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Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

November 2015

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Christmas is coming but

Each academic year brings its challenges for both schools and INTO members; 2015/16 looks no different. Ranged out in front of us, are a variety of issues which will require our continued attention. The determined assault on the public services, of which education is one, will require us to play our part in a campaign of resistance. INTO will join with the broader trade union movement in a renewed campaign for increased funding for education and the public sector in general. Society must decide what the value of education is to it and translate that understanding into a financial underpinning that reflects this view. It is clear at present that the NI Executive has not yet arrived at such an agreed understanding. Neither can INTO afford to ignore the fate of the wider public service and concentrate on education alone. A united trade union movement represents the most effective vehicle for mounting a successful campaign in opposition to austerity policies that see the world simply in terms of cost. INTO will continue to contribute to these efforts.

This piece of work will sit alongside the multitude of other activities our union is engaged in on your behalf. INTO

remains the driving force behind the NITCs efforts to bring about a real and meaningful improvement to teachers terms and conditions of employment. We have brought a pay claim which we believe the teaching profession is entitled to and a claim seeking a radical overhaul of maternity, paternity, adoptive leave arrangements. We are also seeking, for the first time, to have provision made for those members seeking to avail of assisted pregnancy therapies. A demonstration, if it were needed, of the progressive organisation that INTO is. The negotiations continue on these claims and INTO is determined to see a positive outcome. Also we will continue to seek to resolve the ongoing backlog of issues that has



GERRY MURPHY,
Northern Secretary

accumulated at the negotiations over several years. We are pleased to report that after a number of years we have finally completed an agreement with the employers and DE on a strategy for Teacher Health and Wellbeing [THAW]. Work will begin shortly to develop advice for teachers and employers to give effect to this strategy which will be off real benefit to members.

Often forgotten by other individuals and bodies are the rights of substitute

members. INTO considers that for too long those individuals, who step into the breach in times of illness or emergencies in schools, deserve to now have their employment rights addressed. We have now begun such negotiations and hopefully these will be successful.

Work at the negotiation body [the Joint Working Party, JWP] is being pursued against the backdrop of a review of the current negotiation arrangements arising from an acceptance by all parties that negotiations have been taking too long and the creation of the Education Authority [EA] which has altered the make-up of the employer's side. INTO has felt for some time now that members are ill-served by the existing arrangements and we are currently actively engaged in promoting our ideas for more effective working in discussions with the employers and DE. We expect to be in a position to report improvements in these processes in the near future.

The creation of EA will, of course, also have significant implications for INTO's internal structures and we are currently assessing these. In the first instance Northern Committee will be bringing proposals for a number of rule changes to Annual INTO Congress to reflect the fact that the Education and Library Boards are no longer in existence. This is important as it underpins the make-up of the Northern Committee. The continued close working between INTO and the UTU is also influencing our deliberations in regard to future INTO structures. INTO's relationship with

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challenges still there

UTU is central to INTO thinking and the co-operation between our unions provides a model that is delivering for our membership and has the potential for even greater benefits in the future.

At present INTO remains on industrial action on two separate fronts. The successful action led by INTO in opposition to the assessment arrangements remains in place, although serious negotiations have resumed in recent weeks with DE. These negotiations are being handled for DE by the Minister himself who has been absenting himself from the All Party Talks at Stormont to attend. The NITC team in these talks is largely made up of serving teachers and Mary Dorman of INTO is taking the lead for us. It is fair to report that DE are anxious to reach an agreement and the weekly engagements are making significant progress. This is to be welcomed and INTO will continue to approach this work in a positive fashion and be guided by the Northern Conference of 2013 which informs INTO's position on this issue.

Industrial action, against the outworking of the austerity inspired cuts

remains in place. The action is popular with members fed up with years of falling pay, increased work load, ever growing class sizes, reduced resourcing and little or no professional development opportunities. The employers are currently seeking to engage with the NITC in order to see what measures they might be able to enact with a view to having the action lifted. INTO is always ready to talk and we are curious to see what the employers have to offer considering that EA, the largest employer, is currently seeking 400 "voluntary redundancies" in an effort to meet the budgetary targets imposed upon it. Additionally the Tory government in Britain has already indicated that they are going to reduce, once again, public sector funding to the tune of £37 billion. This represents a potential cut to the NI Block Grant in the region of £1.5 billion. When this is considered in the light of our experience of the previous £1.5 billion cut to public sector spending over the term of the last parliament, we are wondering if the employers are engaging in an exercise which is purely for the optics.

INTO will not be persuaded to end the action in the face of further cuts which will be announced in early 2016. Teachers have had enough, our employers are foolish to think that well-meaning words and promises of jam tomorrow will be sufficient to end this action. The reality is that further cuts are coming down the pipeline for education and the wider public sector. INTO has a responsibility to its members and the young people members teach to stand up and resist them and it's a responsibility we will not shirk. This may well involve INTO revisiting its current action and redrawing it to further protect jobs and services. We will also be central to the wider campaign across the public services that ICTU will lead. INTO activists need to now be embedding themselves in local campaign groups across the north and readying themselves for action against the cuts to come.

The year ahead will be challenging but the INTO is not afraid of challenge and we are confident that together we can make a real positive difference to the working conditions of members and make a valuable contribution in the fight against austerity.

It's Amazing!

In my head I always had the notion that by September 2015 I'd be back in the classroom teaching, relishing the year out as Chair of INTO. I never, for one minute, considered that I'd be back in the office interning with the Officials for INTO. That's not to say it wasn't a difficult decision to put your head above the parapet and apply for the post in Northern Office, it was a major decision, accompanied with the usual angst, "What if I don't get it?" ... "What if I'm no good at it?" ... "What if ...?" But sure anyone who has been a school rep is well used to putting their head above the parapet! What's the worst that can happen?

As an intern you can expect exceptional training from the outset, of course because I've been around the office all year as Chair, I am expected to hit the ground running, and rightly so. From the very first day I have been answering member queries, corresponding with employers, attending rallies at Stormont, and I haven't even had to make one cup of coffee! The pace is fast but you are guided

all the way by what can only be described as the hardest working individuals I have ever encountered, the staff of Northern Office, all of whom have supported me from the outset.

I envisage that the internship will be real learning experience. I'm looking forward attending meetings with officials, meetings with members, and answering member's queries. It is the last point that I think is key; the needs of members. This is what INTO is all about; keeping the members to the forefront. Our school budgets are decimated which creates serious difficulties and compromises the ability of INTO members to discharge their professional responsibilities with integrity. More than ever INTO need to take the lead on all campaigns in an attempt to circumvent further cuts to an education system already on its knees. It is in this area

where I feel as an intern I will face my greatest challenge but it will be a tremendous experience and an opportunity to develop skills that will

undoubtedly be invaluable when I return to the classroom.

I would encourage all INTO members to consider the possibility of an internship. The only way to do great work is to love what you do and that is what is most rewarding about this experience. It is daunting but I prescribe to the theory, if it scares you, it might be a good thing to try, to be brave and take risks because nothing can substitute experience. It is early days for me but already I can see the

wide ranging and varied tasks and challenges ahead of me, and remember in the words of Steve Tyler "Life's a journey not a destination," and I'm assured in the knowledge that this particular journey will be, "Amazing!"



ANNMARIE
CONWAY,
Intern

Joint INTO/UTU Annual Leadership Conference

The Annual joint INTO/UTU leadership Conference took place on Wednesday 21 October 2015 in the Tullylagan Hotel, Cookstown. The theme of this year's Conference for principals and vice-principals was Managing Change in Education. The conference focused on two key areas of current change – Special Education and the new Education Authority.

The conference was addressed by Gavin Boyd, Chief Executive of the Education Authority on the changes being introduced by the new EA, followed by a

Question and Answer session. A number of the questions focused on SEN and the lack of resources and support generally for schools, with the dissolution of CASS.

