

NOTTINGHAM NUT NEWS

The Newsletter of the Nottingham City Association of the
National Union of Teachers

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City Academies: Comprehensives on the Edge

Nottingham City Council is ploughing ahead with plans to close at least four of our comprehensive schools and replace them with City Academies. Teachers at River Leen, Henry Mellish, William Sharpe, Greenwood Dale and Elliott Durham schools face an uncertain future. Whatever assurances, promises and pledges the proposed sponsors make now, whatever the arrangements or 'understanding' between the Local Authority and sponsors - these will mean nothing when the sponsors finally take over.

"Will staff be employed under existing terms and conditions? Will trade unions be recognised?" asked one local union officer at a recent meeting with *Edge*—the proposed sponsors of the Bulwell Academy. "Yes" responded the man from *Edge*. "But isn't it true that once in control, you can do anything you like?" ... "Yes, in theory". This is the problem with the current phase of the Academy scheme in Nottingham. The City Council is deep in the process of negotiating with sponsors, corralling staff and casting the illusion that a new, glorious phase in the history of education is about to open.

They would have us believe that the sponsors are all reasonable and respectable organisations. People with a long standing commitment to education and a vision for the future. In fact, we have no such assurances. The calming words of the man from *Edge* mean nothing.

Whatever your position on City Academies—and it's worth repeating that the NUT stands resolutely against the

scheme—the current uncertainty felt by many teachers and the worthless words of the sponsors and Local Authority are unacceptable. The NUT demands a written commitment to preserve the existing agreements between teachers and their employers—we want something concrete to hold the academies to if they attempt to backtrack. For teachers much more is at stake than our desire to retain community schools—we are faced with unpredictable and potentially fundamental attacks on the way we work and the relationships we have with our employers. It has taken many years of hard work for the NUT to win recognition at the Djanogly Academy. This isn't the sort of battle we want to fight again.

The NUT exists to defend the interests of professional teachers and the students we teach. That is why we have consistently opposed and campaigned against Academies and will now fight to preserve national agreements and the right to represent members. If you teach in a school effected by the proposed changes and wish to discuss the implications with the Union, then please get in touch.

Tom Unterrainer, Assistant Secretary



NATIONAL WORKLOAD BALLOT

DON'T FORGET TO USE YOUR VOTE!

VOTE YES ... IN ORDER TO SAY NO



Thank You

We recently surveyed a random sample of 350 members about work-related stress and mental health. So far 129 of those surveyed have replied; an above average response for such surveys (37%). Thank you to all those who took the time and trouble to respond. We are analysing the data which will be published soon. If you didn't respond it still isn't too late!

MAAs to TLRs URGENT!

One of the anonymous replies to our mental health survey described circumstances where a teacher expected to lose significant salary because of the change from Management Allowances to TLRs. This is unacceptable. The NUT has successfully challenged such restructuring in schools all over the country. It is not too late to fight losses in salary but we need to know where it is happening. Please contact us as soon as possible if you are losing pay at nottm.city.nut@ntlworld.com or call the Nottingham NUT Office 0115 9622063. Leave a message on voicemail if no one answers – we will get back to you..

County Teachers Strike over TLRs

NUT members at Colonel Frank Seely School, Calverton in Notts are in the middle of continuing strikes against a very obdurate and heavy-handed management over their TLRs. Some teachers at the school face pay cuts of up to £5000 many others are effected. Send messages of support from your school to office@cfs.notts.sch.uk (for the attention of the NUT rep, Julie Chaplain) and copy to i.wels@ntlworld.com.

NUT Officers

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Tom Unterrainer, Assistant Secretary, 07779328418

John Illingworth, Assistant Secretary, 9199499

Jen Illingworth, Treasurer, 9199499

Sheena Wheatley, President, 07951090768

Threshold Applications

Here are some tips for getting through your application:

When you complete your threshold application form you will need to set out in your own terms the work and achievements that you wish to be considered against the standards. These guidelines help you present your case to the best effect.

The DfES' website contains detailed guidance in the "DfES Threshold Application Pack for Schools", together with a model Threshold Assessment Application form. These can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/performancethreshold

You can also obtain further information on performance threshold assessment by contacting your head teacher or the LA. **It is essential that applicants read all the documents referred to above before completing this application.**

All qualified teachers employed in LEA maintained schools paid on point M6 of the Main Pay Scale, including part-time and supply teachers, are entitled to apply for threshold assessment. Teachers can apply for threshold assessment once only in any school year.

