a number that had been deferred from 2020. An election was held for the appointment of three directors and Emma Lane-Spollen was elected as new vice-chairperson to the Board.

At the AGM, Educate Together welcomed three national (primary) schools and two new second-level schools into membership, bringing its total number of members to 122 (112 schools and 10 independent patrons).

Three General Members Forums (GMFs) were held in 2021 to provide member schools with a forum to discuss policy issues raised during the year. In April and May two forums were held with sessions on admissions policies, supports for schools, inclusion and students with additional needs, school insurance costs and school accommodation. In December 2021 a third members forum was held focusing solely on admissions policies.

Supporting management and leadership in member schools

Educate Together supported and represented its members intensively in 2021, providing core services and support for principals and chairpersons on a range of issues, including managing the very challenging landscape of the Covid-19 pandemic in schools.

The national office represented primary members at more than 40 stakeholder and consultation meetings as their management body. The national office continued to improve supports to our schools by expanding the team to ensure five day a week service, embedding a new system for tracking calls, and moving primary schools towards an online vetting service.

In 2021 the member support service addressed issues related to enrolment, school finances, HR, disciplinary processes, staffing and recruitment, data protection, accommodation issues, bereavement, parental complaints, custody, and child protection issues, as well as those relating to Covid-19 measures and infection prevention and control.

The national office provided four online training sessions for boards of management of Educate Together primary schools, with 191 board members receiving training in 2021. We also collaborated with other management bodies and Clare Education Centre in providing training for 877 board members on Effective Practices for Boards of Management.

Board of management training, new principal induction and board induction sessions and meetings were successfully adapted to online formats during the pandemic, as were lectures, network meetings, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and other distance learning materials and supports.

representation

Due to the pandemic, instead of our annual in-person Educate Together Principals' Conference, two shorter virtual conferences were held during 2021, in March and November, with both sessions attended by more than 60 primary and second-level principals. An induction day was held for newly appointed principals in July, covering topics such as Ethos Guidance, Leadership, Finance and Recruitment.

Management body activities

Educate Together acts as management body for its member primary schools, representing school management in engagements with the Department of Education and other stakeholders and providing advice and support. During 2021 the organisation engaged closely with primary education partners including other management bodies and teacher and parent organisations, both through the Primary Education Forum and in other stakeholder engagements, including those relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this work it represented, supported and advised its members in relation to school closures and reopenings, infection prevention and control measures and staffing and other supports. Educate Together actively collaborated with other Primary Management bodies to improve the provision for children with Additional Educational Needs (AEN / SEN), particularly in developing schools, and collectively engaged with the Department of Education, Ministers, and the NCSE.

Communities of practice

Collaboration, collegiality and sharing of good practice are encouraged in the Educate Together network. Despite the challenges of the past year a number of communities of professional practice within the network continued to work together, including Second-level Principals Network; Second-Level Deputy Principals Network; five Nurture School communities of practice involving all of the Educate Together schools taking part in the project.

Other communities of practice in operation include the Ethical Education Teacher Professional Network and the Educate Together Guidance Counsellors Network.

Representation

Educate Together represented its member schools through various forums, meetings and submissions in 2021 including with:

- Submission to the NCSE Statement of Strategy 2022-2026
- Submission on the New Digital Strategy for Schools
- Submission to NCCA on the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework
- Convened Primary Management Group for Advocacy to Ministers and Department of Education on impact of SET Allocation Model on developing schools
- Primary Education Forum
- Primary Education Forum Communication Sub-group
- Joint Primary Management Body Submission to Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education on School Bullying & Mental Health
- Department of Education - e.g. Covid-19, Teacher Supply
- Department of Education Inspectorate - e.g. Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTAL) inspection model
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- Children's Rights Alliance network meetings and roundtable on Reduced Timetables
- Irish Network Against Racism network meetings
- Irish Traveller Movement Yellow Flag Steering Committee
- Ubuntu teacher education network
- Education and Training Boards Ireland
- Irish Second-level Students Union (ISSU)
- National Parents Council (primary)
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)
- Educate Together Academy Trust (Bristol page 12 England)

accommodation & admissions

School accommodation

In the face of continuing challenges, Educate Together continued to support and represent 49 schools in temporary accommodation in 2021 and worked with the Department of Education to progress permanent solutions. Seven new leases/license agreements and one prefabricated rental agreement were signed for Educate Together schools in temporary accommodation in 2021. Sites were acquired for nine new Educate Together school buildings, including Ennis ETNS and Tralee ETNS, which have been waiting for permanent solutions for more than 20 years. Contractors were appointed to commence construction on six permanent school buildings in Dublin and Cork throughout the year.

