



Educate
Together

Annual Report

of the Board of Directors

2014

This report covers the period
January 1st 2014 to December 31st 2014



Shellybanks ETNS opening - September 2014

Strategic Priorities 2014 - 2016

During 2014, the board of directors set five key strategic priorities for the work of the organisation. These were:

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

The board is happy to report that 2014 was a landmark year for Educate Together. Not only did the organisation successfully exit from a year of severe financial constraints, it broke new ground in Irish education by opening the first three second-level Educate Together schools. It also recorded its fastest annual growth, adding over 2,000 pupils and 10 schools to its network. The opening of the first Educate Together second-level schools is an historic achievement. It crowns a decades-long campaign by many volunteers and activists. It demonstrated the dynamic and innovative nature of our organisation and will transform the learning environment for children and young adults in Ireland.

Six more Educate Together primary schools opened in 2014. These significantly increased the national

spread of our network. Furthermore, the year also saw the first overseas Educate Together primary school opening in the UK in Bristol. This was a further impressive strategic success that underlined the year's achievements.

Before reviewing these events in detail, the board would like to congratulate the CEO and staff on the success achieved. During 2014, the board was able to restore some staff voluntary pay reductions. The national office was restructured along formal programme and project management lines and stringent cost controls were introduced. In the final months of 2014, new salary scales were introduced and new programme managers appointed. The financial reports will show that the organisation is on track to achieve a break-even position by the end of 2015 and at the end of 2014, it was ahead of schedule with this challenge. This was a considerable achievement made as a result of real commitment and teamwork by the entire national office staff.

National office staff changes in 2014:

- Emer Nowlan, Chief Operating Officer, started a year's sabbatical leave. Dee Mangaoang returned to Educate Together and will perform the role of Chief Operating Officer until Emer's return in December 2015.
- Louise Daly, Governance and Patronage Programme Manager, went on maternity leave, to return in 2015.
- Jessica Simpson, previously our Administration Assistant, took up the role as Governance and Patronage Assistant.



Newtownwhite ETNS opening - September 2014

- Masina Johnston, Development Officer and Emma Grainger, Ethos Development Officer left to follow other career paths. Sarah Williams, previously our Volunteering Officer, took over the Fundraising and Development role. The organisation was unable to fund a replacement for the Ethos Development role.
- James McGlynn joined the national office as Administration Assistant.
- Niamh McGarry joined the national office as Communications Assistant.

Educate Together progress in 2014:

Primary schools opened in Tramore, Co. Waterford, Newtownwhite, Co. Mayo, Trim, Co. Meath, Shellybanks, Dublin 4, Malahide/Portmarnock, Co. Dublin and Knocknacarra in Galway City. Shellybanks ETNS and Knocknacarra ETNS opened as new schools and the others opened as part of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) divestment process. In the case of Newtownwhite ETNS, patronage of the existing school was transferred to Educate Together by the Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, following consultation with the school community and other stakeholders.

In addition, Canal Way ETNS (formerly Portobello ETNS) moved into a school owned by the Edmund Rice School Trust in Basin Lane, Dublin 8. This arrangement is part of the DES divestment process.

Two Educate Together schools moved out of temporary accommodation into their permanent homes. Esker ETNS moved into purpose-built (16 classroom and resource pod) premises in Lucan and Hansfield ETNS (formerly Blanchardstown West ETNS) moved into its (24 Classroom and ASD provision) permanent home in Dublin 15.

At the end of 2014, there were 22 Educate Together schools with active permanent building plans on the DES capital building programme. This has been achieved as a result of the focused efforts of national office staff, local boards of management and supporters in each of the school communities concerned. The board would also like to thank officials at all levels of the DES who have greatly assisted this progress and many aspects of our work.

