



Educate Together

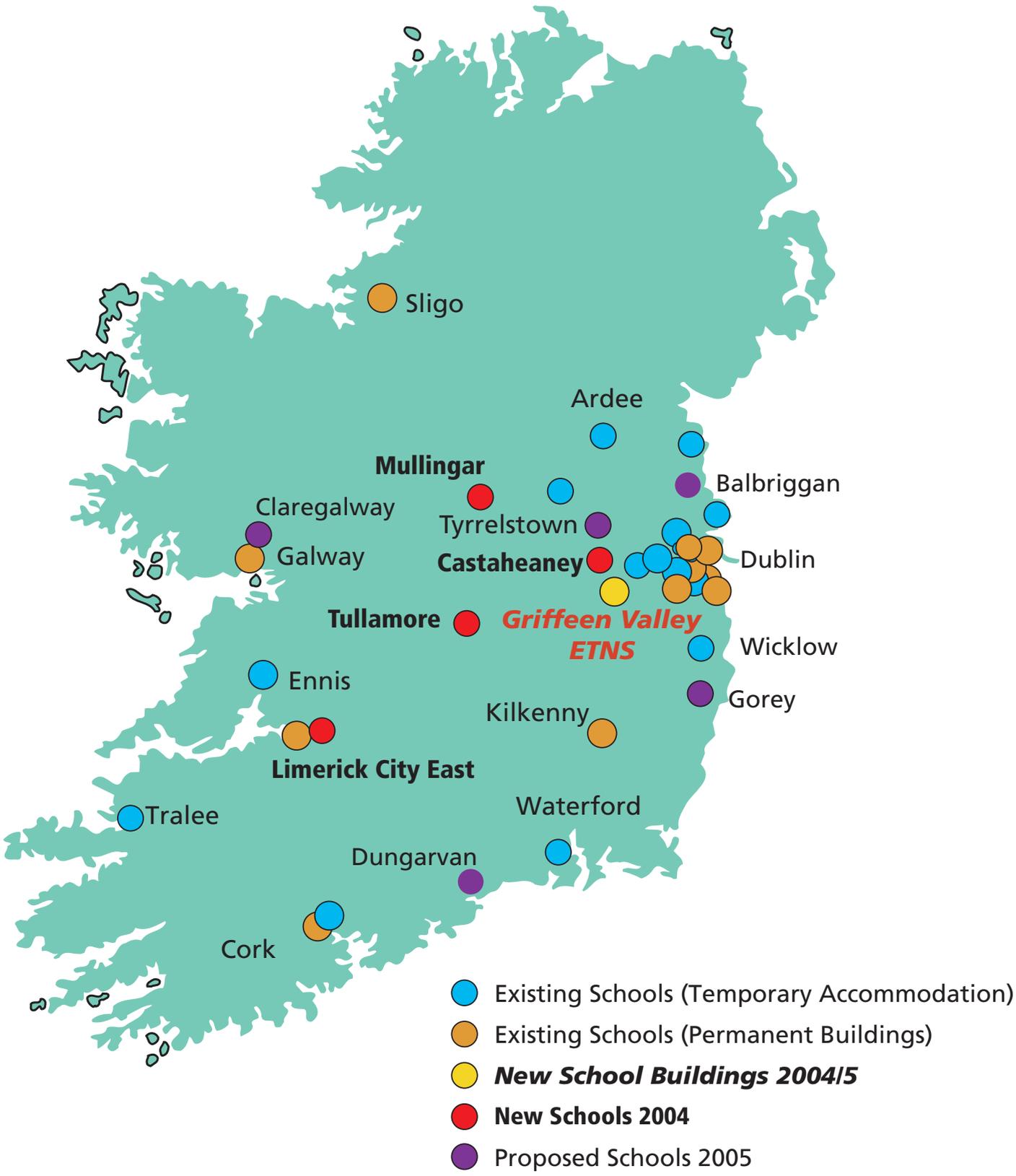
Annual Report of the Board of Directors

May 14 2005



*Some of the Classrooms in the new Griffeen Valley Educate Together National School.
(Photography: John Searl, Design: Coady Partnership Architects)*







Summary

The Board is pleased to report another year of substantial progress for Educate Together. This is the concluding year of the three-year 'proof-of-concept' development grant negotiated in 2001 with The Atlantic Philanthropies and places Educate Together on the verge of a decisive move into the mainstream of Irish education with appropriate State funding.