During the session on Special Education, presentations were made by Mary Dorman and Caroline McCarthy of INTO. Both presenters are elected members of the INTO Northern Committee and made a presentation to the NI Assembly education Committee on the new SEN legislation currently before the Assembly for consideration. They highlighted to the conference many

of the concerns of INTO if this legislation is to be passed. The INTO response and presentation can be viewed on the INTO website.

As part of the focus of the day we asked participants to complete a short survey of need within their schools. To further aid in the collection of data, INTO, in the near future, will be posting a survey online for members to complete, to assist in the development of a strategy which is appropriate for supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs.



Gerry Murphy, Gavin Boyd, Avril Hall-Callaghan, Mark McTaggart and Julie Orr



Nuala Groogan, Marie O'Shea, Brian McGrath and Martin Short



Delegates



Caroline McCarthy, Mark McTaggart and Mary Dorman

STUDENT RECRUITMENT FAIRS

Every year the INTO welcome a new tranche of enthusiastic student teachers into membership of the organisation.

Since September our representatives have visited the University of Ulster, Queen's University, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College and have enjoyed meeting and recruiting the latest intake of students.

All student teachers are encouraged to join the INTO for free. In return they can be assured that INTO will provide them with protection and security while they are on teaching practice, that they will have access to our extensive advice and support network and they receive an INTO Student Pack including a document folder and USB Memory Stick – always gratefully received!

INTO also supports our student members



INTO and UTU Colleagues Recruiting Students at Stranmillis University College. Left to Right: Mark McTaggart, INTO Chairperson, Annmarie Conway, INTO Official, Leigh Cooper, UTU Organising Officer, Jacquie Reid, UTU Deputy General Secretary, Julie Orr, UTU President

through sponsorship of their student unions, sports teams and clubs and societies and by hosting student seminars and workshops throughout the year.

Don't forget to approach and recruit any students that are placed in your school. You can download Student Application Forms directly from our website: www.into.ie/NI/JoinINTO/

Three months and counting ...

Considering now that we are nearly three months in to the new academic year it seems the right time to reflect on the nature of queries coming in directly to northern office. The new academic year invariably brings timetabling issues and when teachers have had a chance to digest the seasonal lack of significant time for planning, preparation and assessment they tend to, in their search for PPA time element, reflect on lunchtime supervision. Teachers phoning northern office in regard to this are reassured to find out that they are entitled to a break of at least 30 minutes at lunch-time and relieved to know they cannot be required to undertake lunchtime supervision if they would prefer not to.

Generally from the end of summer return the main issue of concern has been the current industrial action. Many teachers were unsure as to whether the action remained ongoing and they also needed greater clarification as to different aspects of the action. Unsure callers were thankful that INTO was still to the fore in protecting teachers' terms and conditions of employment. Clarification of some aspects of our action included our continued instruction regarding directed time; apart from attending one after school meeting per fortnight, which should last no longer than one hour, members were instructed not to undertake any directed time. Moreover, INTO still instructs its members that they should refuse to implement any new initiatives. Many members have contacted northern office about this and all are given the same answer; a new initiative is a new working practice or something that is an aspect of your daily teaching which you didn't do before. Furthermore the action in

regard to ceasing to participate in PRSD continues, however, there are certain caveats associated with this action which have prompted many queries; members must not, because of our action, suffer a pecuniary loss and so INTO members who have a reviewer role should continue to carry this role out and review teachers who need successful review cycles to move through the upper pay scale.

An issue regularly being queried is classroom observation. Again the answer to this is also generally simple. A principal, or acting principal, has the right, within reason and without being excessive, to visit and observe any teacher at any time within their school. However, this right cannot be delegated from the principal to another member of staff as this would be outside of the agreed PRSD scheme. This does not mean that some observation cannot take place; observation, outside of the PRSD scheme, by anyone other than the principal can take place with firstly, meaningful consultation and then the complete agreement of the teacher.

Covering absent colleagues has, especially in October, become an issue that has warranted many enquiries to northern office. While this is mentioned in our action short of strike, its inclusion is nothing short of simply working to the rule from the Jordanstown Agreement which is that teachers are not required to

'cover' for absent colleagues in schools with an average daily enrolment of 222 or less, in primary 1 and 2 and in nursery classes. For schools with an average enrolment greater than 222, teachers should only provide cover for absent colleagues for the first two days of absence. However, they should not provide cover on the first day if the absence was planned.

Finally, for some teachers, the return to work and the heavy workload which has come with their return has been a trigger which has hastened their resolve to enquire from northern office possible options to reduce their working week. For some older teachers who are coming towards the end of their

careers, they are enquiring about phased retirements and Flexible Working Schemes which can provide a temporary reduced contract. This has also been investigated by teachers with caring roles or changes to their personal circumstances who simply need to change their contract so that they can keep their job while managing their affairs. Some teachers of all ages simply need a short term temporary change in their working hours and after advice opt for the temporary variation in contract which provides a change for up to one year.

Unsurprisingly with all the talk in both the local and national media in regard to the Tory government and austerity there hasn't been too many calls about pay!



TOMMY MCGLONE,
INTO Official

Hilarious and Funny Examples of Mistakes in Application Letters



It is often wise to check what we have written on an application form if only to ensure that those reading it don't fall off their chair laughing! These funnies landed on the desk of a Human Resources Director.

1. I have a graduate degree in unclear physics.
2. My hobbies include raising long-eared rabbits as pets.
3. My last job was as a plumbing and hating

specialists.

4. I worked for 6 years as an uninformed security guard.
5. The academic scholarship I earned came with a plague.
6. Most of my experience to this point has been as a blue-collar worker.
7. As part of the city maintenance crew, I repaired bad roads and defective brides.
8. My career goal is to shave my talents with a growing

company.

9. This has reference to your advertisement calling for a 'typist And an accountant - Male or Female'... As I am both for the past Several years and I can handle both; I am applying for the post.
10. As my mother-in-law has expired and I am responsible for it, Please grant me 10 days leave

National launch: INTO Global Citizenship School

Croke Park Hotel, Dublin, Sat Oct 10th at 11:00am, a gathering of invited guests heard about the latest support for teachers, introduced by INTO, with resource materials on www.into.ie Global Solidarity pages.

Global Citizenship School is about encouraging and supporting schools in learning about and acting upon global issues. Humanity is interdependent. Schools can make an immeasurable commitment to promote a more just, equitable and sustainable world for all.

Introduced to INTO members at Congress 2015, this event widened the audience to include NGO's such as UNICEF, Trocaire and Amnesty International; State agencies such as Irish Aid and development education groups and projects: Global Schools (St. Patrick's College); DICE; IDEA and WorldWise Global Schools.

Presenters from INTO revealed what was available from the Global Citizenship School pages on the INTO website, how schools could become involved and



demonstrated how useful the lesson plans and other resources are for delivery of Curaclam na Bunscoile through SPHE; SESE; Languages, Ethical & Religious Education. The colourful plaque that schools would display on completion of years one of the programme (see attachment above) was also unveiled.

Global Citizenship School is INTO's contribution to European Year for Development 2015, <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en> and in recognising the recent launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) to 2030.

Just click www.into.ie (Global Solidarity)

for the latest free and ready-to-go lessons for all classes from infants to 6th class on themes of Citizenship, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

It's easy for schools to join Global Citizenship Schools. The one page application form, to be signed by a Principal or Chairperson following in-school discussion, is on the into.ie website.

NOW WE NEED YOU!

Our national Launch was the start and we now need volunteers to promote Global Citizenship Schools nationwide. Join our volunteer network to:

1. Promote G.C.S. in your own or neighbouring schools and INTO branches
2. Help us research the best available lessons for uploading to web
3. Contact local or national media
4. Offer any other skill/suggestions you feel you can bring to Global Citizenship School.

