



RETNS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019-2024

The Development Plan summarises a consultation process involving parents/guardians, members of the Board of Management, staff and children regarding short- and long-term expectations for our school. Further details on the consultation process is available in the appendices.

RETNS also has a Development Committee that is responsible, in conjunction with the Board of Management, for the design, development & delivery of this plan which includes an effective Income Generation Strategy for the school. The Membership of the Board and Development Committee is detailed in Appendix Three.

The Development Plan was formally adopted by the Board at its meeting on 25 March, 2019

Section 1 – School Details

RETNS is an Educate Together School, part of the Educate Together umbrella group. It is a state funded school and follows the four principles of the ET ethos:

- Co-educational – girls and boys have equal opportunities.
- Democratic – all the school community have a voice in the running of the school.
- Child-centred – all our policies and procedures have the child at the centre of decisions.
- Equality Based – all children, whatever their background, are treated equally.

1.1. Our Values

- **We are child centred**
- **We are co-educational**
- **We are equality-based**
- **We are democratically run**

1.2. Background

The School was founded in 1990 when it opened its doors as South City School Project in Crumlin. It was the seventh multi-denominational school to be established in Ireland. The school moved to Rathfarnham in September 1993. The school changed its name to Rathfarnham Educate Together (RETNS) in 2001. Initially the school had its own Executive but moved to the patronage of Educate Together after several years. The Wildlife Garden was developed by the school community in 2000. A major building programme in 2007-08 incorporated the refurbishment of existing classrooms, the creation of a library and the building of four new classrooms. The Wildlife Garden was redesigned in 2015 and the playgrounds were also upgraded. Staff and Parents/Guardians co-operated to provide the school with a sensory room and shed mural in 2015. A teaching garden was developed in spring 2018.

1.3. Our school in numbers as at January 2019

1	Stream	RETNS is a single stream school
8	Classes	8 classes from junior infants to sixth class
8	Board of Management	https://retns.ie/board-of-management/
25	Staff	https://retns.ie/staff-2/
220	Pupils	

1.4. Premises and Facilities

The accommodation comprises 8 mainstream classrooms, 4 support classrooms, a staff room, a sensory room, a large hall, a multi-purpose room, library, offices, junior and senior yard including basket-ball court, wildlife garden and vegetable garden.

1.5. Governance Activities

		Responsible officer(s)	Timeline
1.1	Report to School Community	Chair, BOM	Monthly
1.2	Review progress of actions identified in Plan	BOM	Mid term review (after 2 years)
1.3	Review school policies	BOM & Staff	As required by policy
1.4	Appointment of new Board of Management	Patron	Appointments are for 4 years

2. Vision & Development Objectives (the purpose of this section is to outline the vision for the school and a small number of high level development objectives)

2.1. Vision

To maintain and further develop our child-centred school community which values inclusion, diversity and the unique talents of all

2.2. Development Objectives

To maintain and develop the school building and premises in order to provide optimal educational opportunities for the children

To provide staff with all the resources necessary to deliver the curriculum successfully for each child

To support the patron body in setting up more secondary schools to enable pupils to complete their education in the ethos of Educate Together.

Section 3. Background to Development Objectives

Section 3.1 Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

Strengths

- Established school, viewed as well lead and well managed from perspective of both parents/guardians and staff
- Positive feedback from parents/guardians (see Appendix 1)
 - 70% 'strongly agreed' that their child was happy in the school
 - All respondents either strongly agreed / agreed that their child felt safe at the school and that the school is attractive and well maintained.
- Staff extremely satisfied with their working environment. The Educate Together ethos, their colleagues and that the school is coeducational rate highly amongst the staff.
- Commitment to reduction of class size.
- Use of school facilities by external groups for revenue generation
- Student Council, Green Team, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, ICT Committee, Club Gaeilge, Active School's Committee.
- Active website communicating student learning
- Wildlife Garden, Vegetable Garden
- School Choir
- Green Flag School (Litter and Waste, Energy, Water, Travel, Bio-Diversity, Global Citizenship-Litter and Waste)
- European Blue Star Programme
- Successful application to Creative Schools Project

Challenges

- Finances and maintaining established fundraising opportunities and identifying and pursuing new fundraising opportunities
- Limited opportunity for growth in physical space around the school
- Reduction in availability of parents for volunteering
- Inter-school sports participation – RETNS is a single stream co-ed school
- Relationship with local community including local secondary schools
- Maintaining and improving the school building and grounds
- Improving energy efficiency of building
- Gathering appropriate expertise for governance of school