Educate Together in 2014

- *Opened six new primary schools;*
- *Opened three new groundbreaking second-level schools;*
- *Set up first subsidiary in the UK and opened the first Educate Together primary school in Bristol;*
- *Welcomed a further 2,000 pupils to our existing network of schools;*
- *Chosen as patron to five more secondary schools opening in 2015 and 2016;*
- *196 Primary Teacher Appointments;*
- *10 Primary Principal Appointments.*



Shellybanks ETNS - September 2014

Review of the year's work against Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1: Increase school places

In the past year, there have been more parents than ever before wanting to send their children to an Educate Together school. Our schools consistently reported significant over-subscription of applications for places. In some locations this was over four times current capacity. It is clear that we are experiencing a generational change of attitude amongst parents in Ireland towards concepts of equality and the relationship between religion and education. This is being supported by the positive reputation of our schools and is a credit to the fantastic work done by Principals, boards, teachers, parent volunteers and pupils.

The Educate Together network grew by six primary and three second-level schools, bringing our total enrolment to exceed 19,000.

This surge of demand was built on the success of the 2013 surveys of parental preference in areas where there is little demographic increase. It demonstrated a dramatic indication of latent demand for our model of education. The growth of the network to meet this demand has been obstructed by two key factors. Firstly, Educate Together still only received 11% of the cost of opening a new primary school from the DES. This means that each new school we opened added approximately €80,000 to the organisation's

fundraising needs. In relation to second-level schools, Educate Together had to continue to argue for an appropriate level of financial support for the intense work required to open such schools.

Increasing the level of government support for the new school process was a key objective of the organisation's advocacy effort. Unfortunately, at the end of the year, we have to report that little progress has been achieved. The levels of state support for this type of work in Ireland is completely at variance with international norms and must remain a key focus of our policy advocacy into the future.

National Statistics

- 74 primary schools;
- 3 second-level schools;
- Current enrolment >19,000 pupils;
- 1,000+ Teachers, Principals and school staff;
- 22% of schools in disadvantaged urban areas;
- 14% of schools have specialist autism / Special Education Needs units;
- National office of 20 professional staff supporting the network;
- 15% annual expenditure from the State;
- Very strong demand for more schools and more places in existing schools.



Newtownwhite ETNS opening - September 2014

The second factor affecting the new school process is that new Educate Together schools in areas already identified by the DES for change are only being sanctioned if a premises is made available from an existing patron. The board has the view that the rights of parents in such areas should be vindicated, irrespective of the availability of 'divested' school property. It also has the view that it is essential that new Educate Together schools in such areas must be in locations and in conditions that are viable and attractive to parents.

Many of our schools were assisted to increase capacity and, if in temporary accommodation, move into permanent accommodation. By the end of the year, 22 Educate Together schools were involved in major expansions, or new building projects.

Strategic Priority 2: Be leaders in Ethical Education

Educate Together continued its work to promote the Learn Together ethical education curriculum in 2014. Summer courses on the ethical curriculum were delivered and enrolments in our Postgraduate Certificate in Ethical and Multi-denominational Education remained high.

In addition, courses were delivered in Church of Ireland College of Education, Mary Immaculate College and Froebel College, now part of NUI Maynooth. An initial Ethical Education Curriculum Framework for Second-level was developed and made available for our new second-level schools. The Ethos Conference was held in the National College of Ireland, the Principals' Conference took place in Galway and board of management training continued. The national office maintained a

confidential helpline for school leaders, managed the increasing number of patron approvals of staff appointments, selection panel approvals, board of management appointments and school policy approvals. The national office also provided intensive support for a small number of schools where necessary.

Strategic Priority 3: Ensure schools are implementing the Charter

The board has been acutely conscious of the need to promote good practice within the network of schools during a phase of rapid growth. A quality framework project was initiated in 2013, to research and implement smart measurement and intervention operations within the network. A consultation process began in 2014 and will continue throughout 2015, engaging parents, guardians, pupils, teachers, Principals and board members on what quality standards they want and expect in Educate Together schools. An independent consultant was contracted to lead this work and a series of surveys and consultative meetings were carried out throughout the year.

In addition, the board implemented the decisions of the members at two AGMs to review both the wording of the Charter/Key Principles of Educate Together and the Learn Together ethical education curriculum. This work included setting up a sub-group of the board itself and two working groups. This work was reviewed by the board at the end of the year and will continue in 2015.



