

May 2015

Bradford NUT at the National Conference

Our delegates attended the Conference held in Harrogate over the Easter weekend. Some aspects of it were covered by the media. Two of our delegates were called to speak – Ian Murch seconding the main motion on Teachers’ Pay, and Stephen Pickles proposing the main motion on Teachers’ Pensions. However, the following summarise a few of the main talking points within the 68 motions on the Final Agenda:

- Baseline Assessment - see article below.
- “Stand Up for Education” campaign - article follows. One early result has been the publication of the “Ofsted Clarification for Schools” document which clearly states the things that Ofsted do NOT require, yet many Heads & SMTs continue to assert that THEY do. Let us know if your SMT is still in denial.
- Racism, Migration & Islamophobia – the NUT affirmed its intention to continue to challenge statements & policies intended to discriminate against members of the communities in which we teach.
- The speech by guest speaker, Kristine Mayle (Chicago Teachers Union) about the struggle against GERM (the Global Educational Reform Movement) which seeks to remove education from public control & accountability into a privatised (for profit) business. In this country it currently manifests itself in the Academies programme and the revision of Teachers’ Pay/Conditions/Pensions.



General Meeting

A quick reminder that the next monthly general meeting will take place this Tuesday 16th June at the International curry house on Morley Street by the Alhambra. The meeting will start at 4.30pm for 5pm, and there will be a free curry provided afterwards.

It’s a great opportunity to put faces to names and/or speak directly to our Officers on matters relevant to yourself or your school.

Standing Up For Education Before And After The General Election

Bradford NUT has done quite a lot of work to ensure that as many people as possible, including local politicians, get the message that education, and the treatment of teachers in particular, needs to change for the better under a new government.

1. We held a good Education Question Time with representatives of the main parties.
2. We distributed thousands of copies of the NUT’s Stand Up For Education Manifesto.
3. We wrote to all of the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates in the Bradford District asking them if they support our Education Manifesto and asking what they would do for Bradford’s Education. We met some of them.

BASELINE TESTING – WHY SHOULD WE BE AGAINST IT?

The government intends to bring in Baseline Testing for Reception children starting with optional tests in 2015 – and recording the results from September 2016. Children will be expected to complete these tests in the first six weeks of starting school. The DfE says that these tests will support the “accountability framework”, will measure a child’s attainment against a “**pre-determined content domain**” and the results used to monitor progress throughout the school system.

Schools can currently choose one of six tests being offered by different providers. In most cases the tests will be carried out 1:1; will be done on a tablet or laptop and will have right or wrong answers – with no room for teacher intervention and if a child gets the answer wrong the teacher has to move on. The test will provide a raw score for each child which will be used as the “baseline” against which to measure future attainment. These results will be used to monitor the performance of schools and teachers.

What does the NUT say?

These tests are driven by accountability measures rather than the needs of children. Four and five year olds should not be tested in this way. A “one-size” test for children who may be a year apart in age is wrong. The first few weeks of school are an important settling in period for children and teachers.

Teachers should make assessments of children in Reception class based on observations of them and the way they interact with others. These tests go against agreed good practice and the results will be unreliable and invalid. This is an issue for all teachers as future targets and pay decisions could be based on Baseline Test results. NUT Conference agreed that as part of our campaign, we would “build towards a boycott” of Baseline Testing.

More information at www.teachers.org.uk/baseline

Stress – a way forward?

At our most recent General Meeting, we invited Dr George Madine (based at the Bradford University Management Centre) to give an extended presentation to attendees on his work and findings related to stress in schools. The reaction from attendees was very positive, with many attending asking questions as to how they could organise a visit to their schools. Our two Health & Safety Advisers (Miriam Murch and Stephen Pickles) had previously seen him present to Bradford Council’s Employee Health & Wellbeing Group. They were very impressed by his grasp of the subject and the blend of theory and practice in his work, as well as the transparency of its outcomes for both employees and employers. Hence our desire to disseminate this further via a Bradford NUT General meeting.

www.drgeorgemadine.co.uk

Budget Crisis Ahead Unless Government Acts

Schools in the Bradford District have been warned that they face budget reductions of 7.5% over the next two years and have been prompted to consider taking measures to avoid going into a deficit. The most obvious measure is to reduce staffing and already there have been a number of redundancy situations across the District where significant numbers of staff have faced potential redundancy, Bradford NUT has worked hard to prevent compulsory redundancy (frequently through the use of voluntary redundancy) and no member has yet been made compulsorily redundant this past year. However, it is very likely that the present trickle of potential redundancies could turn into a flood as budget reductions hit home.

It has never been more vital that teachers are in a union that will fight for education and against these threatened cuts.

**Join the NUT, the largest teachers’ union. Just ring the Joining Hotline on
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