

This report covers the period
from January 1 to December 31 2017



Educate Together
Annual Report
2017



Chairperson's Report - 2017 in Review



2017 was a year of change in Educate Together. The Board welcomed a new Chairperson, as Diarmaid Mac Aonghusa stood down as Chair after six years. The Board would like to thank Diarmaid for his hard work and dedication to the network over the past eight years, as Chair and Director on the Board. As Chairperson, he carried the role with confidence and clarity.

The Board also welcomed five new Directors. There was a Board induction for Directors and training for existing Directors this year. The Board met eleven times throughout the year. There are currently six sub committees of the Board. Each has a specific focus and progresses the work of the Board in conjunction with national office staff.

Financially, Educate Together is conducting itself within budget and without a deficit. However, it cannot be overstated that without appropriate levels of funding from the Government the network will struggle to grow at the planned pace. Educate Together must also ensure that the charitable status of the organisation is widely known in an effort to entice people to support the network through charitable donations.

The network continued to expand in 2017. The Board would like to congratulate the start-up groups, parents, children, teachers, principals and boards of these schools on their opening and wishes them the very best for the coming years.

As 2017 was my first year as Chairperson, I have spent a lot of time getting to know the processes and the people behind the Educate Together family. The good will, hopes and aspirations that people have for the network is evident in each person I have met. Educate Together is rich in the vision and hard work which must be undertaken in order to provide the children and young people of the country with an education which is the most effective, inclusive and up-to-date. Those children in turn will enter adulthood with values, skills and hopes for their future which are sustainable, inclusive and based in equality.

Thank you to the Board of Directors and staff of the national office for their hard work and dedication to the network over the past year.

Priorities

For the period 2014 - 2017, the Educate Together national office was tasked with advancing five key strategic priorities. Those are:

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



Strategic Priority 1: Increase School Places



In January Educate Together applied for patronage of four primary schools and in May was awarded patronage of two schools: Dún Laoghaire ETNS and Dublin South Centre ETNS (2018). Dún Laoghaire ETNS, with an enrolment of 23, opened in September 2017.

A number of Educate Together schools moved out of temporary accommodation and into their permanent homes this year. Glasnevin ETNS moved into a new building in January. Midleton ETNS and Limerick ETNS moved into new buildings at the end of August. Letterkenny ETNS moved into its new building in October and Firhouse ETNS moved into its new building at the beginning of November.

In addition, construction on four Educate Together schools began: Bremore ETSS and Stepside ETNS, Belmayne ETNS, Claregalway ETNS and Citywest ETNS. In 2017, the Mullingar ETNS school extension

was under construction and the Portlaoise ETNS extension was completed. These accommodation projects are under the school building programme which was announced by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2015 for the years 2016-2021. These accommodation projects have been advanced as a result of the focused efforts of national office staff, local boards of management and supporters in each of the school communities concerned.

Malahide Portmarnock ETSS was due to open in September 2017. However, uncertainty around the temporary location of the school in June resulted in enrolment numbers understandably diminishing and reaching a point not sufficient to create a sustainable, dynamic learning environment. The opening of the school was postponed until September 2018.



Children of Esker ETNS wait for President Michael D. Higgins to unveil a sculpture entitled “The Book of Climate Bells” which represents a call to action on climate change and Swords ETNS celebrate World Book Day 2017



Strategic Priority 2: Be Leaders in Ethical Education



Ethical Education Conference

The annual Ethical Education Conference addressed the theme of gender equality in November 2017 at the Grand Hotel, Malahide. The 'Gender Matters' conference was attended by 110 teachers (45 Educate Together schools were represented). In addition 87 guests attended the conference. The timely nature of the conference subject matter generated a lot of media coverage and attention.

Erasmus

Educate Together is the lead partner of 4 European partners on the Erasmus+ supported project titled LITTLE. In 2017, the national office has led on the development of a comprehensive, innovative and interactive online course for teachers in methodologies for Ethical Education. The course is freely available on learning.educatetogether.ie

Ethical Education Network

Educate Together supports the fledgling Ethical Education Network which is a professional network for teachers of Ethical Education open to both second-level and primary teachers. The network was launched in May 2017 and over the remainder of the year held 5 sessions involving 60 teachers, including primary and second-level Educate Together and other schools.