Hansfield ETSS opening - September 2014

Strategic Priority 4: Ensure the success of the Educate Together model at second-level

The board is determined that the new Educate Together second-level schools will implement the objectives and methodologies set out in the *Blueprint for Educate Together Second-level Schools*, published in 2009. It is delighted to report that three new second-level schools opened successfully in 2014:

- Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School (Dublin 15) - a voluntary secondary school under the patronage of Educate Together.
- Ballymakenny College (Drogheda, Co. Louth) - a community school under the joint patronage of Educate Together and Louth and Meath ETB.
- Kishoge Community College (Lucan, Co. Dublin) - a community college under the patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB, working in formal partnership with Educate Together.

By the end of the year, all three schools were progressing very well. These schools represent a new approach to second-level education - developing warm, inclusive school communities that enable young people to meet their full potential in society and that focus on the lifelong learning needs of students. The board would like to acknowledge the support of Pobal and the Irish Aid Worldwide Global Schools Programme for this work.

Educate Together also participated in the national discussion of reform of the Junior Cycle throughout the year.

Second-Level Schools: Opening 2014 - 2016



During the year, work was commenced on a new second-level school that will open in Celbridge, Co. Kildare, in 2015, in partnership between Educate Together and the Kildare Wicklow ETB. Planning also commenced on four other second-level schools that will open in 2016, in Carrigaline, Balbriggan, Ballinteer and North Wicklow.



Swords ETNS 6th Class Graduation - June 2014

Many complicated policy issues have been addressed in the development of this work. This has involved much engagement with new second-level partners, management bodies, patrons and staff unions. One area of considerable concern has been the designation of enrolment policies by the DES that seek to impose catchment areas, some of which exclude strong areas of parental support for Educate Together. The board continues to monitor this issue and is committed to ensuring that as many parents who seek this form of second-level education are able to do so.

Strategic Priority 5: Achieve financial sustainability and security

2014 was the first year after a period of financial support of the One Foundation. In practice, this required that the organisation had to compensate for a €900,000 reduction in income by growing alternative sources of income and reducing costs. The board will be separately reporting on its financial management through the audited accounts. However, stringent cost control measures were introduced in the national office with all areas of activity closely monitored. At the start of the year, voluntary salary reductions given in 2013 were in place. Salary levels continued to be frozen for another year. The levels of staff salary and the organisation's inability to offer pension and other schemes remained a critical concern of the board.

Significant measures were taken to boost income. These included ensuring that services delivered by the national office were paid for, exhibition space was sold at Educate Together events,

merchandising opportunities such as school diaries were well managed and fundraising targets were monitored closely. The board would like to formally thank all those who contributed to our fundraising effort, whether their contributions were large or small, and would like to draw the attention to the ongoing direct debit fundraising appeals made to support our work.

New business that was complementary and positive to the development of the network was identified and pursued. In this regard, the development of the Educate Together Academy Trust in Bristol and the opening of the first UK Educate Together school in Redfield were significant developments. This activity has greatly increased the knowledge base of the organisation in areas of governance, teaching and learning and in the delivery of ethical education. To support this, Educate Together received a philanthropic grant to market the UK edition of the Learn Together curriculum at a major educational exhibition in Birmingham.

The board has actively pursued other opportunities to move away from a charity and state funding model of development towards a social enterprise model in which Educate Together can ethically and responsibly derive income from the considerable intellectual property that its experience has built up since 1975.



Swords ETNS 6th Class Graduation - June 2014

Chairperson's Report

I am delighted to report to the members on an incredible year of success for Educate Together. The opening of six new primary schools in Ireland, our first second-level schools and our first school in another country are all tremendous achievements.

On the board's behalf, I would like to express our gratitude for all the great work done by the staff in the national office during the year.

The board worked hard on many issues during 2014. For my part, the key areas were the new Quality Framework initiative and the review of wording of our Charter and the Learn Together curriculum.