Please contact INTO by emailing jobrien@into.ie

Education Sub-committee meets amid cuts to services

Coordinated by Tommy McGlone and attended by seven of the Northern Committee, Mark McTaggart, Dorothy McGinley, Mary Dorman, Paul Groogan, Annette Comey, Seamus Hanna, Caroline McCarthy and two representatives from the national Education Committee, Geraldine McGowan and Sheena Quinn, the first meeting this academic year of INTO's northern education Sub-committee was held at Northern Office in September.

Caroline McCarthy delivered an analysis of the Ministerial Working Group Report into, 'The review of Special School Provision in Northern Ireland.' She explained her disappointment with this document on many levels including how the thrust of the review consists of relocating some pupils with Special Educational Needs from specialist resourced settings to mainstream schools without reference to how this provision would be financed and resourced. Caroline further highlighted her concern that the review purported to be a consultation document but the six day timeframe for response seemed to be at odds with the natural spirit usually associated with consultation. Geraldine McGowan reported on the timescale of the SEN review and Mary Dorman led a discussion on violence

against teachers in special school. This then broadened out to include motion 10 from conference 2015 tasking Northern Committee to undertake research into assaults in schools. Consequently from this a decision was taken to write to all stakeholders on management side and, at time of press, only one reply had been received.

The new GL assessment for primary 1 pupils and the method to achieving a standardised score, coupled with the proposal that they are tested, individually, in September for baseline and then reassessed the following June was discussed. The committee found that while this remains non-statutory, it is similarly both cumbersome and unnecessary for young children. They were extremely concerned that this was accompanied with the poor consultation with the relevant trade unions in relation to the 'Dashboard of Measures'.

Of the many motions passed at conference the Northern Education Sub-committee felt that seven of the passed motions fell within their remit and therefore drew up plans of action for those motions that have not already been undertaken by Northern Committee. Currently, while assessment does fall

within the remit of the education committee, there is already considerable work being carried out by Nuala O'Donnell, Mark McTaggart and Mary Dorman in relation to Motion 4 'Assessment data'. Motion's 6 (condemning the lack of SEN Provision) and 9 (compulsory aspects to GCSE and A-Level courses) are being given attention with letters being sent and proposals for lobbying campaign being planned. Other resolutions have warranted action from northern office including freedom of information requests on assaults to all parties including DE and the PSNI the results of which will be published along with advice and guidelines concerning assault and the safe use of photographic equipment at school. The group have also tabled the issue of unregulated transfer tests for Northern Ireland Teachers' council.

A final concern raised by the group was the gap that teachers will face with the decreasing training services provided by EA due to the massive cuts to finance and reduction in staff at CASS and RTU. So don't be surprised if, in the coming weeks and months, your opinion is surveyed on training or indeed any of these issues. The committee will meet again before Christmas to assess progress on these issues.

Negotiation Update

The process of improving teachers' pay and terms and conditions of employment takes place through the Teachers Negotiating Committee (TNC). This committee is important as it is the only way that INTO can set out claims and negotiate improvements on behalf of our members. Currently the items under discussion include:

Pay Claim – apart from an above the cost of living increase the pay claim will also focus on a proper appeal process for dealing with salary issues in a school; improving CPD and improving the arrangements for maternity, paternity and adoption pay.

Health and Safety Structures – the INTO argument of a lack of proper negotiating arrangements for teachers has now been accepted and INTO representatives will join those from other teacher unions on committees and advisory bodies in EA, CCMS, and within the TNC. This will allow for specific tailored advice and guidance on

a range of matters to be developed for issuance to schools.



TONY CARLIN,
Senior Official

Policy review – a number of policies are presently being reviewed. These include maternity, paternity and adoption leave. The disciplinary procedure is also being reviewed in the light of recent legal cases. Finally a new procedure on shared parental leave is close to agreement.

Social media – guidance is being developed to assist schools and teachers to cope with the pressures that arise from the use of social media. The guidance will include advice on how to keep safe and what to

do should a teacher be threatened by third parties using social media.

Status of TNC policies and procedures clarified

An INTO member recently pursued an independent appeal of their grievance after the school repeatedly refused to adhere to the agreed TNC procedures. The teacher who worked in a grant maintained integrated primary school found that their concerns were never properly addressed and this impacted on their health. At appeal the school argued that TNC policies only apply to controlled and maintained schools and that as an integrated school the only requirement was to ensure that if they offered a process that in their view was no less favourable than the TNC procedure it was ok. This argument was soundly rejected by the tribunal. The independent appeal panel unanimously agreed with the teacher and INTO, upheld their appeal, and confirmed that TNC procedures are binding and cannot be changed.

Further to this the Department of Education will issue a letter to all schools advising them of the binding nature of TNC policies and procedures. The advice of INTO is that if it does not have a TNC number then it has not been agreed with INTO and members should seek advice before proceeding.



INTO stands up for substitute teachers

Currently a review of the working arrangements for the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register are underway.

The review seeks to look at situations when NISTR should and should not be used.

Currently temporary teaching posts of less than 6 months should be filled through NISTR. Temporary positions expected to last longer than six months should be filled

through public advertisement and appointment.

INTO have insisted that this review also look at the right of temporary teachers with regard to permanency and the payments that they should be due.

We have asked that Management Side come forward with proposals to ensure that teachers in a temporary position with more than four years' service are

not less favourable treated with respect to sick pay, holiday pay, notice pay as well as other professional entitlements including being paid for attendance at courses.

INTO believes that this issue has been left unaddressed for too long and we are attempting to find a way forward for our members in temporary positions in schools to ensure their rights are protected.

LANGUAGE TUTORS

another INTO success

About seven years ago, the Department of Education established a programme to teach modern languages to primary children between the ages of 5 to 8 years old. It was known as the Primary Modern Languages Programme (PMLP) and originally employed a handful of staff that were designated as tutors. In the seven years since the programme began, the service grew with demand for the tutors in almost every primary school. The number of tutors employed rose to 83 and they were employed to deliver modern language teaching in a set number of schools. The cost of the service was around £900,000 per year and the actual cost per pupil was costed at 75p per pupil per session. The tutors were welcomed by the schools they visited, the children enjoyed the language teaching and the parents regularly commented on the confidence it gave their children when they went on holiday. It was a success story all round and INTO never had any queries from our members employed in the programme or complaints from schools about the tutors who delivered the service.

That all changed in March 2015.

That month, the tutors were called to a meeting and were told that due to budget cutbacks the service was being axed. They were given a letter telling them they would have no work after 31st March 2015 and if they were owed any money it would be sent to them. A number of individuals contacted INTO and we made contact with the Education Authority demanding a meeting. Silence!

On three separate occasions INTO asked when there would be a meeting to discuss our members' rights. The representative of the EA repeated that these individuals were tutors and not teachers and consequently they did not propose to consult with INTO. INTO was left with no option but to lodge legal proceedings and with the assistance of our legal representatives we commenced tribunal proceedings for a protective award for failing to consult in the case of a dismissal. The INTO members then met with Tony Carlin, Senior Official to discuss their concerns and detail their issues. Tony was asked to manage the case from this point by the Northern Secretary, Gerry Murphy.

In these meetings, it transpired that the tutors had been employed in the service, some for up to seven years, but had never received any holiday pay and had not received notice pay. Redundancy pay was never mentioned and at no point were they invited to join any pension scheme. With the continued refusal of EA to talk to INTO, we decided to ask members to lodge individual tribunal claims in respect of unfair dismissal, holiday and notice pay and loss of pension rights. Tony Carlin advised the tutors of the process and by the end of June 2015, the membership within the service had grown to 63 of the 83 tutors. Over 45 of the tutors decided to proceed and lodge person claims.

Suddenly, INTO were asked to a meeting with EA. We were informed that the tutors were not being dismissed and that negotiations would commence over the winding down of the service. Tutors were to continue to be paid until negotiations were complete. Tutors would be offered alternative employment if they wished, otherwise a package based on redundancy, holiday and notice pay would be developed and agreed.