In the year under review, the key areas of progress have been:-

- **The publication of the "Learn Together" curriculum – the first multi-denominational ethical education curriculum produced in Ireland for National schools and the start of the process of its incorporation into pre-service and in-service programmes for National School teachers**
- **The recommendation of the United Nations that the State promote the development of multi-denominational schools**
- **The negotiated abolition of the €63,500 local contribution required for new State-owned school buildings**
- **New schools in priority areas now being provided with accommodation by the State from the outset.**
- **The opening of the first permanent building for a school operating with the national patronage of Educate Together.**
- **The opening of four new Educate Together National schools and the recognition of five more schools to open next September;**
- **700 more places created in the sector this year;**
- **32 new mainstream permanent teaching positions;**
- **Radical upgrade of the sector's website**
- **Launch of the national fund-raising programme "Friends of Educate Together"**
- **Publication of the first public information booklet "What is an Educate Together National School"**
- **Continued progress in the provision of Board of Management and Start-up association training**
- **Major progress in the planning process for new schools in areas of housing development**
- **Major progress in partnership with primary management bodies, local authorities, educational institutions, teachers unions and the Department of Education and Science**
- **Full implementation of the plan for internal governance of Educate Together with the streamlined Board of Directors and innovative "National Forum" structure**

This progress exceeds the expectations of the plans made at the start of the 2001 development programme and is a testament to the experience, knowledge and skill accumulated in the sector. It is also a testament to the extent to which the development of the sector reflects and is driven by irreversible changes in Irish society.

In contrast, the period under review has also seen Educate Together's resources stretched to the limit to support its schools, two thirds of which are still in development and without permanent accommodation. The period has seen enormous pressure being placed on schools with difficulties encountered with accommodation, special needs allocations and the escalation of the burden on Principal teachers, especially those who are teaching Principals. Now that the specific funding envelope is coming to an end, this Annual General Meeting sees Educate Together in the grip of a funding crisis which can only be resolved if the sector achieves appropriate State funding as well as driving forward its fund-raising efforts.





Our Case for State Funding

It is historically remarkable, that Ireland, almost alone in the democratic world, has not produced a State primary education sector. Instead, 98.8% of all primary schools are privately owned schools operated by religious bodies which are funded by the State. Educate Together was established to build an alternative to this monopoly of provision, to provide choice where no choice has been available and to recast in a modern context the original multi-denominational intent of the National School system.

Educate Together has consistently argued that many of its activities are properly functions that should be carried out by the State and has applied for State support on numerous occasions.

In the current period, Educate Together has had applications with the Department of Education and Science for core funding since 2002, shortly after Noel Dempsey became Minister of Education and Science. Despite many requests, it was impossible to arrange a meeting with the Minister and Educate Together took its case to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Science in July 2003, and to the Secretary General of the Department in July 2004. Despite these representations, core funding for the organization remained at €39,800 and in fact as a result of the reorganization of the In-career Development Unit even the small grants given for Ethos Conferences in 2001,2 and 3 were withdrawn.

When Minister Mary Hanafin took office, renewed applications were made and the first Ministerial meeting with Educate Together for three years took place on January 31 2005. Subsequently a meeting has been held with the new Secretary General of the Department, Ms. Brigid McManus, on May 9 2005 and discussions are on-going.

Educate Together's current statement of case is published on the website and available in hard copy from our National Office.

Recommendation of the United Nations Committee for the Complete Eradication of Racial Discrimination

Educate Together has been consistently arguing that the failure of the State to address the human rights implications of the structure of the primary system in Ireland and to proactively work to produce a national network of schools that provide a legal guarantee of respect and equality to all children is a contravention of the Irish Constitution, and a range of EU and international treaties and agreements. Pursuing such a case through the Irish courts is time consuming and expensive. As a result of the research done in the National Office by Deirdre Mangaoang, Educate Together made a submission to the review of the First Report of Ireland to the Committee for the Convention



Deirdre Mangaoang, fifth from left, representing Educate Together at the CERD hearings in Geneva

for the Complete Eradication of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Deirdre represented this case in Geneva at the hearings of the Committee and when they issued their "Concluding Observations" Item 18 read:-

"The Committee, recognising the "intersectionality" of racial and religious discrimination, encourages the State party to promote the establishment of non-denominational and multi-denominational schools and to amend the existing legislative framework so that no discrimination may take place as far as the admission of pupils (of all religions) in schools is concerned"

This is the first time that Educate Together's case had been reviewed by prominent international human rights lawyers. The fact that they made such a conclusive recommendation to the Irish State demonstrates the strength of this case. We have subsequently submitted the case for observation to the Irish Human Rights Commission and are awaiting their conclusions.

We intend to continue this work into the future, making submissions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We also continue to accumulate evidence to press our case in the Irish courts if and when the Board of Directors considers it appropriate. We note that the Rapporteur of the CERD Committee is to visit Ireland to review the State's progress later this year.

The Education Programme – the Ethical Education Curriculum

The highlight of the past year has been the publication of "Learn Together" the Ethical Education Curriculum for Educate Together schools. This was launched by Professor Kathleen Lynch the Director of the Equality Centre in UCD and Shalini Sinha, journalist at the Ark on October 6th. This publication is the first multi-denominational curriculum for National Schools. The document was produced by Public Communications Centre and supported with a grant from the Day's Trust. It marks the distillation of 25 years of work in our





Professor Kathleen Lynch, UCD, Launching the Learn Together Curriculum in the Ark Children's Cultural Centre

schools and has been widely recognized as a significant contribution to the the Irish educational system. Many of our member schools have held local launches in their own communities during the year and the publication attracts a steady flow of enquiries to our National Office from home and abroad. The Board would in particular thank the Education Sub-Committee and the four authors Carmel Mulcahy, Freida McGovern, Paddie Murphy and Mary Kelleher for their outstanding work on this project.

