

Educate Together Annual Report



Students gather for the second-level student event in Clogher Road Community College

2022



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First day at school in SKY ETNS

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2022 at a glance

96

Primary schools

21

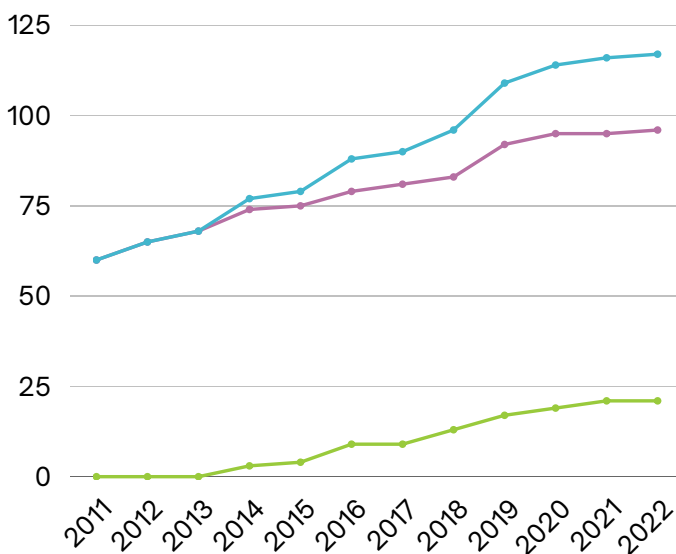
Second-level schools

37,858

Students.
an increase of 2,431 students from 2021

- 8 principals appointed
- 9 deputy principals appointed
- 1 new school opened
- 52 schools opened in the last 10 years
- 4 schools moved into new school buildings
- 10 new boards of management constituted
- 89 board members trained
- 415 teacher appointments approved
- 3 successful summer courses
- 8 schools doing ethos school self-evaluation
- 249 independent assessors approved
- 2,342 Garda Vetting applications processed
- 35 schools participating in Nurture Project
- 43 schools in temporary accommodation supported
- €10,000+ raised for Educate Together on One Day Together

The Educate Together school network 2012 - 2022



Total schools
Primary schools
Second-level schools



Chairperson's report



Our Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026, ‘Stronger Together,’ adopted at our AGM in 2022, guides us in realising our mission, growing sustainably, holding true to our ethos and aiming to give young people the best ‘education’ in its fullest sense. Reflecting on the progress made, the highlights of the year and the issues we have advocated on over the past year I am confident that we are doing just that.

2022 was a year that brought fresh crises, from the impact of cost of living increases and housing crisis to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has brought the brutality of war close to home. The realities of these crises impact directly on our school communities and our students’ lived experience. I am ever more grateful that we have developed the Nurture Programme, thanks to Salesforce and Rethink Ireland who invested €500,000 over 3 years. This has enabled schools to give many young people the space and the tools to focus on learning despite the challenges they face.

2022 showed us how fragile peace is and I am delighted that this year saw Educate Together developing two new North-South collaborative projects.

The first to strengthen primary school provision in border communities, the second aimed at enhancing primary school teachers’ capacity to teach about difference. Partners in these projects include the Integrated Education Fund, Ulster University, Education and Training Boards Ireland, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Mary Immaculate College.

Educate Together aims to be a leading voice for innovation and reform in education, continually striving for wider system change. This year we led on a campaign to secure better supports for children with additional needs, which saw additional posts ring-fenced for developing schools. A particular highlight of 2022 was the gathering of 167 second-level students in Clogher Road Community College for a national Student Event focused on Ethical Education and Global Citizenship. Connecting pioneering schools and students is so important, as we collectively develop a more student-centred and democratic education experience - there is so much we can learn from each other.



Athletes at the 2022 Educate Together Mini Olympics

Chairperson's report (continued)



Fun at the 2022 Student Event

We now have 37,858 students, an increase of more than 2,400 since 2021. As our schools grow to full capacity, this will grow to more than 45,000 over the next few years. We are delighted to have welcomed Sallynoggin Killiney Educate Together NS (SKY ETNS) into our community of schools and give our appreciation to all the parents, volunteers and staff in opening this new school. SKY ETNS is the 117th school in the network.

