

Annual Report

2013



This report covers the period January 1st 2013 to December 31st 2013



September 6th 2013: Portobello Educate Together NS opens its doors for the the first time.

Annual Report

2013 was another remarkable year for Educate Together with major progress on a number of fronts, including the following highlights:

- Three new primary schools established to meet demand for Educate Together schools in Firhouse and Portobello, in Dublin, and Rochestown, in Cork.
- Announcements of a further five second-level schools for 2015 and 2016 in Cork, Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow.
- New buildings for Carlow ETNS, Carrigaline ETNS, Greystones ETNS, Portlaoise ETNS and Skerries ETNS.
- Recognition as an academy sponsor in England, and announcement of a new primary school in Bristol, to open in 2014.
- The selection of Educate Together as preferred patron in 25 towns surveyed as part of the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism.
- Conferring of the first graduates of the postgraduate Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education in St Patrick's College.
- Relocation to a new accessible National Office space in Dublin's City Centre.

2013 saw the completion of the successful One Foundation investment period. During this time, Educate Together increased its income by over 300%, added 38 primary schools, taking the total to 68 in 2013. We also broke the barrier to second-level, took delivery of 24 new buildings, and established a national teacher education programme. The investment enabled the National Office team to be expanded between 2007 and 2013, and the range and quality of services offered to member schools to be increased.

It was, however, a difficult year in terms of transitioning from this investment period. As well as involving intensive work on developing income streams, this transition has involved significant cost-cutting, including voluntary salary reductions for National Office staff. A major restructuring was conducted in 2013. As part of this the number of posts in the National Office was reduced by four. This reduction in staffing has increased pressure on workloads considerably.

Emer Nowlan was appointed as Chief Operating Officer in July 2013, and has worked with Paul Rowe, CEO, to coordinate the development of a new office structure and operational plan. The new structures and systems are focussed on delivering on the organisation's current strategic goals, listed below.

Strategic Goals:

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

The new structure sees the work of the National Office organised into 9 operational programme areas, listed below.

Operational Programme Areas:

- Governance and Patronage
- Finance, HR and Administration
- Opening Second-level Schools
- Opening and Reassigning Primary Schools
- Management Education and Support
- Teacher Education and Support
- Communications, Fundraising and Advocacy
- Major Investment and New Business
- Organisational Improvement

For various reasons, we said goodbye to three staff members in 2013. We are extremely grateful to Mary O'Donovan, John Holohan and Jarlath Costello for their work and for their contribution to Educate Together during their time with us, as we are to all the volunteers and interns who worked with us during the year. We wish them all the very best for the future.

Report on Operational Programmes

Governance & Patronage

This programme aims to plan and support a structure in which Educate Together can fulfil its duties as a patron, a management body and company for our members. The programme works towards measuring and improving the quality of our schools.

During 2013, new principals were appointed in eight schools in accordance with the Educate Together Principal Recruitment policy: Dublin 7 ETNS, Rathfarnham ETNS, Wicklow ETNS, Rush and Lusk ETNS, Letterkenny ETNS, as well as principals in the three schools which opened in 2013; Rochestown ETNS, Portobello ETNS and Firhouse ETNS.

65 permanent and 106 fixed term teaching posts in Educate Together schools were advertised last year after the redeployment of teachers on Educate Together's panels was completed.

A project to develop a Quality Framework for Educate Together schools was initiated in late 2013. This project will be progressed in 2014.

A combined School Accommodation and Lease project was initiated to gather and collate accurate data on school accommodation and property issues.

Finance, HR & Administration

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

A new broadband service in the new office increased bandwidth speeds by more than 400%. This allowed us to move to a VoIP telephone system, which significantly reduced monthly phone bills.

Within the timesheet system, trackers were developed to analyse time spent on specific projects, thus improving reporting and aiding the efficient allocation of resources.