Educate Together currently has 47 schools in Ministerial-owned buildings and is working with the Department of Education and other patrons towards agreeing a lease for these buildings. Our work in the area of school accommodation is supported by the Department of Education.

Garda Vetting

Educate Together is the authorised body for Garda Vetting for its primary schools. In 2021 1,143 Garda Vetting applications were sent to the National Vetting Bureau, up 9% from last year. With the introduction of a new online vetting system, and by providing additional guidance and training to schools, corrections were reduced by two-thirds this year, increasing the efficiency of the process and reducing paperwork and time for schools and the national office. Work continued on schools moving to the online vetting system with 37 schools converted in 2021, which is further enhancing efficiency. This work is supported by a grant from the Department of Education.

Recruitment and appointments

Educate Together approved the appointment of eight principals and eight deputy principals in schools with its patronage in 2021. Appointments for 378 teachers and 60 additional needs assistants (SNAs) were approved.



Yard fun at
Balbriggan ETNS

178 independent assessors for teacher recruitment panels were appointed. Three new boards of management were established at primary and second-level and one board of management grew from a four-person to eight-person size. Thirty-one patron nominees to boards of management were appointed, with fourteen appointed as chairpersons.

Admissions

Admission policy templates were reviewed in 2021. The national office approved admissions policies for 30 schools that Educate Together is patron of, ensuring that policies and school practices are in keeping with legislation and regulations, as well as our equality-based ethos. The national office is continuing to provide support to schools with running their annual admissions processes following the implementation of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018.

Since most Educate Together schools are heavily oversubscribed, the question of equitable admissions policies remains a topic for regular discussion in the organisation. At the 2021 Annual General Members Meeting several motions on admissions to schools were referred to the Board of Directors. The board established a working group to facilitate a process to clarify issues and support discussion among members, including at a General Members Forum in December.

ethos & ethical education

Gorey ETNS
climate strike



Ethos Quality Framework

Following an intensive period of development and a pilot in 20 schools, the Educate Together Ethos Quality Framework was finalised in 2021 when members voted at AGM to adopt agreed ethos standards and statements of effective practice for Educate Together schools. The framework, which includes a practical step-by-step guide for ethos School Self-Evaluation, and a dedicated online Ethos Guidance platform for members, is the first to be developed in Irish education and is leading the way for other patron bodies. The quality framework was developed for Educate Together by DCU's Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspections who held an event to mark its development in November 2021. Our work in the area of ethos development is supported by Salesforce and the O'Connor Family.

Ethical Education

There was considerable development in the area of Ethical Education during 2021, we are grateful to funders such as Salesforce and Worldwide Global Schools for their support in these developments. At primary level the review of the Learn Together curriculum progressed to pilot stage involving 87 Educate Together primary schools who provided valuable feedback.

At second-level the evaluation of the draft Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum was completed by the School of Education in UCD. The Curriculum was launched at a special seminar in November and subsequently printed and distributed to all second-level schools in the network. Following this, work commenced on making its comprehensive accompanying guide available for teachers.

At the end of 2021 Educate Together had an Ethical Education curriculum for children and students at every stage of their Educate Together school experience, from junior infants to sixth year.

Initial Teacher Education

Educate Together continued to provide extensive input to Bachelor of Education and Professional Master of Education elective courses in Mary Immaculate College of Education and Marino Institute of Education during 2021. Inputs continued to be made online.

This work is coordinated and carried out by Educate Together's primary education officer through a seconded role funded by the Department of Education aimed at addressing the historical and ongoing imbalance towards denominational religious education in primary initial teacher education. In 2021 there was a change in the teacher occupying this role due to the conditions of the seconded scheme.

supporting teachers



First day at school:
Blackrock ETSS

Teacher Continuing Professional Development (CPD) 2021 proved to be a challenging year for the delivery of CPD due to impact of the pandemic on schools. Despite this, the changing nature of how we work presented opportunities to reach many teachers and staff members in Educate Together schools online and when possible, in-person; the following is a summary of the CPD provided by the national office over the course of the year:

- 57 teachers participated in three Department of Education approved online summer courses provided in 2021, focusing on Ethical Education and on Student Voice, Participation and Active Citizenship
- 221 second-level staff received induction in Ethical Education at second-level
- 36 teachers (primary and second-level) attended an Active Learning Webinar hosted in partnership with the Ethical Education Network
- 33 teachers (primary and second-level) attended a webinar on Wellbeing within the Ethical Education curricula
- 19 teachers (primary and second-level) attended a webinar on Challenging Stereotypes on 8th March
- 36 second-level teachers and school leaders attended a seminar on Senior Cycle Ethical Education
- 98 primary teachers new to Educate Together attended a webinar on the Learn Together curriculum
- 95 primary teachers attended a webinar on the revised Learn Together pilot

- 52 primary teachers received in-person support at school in the Learn Together curriculum
- 52 school staff (teachers and additional needs assistants) completed training in Nurture Theory & Practice
- Over 140 school staff were involved in whole-school Nurture Programme CPD
- 400 school staff have received an Introduction to the Nurture approach through whole staff CPD session with Educate Together's contracted partners
- 317 primary and second-level staff members received CPD support in digital and distance learning in the context of the Nurture Schools project

We are grateful to our funders WWGS, the Department of Education, Rethink and Salesforce for their support in making this possible.

research & development



Nurture room at Thornleigh ETNS

Research and development are central to Educate Together's work as charity that is constantly striving to innovate in equality-based and democratic education, and a number of projects underway in 2021 involved research with external partners. Educate Together's Ethos Quality Framework, which was developed in collaboration with Dublin City University's Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection, is the first such framework in Irish education and the process of development has become a model for other patron bodies. Curriculum development in 2021 included the Review of the Learn Together primary Ethical Education curriculum and the completion of the Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum (see above). A partnership was also formed in 2021 with Education and Training Boards Ireland to scope out the potential for the development of a new Certificate In Ethical, Multi-belief and Values Education with teacher education providers.

Nurture schools

The Educate Together Nurture Project launched in December 2020 with support from Salesforce and aims to improve outcomes for students who experience educational disadvantage through poverty or other barriers. The concept of Nurture in education recognises that students' wellbeing is inextricably linked to their engagement with school and resulting academic outcomes. In 2021 Educate Together was successful in being invited into Rethink Ireland's Education Innovation Fund to support the Nurture project to expand, both by extending the reach of the project to more schools and increasing the reach of the project within participating schools.

At the end of 2021 the project included 35 Educate Together schools (27 primary and 8 post-primary schools). Extensive support and CPD as well as other supports are being provided to participating schools. An element of the project which was completed in 2021 was the development of an online module in Trauma Informed Practice.

Whilst the Nurture Approach itself has been around for some time, and extensive research from other jurisdictions demonstrates its positive impacts, the Educate Together Nurture Schools project within is the first of its kind in Ireland because of its scale and emphasis on inter-school collaboration and sustained impact. A key aim of the project is to evaluate the impact on students and school staff. To do this Educate Together is gathering rich data from participating schools and there is scope for developing partnerships with third level Institutions in the analysis of this data in 2022.

Nurture training has given our staff a deeper understanding of the effects of poverty, trauma and the risks our young people face due to social disadvantage.

- second-level principal

organisational development



Harold's Cross ETSS students

Internal systems

Building on work that commenced in 2020, Educate Together continued to focus on strengthening its organisational structures and capacity in 2021.

- Staff continued to work remotely for most of the year, facilitating the reduction in size and renovation of our national office space in Dublin city centre in preparation for a move to hybrid working in 2022.
- A Systems Analyst was engaged at the end of the year to support the improvement and integration of IT systems to maximise efficiency and use of data.
- Building on a review of financial systems and structures in 2020, a new position of Finance Officer was created to further improve capacity in this area and an accountant with extensive experience in charity finance was appointed to this role in 2021.
- An external consultant was engaged to review our Accounts Policies and Procedures in December 2021, with recommendations to be implemented in 2022.
- A number of HR policies were developed and reviewed in 2021 and regular staff surveys monitored staff motivation and engagement during remote working.
- Educate Together benefits from generous grants of software licenses from Microsoft, Salesforce and AccountsIQ with support from Enclude.



Outdoor learning at Stapolin ETNS



Modern art at Galway ETSS

challenges



Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 on Educate Together in 2020 immediately followed the impact of a drop in income resulting from a number of projects ending in 2019 and for a time the organisation's resources were considerably depleted. Following a major restructuring In 2020, 2021 saw the organisation begin to rebuild capacity, but Covid-19 continued to put pressure on the reduced staff team, with intensive work necessary to support and represent schools and to continue operations and open new schools during the pandemic.