The growth of Educate Together over the past ten years has been exceptional, opening 52 schools. However, the demand from parents for an Educate Together school cannot currently be met and the number of new schools being sanctioned by the Department of Education has dropped significantly. The Department's current focus to increase multi-denominational provision is on the transfer of patronage, but this process is not delivering. Educate Together has called for a new strategy and a properly resourced plan, with a clear mechanism for all parents and families to have their voices heard publicly.

Educate Together's Board of Directors can report that during 2022 we again maintained high standards of governance, reporting full compliance to the Charities regulator. The AGM was held in person for the first time since 2019 and we took the opportunity to honour Paul Rowe and Deirdre O'Donoghue, two exceptional and committed individuals who have been highly formative in Educate Together's development.

Our movement is our people, and in Educate Together we are exceptionally fortunate that we are peopled with dedicated, talented and tenacious parents, teachers, principals, volunteers and staff.

Chairperson's report (continued)

I wish to recognise two in particular, who passed away in 2022. Colm Kehoe, the founding principal of Wicklow ETSS and Eric Young, chairperson of the Pelletstown ETNS board of management. Both were school leaders whose service to their community and to Educate Together was so significant in establishing their schools and embedding the ethos of Educate Together. They are sadly missed by all within the Educate Together movement, and they leave a strong legacy in the vibrant, inclusive schools they helped establish.

The Board, on behalf of all the members, offer their sincere thanks and appreciation to our outgoing Chair Jen Cummins, who stepped down in September. Jen's commitment to Educate Together over the eight years of her service on the Board, with five as Chair, was exceptional. She steered the organisation through significant changes with the retirement of our first and long-standing CEO, Paul Rowe, and the financial restructuring of the organisation through COVID-19. We offer her and former Vice-Chair Danny Haskins an immense debt of gratitude for their service. Educate Together is now in a strong position to deliver on our mission with renewed vigour.

The values of Educate Together feel ever more important in these times. On behalf of the Board, I give my thanks to all our members and their staff, parent and student bodies who collectively bring alive the Educate Together ethos. I thank my fellow Board and sub-committee members and all the volunteers who sit on our schools' Boards of Management and parents associations for your commitment to ensuring good governance, upholding the ethos and providing leadership to sustain and grow our schools.

I also wish to thank our funders, both philanthropic and state, in particular the Department of Education, Department of Foreign Affairs, Rethink Ireland and Salesforce, for their support of Educate Together. Without their interest, belief in and commitment to equality-based education, the organisation would be unable to deliver for children and young people. Finally, I wish to offer our sincere appreciation for the staff of Educate Together, ably led by Dr Emer Nowlan. Thank you for your dedication, energy and drive in delivering our mission and supporting all of us within the movement to collectively make a significant and growing contribution to education in Ireland.

I am delighted to commend to you the Educate Together Annual Report 2022.

Emma Lane-Spollen
Acting Chairperson

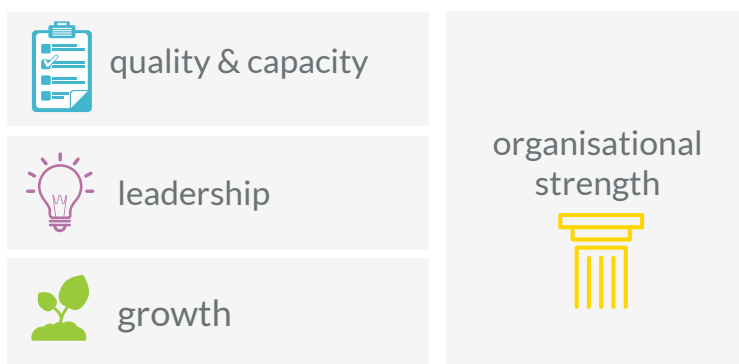
Malahide Portmarnock ETSS new building



Educate Together's 2022 - 2026 strategic goals

Educate Together's current objectives are set out in Stronger Together, Educate Together's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026, which can be accessed online:

www.educatetogether.ie/about/2022-2026-strategic-plan



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

In the media



9 June 2022

School patron body pays tribute to 'outstanding' principal who led the establishment of Educate Together Secondary School Wicklow

MINISTER BACKS PLANS FOR NEW SCHOOL IN CASTLEBAR

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2022



Minister for Education Norma Foley shares a light-hearted moment with pupils while visiting Castlebar Educate Together National School last Thursday.