In the next months, INTO held meetings of our membership and each day regular emails were sent to advise of developments and answer group and individual queries. In addition, negotiations with EA on the package to be offered were continuing. In September 2015, INTO advised our members in the

PMLP service that agreement had been reached and that the Organisation was recommending the offer. The package consisted of a redundancy payment based on one month for each year of service, notice pay based on one week for each year of service and holiday pay based on 12% of all the hours they had worked since commencing the service. It was agreed that pensions would also be dealt with but separately to this process. In mid-September, INTO organised for tutors to attend the Northern Office, to confirm their individual acceptance of their personal offer and to withdraw their tribunal claim.

The average payment made was around £5000 (6800 euro), with a few tutors who had recently joined the service receiving about £1500 (2400 euro) and some long standing tutors receiving over £15000 (20,500 euro). An estimate of the total monies paid to date by EA is in excess of £330,000 (450,000 euro) and this figure excludes the pension costs for lost service and benefits. When the cost of pensions is added to the overall settlement costs, we expect this figure to almost double.

This is a significant victory for INTO and the tutors and demonstrates the importance of standing up for your rights and the importance of being in a trade union called INTO.

TONY CARLIN, Senior Official

THANK YOU INTO

I was one of the 84 tutors employed by the Education Authority as language tutors in primary schools throughout Northern Ireland. In a meeting on the 10th March 2015 we were told by the Education Authority that the programme would be ending on the 31st March 2015, and we would not be returning to the schools in April.

As you can imagine, we were very upset. There was no offer to negotiate any terms for a redundancy, we were simply told the programme was ending and that was that.

Then some of us contacted INTO.... They explained to us that our terms of employment were actually not entirely in accordance to the existing employment legislation and therefore we may be entitled to not only redundancy

payment, but also backdated holiday pay and even a pension!

They guided us expertly through the maze of the legislation and patiently explained our rights and entitlement to us. The caring approach was most appreciated, some of us were very low and in shock after years of service to be told that we would not have a job in a fortnight, not even a full month notice!

I cannot thank INTO and in particular Tony Carlin, Clare Martin and everyone else involved in helping us. As workers we were grateful to have a job and enjoyed the work immensely, but were totally unaware of our rights. Thank you INTO for your wonderful work.

ELENA BALLESTEROS

Useful websites and web-based resources for primary teachers

The provision of largely speedy and reliable internet access to schools made the use of web based resources possible for classroom practitioners. The general availability of interactive whiteboards turned the use of web based resources from an occasional, often experimental activity to a regular, and to many, essential, part of their professional skill set.

Unsurprisingly, there has been a concomitant explosion of material of varying degrees of quality and usefulness, on the web. In the course of this brief article I intend to share some insights as to the experience of colleagues with, what must necessarily be, just a small selection of what is currently available.



Let's begin with Primaryresources.co.uk which is probably everyone's first port of call and which contains both PowerPoint presentations and printable worksheets as well as planning material.

Primary Resources seems to have been around since the first teacher drew on the wall of a cave with a burnt stick, and contains a wide variety of teacher generated worksheets grouped according to subject, topic, somewhat confusingly called "level" (e.g SENTENCE LEVEL) and subsection.

Each item is then marked with an age or ability "level symbol". These refer to England and Wales and in order to find how these correspond to the NI curriculum you must refer to a cross reference chart on their FAQ page.



I'm sure nearly every teacher in NI had some Scholastic resources book on their shelves and now Scholastic also offer a wide range of Foundation, KS1 and KS2 online resources for a £15 annual subscription.



Another old favourite of mine is the "TES Resources" site. This provides a mixture of free and pay to use worksheets and Powerpoints Of course, much of the material is English curriculum based and if anyone cares to use the British Values Week resource I'd be very interested in your feedback. I tended to use TES for one off topics when I'd exhausted all other options.

You can also register for updates by email which is useful for seasonal topics.



For another site offering a choice of free and paid resources try [Teacherspayteachers](http://Teacherspayteachers.com). This is a US based site so prices are in dollars and you must work out age levels etc for yourself.



For more targeted material, specifically but not exclusively for weaker pupils, SEN Teacher offers a vary good selection of printable resources entirely free of charge.



A perhaps less widely known site but one I like a lot, is the US based site [Enchanted Learning](http://EnchantedLearning.com). This provides some free material but for the maximum benefit paying the subscription fee of \$20 (subscribe when sterling is robust!) is highly recommended. This site provides printable material only, with no PowerPoint or other electronic presentations but offers a very interesting selection of material. For those who are introducing their pupils to basic Spanish the site is an absolute treasure trove as you get access to all the material designed for American students of Hispanic heritage. For example until you've "done" Halloween in Spanish you haven't lived!



CHARLIE GLEN,
Past Chair of Northern Committee

For more modern language resources at primary level the BBC is hard to beat. It offers French, Spanish and now Mandarin! The BBC also offer a good range of user friendly material across the curriculum although obviously directed towards England, Wales and Scotland in areas such as history.



While on the subject of modern languages, [Seomra Ranga](http://SeomraRanga.com) provides a range of resources including Powerpoints both as Bearla agus as Gaelige including seasonal topics such as St.Patrick's Day.



For those seeking something new for an assembly try assemblies.org however my choice would be the English based CAFOD site which is free, accessible and very user friendly.



Of necessity this has been a very sketchy glimpse of what is available however I think it safe to say that, after a shaky beginning, web based resources are now as good, if not better than those from more traditional sources and that a little bit of digging can produce some wonderful material.

TTIP a guide for the busy teacher

What is TTIP?

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – a proposed trade deal between the USA and the European Union. It is about removing trade barriers for big business and is still being negotiated largely behind closed doors.

We've been here before n'est pas?

TTIP hasn't gone away you know! A quarter of a million people took to the streets of Berlin to Protest TTIP last month. It is a massive issue for Europeans and the Trade Union Movement.

Why is TTIP of concern to INTO?

TTIP proposes the harmonisation of legislation relating to employment law, environmental legislation, banking regulation etc. As such it opens up the possibility of a direct impact on INTO members rights in the workplace. In the UK there is already a hugely significant increase in the involvement of the Private sector in delivering frontline education services. This has led to significant difficulties relating to 'Collective Bargaining' for Unions representing education workers and therefore the ability to negotiate better terms and conditions.

While the English model is not yet full 'Privatisation' TTIP would open the door to 'For Profit' businesses to move in to the UK and Irish Education system.

The state would not be allowed to treat its own schools more favourably than it does privately run schools. What that would mean in practice remains to be seen,

but potentially it could give the green light for a company to sue a government if it was denied access to the education 'market' as a result of government policy.

Why else should we care?

Other employment rights, union rights, health and safety in the workplace and so on, could all potentially be 'harmonised' to the detriment of workers on this side of the Atlantic in order to enhance trading conditions for multi-national corporations.

A look at the history of similar trade agreements indicates the likelihood of job losses in the countries with better conditions and pay for workers. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) led to the decimation of the US Motor Industry and an estimated loss of 400,000 jobs in manufacturing across the USA. Meanwhile cheap non-unionised labour in Mexico was exploited until cheaper labour was found in Asia by big business and jobs migrated once more.

What is ISDS?

Possibly the most worrying aspect of the TTIP proposals are the establishment of off shore Tribunals to arbitrate in disputes between Multi-National Corporations and

Sovereign States. These are called Investor State Dispute Settlements (ISDS). Such Tribunals would consist of a three person 'independent' panel and would be outside of the jurisdiction of the laws and court systems of the states in question.

To give just one small example of how these already work in practice in other trade deals, an ISDS tribunal under NAFTA

awarded £15 million dollars in projected lost earnings to US company Metalclad, after they had been refused a permit to operate a Toxic Waste Dump in Mexico following concerns from local residents regarding potential pollution to their water supply.