Considerable time was invested in ensuring that staff were properly supported during the difficult restructuring and redundancy process. Advice was sought from consultants to ensure that best practice was implemented in terms of Human Resources.

Opening Second-level Schools

The overall objective of this programme is to ensure that the Educate Together ethos is implemented at second-level for the first time. The current primary objective is that in September 2014, three second-level Educate Together schools open successfully. These schools are Ballymakenny College in Drogheda, Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School in Dublin 15 and Kishoge Community College in Lucan.

During 2013, the programme expanded due to successful applications for patronage of five new second-level schools, bringing the number of second-level schools to eight by September 2016.

8 SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS OPENING 2014 - 2016



The second-level programme operates across five areas:

Leadership & Governance. During 2013, three interim Boards of Management were recruited. Board of Management Training was developed and delivered online and face-to-face for our second-level Boards of Management. A particular highlight of the year was the development, with the Management Education and Support programme, of our competency-based second-level principal recruitment policy and procedures, the training of 15 selection panel members, and the beginning of competitive recruitment processes for the three schools.

Curriculum, Teaching & Learning. The development of the Ethical Education Curriculum Framework was the primary focus during 2013 and European Integration Programme funding was secured to support this. Guidelines on areas related to teaching, learning and assessment have been developed to guide our new schools and identify the processes required to implement the blueprint document. Throughout the year, the programme took an active role in the discussions around the reform of the Junior Cycle with the Department, unions and management bodies.

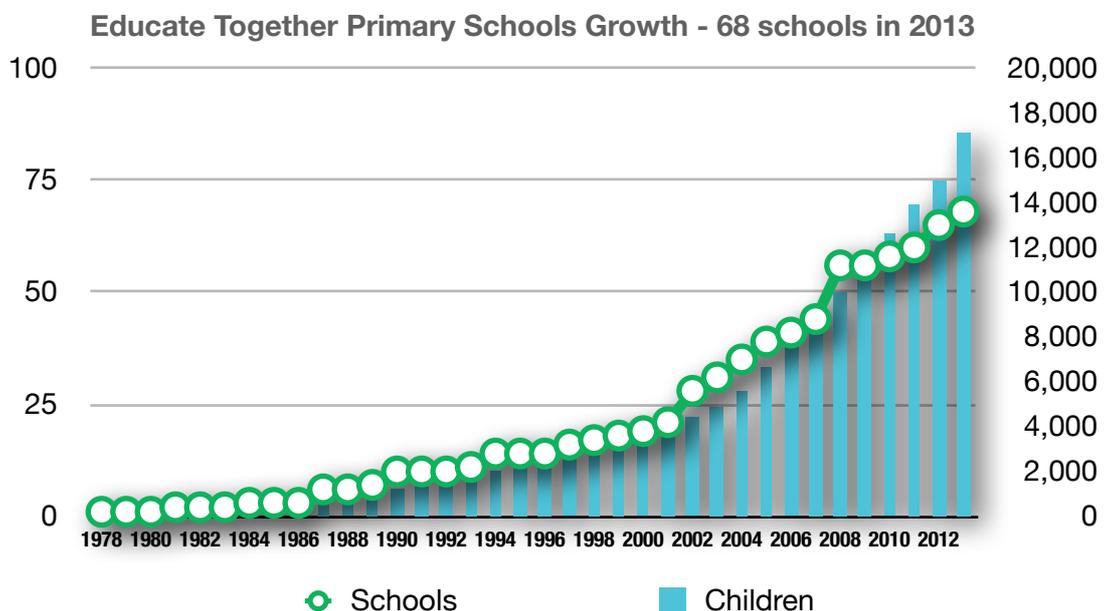
Accommodation. Work in this area focussed on securing quality interim accommodation for our schools opening in September 2014 and participation in the design process for their permanent buildings. This included meetings with the design teams for each school and advocating for design principles based on our blueprint document.

