**Introduction** We are delighted to present this report to the school community of Wicklow Educate Together National School.  The Annual Report provides a summary of information on the operation of Wicklow Educate Together National School in line with the requirements of the Education Act. The report serves as an addition to the information provided on the school website wicklowetns.com, the fortnightly newsletters issued by the school, Information booklet provided to all parents of new junior infants, and all information provided to parents during the school year.

The report sets out to reflect on the work of the past school year 2017-2018 and looks ahead to the bright future in Wicklow Educate Together NS.

**Board of Management -** The Board of Management was formed in December 2015. This board will serve a four-year term. The Board's main function is to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and to provide an appropriate education for each student at the school. The Board is accountable to the patron (Educate Together) and the Minister for Education and Skills.

**Robert Greene** Chairperson

**Sinead Watson** Principal

**Michelle Adebesi** Patron Nominee

**Koryne Smyth** Parent Nominee, Premises

**Graham Byrne** Parent Nominee, Information Technology & Data Protection

**Eamonn O’Hanrahan** Teacher Nominee, Secretary

**Kenia Puig Planella** Community Nominee, Policy Development

**Brian Fitzsimons** Community Nominee, Treasurer

**School Ethos** The school is founded on a caring, nurturing experience, with a child centred focus, and is equality based, coeducational & democratically run. It has found expression this year in

* Student Council
* Weekly School assemblies
* Achievement Awards celebrating our pupil successes & progress
* Friendship Fortnight
* Intercultural Week
* Forest School

**Pupils** The current pupil enrolment number in Wicklow ETNS is 377, 211 boys and 166 girls. There are 277 families. 20% of our families have English as their 2nd language.

Our families come from Wicklow town, surrounding environs, and as far north as Newcastle & Newtown, as far south as Arklow. The school is served by 4 Bus Eireann bus routes currently.

**Staffing** In 2017/18 we had a Principal, Sinead Watson and Deputy Principal Mary Dee along with promoted post holders Assistant Principal 1 Adele Kelly & Assistant Principal 2 post holders Paula Ryan, Eileen Power & Eamonn O’Hanrahan who made up the middle management structure of the school. We had fourteen classroom teachers. We had ten support teachers and three special classes for children with a diagnosis of autism. There are currently fourteen Special Needs Assistants [SNAs] employed by the school.

School administration is supported by our school secretary, Fran Ui Dhubhshlaine along with facilities manager Lisa Jervis. We also employ a part-time caretaker Billy Rafter.

**Additional Needs** of students are supported in each classroom by differentiated learning, our support teachers and SNA staff. We have three special classes for children with a diagnosis of autism.

**Policy Development**

The following school polices were reviewed/approved since September 2017

* Child Protection Policy Review
* Anti-bullying Policy Review
* Enrolment Policy
* Data Protection
* Dignity at work
* Attendance Strategy

**School Inspection** The school had a whole school evaluation in November 2017. The DES inspectors involved in the evaluation were Ursula Cotter, Noreen Kavanagh and Liam Walshe. The staff of the school found this to be a positive and affirming evaluation that has helped focus planning in teaching and learning. The Board of Management were very pleased with the report and especially noted is the school’s commitment to each child’s wellbeing. See Self Evaluation Report also attached

**Aistear** Infant classes continue to use Aistear, where curriculum objectives are fulfilled through structured play in a stimulating and motivating environment.

**Learn Together** Is taught at a designated time each day to all classes. It covers the strands of Ethics & the Environment, Moral & Spiritual, Equality & Justice and Belief Systems

**New model of allocation of support for pupils with special educational needs** The Department of Education has made changes to the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs. Since September 2017, schools have greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly, based on pupils’ needs, without the requirement for a diagnosis of disability. This is done within the context of the support teaching posts allocated to the school.