Learn Together

Educate Together supports a network of Learn Together Advisors with a view to building the capacity of the network in the implementation of

the Learn Together Curriculum. The Advisors also have a role in Educate Together's presence in the Colleges of Education, which in 2017 involved;

- Postgraduate Diploma in DCU. Module on Ethical and Multi-denominational Education - 4 students
- Church of Ireland College of Education/DCU. 18 hour module on the Learn Together Curriculum - 30 students
- B.Ed Course in Marino Institute of Education. 9 hours of course content -100 students
- PME Course in Marino Institute of Education. 9 hours of course content - 60 students
- B.Ed Course in Mary Immaculate of Education. 28 hours of course content (2017/18) - 130 students

Summer Courses

Educate Together offered two online summer courses in 2017, although only one ran due to uptake and DES requirements. 90 people participated over July and August in the summer course.

Educational Studies Association of Ireland conference

Educate Together presented a paper at the ESAI Conference titled *Creating Cross-Curricular Learning Experiences for Students: a Review of a Thematic Integrated Curriculum Approach in a Post Primary Educate Together School*.



Strategic Priority 3: Ensure Schools Are Implementing The Charter



Principals Conference 2017 and students celebrating 20 years of Lucan ETNS

Board of Management Training

Face-to-face training for Boards of Management was provided on the themes of:

- The Board of Management as a Corporate Entity - 11 participants
- Recruitment and Appointment - 9 participants
- Data Protection - 21 participants

Face-to-face training was complimented by online 'webinars' which were accessible nationwide. Two such webinars were provided:

- The Board of Management as a Corporate Entity - 19 participants
- Recruitment and Appointment - 6 participants

School Support

The School Support system piloted a new way of supporting principals through a peer-led group initiative known as a Balint Group. Eight of our primary school principals participated in this closed group over the course of 2017.

In 2017 Educate Together responded to 119 School Support queries through our confidential School Support system. Such queries cover a very broad range of issues. Key themes for 2017 included; SEN Allocation, Teacher Allocation, Parental Complaints, Interpersonal issues, Recruitment and Appointment, Contracts of Indefinite Duration and Child Protection.

Representation

In 2017, Educate Together represented the interests of member schools at a number of forums and submitted the following points:

- **Working Group on Child Protection:** Input into preparation of DES Guidelines, request for training for staff in schools, and Boards of Management
- **School Procurement Advisory Committee:** Increased insurance premiums, new procurement contracts and renewal of existing contracts
- **Centre for School Leadership:** Meeting with new principals, input on panel discussions, feedback on CPD
- **Working Group on Nursing Support:** Emphasised the need for a standardised national training programme, difficulties with 'access' to SNA when students require assistance simultaneously
- **Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland:** Encouraging schools to avail of advice from SEAI, presence at Principals Conference
- **Board of Management Training Advisory Committee:** Updating and Developing Training Modules (Board as a Corporate Entity, Data Protection, Finance, etc.)

Principals Conference

The Principals Conference is an annual event and an important opportunity for network members to convene, network and share good practice on implementing the Charter. In 2017 45 principals attended the Galway venue which included a keynote address by Dr. Mary Gannon, titled *Balancing Rights and Ethos in Educate Together Schools*.



Strategic Priority 4: Ensure The Success of Educate Together At Second-level



Stepaside ETSS at the WorldWise Global Schools Awards and Oscar-nominated director Lenny Abrahamson at Bremore ETSS

During 2017 Educate Together developed the Second-level Educate Together Principals Network and held four half-day meetings involving all second-level principals. National office staff worked closely with the network in advocating to the DES for greater flexibility within the Junior Cert framework. The DES issued a directive that all students (with certain exceptions) must be registered for a minimum of eight subjects for the Junior Cert examinations.

The Educate Together Second-level Officer made 13 school visits, seven of which were with the full school staff reaching 100+ teachers in addition to four class visits with 100 students.

Continuous professional development training was provided with the support of the Worldwise Global Schools programme. 22 teachers participated from eight second-level schools. Applications were submitted to input to three funding applications - Worldwise Global Schools, Global Education Network Europe and the Social Innovation Fund.



Principals Network Meeting at North Wicklow ETSS in May 2017 and World Cafe at North Wicklow ETSS



Strategic Priority 5: Achieve Financial Security & Sustainability



Hansfield ETSS showcase of integrated learning and Ethical Education and Glasnevin ETNS celebrate One Day Together 2017

The Development and Fundraising Programme worked to diversify the income base for Educate Together. The programme also worked to grow income from corporate partnerships, regular donations, trusts and foundations, major investment, and community fundraising. Growing fundraised income and achieving financial sustainability requires investment before seeing a return. The investment includes having appropriate levels of staffing to maintain existing income, and also to grow it. 2017 saw the addition of a Fundraising Trainee to the team, which helped to build capacity.

Educate Together's Fundraising programme faced a number of challenges in 2017. One of the biggest of these was the perception amongst many that Educate Together is not a 'charity.' Educate Together has challenged this perception through a targeted communication plan to promote our charitable work and raised awareness of our need to generate income from voluntary sources.