It also opens the possibility of challenges to state law which may affect 'future' profits. For example Veolia challenged the Egyptian Governments proposed increase in the Minimum Wage, using an ISDS style mechanism under a trade

deal between France and Egypt. The laws and courts of sovereign nations have no role to play under ISDS .

So what now?

INTO members should continue to lobby their political and Trade Union representatives to oppose this unfair, anti-democratic, one sided trade deal.



KEVIN DALY,
SELB, Northern Committee
Post Primary Rep

Training courses for INTO members 2015-16

Our latest series of training courses for INTO members are listed below. Some courses will be delivered by an ICTU trainer and may be accredited. Last year, for the

first time, INTO school representatives undertook an accredited trade union training course. These reps were recently issued with their certificates

from the Open College network. It is hoped that more INTO school representatives and health and Safety representatives will avail of and receive accreditation for their training in the future.

Applications for the courses listed are invited using the pro-forma on the INTO website. Paid release is available to accredited School Representatives under the Facilities Agreement and the provisions of the Labour Relations Code of Practice for Trade Union Training. Substitute cover, however, has to be provided by your school.

Lunch and refreshments are provided. Places are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and early application is advised. Places on some of the courses are still available. All the courses are being held in INTO Northern Office. Northern Office will notify you of your successful application.

Date	Time	Course	Delivery	Closing Date
12 Nov 2015	9.30am–3.30pm	Induction Course for New School Reps	INTO/ATL	29 Oct 2015
26 Nov 2015	9.30am–3.30pm	Induction Course for New H&S Reps	INTO/ATL	12 Nov 2015
27 Jan 2016	9.30am–3.30pm	School Reps Training (Day 1 of 2)	INTO/ATL	13 Jan 2016
28 Jan 2016	9.30am–3.30pm	School Reps Training (Day2 of 2)	INTO/ATL	
25 Feb 2016	3.00pm–5.00pm	Aspiring School Leaders: Applying For Your First VP Post	INTO/ATL	11 Feb 2016
11 Mar 2016	3.00pm–5.00pm	Aspiring School Leaders: Applying For Principal Posts	INTO/ATL	26 Mar 2016
28 Apr 2016	9.30am–3.30pm	Health & Safety in School Seminar	INTO/ATL	14 Apr 2016
ICTU Courses	TBC	ICTU Stress Course for School Reps (3 Days)	ICTU	–
Check out		ICTU H&SE Stress Guidelines for P/VPs (1 Day)	ICTU	–
www.into.ie		ICTU Disability Champions for School Reps	ICTU	–
for updates		– Accredited (3 Days)		



Trade Union Friends of Palestine

In 2016 Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFPP) mark their 10th Anniversary. TUFPP was set up in 2006 by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) to take a stance against Israeli oppression of Palestine and to embark on a campaign encouraging boycott, divestment and sanction against Israeli apartheid.

The situation for the people of Palestine remains one of stark injustice perpetrated on a daily and systemic basis. Over 500 checkpoints in the West Bank alone restrict freedom of movement and daily acts of intimidation and violence by Israel's military are a part and parcel of Palestinian life. However, the narrative that is presented to the wider world through mainstream media outlets is one of gross misinformation. A recent outbreak of violence that has left 60 Palestinians killed by Israeli military, police and settlers since the beginning of October is described as 'an upsurge in Palestinian violence' by some outlets; 15 of these victims have been under the age of 18. In the same period the death toll for Israelis at the hands of Palestinians is 9.

Ever more Palestinian territory is illegally settled by Zionist Extremists, in defiance of international law. While Israel and her allies cry foul at accusations of apartheid, the simple fact remains that 'Israel's ... avaricious land grab of its monstrous 'apartheid wall' and relentless expansion of its illegal settlements, have reduced the West Bank to several disconnected pockets amounting to a mere 12% of former Palestine.' (Ronnie Kasrils in

'Israel and South Africa, The Many Faces of Apartheid' Ed Ilan Pappé) The Israeli government responds to these illegal settlements by extending or re-routing the infamous separation wall,



building 'Jewish Only' Roads which cut through Palestinian land and increasing their military presence around new settlements, encroaching ever further in to Palestinian territory.

When an ICTU delegation visited Palestine in 2007 they found 'discrimination against Arabs and Palestinians ... pervasive ... in employment, business, Trade Union organisation, housing, and the provision of vital public services such as health.... In Gaza we witnessed the consequences of a siege which international law defines as the collective punishment of a people and consequently a war crime.' (ICTU Delegation to Palestine Document)

Since that visit Gaza has twice been subjected to military onslaught by the Israeli defence forces. The most recent of which in 2014 resulted in 2,251

Palestinian deaths, 1,462 of whom were civilians including an estimated 500 children. (Figures from UN HRC) The same period of violence presented to the world as 'Self Defence' for Israel, resulted in 66 deaths among the Israeli Military and 7 Israeli civilians casualties.

These facts, among many others, are why Irish Trade Unionists were the first to call on the ICTU to adopt a position in favour of Boycott, Divestment and Sanction against Israeli Apartheid and why TUFPP are now calling on a renewal of the BDS campaign. Palestinian and Israeli progressives have called upon the world to act as it did in bringing about an end to South African Apartheid through such a campaign. There is a need to reinvigorate this campaign and to engage in other acts of solidarity with the people

of Palestine and those courageous Israelis who stand with them. Here is what INTO members and branches can do in the short term:

- Propose that your branch of INTO affiliates to TUFPP
- Having affiliated send a delegate from your branch to TUFPP meetings
- Give consideration to formulating motions for Conference and Congress in support of Palestine and to mandate INTO at National Level to adopt a BDS Policy
- Personally Boycott Israeli goods and services in line with ICTU policy
- Lobby politicians, encourage your local council and businesses to Boycott and Divest from Israeli goods and services.

KEVIN DALY SELB, Northern Committee Post Primary Rep

Nablus, West Bank, Palestine

Knowledge is Power

Caroline McCarthy & Peter Mac Allister

The aim of this article is to provide teachers with an insight into the support network that is available within your school (through policies & procedures), EA as well as outside of Education within HSCT. There is a big drive within SEN and that drive is the increasing numbers of children and young people presenting challenges and barriers to learning within our classrooms both mainstream and special. This is at a time of austerity, change and extreme uncertainty within NI Education.

The EA are clear in their view that inclusion is a positive learning environment for all of our community and in the main I would agree but it is the very word inclusion that we must take caution over. Inclusion is not merely being present, sharing the same school building, the same uniform. Inclusion is about active participation, connected learning and mutual respect. While more Learning Support Centres are welcomed into schools and

communities, it will be key to lay the strongest of foundations for this step in education that the individual, diverse and at times multiple needs of the children and young people are kept front and centre. There is not a one size fits all answer to SEN, the professional perspective of the practitioners in the classroom has to influence the future of SEN provision. Our voices must be

From nursery, primary through post primary physical aggression is becoming an 'accepted' part of the job. It isn't and it can't be

heard in which case we have to start using them!

A mainstream class may be identified as having 30 pupils when in actual fact there are 32 pupils sitting in class, pupils with SEN are not counted in these numbers. An extra two pupils can have a huge impact on any class at any age, add into the mix maybe communication difficulties, emotional difficulties and/or challenging behaviour and there has to be an impact on the teaching that can take place within the class for all the pupils.