The Education Sub-Committee is now working on the further development of this work and organizing pre-service and in-service training for teachers. They are also working to extend the scope of the curriculum. One of the great strengths of the "Learn Together" approach is that is a process description with a full cycle of feedback and development. It contains an open invitation to the creative input of teachers and activists from inside and outside the sector. In this regard, we look forward to the development of exemplars on specific faiths in conjunction with religious bodies, on social issues with human rights and development organizations, and environmental issues with organisations specializing in these areas.

Teacher Training

One of the most promising areas of development opened up with the publication of the Learn Together curriculum has been the start of formal discussions with the main teacher training colleges. This year, all third year graduating teachers in Mary Immaculate College and St. Patrick's College have had the opportunity to attend an information lecture on Educate Together schools and there are on-going discussions aimed at incorporating such information and formal learning of the "Learn Together" curriculum into the the core syllabus of these colleges.

We would like to thank the President's of both colleges, Pauric Travers, and Peadar Cremin, the Heads of Education, Mark Morgan and Teresa O'Doherty and their staff for the welcome that they have afforded Educate Together and their spirit of partnership in this process.



Patricia Keiran, Mary Immaculate College, Carmel Mulcahy and Paul Rowe, Educate Together and Teresa O'Doherty and Jim Deegan, Mary I, on the occasion of the first student information Lecture by Educate Together in the college.

Abolition of Capital Contribution to New Schools

Educate Together has been negotiating over the terms upon which Boards of Management occupy 100% State owned buildings. We are delighted that the Department has abolished the requirement that boards had to pay €63,500 as a contribution to the buildings. We believe that this was an unfair regulation that had it basis on the model of a privately-owned site upon which the State was providing a building. We also believe that the new arrangement protects the State's interest in the building. The local contribution was a heavy burden on a new school community especially when it was impossible for them to raise a mortgage on a property that they did not own. We are now in discussions on the new lease for State owned primary schools and the insurance policies required. We hope to make progress in these areas in the coming year.





Growth of the Sector

A core legal requirement for Educate Together is to “promote a future where multi-denominational education will be as freely available to parents as any other educational option that they may choose” (Educate Together Charter). The context of a rapidly diversifying society is driving demand for the sector to assist groups who wish to open new Educate Together schools.

The graph, table and map underline the continued growth of the Educate Together sector. In the past year, we have welcomed four new schools, 16 new mainstream classrooms, over 60 new teaching posts and 487 new children. This growth is taking place despite the fact that welcome improvements in the pupil teacher ratio is reducing the capacity of our established schools and underlines the fact that the majority of Educate Together schools are still building up to their full capacity. The figures also highlight the continuing trend of schools in areas of rapid housing development moving towards a 16 classroom model and the substantial increase in special needs provision. This is also illustrated by the increase in the provision of Assisted Learning Units or Classes in Educate Together schools as the necessary resources required to implement these departments are provided by the State. The sustained growth of the sector can be clearly identified by the ratio between 6th class students and junior infants. This year, this percentage has risen to 1.84, meaning that there are almost twice as many entrants to the Educate Together sector than leavers, showing that the capacity of the sector – even without further schools - is approximately double its present level of around 6,000 students.

In the calendar year 2004 there was a welcome change of heart by the Government in providing resources for the primary capital building programme, and significant progress in our working relationship with the Planning and Building Section of the Department. As a result of

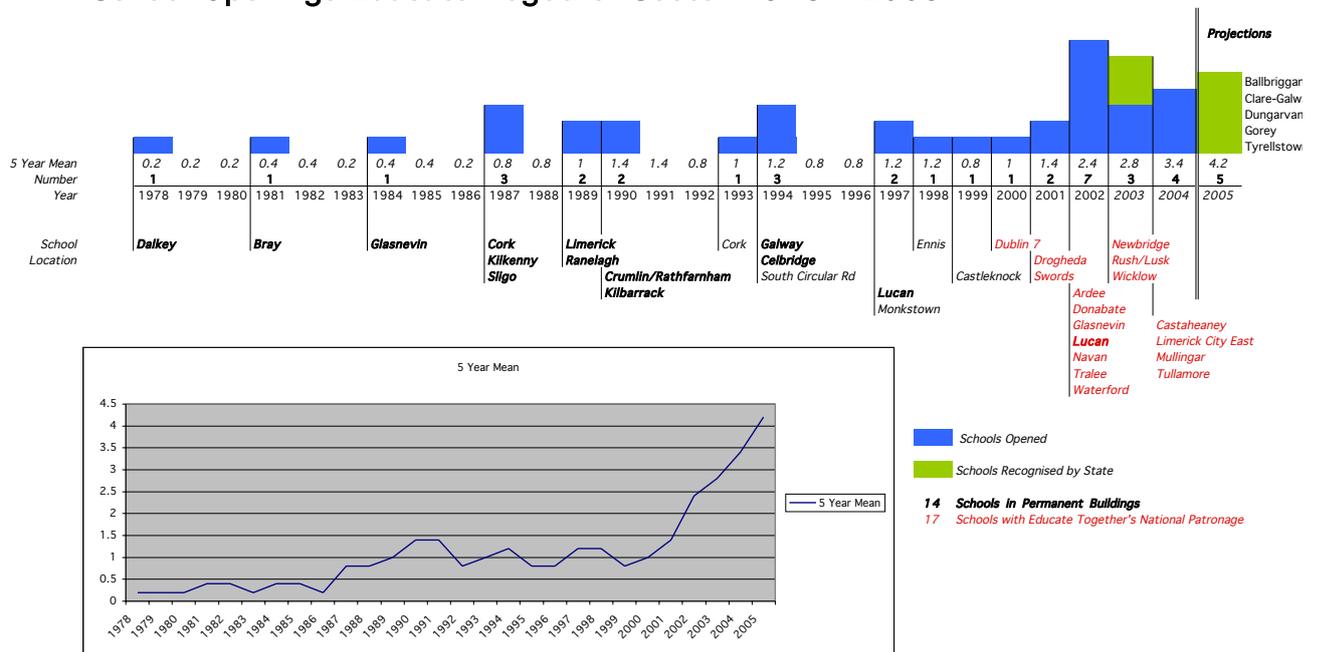
this, four new schools were recognized to open in 2004 and with some delays opened in September. Two of these schools were schools that were unable to open the previous year.