**ICT** We have employed the services of Paradyn to help maintain and develop the opportunities for using ICT to support teaching and learning in the classroom. Significant investment in teacher and classroom ICT equipment has been made

**Pupil progress** and development was supported & monitored as follows

1. Teacher to teacher formal hand over at the end of previous school year & at the beginning of this school year
2. Class welcome meetings in September
3. Parent teacher meetings in November
4. Requested meetings by teacher/parent
5. Staged process of referral for additional needs
6. NEPS Psychologist
7. Assessment of Need [HSE]
8. Behaviour plans
9. End of year reports
10. Reporting of standardised test results to parents, DES, BOM, post primary schools
11. Introduction meeting and information pack for parents of junior infants and new pupils in other classes & introduction visit for new pupils to WETNS
12. Teacher observation, Teacher designed tasks and tests, Work samples, portfolios & projects, Checklists. WETNS is mindful of the importance of assessment *for* learning as well as assessment *of* learning

**Child Protection -** The Board is happy that the School Child Protection Policy is working effectively. Updated reports are presented to each Board meeting and Child Protection features on the agenda of every Staff meeting. The Designated Liaison Person maintains contact with Túsla, the Child Protection Agency.

**Attendance** -The Board of Management receives regular updates on school attendance. The Board is satisfied that the school is compliant with mandatory reporting of pupils who miss more than twenty school days. There are a high number of students who miss 20 days or more, of the school year. The School Attendance Strategy is being implemented and school attendance will continue to be monitored & reviewed.

**School Building Health & Safety** Our new school building is in excellent condition. The school Safety Officer completed a Health and Safety Audit. Identified hazards and issues were noted and appropriate action taken. The school continues to work with DES and contractors to complete final snagging issues

**Extra-Curricular Activities** Staff and outside facilitators now offer a broad range of extra-curricular activities to our pupils. The Board recognises that extra-curricular activities compliment in-school learning activities and provide further opportunities for pupils to explore their talents and develop holistically. On offer this year were Science Soccer Guitar Yoga Playball Sewing Cookery Athletics Drama Sugarcraft Art Chess and Irish Dancing

We thank all after-school facilitators and facilities Manager Lisa for their work during the year

**Breakfast Club** The school opened Breakfast club for the first time this year, whilst feedback from parents & students is positive the number of uptake is small. Special thanks to all staff involved in running the club.

**Pre and post school care** will bring breakfast club, after care, homework club and aftercare until 5.30pm under the one umbrella from September 2018, depending on a minimum number of students taking up places.

**Public Service Agreement** Under the terms of the Haddington Road Agreement, teachers and special needs assistants completed a schedule of additional work which included the following;

School resource development- classroom and school preparation -school planning - continuous professional development - induction - policy development - staff meetings - nationally planned in-service - school arranged in-service

**Student Council** Our student council was elected in September 2017. The student council has the following aims and objectives:

* to allow students play an active and positive role in matters of school life;
* to provide effective communication between Staff, Students and Parents;
* to empower students and give them a sense of responsibility;
* to foster a sense of respect and a positive attitude among students.

**School Finances** The financial management of our school is conducted in compliance with Department of Education and Skills requirements. The Board of Management’s prepares a regular statement of income and expenditure ahead of each Board meeting. The Board is grateful to the parent association for money fundraised and consults with the Parent Association with regard to the spending of this money. The school accounts are audited in accordance with the Education Act annually. The school identified that non- payment of sundries was having a serious impact on school funds. The school is actively seeking out ways to increase funding to help manage the finance associated with the new school building, particularly in the light of increasing utilities and insurance costs. We expect to run at a deficit of approx. €7k for this year but anticipate returning to a breakeven position for 2018/19. As well as DES grants the school was successful in receiving An Pobal grant for school aged childcare, HSE National Lottery Grant for sensory room equipment & Wicklow County Council Community grant for support to the school’s Special Classes. See full financial statement attached

**Reflecting on School Activities and Achievements this year** The Board is indebted to the teaching staff, who, with the help of support staff, parents & external providers created so many additional learning opportunities and enjoyable events during the school year. This year the learning of the pupils of the school was augmented and built on in the following ways –