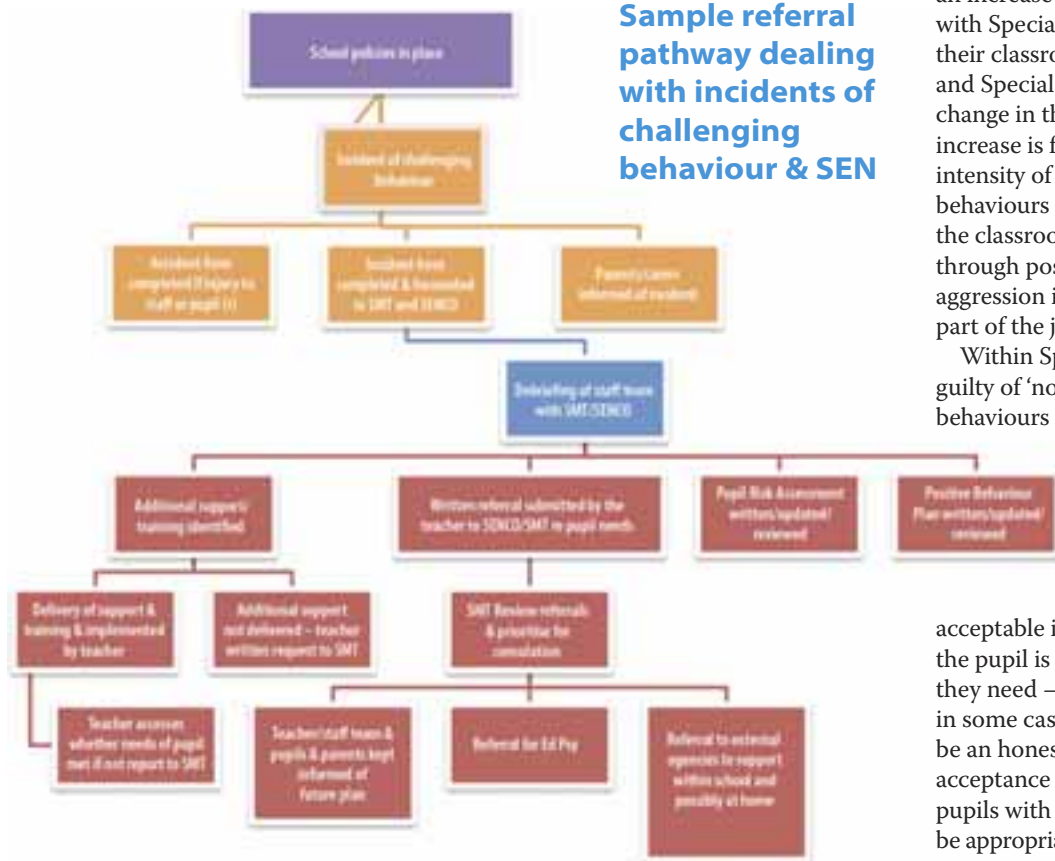
Teachers are daily guiding and supporting pupils with very individual needs through their education so that we can say at the end of our working day, as we collapse into a comfy chair, we have done our best. However, resourcing, internal and external support are not always up to the challenge and teachers are facing each day challenges that are not only emotionally but also physically beating them.

More and more teachers are reporting an increase in the numbers of pupils with Special Educational needs within their classroom in Mainstream schools and Special Schools. Both report a change in their pupil dynamic. This increase is further exasperated by the intensity of some of the challenging behaviours pupils are presenting with the classroom. From Nursery, primary through post primary physical aggression is becoming an 'accepted' part of the job. It isn't and it can't be.

Within Special Schools we have been guilty of 'normalising' challenging behaviours and accepting physical aggression faced by some of our colleagues as 'part of the job'. This helps no one. The staff members are accepting physical assaults that would not be

acceptable in any other work place and the pupil is not getting the support that they need – either within the school or in some cases at home. There needs to be an honesty by schools and an acceptance by DE & EA that supporting pupils with SEN is not cheap, it needs to be appropriately resourced and the, often,

Sample referral pathway dealing with incidents of challenging behaviour & SEN



multiple needs of the pupil prioritised.

As we all know, no two children are truly alike and this applies to the generalised heading of 'learning difficulty', Autistic Spectrum Disorder, communication difficulties and challenging behaviour. Because of the drive for inclusion there is an expectation that appropriate training and support is given by the DE. We need to remain vigilant and report concerns where resources and training do not meet the needs presented by a child.

So what can we do, as teachers in the classroom, members of a school community and educational body? Where do you start when you realise that a pupil in your class is presenting challenging behaviour that is affecting their own education as well as the education of others, (when referring to challenging behaviour I will be using the definition provided by Emerson 'culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities.')

The challenges are happening from the Nursery right through to post primary education and they will continue. Ultimately the phrase 'knowledge is power' is key to protecting the pupil and staff and ensuring a better school life for us all.

On the right is the start of a simple guide/support that will hopefully start the information that we all need as teachers, it is not an exhaustive list but illustrates the complexity of the needs of our young people and children.

So, where can we go from here?

- Read your schools policies for SEN, Challenging Behaviour, Discipline, Suspension, discuss with your fellow teachers & Senior Management & highlight areas of concern that you have. Discuss language that is used to inform parents, clearly, of the behaviour that their child is presenting. Report and Record all incidents of

Training		Recording & reporting <i>Create a clear record of the incident and a timeline for short/long term assessment</i>	
Risk Assessment writing Attachment Managing Challenging behaviour Middletown centre for Autism <i>(https://www.middletownautism.com) provides excellent training throughout Ireland specifically for both professionals & parents. Courses deal directly with issues such as managing anxiety, sensory processing and mental health.</i> Team Teach – positive behaviour management (www.team-teach.co.uk)		Incident reports Accident Reports Risk Assessments Positive Behaviour Support Plans	
School Policies <i>Provide support for teaching staff, pupils & inform parents clearly of the school ethos</i>		Education Bodies	External Bodies <i>Referral works through the GP</i>
Policy on Behaviour Management/Support Policy on Assaults on Staff Policy on Assaults on other Pupils Policy on reporting & recording Policy on Critical Incident Policy of disciplinary/suspension		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCO • SMT • Board of Gov. • Educational Psy. • Behaviour Support Team • Child protection • EA Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSC Community Team • Family Support Team • Clinical Psychology • Community Behaviour Support Team • Speech Therapy • Occupational therapy • Voluntary organisations eg. Barnardos, Kids Together

- challenging behaviour to create a timeline which will show positive periods as well as those of challenge.
- It is essential that as teachers we are aware of the training that is available, this is currently very adhoc with courses not being shared – Contact cmccarthy@into.ie and register with the online Support through the INTO website to share courses that you have found helpful when working within all areas of SEN
 - I've said it before – do not carry on until you are at crisis point or ready for collapse due to stress before raising concerns about managing a pupil, no matter how old. Speak to colleagues, Management, your BOG By raising concerns you are benefiting the education of the pupil and their peers by ensuring that they get the correct support and reducing your stress in the classroom
 - Have your voice heard! Take part in

the Consultation of The Review of Special School Provision in Northern Ireland – INTO will inform you when it is available, changes made at this stage will impact on SEN education for the next decades it is essential the knowledge and skill developed over years by teachers guide best practice for the future.

If there are issues relating to SEN you feel need to be addressed, let us know. In the next issue we plan to share Case Studies of situations that Teaching & non teaching staff have faced, how they were dealt with, procedures that were followed, what worked and what failed. Do you have a case you are willing to share? Please contact cmccarthy@into.ie

CAROLINE MCCARTHY, Northern Committee Representative, Primary A, BELB



Certification Officer

Under current legislation the Union must publish to each member the following details:

"In accordance with the provisions of Article 11 of the Industrial Relations (NI) Order 1992, as amended, hereafter referred to as 'the 1992 Order', the following statement relation to the financial year of the Union ended 31st December 2014 is herewith provided to members of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation hereafter referred to as 'the Union.'"

1. TOTAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The total Income Expenditure of the Union in the financial year ended 31st December, 2014 as included in the annual Return to the Certification Officer.

Members' Subscription	Other Income	Total Income	Total Expenditure
€11,827,163	€1,055,915	€12,883,078	€10,982,542

2. POLITICAL FUND ACCOUNT

The Union maintains a Political Fund Account in the Republic of Ireland and political grants of €14,000 were included in the Annual Return to the Certification Officer.