New Educate Together National Schools

Four new schools opened in September 2004, all opened with Educate Together as their patron. Of the four, two opened in Rugby clubs, another in a prefab recently vacated by a Gaelscoil and the fourth in spare classroom space in a new school building. However, considerable progress has taken place in our negotiations with the Department to move a system whereby we pro-actively plan accommodation for schools from the outset and can be seen in the developments with schools due to open in 2005. Three of the schools opened after a grueling search for temporary accommodation. The Directors would like to express our thanks to all the individuals and local bodies who have assisted the schools with temporary accommodation this year. As patron of these schools, the Directors have taken great care to ensure that the process of establishment of Boards of Managements and selection of key staff has been carried out to the highest standards. We would like to thank all those who are assisting new schools in this way. In addition, experienced Principals of Educate Together schools and members of the Board of Directors sat on all selection boards for Principal teachers. This voluntary contribution is an invaluable help to new schools for which we would like to formally express our gratitude.

The National Office has organised a number of seminars and training sessions for those involved in establishing these schools. We would like to acknowledge the great help that each of these communities has received from our members both in the form of encouragement, visits, resources and often extensive time for advice and assistance.

School Openings Educate Together Sector 1978 - 2005





School	Opened	Years Operational	Mainstream teaching - Including Principal	Change from last year	Principal	Pupils	Change from last year	Accommodation	Building Type
Dalkey School Project	1978	26	9	0	A	240	2	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Bray School Project	1981	23	9	0	A	239	0	Permanent	New purpose-built school
North Dublin National School Project	1984	20	9	0	A	224	0	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Cork School Project	1987	17	9	0	A	227	-11	Permanent	Reused school building
Sligo School Project	1987	17	8	0	A	154	-17	Permanent	Reused school building
Kilkenny School Project	1987	17	9	0	A	239	-5	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Limerick School Project	1989	15	10	1	A	212	0	Permanent	Reused school building
North Bay EducateTogether N.S.	1990	14	12	3	A	237	0	Permanent	Reused school building
Ranelagh Multi-Denominational School	1990	14	12	3	A	245	-5	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Rathfarnham Educate Together N.S.	1990	14	9	0	A	224	5	Permanent	Reused school building
Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Alainn	1993	11	11	2	A	264	33	Temporary	Prefabs
Galway Educate Together N.S.	1994	10	9	0	A	232	0	Permanent	New purpose-built school
North Kildare Educate Together School	1994	10	9	0	A	230	-20	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Griffith Barracks Multi-Denominational School	1994	10	6	0	T	180	25	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Monkstown Educate Together N.S.	1997	7	10	1	A	237	-6	Temporary	Prefabs
Lucan Educate Together N.S.	1997	7	14	1	A	410	57	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Ennis Educate Together N.S.	1998	6	4	0	T	87	0	Temporary	Prefabs
Castleknock Educate Together N.S.	1999	5	10	0	A	291	47	Temporary	Prefabs
Dublin 7 Educate Together N.S.	2000	4	7	1	A	186	33	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Le Cheile Educate Together N.S.	2001	3	7	2	A	191	58	Temporary	Prefabs
Swords Educate Together N.S.	2001	3	5	1	T	158	63	Temporary	Prefabs
Waterford Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	2	0	T	66	25	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Navan Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	3	0	T	53	-4	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Tralee Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	3	1	T	53	13	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Donabate Portrane Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	4	1	T	128	65	Temporary	Prefabs
Glasnevin Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	4	1	T	85	26	Temporary	Reused school building
Griffeen Valley Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	8	4	A	214	123	Permanent	New purpose-built school
Ardee Educate Together N.S.	2002	2	2	0	T	46	14	Temporary	Reused school building & prefabs
Rush and Lusk Educate Together N.S.	2003	1	2	0	T	39	15	Temporary	Old school building and prefab
Newbridge Educate Together N.S.	2003	1	2	0	T	51	31	Temporary	Prefab
Wicklow Educate Together N.S.	2003	1	2	0	T	53	27	Temporary	Reused alternative building
Castaheany Educate Together N.S.	2004	0	2	2	T	52	52	Temporary	Unused space in new school
Limerick City East Educate Together N.S.	2004	0	1	1	T	12	12	Temporary	Rugby Club
Mullingar Educate Together N.S.	2004	0	2	2	T	24	24	Temporary	Rugby Club
Tullamore Educate Together N.S.	2004	0	2	2	T	17	17	Temporary	Prefab
TOTAL		270	227	29	19	5600	699		

