

Learn Together

You may have heard your children talking about **EEP** and wondered what it was. Or maybe it was confused in children's minds with SPHE or SESE. To clarify, **EEP** is our school's **Ethical Education Programme**, a programme which is common to all Educate Together schools.

When Educate Together schools were first founded the Ethical Education Programme was drawn up as a fundamental expression of the overall ethos of Educate Together schools, based on the four guiding principles, multi-denominational, co-educational, child centred and democratically run. The aims of the ethical education programme, originally known as the 'Ethical Education Core Curriculum' were to complement the four guiding principles.

In contrast to the rest of the Primary School Curriculum, the areas covered by the Ethical Education Programme were not prescribed by the Department of Education therefore it became the responsibility of the school patron to formulate the Ethical Education Programme policy. In the early days of RETNS, then known as South City School Project, the Executive Committee was the school patron. The lesson plans for the Ethical Education Programme were developed over time and much consultation, and a comprehensive programme was developed. Our school produced its own booklet, "Understanding the Ethical Education Programme", which outlined the main aims of the programme and provided an understanding of the programme for parents/guardians, prospective parents/guardians, pupils, members of Educate Together or other interested parties.

As Educate Together became more established and the number of Educate Together schools increased, it was obvious that there was a need for a more structured programme which would be common to all Educate Together schools, while still allowing schools flexibility in the delivery of the programme. An impetus to develop a national ethical core curriculum also emerged as more schools came under the national patronage of Educate Together. A working party was formed, a 'collaborative and consultative process' was embarked on, and in 2004 '**Learn Together – An ethical education curriculum for Educate Together schools**' was produced. One of the members of this working party was Paddie Murphy, then Principal of RETNS.

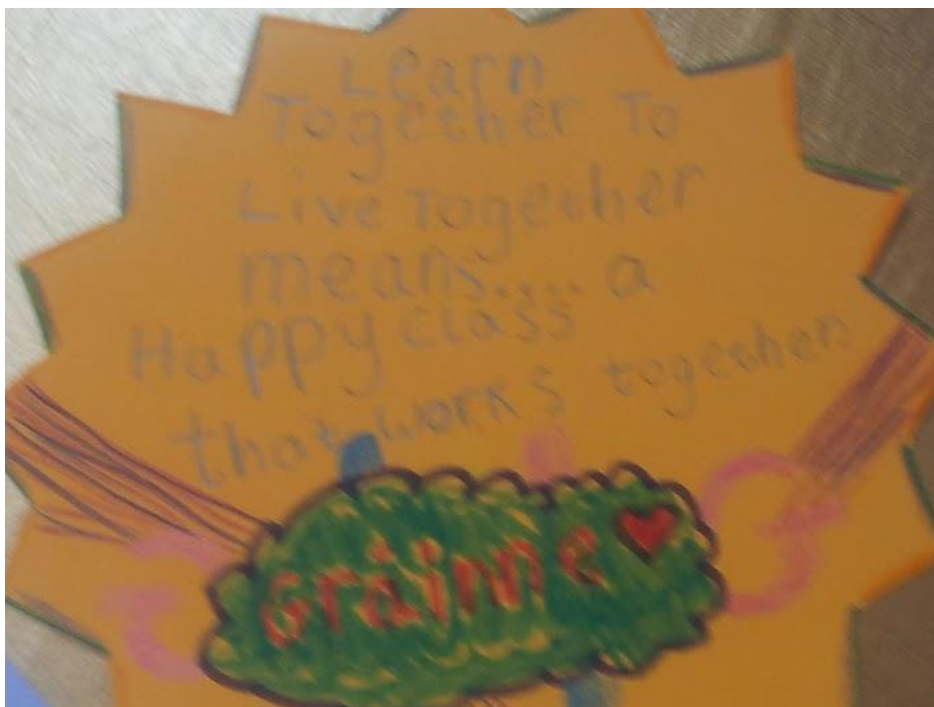
With the emergence of many new Educate Together schools over the last few years, the Ethical Education Programme has become more commonly known as '**Learn Together**'. It is divided into four strands designed to "nurture and develop in children a caring and responsible approach to society". The Learn Together Curriculum document is highly regarded in Educate Together schools. A survey of Educate Together schools carried out by DCU in 2012 concluded that Learn Together "is perceived to embody the spirit and ethos of Educate Together and to provide a flexible and relevant framework to underpin curriculum development in the area."

Educate Together continues to evaluate the implementation of the Learn Together programme in schools, particularly in the light of the rapid expansion of the Educate Together sector. In RETNS we are fully committed to delivering this programme and

to developing the Educate Together values of honesty, respect, justice, integrity and responsibility in all areas of school life. Through our interactions with each other, student participation in the running of the school through student committees, interest and involvement of parents in the life of the school, school assemblies, giving to others through our fund-raising events, our commitment to being a Green School, and through all the subjects we teach and learn, the Educate Together ethos is central to our school and is what makes RETNS the happy place that it is.

For me, the ethos is summed up in the words of a child who is quoted in the RETNS publication "Understanding the Ethical Education Programme",

"I like my school because we don't pick, we just mix!"



1ST CLASS EXAMINED HOW **LEARN TOGETHER AND LIVE TOGETHER** CAN BE PUT INTO ACTION TO CREATE A POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY CLASSROOM. SEE THEIR WORK ON OUR FESTIVAL WALL AND IN THEIR CLASSROOM.