3. ANALYSIS OF GENERAL SECRETARY'S SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary paid to the General Secretary was €143,535. Also included in the Annual Return to the Certification Officer is the Employer's PRSI amounting

to €15,430. Pension contributions cost €61,002.

No salary was paid to or any benefits provided for the President of the Union or any member of the Unions Central Executive Committee.

4. INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE IRISH NATIONAL TEACHERS' ORGANISATION (EXTRACT)

We have audited the financial statements of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation for the year ended 31st December 2014 which comprise the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account, the Consolidated Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Accumulated Funds Account, the Consolidated Funds Income and Expenditure Accounts, the Northern Ireland: Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, Accumulated Funds Account, Funds Income and Expenditure Account, the Statement of Accounting Policies and the related notes 1 to 21. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

OPINION

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the affairs of the Organisation as at 31st December 2014 and of the surplus for the year then

ended as set out in the consolidated income and expenditure account.

Mazars, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors, Harcourt Centre, Block 3, Harcourt Road, Dublin 3

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF UNION

The rights of Members of the Union outlined below is reproduced exactly as required by Article 8 of the 1995 Order, which inserts an additional Article 11A in Article 11 of the Industrial Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 as follows.

"A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or has occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the Union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct."

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with officials of the Union, the trustees of the property of the Union, the auditor or auditors of the Union, the Certification Officer for Northern Ireland (who is an independent officer appointed by the Department of Economic Development) and the police.

"Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the Union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the Union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the Union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice."



St Mary's
University College
Belfast
A College of Queen's University

St Mary's University Students' Union

This year, the College Students' Union, in partnership with the St Mary's Alumni Association, are setting up an Alumni Contribution Scheme, whereby former St Mary's students will have the opportunity to make a small monthly donation to help support and develop the Club and Societies within the College. The scheme will be the first of its kind within St Mary's: similar schemes have been very successful in other universities in Belfast and beyond. We know the College Alumni have great memories and strong connections to the College itself, and to the many clubs and societies that it has, so if you'd be interested please be on the lookout for Alumni emails in the near future. If you have not registered as an alumni, and are interested in supporting the College in this way, contact Aidan in the Union office via the details below. Go raibh maith agat.

St Mary's Students' Union E: suvpres@stmarys-belfast.ac.uk T: 028 90 235 790

FAQ: some of the simpler questions often received in the Northern Office

I don't have a contract of employment?

A contract does not have to be written and can exist simply through the offer of employment.

The pay and terms and conditions of a teacher's contract are based on the Jordanstown Agreement and agreed through negotiation and incorporated into the teacher's terms and conditions of employment.

Should a member have concerns about their working conditions they should contact their Northern Committee or district member or the Northern Office.

Do I have to be off sick to get an ill health retirement?

No. An ill health retirement is based on a medical assessment of the teacher's health and the prognosis of a condition in the medium to long term.

Many teachers remain at work even though medically they have been advised of the worsening prognosis of a condition. A medical retirement is based on three criteria:

1. A medical and / or psychiatric condition which is certified by a Consultant;
2. The prognosis of the condition over the medium to long term.
3. The likely impact of the condition on the ability of the individual to teacher or to undertake broadly similar work.

Am I entitled to annual leave when I am on maternity leave?

Yes. All employees are entitled to 28 days annual leave under the Working Time regulations. A facility exists within the teachers maternity regulations to allow for a teacher to take any leave that they would not have been ordinarily able to take in the year of their pregnancy.

The process requires the teacher to look at the leave year in which they commenced their maternity leave and to determine in that year have they been able to have 28 days leave. If they have not been able to take the full 28 days leave they are entitled to claim the outstanding leave. They cannot be paid in lieu for the leave.

When can a substitute teacher claim the right to permanency?

The right exists after four years and arises from the Fixed Term (Less Favourable Treatment) Regulation NI. If the school does not confirm permanency at this stage then the individual must exercise their right and express the wish to be made permanent, i.e. write to the Governors. Should the governors decline the request the teacher however must not be treated any less favourably in respect of any employment matter when compared to a similar permanent member of staff.

Why have policies and procedures?

Put simply! Policies and Procedures allow your school to manage its business in a fair

and consistent manner. Policies relating to your pay or terms and conditions are jointly agreed by the teacher unions and management side of education. School based policies should always be the subject of consultation and agreement with INTO. Having policies and procedures should remove the emotions of the people in the organisation in the decision making process and removes any grey areas when important decisions have to be made regarding the operations of the school.

What is a policy?

A policy is a predetermined decision, as to how the school or college company should deal with issues which might arise during the normal working of the school. A policy is written to ensure that everyone in the school or associated with it have a clear understanding of how a particular matter is to be dealt with.

What is a procedure?

A procedure is a predetermined written action put in place to implement the policy of the school

Policies and procedures allow everyone in the organisation to sing from the same hymn sheet. They provide role clarity for all in the organisation. Policies and procedure are live documents which must be updated as the internal and external environments associated with the school change. INTO representatives have a vital role in ensuring that the only employment policies used are agreed by the TNC and that school based policies have the agreement of INTO members.

CHILDREN IN CROSSFIRE - MATHS CHALLENGE

Children in Crossfire helps some of the most vulnerable children on the planet that suffer from the injustice of poverty. Our Maths Challenge is available to all schools and runs for the first 2 weeks in February every year. Schools wishing to participate can register now at www.cicmathschallenge.com or contact



liam.mccusker@childrenincrossfire.org for more information.

Participating means promoting a

positive ethos of using mathematics, collaborating and competing with other schools at home and abroad, providing active shared learning opportunities for pupils, raising attitudes and dispositions to mathematics and supporting less fortunate children in other parts of the world.

Adventures are the best way to learn

Organising a school trip is a responsibility that many school staff understandably shy away from, particularly when it is a residential trip. However, there is very little doubt that a school trip is of the utmost benefit to any class, arming pupils with the important educational, “Learning Outside the Classroom” insights and life skills. This is particularly true of a residential trip, where young people may be staying away from home for the first time. Without a doubt taking 30+ pupils out of the classroom for 1 hour never mind an overnight stay can be a planning and logistical nightmare but it is an adventure and adventures after all are the best way to learn.

INTO believes that school visits can be a substantial benefit to pupils in the development of their characters and social skills. For many, school trips offer opportunities to broaden their horizons and enrich their experience; opportunities which would otherwise be unavailable in their lives. School trips and educational visits are generally considered to be of educational value in developing the potential and qualities of young people. Most school visits take place without incident and it is clear that teachers already demonstrate a high level of safety awareness. Recent tragic incidents, however, have shown that proper full concern for health and safety must be imperative at all stages from early planning to departure and return. Potential hazards should not discourage teachers. No amount of planning can guarantee an incident free visit, but good planning and attention to health and safety measures can reduce the number of incidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do happen nonetheless.

The information contained in this article does not seek to replace local or other professional guidance regulations. Where appropriate the relevant

Employing Authority should be the first source of advice. The management of health and safety on school visits is part of the school’s overall health and safety policy. The advice contained is guidance and should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law. That is for the courts.

Legal framework

Under the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1976 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, made under the Health and Safety at Work (1976) NI Order, require employers to:

- assess the risks of activities
- introduce measures to control those risks;
- tell their employees about these measures.

Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety;
- co-operate with their employers over safety matters;
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions;
- inform the employer of any serious risks.

These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent (in loco parentis) would do in the same circumstances.

A full outline of Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visit is available on

the INTO website <http://www.into.ie/NI/Schools/HealthSafety/EducationalVisits/>

Top Tips Before You Go!