Increase in Classes	29
Increase in Pupils	699
No of administrative Principals	19
No of Teaching Principals	16
Recorded Unsuccessful Applicants	1200
Ratio of Junior Infants to Sixth Class	1.98
Schools with Permanent Accommodation	14
State owned Permanent Buildings	8
Permanent buildings with architectural awards	5
Schools without permanent accommodation	21

Castaheany ETNS

The school opened in September 2004 with 55 children, and has been located in Griffeen Valley ETNS in Lucan. The Dept. of Education & Science are currently negotiating the purchase of a site and we are hopeful that this will result in a permanent building for the school for September 2006. The school has been granted permanent recognition. In the meantime, the school will re-locate in September 2005 for 1 year, to



Marie Gordon, Principal Castaheaney ETNS, Tomás O'Dulaing, Principal Griffeen Valley ETNS and Minister Noel Dempsey T.D., at the school. Photo: Dave McKane

temporary structures on the grounds of Mary Mother of Hope NS in Littlepace.

The Board would like to thank both the Griffeen Valley and Mary Mother of Hope School for their help and generosity in providing such vital assistance to this school.

The hardworking staff and Board of Management have created an excellent environment for the entire school community, and have dealt with the huge workload of a rapidly developing school in temporary accommodation in a professional and efficient manner.

Marie Gordon is the Principal.

Tullamore ETNS

The 1st Educate Together school in Offaly opened on September 1 2004. The Acting Board of Management had experienced tremendous difficulties with their proposed accommodation, and with the help of Offaly County Council and a local helpful landlord, were able to source alternative accommodation only 2 weeks prior to opening.

Substantial development plans are in the pipeline for Tullamore, so school management are working closely with the Dept. of Education & Science and Offaly County Council to ensure that a permanent school building is provided in the future, in order to meet emerging needs.





The first day of the Tullamore ETNS

We expect that the school will grow to grow to either 8 or 16 classes over the coming years. Fionnuala Morgan is the Principal.

Mullingar ETNS

The 1st Educate Together school in Westmeath opened in Mullingar Rugby & Football Club on September 1st, with 25 children. The school has gone from strength to strength, with Roisin Nic Tighearnain as Principal.

A further 26 children are due to start school this September, therefore we expect that the school will receive permanent recognition in early 2006.

Mullingar is a rapidly developing town, therefore it is expected that the school will grow to a 16 class school very quickly. The BoM and Educate Together have therefore been working with the Dept. of Education &



The Official Opening of the Mullingar ETNS

Science and Westmeath County Council to ensure that a permanent solution is in place for the school in the short term.

Limerick City East ETNS

Limerick City East ETNS is the 2nd Educate Together school in Limerick and opened its doors on September 1st 2004.

The school community and Principal Pauline Ryan have worked extremely hard to develop the school, and an additional class of Junior Infants will commence this September.

Parents have given their time to provide cookery and pottery classes to the children, and many trips and events have taken place.

The school is located in Young Munster RFC, and work is on-going to achieve permanent recognition for the school and work with the Dept. of Education & Science, on a permanent solution for the school.

New Buildings and Building Plans

In the year under review, significant funds have been provided for primary buildings and we have the first year of the multi-annual funding envelope for this programme. Educate Together congratulates the Minister for her success in achieving this funding and securing significant increases in the 2004 Budget. There is however, still a substantial backlog, and it will be necessary for all those involved in primary education to consistently press the case for sustained investment in primary buildings in the next five years. In addition, we are concerned that the system of transparent criteria based lists is not being adhered to in this year's announcements.

Educate Together has the highest percentage of schools in temporary accommodation of all primary management bodies. Of our 35 schools 21 are in temporary buildings. As we are opening an average of 4 schools per year, it is of concern that only one of our schools moved into a brand new building in the last year. Simple arithmetic means that we should at least be taking as many off the list for buildings as we add on to it. We have also participated in discussions to press forward the standards of new school design and in the integration of new schools with community provisions, pre-school, after-school care, special education units, second level and adult education. In this we have made much progress in discussions with local authorities, especially with Fingal County Council.

However, it is of great concern that there is still delay in providing accommodation for Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn, which is now in temporary accommodation since 1994 and is now developing to a full 16-classroom size entirely in prefabs. Griffith Barracks MDS, and Ennis ETNS have also been waiting longest for appropriate accommodation. Despite this, the builders have started work on the new building in Castleknock, tenders are in place for Rathfarnham and Monkstown ETNS is on the priority list for site purchase. Pending site purchase, it seems that 2 more Educate Together schools will proceed to tender & construction during 2005.