In 2017, the number of donors who support Educate Together each month through direct debits and standing orders increased by 40%. A donor care programme was established to ensure adequate communication with our supporters. Twelve applications were made to trusts and foundations, several new corporate partnerships with likeminded businesses were developed, and income from One Day Together was almost doubled.

The major gift programme, 'Educate Together 120' continued with its objective of raising sufficient funds to make equality-based education a reality for every family in Ireland. Some exciting partnerships were advanced to bring this fundraising campaign to an international audience. While the fundraising landscape remains challenging, there is huge potential within the network and among Educate Together's wide circle of supporters to continue to grow and reach the strategic objective of financial sustainability.



International Development



Musicians from Europe's first majority BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) orchestra Chineke! performing for the children in Redfield Educate Together primary academy in November 2107

During 2017 significant progress was made in Educate Together's engagement with like-minded educationalists across the world.

In England, the Educate Together Academy Trust opened its second school in Somerdale, Keynsham. This is a one-form entry (single stream) primary school and opened with a class of 15 Reception children (Junior Infants).

The Trust's first school, Redfield Educate Together grew strongly during the year and successfully passed its first Ofsted Inspection receiving a grade of Good with Outstanding Early Years provision. This was an important achievement for the Trust as it was the first time the Educate Together model and Learn Together curriculum had been formally assessed by this high-stakes inspection system. By the end of the year, Redfield had over 230 children and had entered its fourth year of operation.

The Trust also progressed two primary new schools due to open in September 2018, in Locking Parklands, Weston-super-Mare and Mulberry Park, Bath. Headteachers were recruited in December. The Trust also received the go-ahead for a fifth primary school to open in Swindon in 2019.

Educate Together had a stand featuring the Learn Together curriculum at the Inspiring Leadership Conference in Birmingham in June and Fintan McCutcheon presented the Educate Together experience to a Philosophy for Children (P4C) conference in Winchester in July.

Educate Together also maintained its links with the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

and the Integrated Education Fund in Belfast with increasing interest being shown in the North for the Learn Together approach.

Further afield, Educate Together has increasingly identified its Learn Together ethical education approach as an essential pillar of the world-wide focus on Education for Sustainability and the United Nations 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals.

This was highlighted in President Higgins visit to the "Book of Climate Bells" at Esker ETNS and in the launch of the Erasmus + "Little" Project at the Ethical Education conference. This project involves the creation of ethical education resources by Educate Together and our partners in Italy, Slovenia and Croatia which will be available in four languages to educationalists all over the world.

In addition, Educate Together CEO Paul Rowe presented a paper on the Educate Together experience to a conference of ethnic Albanian and Macedonian teachers in Skopje in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which was organised by the Nansen Dialogue Institute based in that city.

Considerable interest in the Educate Together model and the Learn Together curriculum continues to be expressed by educationalists in other countries. This interest offers opportunities to Educate Together and its schools to form partnerships to advance the aim of educating this generation of school children with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need as they tackle the challenges of global sustainability.



Governance and Patronage



Outgoing Chairperson Diarmaid MacAonghusa at the 2017 AGM at Hansfield ETNS and students entertaining delegates on the day

The Governance and Patronage programme works to fulfil Educate Together's legal duties as a patron and management body for its members.

The 2017 AGM was held in Hansfield ETNS where our members voted a new Chairperson and four new members to the Board of Directors. The AGM passed a special resolution of our constitution and registered this with Revenue.

Educate Together had its first full year of eVetting for Garda Vetting, 2,589 vetting applications were sent to the National Vetting Bureau in 2017, this was an increase of over 100% on the previous year. This figure includes retrospective vetting of non-teaching staff and volunteers for our primary schools. Two new Liaison Persons were also trained.

The Main and Supplementary Redeployment Panels were released in April and May respectively. There were no teachers on the Educate Together main panel and there were 45 teachers requiring redeployment on the Supplementary Panel

nationwide. The Supplementary Panel was cleared at the end of June allowing all schools to proceed to open competition with all remaining permanent vacancies.

In the summer months the Governance and Patronage programme approved appointments for 396 teacher and SNA posts for schools under our patronage. In September, following a new circular on posts of responsibilities Educate Together developed a list of approved independent assessors in consultation with the INTO. In addition, thirteen school enrolment policies were approved.

Reporting schedules were developed for all schools to map out when reports would be required. Some reports are now submitted using electronic forms which help to make this easier and more efficient.

In December the remaining provisions of 'Children First Act 2015' came into effect and new guidelines were published for Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, these include provisions relating to mandatory reporting.