A welcome move for Cherrywood Educate Together NS

written by Gazette Reporter | 10/11/2022



Parents may not get to choose patron of 'reconfigured' Catholic schools

Educate Together fears being excluded from plan to create multi-denominational schools

Integrated and equality-based school movements call for new approaches to accelerate change



Roisin Marshall & Emer Nowlan



Transforming our education systems, North and South



Budget 2023

Pre-budget submission 2023

Educate Together

Ireland's equality-based schools



Will Irish schools cope with an influx of Ukraine's refugee children?

Schools have been quick to open their doors, but there is an urgent need for English language supports

Expand



Caitriona Ni Chealligh, principal, and Sibéal Carolan, nurture teacher, at Pelletstown Educate Together, Dublin 15 with some of the newly arrived students alongside their classmates - Sophia, Isla-Belle, Sasha, Syyal, Mark, and Afkadi. Photograph: Alan Betson

In the media

Third of people want more mixed, multidenominational schools, survey finds

Progress in expanding school choice moving 'far too slowly', education boards chief says

✕ Expand



Dublin's first 'bike library' opens in Harold's Cross

Updated / Monday, 26 Sep 2022 21:22

CELEBRATIONS AS IRELAND'S NEWEST SCHOOL, SALLYNOGGIN KILLINEY EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL, OPENS FOR THE FIRST TIME

PADRAIG CONLON 02 SEP 2022



'It's kind of a moment of pride': Emotional day for parents as school begins for junior infants

At a north Dublin school, parents took comfort in being able to settle their little ones in the classroom following the easing of Covid restrictions

✕ Expand



Hazel Whelan is comforted in the classroom on her first day of junior infants at Belmoyne Educate Together National School in north Dublin. Photograph: John Ohle



Students And Staff At Cork Educate Together Call For Permanent School

10 May 2022

Education Minister commits to engaging with Educate Together on school transfers

Minister for Education Norma Foley TD has committed to engaging with Educate Together and other stakeholders in progressing the Government's plans to broaden the range of school choice available to families in Ireland.

2022 in review



Educate Together worked productively throughout 2022, achieving all the organisation's core objectives and targets, and providing support and representation for our growing network of schools as Covid-19 restrictions were reduced and then removed.

A new Strategic Plan was adopted by members at the organisation's 23rd Annual General Meeting in May 2022. 'Stronger Together – Educate Together's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026' sets out ambitious goals to support quality and build capacity across our school network, to lead on important system reforms, and to increase access to equality-based education so that this model is available to more children and young people.

By the end of 2022, there were 37,858 pupils accessing equality-based education in 117 Educate Together schools (96 primary and 21 second-level). This represents an increase of 2,431 students from 2021.

Sallynoggin Killiney Educate Together NS (SKY ETNS) opened successfully in September 2022, the first new primary school in the country to open with an approved class for autistic pupils on day one. Altogether Educate Together has opened a total of 52 new schools over the past ten years, expanding access to equality-based education to meet growing demand.

Four new state-owned permanent school buildings were handed over to Educate Together in 2022, with Ballinteer ETNS, Cherrywood ETNS, Malahide Portmarnock ETSS and Pelletstown ETNS all moving into impressive new facilities during the year.

Educate Together's new Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum was adopted by members at the organisation's Annual General Meeting in May 2022. 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).

After extensive consultation, development and piloting, the revised Learn Together Ethical Education curriculum was completed and made available to every Educate Together primary school in September 2022. The revised curriculum will be proposed for formal adoption by all members at the 2023 AGM.

In May, Educate Together second-level students hosted a national Student Event focused on Ethical Education and Global Citizenship. Funded by Irish Aid's Worldwide Global Schools, the student-led event welcomed 167 students from 18 second-level schools in the Educate Together network to Clogher Road Community College.

2022 in review (continued)

Educate Together's national fundraising day, One Day Together, was held on Friday 28th October 2022, and was a huge success. Schools around Ireland held celebration events to promote awareness of Educate Together's work and more than €10,000 was raised to support democratic and child-centred education.

As part of our advocacy work, Educate Together led on a campaign with other primary school management organisations to secure additional staffing for children with additional needs, which saw additional posts ring-fenced for developing schools. Work to address issues with current allocation models is ongoing.

The number of teachers accessing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Ethical Education focused on Global Citizenship Education (GCE) increased in 2022.

Continued WorldWise Global Schools funding enabled us to provide CPD to 300 teachers in 21 second-level schools, and a new grant was secured from Irish Aid to embed GCE in the revised Learn Together curriculum at primary level.