Griffen Valley ETNS

Griffen Valley ETNS is the first school operating with Educate Together's national patronage to move into a purpose-built school. The school is State-owned and has been built as a "Design and Build" project. The building was completed in a record 5 month period and was finished in time for the school to move in and also







to accommodate the new Castaheany school when it opened last September. The timber-framed design sets new standards for Irish primary schools. The creative use of light and superior acoustic treatment make it an excellent teaching environment. It also sets standards in areas of tactile feel for young children and heating economy. The Board would like to congratulate the builders, architect and the Building Section of the Department for the excellent school that has been produced. We feel that this should be seen as the minimum standard for all new primary building projects into the future.

Schools Proposed for 2005

5 new Educate Together schools have been granted sanction to open in September 2005, by the Minister for Education & Science, Mary Hanafin T.D.

Tyrrelstown ETNS, Dublin 15:

Around 125 children are pre enrolled for this new school due to open in September. Over 3,000 houses are to be built in Tyrrelstown, with around 2,000 already in place. Most of the occupants are families with children, and Tyrrelstown Educate Together NS, will be the only school in the area.

The Tyrrelstown School Action Group (TSAG) started in the early part of 2004, and immediately did some research in the area, around the needs of this new community. The majority of residents indicated their interest in an Educate Together school, and the local group then started to work with Educate Together, who is Patron of the new school.

We envisage that this school will grow very quickly and will either be a 16 class or even larger, once a permanent building is provided by the Dept. of Education & Science. We are working closely with the Planning Unit of the DES, who are ensuring that temporary accommodation is available for the school to open in, and will then look to meeting the long-term needs of the school, in conjunction with Fingal County Council.

Balbriggan ETNS, Co. Dublin

The development of Balbriggan Educate Together NS, arose from a public meeting held in June 2004. This was arranged by some local parents who had contacted Educate Together, with a view to working towards an Educate Together school in Balbriggan. A very successful launch of the group was then held in September and work started at identifying suitable premises and making an application to the New Schools Advisory Committee.

Fingal County Council and the Dept. of Education & Science are working together on the provision of temporary accommodation for the school, and we are confident that this partnership approach to accommodation, will result in a permanent school



Pre-enrolment at Balbriggan ETNS

building being provided in the short-term. Over 50 children are pre-enrolled to commence in September 2005, with similar numbers presenting for subsequent years. Again we expect that this school will grow rapidly to a minimum size of 16 class.

Gorey ETNS, Co. Wexford

A public meeting was held in Gorey in April 2004 and Gorey Educate Together Association has been working with Educate Together since. The school will be located in a beautiful building, St. Wallerans, on the outskirts of Gorey, and the owner has been working closely with the group, to meet the needs of the school. There is a huge amount of new development in Gorey and Wexford County Council are extremely supportive of



Easter Egg hunt to promote the Gorey ETNS

the new school, and have been very helpful in their approach.

It is envisaged that the school will open in September with around 35 children, and will grow to a 16 class school, once a permanent building is provided by the Dept. of Education & Science.

Gorey Educate Together NS will be the 1st Educate Together school in Wexford, and has enjoyed very positive support across the board within the area.





Galway North ETNS Co. Galway

Galway North ETNS got underway as a result of a public meeting held in Claregalway in March 2004. A working group was formed and has been working hard to make their dream a reality.

A suitable premise for the school has been located in Claregalway which is a suburban centre of population on the Northern side of Galway City and a planning application has been lodged with Galway County Council, to convert the premises to a school. This will be the second Educate Together school in Galway. It is expected that around 25 children will commence in September, with similar demand in subsequent years.

Dungarvan ETNS, Co. Waterford

Dungarvan is a growing town and all existing educational provision within a 30 mile radius is denominational by nature. Educate Together were contacted by parents in the area in mid 2004, and the first public meeting was held in June. Since then, a huge amount of work has been done to build the profile of the proposed school in the area, develop a pre-enrolment list and source a suitable premises for the school.

Around 25 children are due to attend Dungarvan ETNS in September, with subsequent demand very healthy. There has been unanimous support for the project in the area and it is envisaged that the school will cater for children from a wide catchment area.

All of the above schools will open as a result of the commitment, energy and vision of those parents and committee members who have worked extremely hard over the past 12-15 months. Educate Together would like to see this huge voluntary effort being further supported by the Dept. of Education & Science considering that these groups are enabling the State to develop a national network of state owned national schools.

The New Schools Advisory Committee also play an important role, as the body with responsibility for assessing applications for new schools and making recommendations to the Minister for Education & Science.

It is a testament to their commitment to the provision of diversity in primary education, as well as the high standard of applications submitted by Educate Together, that all 5 applications submitted by Educate Together, were granted sanction to open.

Schools Proposed for 2006 and Beyond

The number of requests for assistance to open new Educate Together National Schools continues to be buoyant. In the past year, Educate Together has worked with individuals and groups in many areas. Among the areas which may see applications to open schools in 2006 are, Naas, Baldoye, Wexford, Letterkenny, Galway City East, Leixlip and Adamstown.