Meetings of the Board of Directors and attendance 2017

Date	Type of Meeting	Location	Dianmaid Mac Aonghusa (chair)	Jennifer Cummins (vice-chair)	Robert Cochran (secretary)	Peddie Murphy	Martina von Richter	Paul Croghan	Meena Baskarasubramanian	Danny Hoskins	Simon Bradshaw	Marie Gordon	Mary O'Rourke	Vacancy
Jan 19th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Feb 15th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Mar 15th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Apr 26th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
May 17th	Meeting	Dublin 7 FHS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Election of the new Board of Directors until May 2018														
Date	Type of Meeting	Location	Jennifer Cummins (chair)	Danny Hoskins (vice-chair)	Robert Cochran (secretary)	Peddie Murphy	Martina von Richter	Paul Croghan	Meena Baskarasubramanian	Catrina Hand	Anna O'Flanagan	Sibhan Mortell	Aidan Clifford	Richard Wolfe
June 21st	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Jul 11st	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			
Sep 20th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oct 18th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Nov 15th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dec 12th	Meeting	Nat Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

Formal Statement by the Board of Directors on Fundraising Principles

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

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

Formal Statement by the Board of Directors on Governance

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

Principle 1: Leading our organisation;

Principle 2: Exercising control over our organisation;

Principle 3: Being transparent and accountable;

Principle 4: Working effectively;

Principle 5: Behaving with integrity.

More information can be found on www.educatetogether.ie/finances-and-governance



Statistics 2017

91 Schools in Ireland:

- 9 Secondary schools
- 82 Primary schools.

Two primary schools in UK

TOTAL ENROLMENT

Primary schools

- 23,144

Second-level schools:

- 2,245

Educate Together Board of Directors December 2017

- Jennifer Cummins (Chair)
- Danny Haskins (Vice)
- Robert Cochran
- Paddie Murphy
- Martina von Richter
- Paul Croghan
- Meena Baskarasubramanian
- Catriona Hand
- Anna O'Flanagan
- Siobhan Mortell
- Aidan Clifford
- Richard Woulfe

National Office Staff Changes 2017

The following staff left the national office in 2017:

Paddy Monahan, Regional Development Officer.

Emer Nowlan, Chief Operating Officer.

We wish them well in their new careers.

Administration Assistant James McGlynn also joined the Education and Support programme as a trainee School Support Officer on a part-time basis.

The national office welcomed:

Liz Martin, Administration Assistant

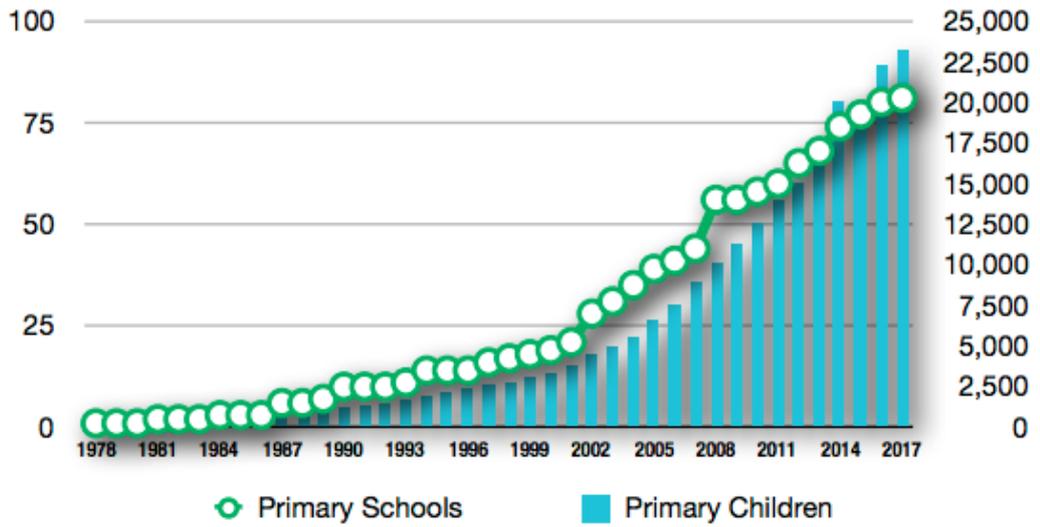
Orla Sadlier, Development and Fundraising Trainee