The board met eight times during the year and I would like to thank the members of the board for their contributions and commitment of time. I think it is important that the members note the amount of work that directors do on a

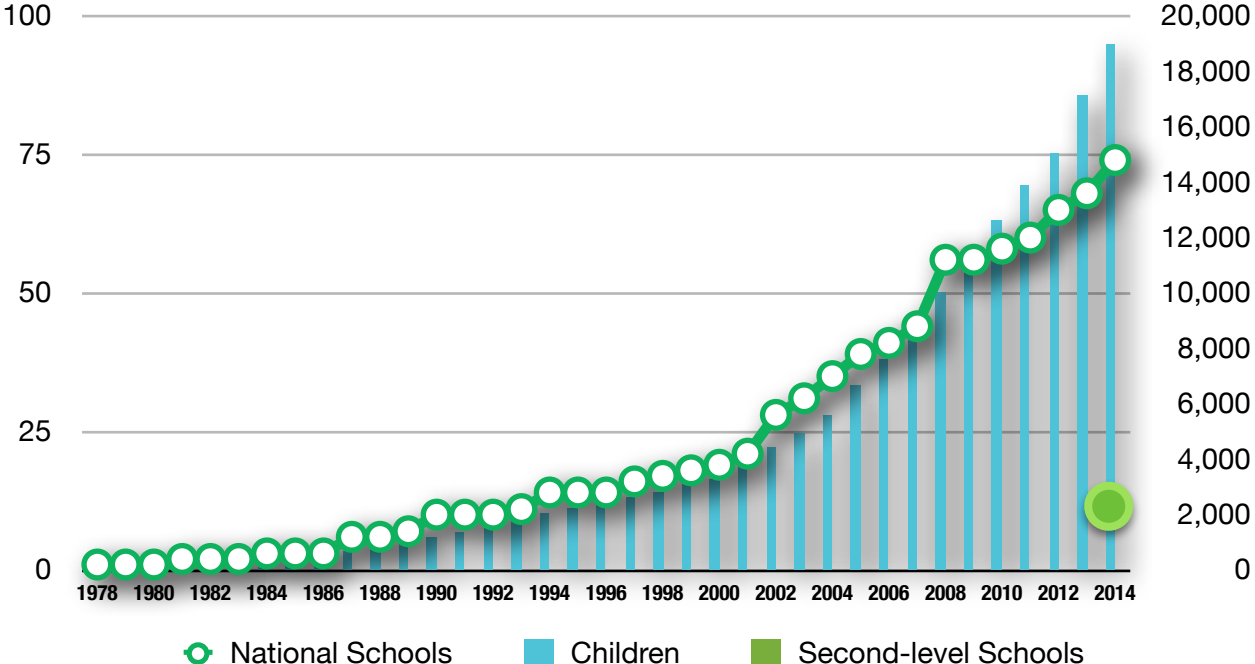
voluntary basis outside meetings and on important sub-committees.

Educate Together now has many supporters in all walks of life and all parts of the country. We would not have been able to make the progress detailed in this report without the support of so many.

In particular, I would like to thank all our members and those who have worked so responsibly on boards of management of our schools over the past year.

Diarmaid Mac Aonghusa, Chairperson.

Educate Together Schools - 77 schools in 2014



**Educate Together National Office Staff
Dec. 2014**

Louise Byrne - Office Manager
Louise Daly - Governance & Patronage Programme Manager
Ruth Doggett - Education & Support Programme Manager
Dee Mangaoang - Chief Operating Officer
Niamh McGarry - Communications & New Schools Assistant
James McGlynn - Administration Assistant
Jenny McGrath - Accounts
Gerry McKeivitt - Regional Development Officer
Amy Mulvihill - New Schools Programme Manager
Jarlath Munnelly - Regional Development Officer
Catherine O'Brien - Authorised Signatory for Garda Vetting
Deirdre O'Donoghue - Governance Specialist
Luke O'Shaughnessy - Communications, Fundraising & Advocacy Programme Manager
Paul Rowe - Chief Executive Officer
Ann Ryan - Second-level Education Officer
Jessica Simpson - Governance and Patronage Assistant
Niall Wall - Regional Development Officer
Fionnuala Ward - Primary Education Officer
Sarah Williams - Development & Fundraising Coordinator

**Educate Together Board of
Directors Dec. 2014**

R. Bourke
M. Baskarasubramanian
S. Bradshaw
J. Cummins,
J. Galvin,
M. Hurley,
D. Mac Aonghusa (Chair)
P. Murphy
M. O'Rourke
M. von Richter-Japy

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