Educate Together Second Level Developments

Educate Together is seeking the resources to employ a project manager for second-level developments. In the absence of this resource, we have been limited to supporting voluntary initiative at local level. Groups are active in Lucan, Dublin 15, Donabate and Galway. Educate Together has been represented at public meetings in Galway. In addition to this, we have opened up discussions with Vocational Education Committees in Dublin County and Galway and with the umbrella organization the Irish Vocational Educational Association.

Development Work

Local Authorities

Educate Together have forged excellent links with a number of local authorities, primarily in areas of existing and forthcoming Educate Together schools. This work has proved extremely helpful and has generated excellent support for the sector.

We have also made submissions to a number of county development plans as well as local area plans, in order to ensure that emerging educational needs of an area are met.

Dept. of Education & Science – Planning & Building Unit:

Educate Together continue to work very constructively with the unit, and meet regularly with the Principal Officer of the Planning Unit. We would like to see the unit being provided with additional resources, to enable it to better meet the needs of their clients, which amount to all national schools, as well as 2nd level schools. We hope to move to a position where the unit will provide us with a clear development plan for each school in temporary accommodation, thereby providing clarity re. Possible location and timescales.

Dublin School Planning Committee:

We have been participating in this committee, by Paul Rowe and Jane McCarthy which is led by the Dept. of Education & Science. Much of its work is focused on efficiently meeting the needs of developing areas, and considering new approaches such as multi-campus developments.

Schools Support Department and Training Programmes for Educate Together Schools

Educate Together maintains a full-time school support department. In the past year, this has provided much needed support for many developing and established schools. This work is divided into three main functions.





Firstly to provide professional confidential support to the Chairpersons of the Patron, Board of Management and Principal Teacher of Educate Together schools.



Nora Ni Loinsigh, Gaelscoileanna, Minster Mary Hanafin T.D., Deirdre O'Donoghue, and Paul Rowe at the Launch of the Teaching Council

This service allows problems to be addressed quickly and quietly and the key staff of schools provided with timely legal and administrative advice, facilitation and mediation services.

Our School Support Department also facilitates whole school development sessions in which the issues of community development and delivery of ethos are discussed in schools. We have also facilitated School Planning Days.

The third element of this Department is to draw up and deliver training programmes for the schools in the Educate Together sector. In the past year, we have delivered a training session for all Start-up Groups, dealing with the transition to becoming a Board of Management in September. We also delivered our first successful training session on recruitment for all Educate Together schools. We hope to repeat this next year, including a session on Posts of Responsibility. Together with all management bodies, our training programme must be funded from our own resources, as no funding has been forthcoming from the Department for the last two years.

This means that the voluntary Boards of Management are now half way through their term of office, with no state-funded training or support. Deirdre O'Donoghue, National Coordinator also works with other Management bodies and the INTO in providing mediation and facilitation services and policy development. Deirdre is also a member of the Teaching Council, representing Primary Management, together with Fr. Dan O'Connor.

Communications and Fund-raising

Raising the profile and communicating the objectives of Educate Together is essential to the growth and development of the sector. It is critical to invest in public relations, visual identity and information technology to build awareness and highlight our aims nationally and internationally.

Over the past 12 months Educate Together has been represented in the National and local media outlets on a steady and regular basis as a result of the efforts of Kate Morris. The National Office is regularly approached to make comment on current education and social affairs issues, a clear indicator that the sector has now become main stream in the public sphere. Significant items have included feature articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, radio documentary, interviews and reports.

The Educate Together Newsletter (ETEN) has also doubled in subscriptions to a total exceeding 3,500. We have plans to develop this newsletter further and also to introduce special interest email newsletters for members of our Boards of Management, Start-up groups, teachers etc. If you have not already signed up to ETEN, you can do so on the green pane of most pages of our website www.educatetogether.ie.

In December 2004 the "Friends of Educate Together" Programme was launched in the first Educate Together school, Dalkey School Project National School. This programme has been established to give us the opportunity to increase our effectiveness, set higher goals and make a real and lasting impact on future generations living in Ireland. Educate Together is experiencing a huge increase in the demand for multi-denominational schools throughout the country. In order to continue providing schools and increase general support for parents and children we must access alternative funding through The Friends of Educate Together Programme. To date the programme has been successful with generous commitments from individuals



Michael Johnston, founder member of the Dalkey School Project speaking at the launch of Friends of Educate Together.

dedicated to ensuring the provision of Human Rights based multi-denominational education and individuals committed to making a positive contribution to the society we nurture and empower future generations and future contributors to a just, non-discriminatory and progressive Ireland.

A short documentary on the work of the sector is available from the National Office for fundraising and





awareness building purposes. Fundraising events for the National Office 2005 will include concerts and a Gala Dinner in Castle Leslie, Monaghan in union with The Integrated Education Fund, Northern Ireland.

A number of applications have also been submitted to Trusts and Foundations on behalf of the sector.