Javier Lopez, Business Administration Intern

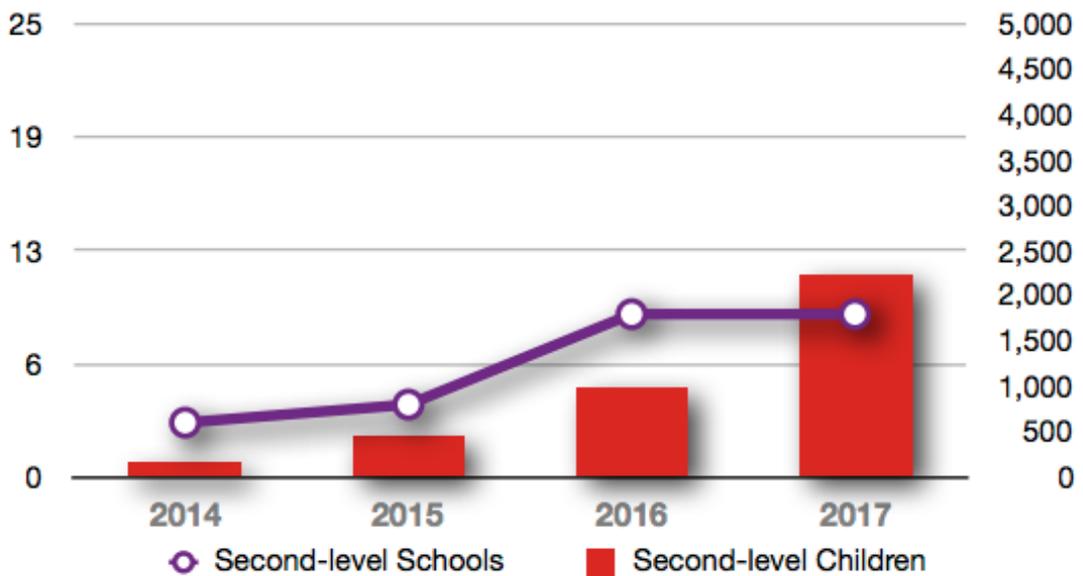
Emily MacKinlay, Garda Vetting Admin Assistant



**Educate Together Primary Schools in Ireland
82 schools in 2017**



**Educate Together Second-level Schools in Ireland
9 schools in 2017**



Educate Together in the media in 2017

THE IRISH TIMES

Humanism to be taught in Educate Together primary schools

Pupils to learn about the non-religious belief system humanism, atheism and agnosticism

© Thu, May 11, 2017, 19:44 Updated: Thu, May 11, 2017, 19:00

Carl O'Brien



Musaklem Shah (R), Theodora McIlennell (F), Zen Brennan (R) and Fergus Linehan (F): the Humanist Association of Ireland together with Educate Together has launched humanism lesson plans for Educate Together schools. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw

Students speak up: How schools are listening to pupils

Some schools are allowing pupils to influence decisions in a democratic, progressive way

© Mon, Nov 20, 2017, 19:00

Barry O'Rourke



A growing number of schools are taking the voices of students seriously by including them on boards of management and other decision-making bodies. Photograph: iStock

Empathy, leadership, confidence: the Irish schools teaching more than the 3Rs

As back to school time rolls around, some teachers are gearing up to do more than teach the curriculum in the traditional way

© Sat, Aug 5, 2016, 0:00

Aoife Valentine



First day of school: It's the parents crying - not the children

Mothers and fathers dabbed their eyes as children got stuck into their school day

© Wed, Aug 23, 2017, 17:49 Updated: Wed, Aug 30, 2017, 14:59



Carl O'Brien

Follow



Balbriggan's Educate Together opened their doors for a new year of junior infants and there was tears and laughter as the new students grappled with the curriculum.



PAPA DON'T PREACH Educate Together slams Richard Bruton for 'unfair and unworkable' plan to assume primary schools from the Catholic Church

The Education Minister's strategy is to open 400 multi-denominational schools by 2030



Educate Together in the media in 2017

Independent.ie

Watch: The first day at school for these junior infants in Dublin... and it's perfect

From making friends to 'boyfriends' showing up - here's how the kids and their parents reacted



An array of emotions on display at Shellybanks Educate Together School in Dublin

Mayo News

Castlebar Educate Together moves to Marsh House

05 SEPTEMBER 2017



'Everyone should get a cuddly toy' - Schoolchildren have their say on Budget 2018



'There must be some way we can use the skills of foreign-trained teachers'



Matt Wallen and pupils at Knocknacarra Educate Together. PHOTO: ANDREW DOWNES

LAOISTODAY.IE

In Pictures: Crazy hair takes over Portlaoise Educate Together NS

By Siun Lennon - 9th October 2017

SHARE      



Why Galway city needs an Educate Together secondary school

OPINION BY KERRAN ANDREWS

Galway Advertiser 7th Mar 2017

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