Educate Together publicly raised concerns with the Government's pilot school transfer programme to identify schools which could transfer to multi-denominational patronage in 2022, calling for greater transparency and a clear mechanism for parents and families to have their voices heard.

2022 saw Educate Together developing two new North-South collaborative projects. The first is an innovative partnership project to strengthen primary school provision in border communities, with the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and Ulster University, funded by the International Fund for Ireland's Communities in Partnership Programme.



Last day of school at Belmayne ETSS

2022 in review (continued)



The EDUCATE project aims to enhance primary school teachers' capacity to teach about difference, and is funded by the Shared Island - SCoTENS research partnership. Educate Together partners with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) and Ulster University (UU) in this project, which is led by Mary Immaculate College (MIC).

Educate Together's Nurture Schools Project continued in 2022 with 35 schools participating. Supported by Salesforce and Rethink Ireland, this project aims to improve engagement and remove barriers to learning by addressing students' social and emotional needs. Emerging data show significant benefits to this approach for students and staff, and a full evaluation will be published in 2023.

An innovative eLearning module on Trauma Informed Practice for primary and post-primary schools was launched in March, as part of Educate Together's Nurture Schools Project. In response to the increase in refugee children arriving in schools, access to this module was extended to all school staff nationally.

Educate Together continued its work with City of Dublin ETB to agree on management arrangements for three City of Dublin ETB schools in partnership with Educate Together. This work aims to increase school options in areas where families are seeking choice, but where new schools are not needed for demographic reasons.

High standards of governance were again maintained, with full compliance with the Charities Governance Code reported to the Charities Regulator.

Supporting & representing member schools



Annual General Meeting

Educate Together's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 7 May 2022 in Bremore Educate Together Secondary School (ETSS) with representatives from 45 member schools in attendance. Two new schools were welcomed into membership at the AGM, Blackrock ETSS and Gorey ETSS, bringing the total number of members to 124 (114 schools and 10 independent patrons). A number of policy motions were brought by members and debated, with motions on admissions policies, co-patronage and LGBTQ+ supports passed.

The contribution of founding CEO Paul Rowe, who stepped down in 2020, was marked and celebrated, along with that of Deirdre O'Donoghue, Educate Together's first ever employee, who retired in 2022. The Board of Directors formally thanked Danny Haskins and Colm O'Connor for their contributions to Educate Together as they stepped down from the board, and two new directors were elected.



Educate Together's new Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026) and Senior Cycle Ethical Education Curriculum were formally adopted at the AGM. Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, addressed AGM delegates via video-link and committed to engaging with Educate Together and other stakeholders in progressing the Government's plans to broaden the range of school choice available to families in Ireland.

Member support

The national office continued to improve supports to our schools by implementing new coordination and training procedures for team members, thus ensuring an effective five day week service.

In 2022 the member support service provided advice, support and guidance to schools on a wide range of issues including HR, disciplinary processes, staffing and recruitment, data protection, admissions, school finances, accommodation issues, bereavement, parental complaints, custody, child protection issues, and staffing in developing schools.

The national office provided four training sessions for boards of management of Educate Together primary and secondary schools, with 89 board members representing 61 schools receiving training in 2022. Training was provided in the following areas: The board as a corporate entity (in-person, online versions), schools ethos input with the Joint Managerial Body (online), and recruitment and appointments procedures (online).

Celebrating 25 years at Monkstown ETNS



Management body activities

Educate Together acts as a management body for its member primary schools, representing school management in engagements with the Department of Education and other primary education partners and providing advice, training and support. During 2022 the organisation engaged closely with, including other management bodies, teacher and parent organisations, both through the Primary Education Forum and in other stakeholder engagements. Educate Together led collaborative efforts with other Primary Management bodies to improve supports for children with Additional Educational Needs (AEN / SEN), particularly in developing schools, and collectively engaged with the Department of Education, Ministers, and the NCSE.

Representation

Educate Together represented its member schools through various forums, meetings, and submissions in 2022, including with:

Written Submissions: NCSE Statement of Strategy 2022-2026, Department's review of Action Plan on Anti-Bullying Procedures, Department's review of Section 37A, Education (Admissions to Schools) Act, 2018, NCCA consultation on the draft specification for Junior Cycle SPHE, NCCA consultation on the redevelopment of Senior Cycle SPHE, Consultation on the NPC Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027, The Wheel's 2022 Member Pay and Benefits Survey, Children's Rights Alliance annual Report Card consultation.