This year witnessed a full makeover for our web site. A new and comprehensive information tool has been created and is available online at www.educatetogether.ie This cover all areas of the sector. Recent figures from our access reports indicate that the site is receiving more than 11,000 hits per day, with an average of 200 visits per hour. We would like to thank Dave McKane, of Dynamic Visual Design for his work on this site. We intend to introduce a full section on our Ethical Education Curriculum in the coming year and incorporate significant interactive features. Together with other NGOs we see our website as our most efficient means of delivering accurate information and services to our members and that investment in this technology should be a priority for the future.

In April 2005, the first general information brochure on the Educate Together sector was designed and published. This is the first product from the Friends of Educate Together Programme. Kate Morris worked with the artist Sarah Cunningham and Derek Kennedy of Slick Fish Design to produce what we feel is stunning piece of work that accurately captures the commitment to excellence in inclusion that is at the heart of our work. Each member school is being supplied with a box of these brochures for their current and prospective parents.



The cover of the booklet. It is now available from the National Office and has already been translated into Russian and Spanish with other languages on the way.

Colm Ó Cuanacháin officially launched the brochure in the Ark children's cultural centre. An information booklet on communicating, campaigning and fundraising has also been produced for new and existing school communities. This can be obtained by getting in touch with the National Office.

For the second year in a row Educate Together has been short listed for the Media and Multi-cultural awards run by Metro Eireann and RTE.

The Media and Multi-Cultural Awards recognise and celebrate outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to creating cross-cultural understanding and co-operation in Ireland. This years entry from Educate Together highlights the "Learn Together" curriculum which seeks to address the values of equality and diversity for children of all backgrounds. It is the product of 25 years work by teachers and parents in the Educate Together schools. Congratulations to all involved in the development of this programme through out the years. The ceremony will take place in Co Cork on the 29th May.

Developments in Our National Office

The National Office has continued to develop its infrastructure and policy base during the past year. We have developed our accounting systems to deal with the sale of publications and other materials and have made further progress in our database and information systems. However, the office was rocked by the sudden death of our accounts person, Christina Attwood who had made an outstanding contribution to organization and office. We have now welcomed Jenny McGrath who has taken her place.

Structural Change and Development in Educate Together

The changes to our Memo and Articles approved at the 2004 AGM have been fully implemented. The new 10 person Board of Directors have worked hard to clarify their new role. Christine Lennon, Principal of Dalkey School Project National School has been coopted onto the board during the year. The Board has organised itself into formal sub-committees including the Executive Sub-Committee, the Education Sub-Committee, the Policy Sub-Committee, the Patronage Sub-Committee and the Audit Committee. There was much work done during the year on future strategic directions and corporate governance issues.

The new National Forum structure was initiated in October 2004 and held its second meeting in April 2005 in Limerick School Project National School. Both meetings were very well attended and show the scope for the development of this structure into the future.





Relations with Other NGOs

Educate Together participates with other charities and non-governmental organisations in areas of mutual concern. These areas consist of charity tax reform and regulation, best practice for companies limited by guarantee, human rights, diversity, anti-racism, anti-discrimination and education. We actively participate in the Wheel, the umbrella body for voluntary and community organisations. Further afield, we have supported events organised by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and ensured that our views are represented at international education conferences. This year, we have intensified our work with NGOs in the human rights area, especially in relation to our submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) we contributed to the Shadow report as well as submitting our own independent report. We are also working with a number of NGOs on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and participated with the Children's Rights Alliance of which we are a member.

Relations with Partners in Education

Educate Together has maintained close links with other Partners in Education, including all patron and management bodies in primary education in Ireland.

The Partners include the Catholic Primary School Management Association, the Church of Ireland Board of Education, the Islamic Board of Education, Gaelscoilleanna, an Foras Patrúnachta and the Irish National Teachers Organisation. We have also worked closely with the Irish Primary Principals Network and the Irish Vocational Educational Association. We have been represented as guests at the AGM of the CPSMA, the Annual Conference of the IPPN and the Annual Congress of the INTO. Our schools support service maintains close links with those of the CPSMA and the INTO and our Development Department works with Gaelscoilleanna on new school policy issues.

Conclusion

The Board considers that the work detailed in this report shows the continued strong performance of the National Office and our member schools. It shows the real potential of the Educate Together sector and its relevance to 21st Century Ireland. Faced as we are with a funding crisis we are now calling on the State, all political parties and all people of goodwill to work with us to ensure that we are able to continue this progress into the future.

David Denny, Chairperson.

Receive the Latest News from Educate Together Direct to your Desktop!

Educate Together is going through a phase of rapid and exciting development. With our new national office and increased resources we are at last beginning to deliver serious services which will impact on the quality of education provided in our schools. We regularly publish newsletters, news alerts and other information through email. You may subscribe to our newsletter, which is a free email service by sending a simple message to:-

subscribe-eten@educatetogether.ie

Archives of previous newsletters and extensive information on the sector can be seen at our website:-

<http://www.educatetogether.ie>

Educate Together

8Ha CentrePoint, Oak Drive Dublin 12

tel: +353 01 4292500

fax: +353 01 4292502

Emal: info@educatetogether.ie