Observations

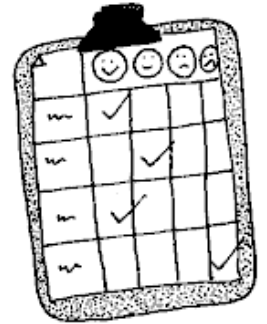
THE FACTS

The NUT has issued a comprehensive set of guidelines on observations in response to new government proposals on Performance Management (PM). Here's a brief summary of the Unions position:

- The NUT considers that three sixty minute lesson observations for ALL purposes (PM and two others) should be considered more than sufficient
- All lesson observations should be conducted in a supportive and professional manner and should be neither intrusive or threatening
- The reasons for the observation should be made explicit ('monitoring teaching and learning' is not sufficient)
- The reviewer should respond positively to any reasonable request
- Unannounced drop-ins are unacceptable
- At least five days' notice should be given
- There should be a positive response to any reasonable request by teachers on when the observation takes place

- Verbal feedback should be given immediately and no later than the next school day
- Written feedback should be given within five working days
- Teachers should have the opportunity to record their own comments
- Feedback should include all positive aspects of the lesson and practical advice for realistic improvements

The workload guidelines if applied with some force and plenty of national Union publicity can cut across a lot of unnecessary and arbitrary lesson observations. It needs a willingness and confidence by members in schools to take action school by school. This means that there will have to be an on-going, high profile national campaign for support for those schools that are taking action. Nottingham City NUT will do all we can to make this a priority matter.



IPS Programme - How is it for you?

More and more teachers are contacting the Union about the ISP programme running in many City primary schools. We think that similar programmes are also running in some secondary schools. Teachers have told us that the six week cycle of individual pupil targets and associated bureaucracy is generating a lot of extra work.

There is also concern that regular meetings with Authority staff and repetition of training, already attended in previous years, is taking teachers out of their class too often leading to additional problems.

No one minds purposeful activity if it helps to improve children's overall education, but if it detracts from the time teachers have to plan and evaluate their teaching, or just exhausts them, it will be counter productive.

We know that some head teachers are put under significant pressure to participate in the programme, sometimes against their professional judgement. Some head teachers have gone as far as to describe this as 'harassment or bullying'.

The Union has written to the City Director of Schools asking for more information about the programmes. We want to know:

- Which schools are involved and what criteria are used to identify them?
- What extra work is involved?
- How the ISP programme has been evaluated and what evidence was used?

We would be very interested to know more from teachers who are involved in ISP. Does it work? Which parts are helpful? Is it creating significant extra work?

We are considering holding a meeting for our members working in ISP schools to find out more. Please let us know if your school is involved so that we can invite you. A short email to nottm.city.nut@ntlworld.com telling us you are in ISP, and the name of the school, will suffice or call the Nottingham NUT Office 0115 9622063. Leave a message on voicemail if no one answers. We can also visit your school to talk to members if you want to tell us more about the impact of ISP.

NUT means business on workload crisis

The national union is now in the process of balloting members on new guidelines to protect members from excessive workload.

In the last year the introduction of the new Ofsted arrangements and the accompanying drive to develop SEFs in schools has created a bonanza. Next year the new Performance Management regulations will see more pressure on staff through observations, planning and review.

The NUT guidelines are designed to deal with past and present initiatives. We will be expecting school management to work within the guidelines so as to ensure a healthy and happy staff are able to deliver the best possible education to pupils. Where this proves impossible through negotiation schools will be balloted again for industrial action to enforce the guidelines.

Once again the NUT is the only union providing real protection for teachers in schools. Indeed, the other main unions for classroom teachers are actually helping the government

pile the pressure on. As with TLRs, where many teachers faced pay cuts, the NUT will not stand by as ill-conceived education policies from an increasingly unhinged government play havoc with our lives.

If you haven't already voted in the ballot, please make sure you do as a matter of urgency. Don't hesitate to contact a union officer if you have any concerns about the ballot or workload issues in your school.



Dr Jones gets to the root of the problem...

Not yet a member? Then...

Join the NUT



Our concern is for the proper funding of the education service - for smaller classes, more books and equipment and properly maintained school buildings. For teachers we seek better pay and improved conditions, with time to plan, mark and prepare. Above all, we seek improved educational opportunities for all our children and young people.

At the heart of the Union's endeavours is its commitment to the promotion and recognition of the professionalism of teachers. Membership is open only to fully qualified teachers. The NUT is the only teachers' organisation to set such standards for admission.

The National Union of Teachers is both a professional association and a trade union. It cares for the children in our schools and for their teachers. The legal and professional services available to members are second to none. Membership brings with it access to the widest range of benefits and service.

To join visit www.teachers.org.uk or phone the local office.