Working groups / advisory groups / forums: Primary Education Forum, Advisory Group for review of EPSEN Act, DE Review of Governance Manual for Boards of Management of primary schools, PDST / CSL working group for new 'Aspiring Leaders' CPD, Ukraine Civil Society Forum, regional REALT teams.

CPD/ITE inputs: Misneach 1, JMB board of management training, Colleges of Education.

Meetings, conferences and events: Other meetings attended included DE Ukraine Stakeholder meetings, DE Assessment of Need briefings, NCCA Leading Out Seminars, NCCA Revised Primary Curriculum, DE Inspectorate Partner Briefing on Revisions to LAOS and SSE, DE Inspectorate School Self-evaluation, as well as other meetings and events organised by teacher unions, school management bodies and other relevant organisations.

Various representations were also made during 2022 to the Minister and other public representatives regarding issues affecting Educate Together schools. Educate Together is registered as a lobbyist and makes regular returns to lobbying.ie in compliance with the Lobbying Act 2015.

Communities of practice (COPs)

Collaboration, collegiality and sharing of good professional practice are encouraged in Educate Together and peer-support and peer-learning are particular strengths of the network. Arising from the 2022 AGM, a dedicated Working Group was formed to develop enhanced guidance for schools in supporting LGBTQ+ students, families and staff, and a new community of practice (COP) was also formed focusing on ethos School Self-Evaluation (SSE). A number of existing COPs also continued to work together, including the primary Learn Together Advisor network, Second-level Ethical Education Teachers and Nurture School communities of practice.

In addition to these COPs that are supported by the national office, various groupings of primary and second-level Principals and Deputy Principals continued to engage and collaborate together on many areas, including leadership support and network events, such as second-level athletics, drama and debating competitions.



Celebrating 20 years at Donabate Portrane ETNS

Garda vetting

Educate Together is the authorised body for Garda Vetting for its primary schools. In 2022, 2,342 applications were sent to the National Vetting Bureau, a 105% increase from last year. By providing guidance and training to schools on the online vetting system, corrections were reduced to 9% this year (213 in total), increasing the efficiency of the process and reducing paperwork and time for schools and the national office. Work continued on moving schools to the online vetting system with 29 schools converted in 2022 and a total of 66 schools (73%) now signed up, which is further enhancing efficiency. This work is supported by a grant from the Department of Education.

Ethos Quality Framework

Educate Together continued to roll out its Ethos Quality Framework in 2022 (ethos.educatetogether.ie). The framework, which includes a practical step-by-step guide for ethos School Self-Evaluation, and a dedicated online Ethos Guidance platform for members, was the first to be developed in Irish education and has led the way for other patron bodies.

In 2022 a further 8 schools began work with national office staff to progress school self-evaluation in an aspect of ethos. Also in 2022, following a motion passed at the AGM 2022, a working group was established to develop guidance for members on LGBTQ+ inclusion and support across the network.

Ethical Education

There was considerable development in the area of Ethical Education during 2022. At primary level, the revised Learn Together Curriculum, which was developed after extensive consultation with teachers, parents, pupils, ANAs and ancillary staff and a thorough pilot was sent to every Educate Together primary school. Educate Together received funding from Irish Aid to support the roll-out and implementation of the revised curriculum through CPD on methodologies focused on promoting students' engagement and learning in Global Citizenship Education. The draft curriculum will be proposed for formal adoption by all members at the 2023 AGM.

At second-level, Educate Together's new Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum was ratified at the organisation's Annual General Meeting in May 2022. The ratification of the curriculum 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). A first of its kind in Ireland, the senior cycle curriculum and its accompanying teacher guide were developed by and for Ethical Education teachers.

The ongoing development of Ethical Education, involving teachers from across the network reflects the grassroots principle which has characterised Educate Together's approach to Ethical Education.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

March saw a very welcome return to an in-person conference of Educate Together principals with 58 primary and post-primary school leaders assembling in Galway for the two-day event. After a two-year Covid-19 enforced absence, this was an important networking and relationship-building event. An Induction Day was held for seven newly appointed primary school principals in August, covering topics such as ethos guidance, member supports, leadership, finance and recruitment.