1. **Out of school trips** local trails, other schools, day care for the elderly and end of year school trips
2. **Visitors and workshops** book shop readings, library, reading dog,
3. **In-school events** book day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, friendship fortnight, intercultural week, active month, Halloween dress up, internet safety day
4. **Celebration of ethos** buddy reading, assemblies, achievements, communication of important information, birthdays, individual class presentations] Christmas concert, fundraising for charity, international food day
5. **Sports opportunities** GAA skills, swimming, rugby, cricket, Irish dance, active month, sports day, competition level-athletics & soccer, bike to school, extra-curricular activities**,** tennis workshops
6. **Arts opportunities** write a book project, fighting words, music generation, 6th class graduation, concert, extra-curricular activities
7. **Language opportunities-**Seachtain na Gaeilge, intercultural week
8. **Science opportunities** in class gardening, science days, young scientist, forest school
9. **Community Links** sport competitions- soccer, tug of war, chess, GAA, climbing, basketball and athletics. Wicklow Day care for the elderly, road safety workshops, Simon giving tree.

**Parent Association-** The Board of Management wishes to thank the committee of the Parent Association for their work during the course of the year. The Association, whose efforts stretch far beyond fundraising, organise many events and celebrations which greatly enhance the school life for our pupils and enable parents play an active and supportive role in their children’s school experience. The fundraising efforts of the committee are commendable. The PTA committee met on a regular basis, and the Chairperson met with the Principal regularly.

Some of the Parent Association activities this year included:

* Halloween dress up & bake sale
* St Patricks Bake Sale
* Makers Festival
* Organisation of parent coffee mornings
* Organisation of hospitality for school events
* Bike to School Teddy Bears Picnic
* Sponsored Walk

**Teaching Experience & Transition Year Student Support** This year, our school has again been in a position to host third and second-level students. As part of our co-operation with Colleges of Education, we facilitated student teachers for their teaching practice modules. We also facilitated transition year pupils from local second level schools. Additionally, some Colaiste Chill Mhaintain transition year students coached 6th class in basketball skills. We also welcomed many work placement students preparing for employment as childcare workers & SNAs. We thank the students for their efforts and we hope we have been able to give some focus on working in education as a fruitful and rewarding career choice.

**School Communication -** The Board acknowledges school efforts to encourage and support parental involvement and communication with the school. Information meetings were organised for each class in September and formal parent teacher meetings were held in November. Parents were facilitated in meeting teachers by appointment at other times during the year. The Aladdin Parent Portal has also been rolled out to enhance school home communication. See our full communication guide here <http://wicklowetns.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Wicklow-Educate-Together-National-School-Communications-Guide.pdf>

School newsletters were distributed to parents every fortnight, and uploaded to the school website, and sent by link to parents via text

**A very special staff -** In Wicklow ETNS, we are so lucky to have a staff who work so well together and are truly dedicated to enriching the school experience of all the pupils. From the moment one enters the school building, you sense a thriving school community. We pay tribute to the fine work of the administrative staff, teaching staff and support staff who we commend for their dedication and hard work.

**Graduation Class 2018** It seems like just a few months since we welcomed in the junior infants of 2010. Eight years later we send them on their way to secondary school. Those schools are Colaiste Chill Mhantain, North Wicklow Secondary School, East Glendalough, Gaelscoil na Mara, Arkow CBS, Domiican College, Avondale Community School. We thank all thirty two pupils and their families for enriching our school during the past eight years, and we wish them all the very best in the months and years ahead as they began the next chapter of their learning lives. A special thanks to the parents of some of these pupils who brought to an end their close affiliation with Wicklow ETNS.

**And finally…**

The Board wishes to congratulate all pupils, parents and staff, and to acknowledge the significant contributions all have made during 2017/2018.  We look forward to a bright new school-year after a well-earned break. The next annual BoM report to the school community will issue in June 2019.

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Rob Greene Sinead Watson

Chairperson Board of Management   Principal