Opportunities

- Staff Experience and commitment to RETNS
- Growing awareness of the impact of an ET education on child's development and increasing public/ Departmental support for ET approach to education and child development
- Skills base and active involvement of parents/guardians

Risks

- Unforeseen/ external financial burdens arising e.g. insurance costs, storm damage.
- Financial and resource implications arising from national/international developments/legislation e.g. GDPR
- Variability in state financial support (eg. Minor Works Grant)
- Age and size of building-requires more maintenance/heating

Section 3.2 Children's Wishes for the School

Children were consulted in May 2018 as to how they would like to improve their school. Their answers can be arranged under 4 headings (a list of suggestions appears as Appendix 4)

- School Physical Space (Indoor and Outdoor)
- Resources for learning and development
- New learning opportunities
- Sports and Activities

Section 3.3. Areas for Development identified via Parent/ Guardian Survey

- Reduce class size
- Outdoor Environment
- Curriculum/ School time
- Sports
- Pre & After School
- Parking

Section 3.4 Areas for Development identified via Staff Survey and consultation

- Physical environment
- Curriculum
- Extra-Curricular

From the consultation process, a number of themes have arisen that this development plan will concentrate on

- 1) Finances
- 2) Development of school premises
- 3) Curriculum Resources
- 4) Wellbeing, Sports and Afterschool activities
- 5) Links with Local Community

Section 4 Development Actions

1. Finances

	Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timeline
1.1	At start of academic year, identify target amount to be raised to keep finances healthy	Board/ Development Committee	Annually
1.2	Source new revenue streams e.g Arts Council /DLRCC	Development Committee	Ongoing
1.3	Establish annual fundraising calendar on firm footing	Development Committee	Ongoing
1.4	Lobby local TDs / Councillors for funding opportunities	Development Committee	Once spending priorities identified

2. School Premises

Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timeline	
2.1	Make list and cost work required for staff and children's safety and comfort e.g. junior yard resurfacing, heating issues and water filter, assess the boiler, school furniture	Board	Ongoing
2.2	Develop plan to continue improvements to outdoor space including access for the junior classes to the outdoors, development of outdoor all weather classroom, possibility of greenhouse and include costings for possibilities for energy efficiencies including solar panels	Board/ Development Committee with required expertise	Ongoing
2.3	Once priorities have been agreed, liaise with Dept of Education regarding school building with aim of securing additional funding for identified objectives	Board/ Principal	Ongoing
2.4	Audit and maintenance of space: including painting and upkeep of school and cost for same	Staff/ Board	Annually

3. Curriculum Resources

	Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timeline
3.1	Funding stream for tablets to be maintained	Development Committee	Ongoing
3.2	Ongoing maintenance of technology (student laptops, teacher laptops, tablets, pcs for children) – new funding stream should be sourced	Principal	Ongoing – currently outsourced
3.3	Source new parent volunteers for library	School / PA	2018/19
3.4	Investigate the possibility for the development of mobile Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) unit	Development Committee/ Parents / Local Secondary Schools	2019
3.5	Assess PE supplies and equipment, yard equipment and replace and improve	Staff/ Student Council	Annually

4. Wellbeing, Sport and Extra-Curricular Activities

	Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timeline
4.1	Provide space and materials for motor skills development	Staff	2018/19
4.2	Maintain Sensory Room	Staff	Ongoing
4.3	Investigate improving instrumental music provision opportunities in school	Staff/ PA	2018/2019
4.4	Develop links with community groups, local businesses and local sports organisations	Staff/ PA/ Board / Development Committee	Ongoing
4.5	Decide on 2 sports to focus on within the school and after-school – e.g athletics/ basketball/ table tennis. Investigate possibility and cost of outside assistance during school time with athletics coach. Source funding for sports development. Explore opportunities for team and individual sports with other similar sized schools	Staff/ PA	2018/19
4.6	Investigate the possibility of using the vegetable garden to link with healthy eating	Staff/ PA	Ongoing

5. Community

•	Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Timeline
5.1	Host Annual Development Meeting with parents and staff	All	From 2018/19
5.2	Improve access to information collected annually from parents on how they can help with the running of the school	PA/ Board	From September 2018
5.3	Host annual social / fundraiser night for parents/ guardians	Development Committee	Annually, late October
5.4	Develop links with local residents' group to arrange one fundraising event per year where funds raised will benefit the school and the residents of the area	Development Committee	Annually
5.5	Continue and expand liaison programme for the transition to local secondary schools and other ET secondary schools ,	Principal	Ongoing

5.6	Continue to support the Educate Together Second-Level Campaign, ensure new parents/guardians are informed of the campaign and as children get older, involve them in the campaign	Principal	Ongoing
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Appendix 1

Summary of Parents/ Guardians Survey

88 respondents, undertaken in 2016/17.