Having adapted to online teacher CPD during the pandemic, in 2022 Educate Together was able to offer blended provision through both online and face-to-face opportunities. CPD provided by the national office over the course of the year included:

- More than 200 primary teachers attended Learn Together related webinars on topics including Droichead and the Learn Together curriculum, Wellbeing, Gender Equality, Outdoor Learning and the environment.
- In person CPD and support was provided to 100 primary teachers focusing specifically on methodologies for teaching Learn Together.
- Three Department of Education approved online summer courses for primary teachers were provided in 2022, focusing on Ethical Education, Student Voice, Participation and Active Citizenship. 33 teachers participated in these courses.

- 300 second-level teachers in 21 schools engaged in teacher CPD with Educate Together in 2022, including induction in Ethical Education, Global Citizenship Education, Ethical Inquiry and Environmental Activism.

Educate Together is grateful to all its funders for their support in making this CPD provision possible in 2022, including WorldWide Global Schools, Irish Aid and individual and corporate sponsors.

One Day Together at Midleton ETNS



Nurture schools

The Educate Together Nurture Schools Project, launched in December 2020 with support from Salesforce, aims to improve outcomes for students who experience educational disadvantage through poverty or other barriers.

The project began in 2020, at the height of the pandemic, and by 2022, nurture spaces were operating in 35 participating Educate Together schools (27 primary and 8 post-primary schools) across the school network. Throughout the year, participating schools had the opportunity to meet up in person, share their experience and learning and celebrate all they have achieved.

The following is a summary of the nurture training provided through the national office over the course of the year:

- 22 school staff participated in the first in-person whole school Nurture CPD for a cohort of eight new schools
- 87 educators were involved in accredited nurture training (21 of whom received formal Nurture approach practitioner accreditation) in 2022.
- 180 educators were trained in whole school Nurture programme and 750 school staff in the whole staff Nurture CPD in 2022.
- 350 staff members across the school network completed the module individually in 2022.
- Kinia trained 444 teachers from 28 schools over the two years in a variety of distance and digital learning over 30 sessions.
- 25 schools and 80 school staff participated in five in-person community of practice Nurture celebrations where they received certificates of participation in the Nurture programme. Celebrations were held in Cork, Tuam and in three Dublin locations.

The cumulative total of students benefiting from their school's involvement in this project is approximately 11,000, based on current enrolments in the 35 participating schools.

As part of the Nurture Project Educate Together developed an online module on Trauma Informed Practice in Teaching. The module was made available to all schools during 2022 in response to the war in Ukraine. While not designed to address trauma as a result of experiencing conflict and war, the course supported teachers to develop their understanding of trauma and how it can affect the children in their care. In Q4 2022, the development of a further online module was initiated. This module on Culturally and Socially Responsive Practice in schools will be completed and made available to schools in 2023.

Educate Together is grateful to Salesforce and Rethink Ireland for providing dedicated funding to support the Nurture Schools project.



First day at school in SKY ETNS

School patronage



Accommodation

Operating in temporary accommodation continues to present huge challenges for a large number of Educate Together schools and the national office continued to advocate for improvements to planning processes and the school buildings programme. Support and representation were provided for 43 schools in temporary accommodation in 2022 (29 primary and 14 second-level schools) and the percentage of Educate Together schools in temporary accommodation reduced from 43% to 39%.

Permanent buildings were handed over for Ballinteer ETNS, Cherrywood ETNS, Malahide Portmarnock ETSS and Pelletstown ETNS during the year, reflecting a regaining of momentum in the building programme. Contractors were appointed to commence construction on four further permanent school buildings for Dublin 7 ETNS, Harcourt Terrace ETNS, Stapolin ETNS and Belmayne ETSS and sites were confirmed by the Department of Education for two schools: Westport ETNS and Gorey ETSS. Four new leases and two license agreements were signed for Educate Together schools in temporary accommodation in 2022.

At the end of 2022, there were 47 Educate Together schools in Ministerial-owned buildings and work were underway towards agreeing a lease for these buildings.

Educate Together's work in the area of school accommodation is currently supported by a grant from the Department of Education.

Recruitment and appointments

Educate Together approved the appointment of eight principals and nine deputy principals in schools with its patronage in 2022. Appointments for 415 teachers and 140 additional needs assistants (ANAs/SNAs) were approved and 249 independent assessors for recruitment panels were appointed. Ten new boards of management were constituted. Thirteen patron nominees to boards of management were appointed, with seven appointed as chairpersons.