Communications. Brochures and websites were developed for each new school and information evenings were held. 530 parents and guardians attended information nights and 549 prospective students were met at information nights or during school visits.

Funding. We estimate that it costs Educate Together in the region of €120,000 to open the doors of a second-level school, with additional costs involved in providing support for our approach to teaching and learning. During 2013 we lobbied the Department of Education and Skills to cover these costs, which currently require fundraised income. A highlight was the grant secured to support curriculum development and CPD from the European Commission under the European Integration Fund, supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality, and Pobal.

Opening and Reassigning Primary Schools

This programme aims to establish new and reassigned primary schools in areas where there is demand for additional Educate Together places. These schools are established through the reassignment of existing schools to Educate Together's patronage and the development of new primary schools in areas of demographic need.



Management Education and Support

This programme aims to support good practice in Educate Together member schools through support, training and networking. This involves:

- Providing training for new and existing boards of management and interim boards of management (online and face-to-face).
- Recruiting, training and supporting selection panels for principal recruitment.
- Providing support to new Educate Together principals.
- Providing everyday support to boards of management and principals on specific issues (via website, email, phone, events).
- Working intensively with schools in particular difficulties.

We continued to advocate on behalf of schools in temporary accommodation and were delighted to see the following schools take possession of permanent buildings:

- Carlow ETNS, Carrigaline ETNS, Greystones ETNS, Portlaoise ETNS, Skerries ETNS

In 2013 our planning work for second-level school management intensified. With the Opening Second-level Schools programme, we developed our second-level principal recruitment policy and began the process of recruiting and inducting our first second-level principals and interim board members. An important innovation here was the inclusion of students on selection panels for the first time - a positive development which has been widely welcomed.

A new Child Protection module was launched in May 2013 as part of our online training service, and over 100 Board of Management members accessed our online training during the year. Face-to-face training sessions were held in Dublin and Cork, and covered topics including The Board as a Corporate Entity and Legal Issues. Seminars were also organised in conjunction with the Revenue Commissioners on Relevant Contracts Tax.

The Principals' Conference was held in Galway in April, and included sessions on the Aistear early childhood curriculum framework, parental involvement, bereavement and energy saving. Four schools were supported to complete the Ethos Self-evaluation Process in 2013.

Teacher Education and Support

The aims of the Teacher Education and Support programme are:

- Promoting ethical education in schools and supporting schools in this area.
- Working towards ensuring that all teachers leaving their initial teacher education are fully prepared to teach in Educate Together schools.
- Being leaders in ethical education.

Courses for students in initial teacher education were provided again in St Patrick's College, Mary Immaculate College, Froebel College and the Church of Ireland College of Education in 2013. We also advocated for the extension of elective courses to all students in the context of the expansion of teacher education programmes in the colleges.

February saw the first 14 postgraduate students begin the Educate Together module as part of the new Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education in St Patrick's College. In collaboration with Educate Together, an Ethical Education strand was also added to the Doctorate in Education in the College - the first doctoral programme in Ethical Education in the country.

Two Educate Together schools availed of whole school inservice training in 2013. A blended (part face-to-face, part online) course was added to the range of summer courses on offer for teachers, and over 250 people took Educate Together summer courses in total in 2013.

The Learn Together online resource bank was further developed in 2013 and the numbers of teachers using it and receiving our teacher newsletter also grew significantly. Funding was provided by Pet Aware to develop new lesson plans on responsible pet ownership.

The Ethos Conference was held in Dublin in November, and was well attended by teachers, board members and parents from across the network.

Communications, Fundraising and Advocacy

This programme aims to represent the interests of Educate Together – including those of its schools and of people seeking Educate Together schools - in public, political and educational circles.

Following the restructuring, the Communications, Fundraising and Advocacy programme now focuses on developing the Educate Together brand in such a way as to maximise the impact of the organisation’s advocacy and fundraising work in the context of reduced resources.