Overall very positive. 70% 'strongly agreed' that their child was happy in the school with only 1.14% disagreeing with that statement.

All respondents either strongly agreed / agreed that their child felt safe at the school and that the school is attractive and well maintained. The educate together ethos, the co-ed nature of the school and the teachers were the most popular reasons for parents liking the school.

Over 90% said that their child was making progress at the school (strongly agree/ agree) .

All respondents felt that their child is taught well (strongly agree/ agree). Most felt that communication about child's progress was communicated easily with the school.

Over 80% agreed with the statement that the school is well lead and well managed (strongly agree/ agree)

The response of the school to issues raised was also seen favourably – there were a few comments about the sibling policy but that has since been addressed.

The following were mentioned as areas for improvement:

- Reduce class size
- Outdoor Environment
- Curriculum/ School time
- Sports
- Pre & After School
- Management of School
- Community Links

Appendix 2

Consultation with Staff

A Staff Survey was undertaken in 2016/17. There were 14 responses.

Overall extremely positive, staff feel that the school is well maintained. All respondents were '**extremely satisfied that the School is well led and well managed**' and '**extremely satisfied with their work experience at this school**'. The Educate Together ethos, colleagues and that the school is coeducational rate highly amongst the staff. Staff feel generally supported by the BOM and PA. There was reference to PA widening its membership. Staff also feel that school is generally supportive of their professional development.

Suggested areas for improvement from the staff were as follows:

- Physical environment
- Curriculum
- Extra-Curricular

Staff were also consulted **in Autumn of 2018** and suggestions could be categorised into the areas identified above, with an addition of staff development. Suggestions were as follows

Physical Environment : Storage, vegetable garden bench and planting , yard boxes, external bell, lights in hall , doors from bottom corridor to side-garden and covering, improving energy efficiency, investigate air and water quality, acoustics in staffroom, multi-purpose room and hall , finishing the side garden (grass, bicycle rack, seating, planting), doors from senior corridor to outside space and walkway and enhance stage, curtains & backdrop

Curriculum/ Extra Curricular: Library Books, SEN motor skills equipment , percussion instruments, Aistear equipment, sporting equipment, maths and STEM equipment, tablets, staff development

Appendix Three

RETNS Development Committee Membership as at January 2019

John Bronsan (Chair)

Kieran Farrell

Liz Fitzpatrick

Anna O'Herlihy

Patrica MacManus

Patricia Sheehy

Jane Sweetman

Paul Walsh

Appendix 4 Children's Suggestions for School Development

The children were asked in Summer 2018 as to how they would like their school to develop. The following are examples of the suggestions made by the children.

School Building/Exterior

Cafeteria/Music Room/Dance Room/Drama Room/Storage Room

Kids' "Staffroom" – classes to take turns to use

Meeting Room for student council etc.

More than one boys and girls bathroom per class

Cinema/AV Room

School Shop

Classrooms can overheat-something to solve this

Water in the classrooms (doesn't taste nice)

Comfortable chairs / cushions

Solar panels

Colour on the walls

More things in Seomra Sonais

Extra space

Paint outside/inside the school building

Art installation in the school/on the walls

Outdoor Spaces

Playground games (swing/slide)

Play football on the yard

Use Nutgrove Park more often

Develop side garden (maybe sport, but also need to protect wildlife and veg)

Bigger Yard

Playground

Doors leading from classrooms to outside

Running Track and other sports facilities

Swimming Pool

More plants in the Wildlife Garden

Aquarium

Greenhouse

Re-do surface for Junior Yard so it is like Senior Yard

Fill in semi-circle at back of yard so it is flat

Trees at front of school – a hazard, open space would be nicer

Paint Buddy Benches

Football area / goals on yard / Tennis areas

Senior children to use Junior Yard when Junior children using side yard.

Resources

Resources for children unable to go out to yard

Mascot

New Yard equipment – climbing frame etc.

Football team

Mats for assembly

Up-to-date books (Geography, History Quest etc.)

PE supplies / equipment

Lunch options

Outside teachers / coaches

Science equipment

Science equipment

Repair covers on damaged library books

School pet/aquarium

New rental books

Gymnastic equipment

More books in the classrooms

New toys for the infant classrooms

Learning Opportunities

Cheerleading

Nature as daily lesson

Focus on one new sport each year

More outdoor lessons

Opportunities to learn different languages

Teams, different sports

Do more events in Santry

New sports gear

Morning activity outside (e.g run at 8.50am)

Lunchtime clubs (music club)

Stay over trips or in the school

School Mascot

School Band