School accommodation

An ongoing challenge for all new and developing schools is the length of time they are required to spend in temporary accommodation. Because Educate Together has opened more than half of all new schools that have been opened in Ireland in the past ten years, our sector suffers disproportionately from this systemic problem.

Despite having opened 28 new schools In the last 5 years, not one Educate Together school moved into a permanent school building in 2021. At the end of the year, 49 Educate Together schools remained in temporary accommodation. In addition 13 schools in permanent buildings continue to face significant challenges as a result of defects and disruptive remediation work.

The national office worked with the Department to improve the situation for these schools in 2021 and nine sites were acquired and six contractors appointed. However, radical changes are needed and Educate Together will continue to advocate for improvements in the systems for planning and building schools so that sites are secured earlier and good quality permanent buildings are delivered sooner. It is vital that students in developing schools are not disadvantaged, and that school communities have the security and facilities they need as they grow and develop.



Supports for children with additional needs

Educate Together is proud to have a reputation as a diverse and inclusive school network, welcoming students from a range of backgrounds and supporting every child to reach their full potential. Our developing schools often have a higher proportion of students with additional needs in mainstream classes, and 56% of all Educate Together schools have specialist Autism classes, a significantly higher proportion than the national average.

Educate Together schools have identified deficits in the supports currently provided for children with additional needs in mainstream classes. Insufficient staffing (Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants) and a lack of therapeutic supports place enormous pressure on teachers and school management as they strive to meet the needs of their students. Challenges are exacerbated for developing schools, who often cater for more students with additional needs with less resources, while also dealing with the challenges of operating in temporary accommodation.

Educate Together convened a group of primary management organisations in 2021 to raise this issue with the Department of Education and with the Minister for Special Education and the Minister for Education and will continue to advocate for more and better supports for students with additional needs.

people

National office staff

During 2021, four staff members left the Educate Together national office. We are very grateful for their contribution, and wish them all well in their future endeavours. Thank you to Laura Dooley, Fionnuala Ward, Emily MacKinlay and Ger Mullen.

The national office also welcomed new colleagues in 2021: Susana Núñez (Second-level Education Officer), Vera Shanahan (Primary Education Officer), Laura Geraty (Finance Officer), Saoirse McLave (Administration Assistant) and Geetha Rajappa (Systems Analyst).

We are very grateful to Rita Galvin, our Member Support Volunteer, and to Gary Doyle, our Board Support Volunteer, for volunteering their time to support the national office again in 2021.

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 Charities Governance Code: advancing charitable purpose; behaving with integrity; leading people; exercising control; working effectively; being accountable. More information can be found at:

www.educatetogether.ie/about/governance

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 of 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.

Attendance at Board meetings 2021

	ATTENDED	OF	%
Jennifer Cummins	10	11	91%
Danny Haskins	11	11	100%
Emma Lane-Spollen	11	11	100%
Colm O'Connor	10	11	91%
Richard Woulfe	10	11	91%
Siobhan Mortell	10	11	91%
Aidan Clifford	10	11	91%
Aine Clancy	7	11	64%
Colm Ó'Cuanacháin	9	11	82%
Doris Abuchi-Ogbonda	11	11	100%
Matt Wallen	11	11	100%
Theresa Burke	9	11	90%

finances

For detailed information on the organisation's finances in 2021, see our audited Financial Statements at: www.educatetogether.ie/about/reports

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP - www.charitysorp.org) and include detailed information about the company's accounting policies, as well as Statements of Financial Activities (SOFA), Financial Position and Cash Flows.

As a charitable organisation, Educate Together is required to raise around a third of its income from fundraising each year. In 2021 it was necessary to raise €150,000 through donations from individual, community and corporate donors and trusts in order to continue operations, in addition to funding provided by Salesforce and Rethink Ireland for the Nurture Schools project. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, by the end of 2021 we were able to reach this goal, and we are hugely grateful to all our donors and funding partners for their support in another challenging year.

Partnerships with Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers in 2021 continued to achieve further savings for Educate Together schools and related income contributions for the national office. Both partnership schemes increased their reach to more Educate Together schools with 67 schools insured through Bradys and 83 schools engaged in the Folens scheme. We are very grateful to Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers for their continued support in 2021, and to the schools that participate in these cost-saving schemes.

Educate Together is a registered charity. Our work is funded through a mixture of government and other grants, membership income, and fundraising.



Galway ETSS amber flag promoting positive mental health

Educate Together

annual report 2021

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Company Number 286202

Registered Charity Number 20033309



Educate
Together