Much of the communications work in 2013 centred around targeted marketing campaigns in areas where parents were seeking Educate Together schools. These campaigns were highly successful; five new second-level Educate Together schools were announced in September 2013, and recommendations for changes in primary school patronage in 25 areas around Ireland following government surveys.

Other advocacy work included calling on the government to increase the supply of multi-denominational national schools in Dublin, lobbying for funding, and participating in the UN Universal Periodic Review of Ireland’s human rights record.

Various campaigns were organised to raise much-needed funds for the National Office in 2013, including One Day Together - Educate Together’s national fundraising day - and a collaboration with DealEffect.ie, a charity-based daily deals website.

Educate Together made international news in November 2013 when the Guardian newspaper asserted that Educate Together schools were teaching "that God doesn't exist", following discussions with Atheist Ireland about a potential joint project to develop teaching resources. The story was picked up by international publications, including El Pais, The Atlantic, Time Magazine and The Telegraph, and generated significant attention on social media. Both the Guardian and The Telegraph issued subsequent clarifications when contacted by Educate Together.

EDUCATE TOGETHER MAKES INTERNATIONAL NEWS NOVEMBER 2013



Major Investment and New Business

2013 saw a reorganisation of our major investment work. We continued to seek significant investments in our work from foundations and individuals and raised over €250,000 to support the network in this context.

The New Business programme was initiated in 2013. It aims to create sustainable income from marketing of the Educate Together model, ethical curriculum, materials and services both in Ireland and abroad.

In 2013, there were two key projects initiated. Firstly, we investigated the feasibility of establishing an international subsidiary to sell our services worldwide. Secondly, we looked to trial the application of the Educate Together model in a new jurisdiction.

Arising from a proposal from experienced educational consultants from the UK, a decision was taken to apply for Academy Sponsor status in England. Following intensive business development work, this was successfully achieved in July 2013 with the assistance of the Irish Department of Education and Skills.

In mid-December, Educate Together was awarded the sponsorship of a brand new primary school in Redfield, Bristol, and commenced work on the project, which is fully funded by the UK authorities.

Redfield Educate Together Primary Academy was the result of a campaign by a local parent start-up group whose statement of aims closely mirrors the principles of the Educate Together Charter. We are delighted to be working with this group to establish the first Educate Together primary school in England in 2014.

In the context of these developments, we welcomed many visitors from overseas to our schools in 2013, and we look forward to working with new partners to share ideas, collaborate and provide services abroad in 2014.

Organisational Improvement

This programme aims to improve communication, management, efficiency, systems and the working environment in the National Office.

The main work of this programme in 2013 was to establish a new office structure and operational plan in the context of the National Office restructuring. This was aimed at focussing the efforts of the National Office on achieving the organisation's strategic goals with reduced resources.

While restructuring was required for cost-cutting reasons, it also offered an opportunity to improve office systems and structures, and a consultation in the summer ensured that staff had the opportunity to input into the development of the new structure.

As part of the restructuring, six posts were made redundant and two new posts created. The redundancy process was highly stressful for all concerned, and the National Office team showed remarkable strength and commitment in continuing to achieve and surpass goals set during this time.

Following the restructuring, staff are no longer organised into separate departments, but operate as a whole staff team with work organised according to programme areas. The implementation of this system involves the development of new planning, budget tracking and reporting structures, as well as new systems to coordinate work plans, programmes and projects.

A new project management approach to national office work was developed in 2013, and will be fully implemented during 2014.



From top: First day at school in the newly opened Portobello ETNS; An artist's impression of the new Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School; The Tyrrelstown ETNS girls relay team celebrating their relay win in style; A fun day out for the students in Stepside ETNS.



Skerries ETNS new building

The Principals Conference

Firhouse ETNS getting ready for the first day





Carlow ETNS new building. Portlaoise ETSN new building, a view of our AGM, Checking out Carrigaline ETNS new building, and signing up to model agreement for Kishoge Community College.