First day at school in SKY ETNS



Halloween at Griffeen Valley ETNS

Admissions

The national office approved admissions policies for 20 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. Due to the commencement of the remaining Sections of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 Educate Together approved 19 amendments on admissions policies before the end of 2022, as required under section 62 of the Act. 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.

The Admissions Working group established in 2021 published its report, and the procedure for schools to apply to include variations to an admissions policy was reviewed to reflect this.

Research & development



Educational research and development

Research and development are central to Educate Together's work as a charity that is constantly striving to innovate in equality-based and democratic education, and a number of projects were underway in 2022 – both in-house and with external partners. Curriculum development in 2022 included the roll out of the revised Learn Together primary Ethical Education curriculum and the completed Senior Cycle Ethical Education curriculum, as reported above. Also reported on above is Educate Together's innovative Nurture Schools project, which went from strength to strength in 2022.

EDUCATE project

Educate Together is one of five partners involved in the new Educating About Difference Uniting Classrooms and Teacher Education (EDUCATE) action research project announced in 2022, along with lead partner Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Ulster University (UU), Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). This cross-border education partnership will enhance student teachers' capacity to teach about difference in equality-based, multi-denominational and integrated primary schools, and the project is funded by the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) in conjunction with the Shared-Island Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach.

Certificate in Ethical Multi-Belief and Values Education

Educate Together developed a new partnership with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and all five Colleges of Education in 2022 to develop a Certificate in Ethical, Multi-Belief and Values Education. This Certificate will build on the good practice already happening in the Colleges of Education and will enhance and extend formal teacher education in the Learn Together and ETBI's Goodness Me, Goodness You curricula to every pre-service teacher in Ireland from September 2024.



Research & development at Hansfield ETSS

Human resources and systems

Educate Together continued to focus on strengthening its organisational structures and capacity in 2022 in line with Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan. In keeping with its flexible working culture, the national office moved to a more formalised hybrid working policy, with most staff working in the national office two days a week between Monday and Thursday. A number of HR policies were developed and reviewed in 2022 and regular staff surveys monitored staff motivation and engagement during remote and hybrid working. New HR support services and EPA providers were appointed in 2022.

As part of ongoing restructuring and resource planning, the following roles were filled in 2022:

- A new role of Fundraising and Communications Officer (4 days) was created to support the implementation of the new Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026).
- A new Volunteer Officer role was created to enhance support and training for volunteer board of management members and to plan for the changeover of primary boards in 2023.
- A Systems Analyst was employed on a twelve-week placement as part of the Women ReBoot programme to support the improvement of office systems.



As part of ongoing work to improve office and IT systems, changes were made to our file management and CRM systems during 2022. Multi-factor authentication was introduced on a number of systems to improve security. Automated processes were implemented to improve our patronage, appointments, HR and accounts functions. Educate Together benefits from generous grants of software licenses from Microsoft, Salesforce and AccountIQ with support from Enclude.

Fundraising

As a charitable organisation, Educate Together is required to raise approximately a third of its income from fundraising each year. In 2022, it was necessary to raise €179,155 through donations from individual giving, community fundraising, foundations, trading and corporate partnerships in order to continue operations. This was in addition to grant funding of €82,324 provided by Rethink Ireland for the Nurture Schools project and grant funding of €55,825 from Irish Aid and Worldwide Global schools to support Global Citizenship Education. By the end of 2022, we were able to reach our fundraising goal, and we are hugely grateful to all our donors and funding partners for their support in 2022.

Partnerships with Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers in 2022 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 70 schools insured through Bradys and 85 schools engaged in the Folens scheme. We are very grateful to Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers for their continued support in 2022, and to the schools that participate in these cost-saving schemes.

Challenges



Covid-19, illness and staff shortages

2022 saw the return to full in-school learning for our network of schools. The transition back to in-school learning after the easing of restrictions presented several challenges for school communities. Schools continued to implement safety measures and to address the academic and social impacts of school closures and remote learning over previous years, prioritising supports to vulnerable students. The Educate Together nurture schools project assisted many school communities in this respect in 2022.

The crisis in relation to teacher supply, which began before Covid-19, continued to be exacerbated by illness and public health advice regarding isolation in 2022, affecting staffing in schools across the country. The government decision to end ‘banking hours’ meant that many schools were not able to provide sufficient teaching and support for students with additional needs, just at the time when these students needed it most, as they were forced to deploy ‘Special’ Education Teachers (SETs) to mainstream classes. Educate Together continued to advocate on this important issue in 2022.

With the removal of government Covid-19 restrictions at the end of the pandemic, a number of consultations, developments and projects that had been paused during the pandemic resumed across the education system in 2022. This placed considerable pressure on the small national office team, especially towards the end of the year, and it was necessary to prioritise representation work.

School accomodation

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 been a leading provider of new primary and post-primary schools, having opened more than 50 new schools over the past ten years, our sector suffers disproportionately from this systemic problem.

At the end of 2022, 43 Educate Together schools (29 primary and 14 second-level) remained in temporary accommodation with some facing particularly challenging conditions. In addition, several schools in permanent buildings continued to face challenges as a result of defects and disruptive remediation work.

Although there was some progress in the number of sites acquired, projects commenced and buildings handed over in 2022, further improvements are urgently required, and Educate Together will continue to advocate for changes to 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 striving to support every child to reach their full potential. By the end of 2022, 60% of all Educate Together schools were offering specialist Autism classes, a significantly higher proportion than the national average at both primary and second-level.

However, surveys in 2022 showed that many Educate Together schools are currently under-resourced to cater for their students with additional needs. These surveys confirmed continuing issues with staffing allocation models, review mechanisms, communication, planning and CPD for autism classes and access to therapeutic supports.

Educate Together continued to advocate for improvements and for additional supports for developing schools in particular in 2022, and to call for a review of the allocation model for 'Special' Education Teachers (SETs). Plans to introduce a similar allocation model for Additional Needs Assistants (ANA/SNA) were paused, and a commitment was given by the Department of Education to review the SET allocation model. In addition, 100 additional SET posts were allocated to developing schools. However, significant challenges remain in this area and Educate Together will continue to advocate for more and better supports for students with additional needs.

Finances



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

Our published Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP - www.charity-sorp.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 2022 it was necessary to raise €179,155 through donations from individual, community and corporate donors and trusts in order to continue operations, in addition to funding provided by Rethink Ireland for the Nurture Schools project. By the end of 2022 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.

Educate Together received a core grant from the Department of Education in 2022 of €133,000, This has remained unchanged for 15 years despite the significant growth in the number of Educate Together schools; from 44 in 2008 to 117 in 2022. Membership subscriptions provide the mainstay of the organisation's funding contributing €420,066 in 2022.

Partnerships with Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers in 2022 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 70 schools insured through Bradys and 85 schools engaged in the Folens scheme. We are very grateful to Brady Insurance and Folens Publishers for their continued support in 2022, and to the schools that participate in these cost-saving schemes.

For detailed information on the organisation's finances in 2022, see our audited Financial Statements at: www.educatetogether.ie/about/reports

Dublin 7 ETNS Junior infant students survey their new school building



People



National office staff

During 2022, a number of 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 Deirdre O'Donoghue, Saoirse McLave, Geetha Rajappa and Kate Hickey.

The national office welcomed new colleagues in 2022: Alison O'Neil (Volunteer Officer), Julia Bauer (Fundraising and Communications Officer), Kate Hayden (Administration Assistant) and Suriya Krishnamoorthi (Systems Analyst).

Board of directors

In Educate Together, directors are elected by members annually at AGM in accordance with our constitution. We are very grateful to directors for sharing their knowledge, time and expertise to provide strong governance to our organisation.

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. In addition the board is fully committed to the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public. In 2022 we maintained high standards of governance, reporting full compliance to the Charities Regulator. More information can be found at:

www.educatetogether.ie/about/governance

Attendance at Board meetings 2022

Director	Attended	of	%
Jennifer Cummins	6	6	100%
Colm O'Connor	2	4	50%
Danny Haskins	4	4	100%
Aidan Clifford	8	8	100%
Áine Clancy	5	8	63%
Colm Ó Cuanacháin	6	8	75%
Doris Abuchi-Ogbonda	7	8	88%
Emma Lane-Spollen (Chairperson)	8	8	100%
Lesley Byrne	4	4	100%
Matt Wallen	8	8	100%
Miriam Hurley	4	4	100%
Richard Woulfe (Company Secretary)	6	8	75%
Siobhan Mortell	6	8	75%
Theresa Burke	6	8	75%
		Average attendance:	86%

Educate Together's Board of Directors 2022



Educate Together **Annual Report** **2022**

info@educatetogether.ie

www.educatetogether.ie

01 429 2500

Company Number 286202

Registered Charity Number 20033309



Educate
Together