1. Read and understand the relevant Employing Authority’s policy on school trips/educational visits.
2. Plan your trip as far in advance as possible, ideally INTO would recommend that you “launch” your trip 9-24 months ahead, especially for residential visits. This ensures you get your choice of location, dates of travel and it gives parents a chance to budget for the coming trip.
3. Deciding on a location can be challenging as there are many options available. Do you want to save on transport and choose a destination close to home or would you prefer pupils to venture further afield? For the latter INTO would recommend the use of an experienced trip advisor such as NST. Tour operators such as this offer cover from the moment you book until your safe return. They can tailor your trip to suit your group’s needs and of your support whilst away as well as assist you in the initial planning stages. (NST Essential Guide To a Successful School Trip- <http://www.nstgroup.co.uk/Files/Media%20Library/PDFs/Booking%20and%20Safety%20Documents/BKSAFE0014%20-%20First%20Time%20Traveller%20Guide.pdf>)
4. Be clear on costs-what is included in the price? What do pupils need extra money for? Set up a payment schedule if necessary, providing pupils with the opportunity to pay in instalments. Receipts must be given for all monies collected.
5. Safety, Safety, Safety: Check before booking that your chosen provider is registered with all relevant organisations and authorities. Before



undertaking any school trip, teachers are legally required to carry out a written risk assessment. Most educational visit providers will have carried out a risk assessment for teachers and these can be submitted to all necessary parties.

- 6 Check the passport and visa implications for you trip.
- 7 Write to parents including the following information:
 - Details of staff accompanying the trip
 - Payment schedule and amounts, including a clear indication that deposits are non-returnable
 - Details of what is, and what is not, covered by the cost
 - Advice on appropriate clothing and pocket money
 - Details of the viable number needed for the trip
 - The itinerary including departure and arrival details
 - Accommodation details
 - A clear identification of possible risks
 - A clear statement concerning discipline and appropriate sanctions
 - Details of travel arrangements, including any on route accommodation.
 - Date of a parents' information evening
 - Emergency contact name and number at school and in the travel destination
 - A form of consent requesting special medical and diet information and permission to take appropriate emergency measures, plus home contact numbers.
 - Request for Nationality and Passport details (if necessary)
 - Request for E111 if travelling to a EU country
- 8 Set up a parents' information evening (nearer to time of departure). It would be advisable to present parents with a

trip booklet at this stage, included within: the itinerary, contact telephone numbers, insurance cover details, rules and regulations for pupils on trip, consent forms/ medical consent forms, room check list.

- 9 Regularly update your risk assessment to suit individual student needs.
- 10 Relax and enjoy your trip!

During the trip

- Regularly do a headcount of students, particularly when getting on and off transport.
- Always get another member of staff to double check.
- Ensure reasonable supervision at all times. Allocate groups of students to individual staff members; this helps rapid communication of information.
- Ensure students understand and apply travel safety requirements, e.g. using seat belts on coaches and minibuses.
- Create positive relationships with coach drivers, hotel managers, tour reps and, above all, teachers from other schools! You need them on your side.
- Always keep students informed of reasons for delays or sudden changes of plan. This will keep most students quiet for a period of time!
- On arrival at the accommodation update your risk assessment. Insist on a fire practice if one is not organised. Check exits and entries to rooms. Take care when allocating students to rooms. There needs to be a balance between students' preferences and the need to ensure good order and safety.
- Take similar care in allocating staff members.
- Advise students to take care of their belongings and offer to lock valuables in staff rooms or in the hotel safe.
- Make sure rooms are checked for pre-existing damage. Issue each room with a

check list, make note of, or photograph any breakages on arrival making relevant hotel staff aware so that your group is not liable for damages.

- Arrange a meeting with students to reinforce the code of conduct, identify out of bounds areas, map out the programme for the duration of your stay and agree on bedtimes. (This type of meeting should be a daily event).
- Let the tour reps or hotel managers know of any concerns you may have, particularly if you think they compromise student safety.
- Do not change the planned programme, or accept enforced changes, without good reason.
- Consider the insurance implications of any change and your liability as Party Leader.
- Before setting off for home from abroad ensure students are aware of Customs and Excise regulations and the penalties that underpin them.
- On the way home ensure that, in the last stages of the journey, students can contact home to give the expected time of arrival.
- On arrival, staff must stay with students until they are collected.
- Contact the parents if they are late.

Useful templates for school trips are available on INTO website.

Ultimately school trips are supposed to be enjoyable and educational. It is learning whilst having fun whether it's key life skills such as team work and leadership, themed specific study areas, theatre trips of GCSE/A Level fieldwork, the experience and benefits of going beyond the classroom make all the planning worthwhile. Think of the adventure! "Oh the places you'll go." – Dr. Seuss.

ANNMARIE CONWAY

IMPORTANT CHANGES



Dear Colleague

As a registered INTO member who pays their membership contributions by DIRECT DEBIT it is important that you take some time to read the following update.

At present members who have set up a direct debit with INTO pay either £37.50 (full time) or £18.75 (part-time) at the end of November, February, May and August for the preceding three months.

Thank you to those members who paid their direct debit at the end of August 2015, this means you have now paid for June, July and August 2015.

In order to make things simpler and hopefully more efficient, for you the member and administratively in Northern Office, from 30 December 2015 INTO will be moving to:

> **Monthly collections on the last banking day of each month**

Direct debit rates have remained unchanged since 2009, to bring this rate of payment more in line with the rate for members who pay directly from their salary a small increase has been unavoidable:

Current annual full time rate – £150

> **New annual full time rate – £168**

> **New monthly full time rate – £14**

Current annual part time rate – £75

> **New annual part time rate – £84**

> **New monthly part time – £7**

The next scheduled direct debit payment due on Monday 30 November 2015 will be the last quarterly collection.

After this direct debit payments will occur **monthly** with effect from December 2015. There is no requirement to complete a new direct debit mandate – unless you have new bank details to provide INTO.

Monthly collections will cover the month in which you are paying.

New joiners signing up will have their payments scheduled based on their date of joining.

Some members working in voluntary grammar schools choose to pay their membership contributions by cheque, if you have any queries regarding this please contact Northern Office.

As per our Direct Debit Guarantee obligations INTO is taking this opportunity to inform you in writing of the upcoming changes to the amount and frequency of your direct debit payments.

INTO will write to you again to remind you of the changes before the December 2015 payment is processed.

Thank you for your continued membership.

Please contact Northern Office with any queries or concerns you may have.

INTO, Vere Foster House, 23-24 College Gardens, Belfast, BT9 6BS
Telephone: 028 90 38 14 55 Email: infoni@into.ie

School Reps Prize Draw winners from this year's Recruitment Promotion

1st Prize £200 Joanna McGivern St Ronan's College, Lurgan

2nd Prize £100 Gavan Duffy Oakgrove IC, Derry

3rd Prize £50 Bernadette Warnock St Patrick's PS (Glen), Maghera



Anne Curran receiving her long service pin from John Kelly (Northern Committee, Area Representative, for SEELB Post Primary)



Paula Tumelty (Down Branch Chairperson) receiving a vase from Paul Boyd (Down Branch Secretary) on the occasion of Paula being a full and active member for 40 years.



John McNulty (Past Northern Chairperson) receiving a vase from Paul Boyd (Down Branch Secretary) in recognition of his time as Chairperson of Northern Committee in 2010/11.



Pat Hanna, past Northern Committee member, receiving presentation from Paula Tumelty



The Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service

The Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service provides an Educational Visits Programme in Parliament Buildings and educational resources to support teaching and learning about the Northern Ireland Assembly. The School Visits Programme is tailored to meet the Northern Ireland curriculum requirements in Citizenship, Government & Politics and History. These are some of the subjects that can be brought alive by a visit to Parliament Buildings.

What Does an Educational Visit Involve?

All groups participating in the Visits Programme receive:

- a presentation on the Northern Ireland Assembly; and
- a tour of Parliament Buildings: the Great Hall, Senate and Assembly Chamber (the Public Gallery on sitting days, subject to available seating).

The programme is adapted to suit the needs of particular groups and may also include one or more of the following:

- Group activity session;
- Address by MLA/s
- Address by Assembly staff, eg, a Committee Clerk

Please note: the programme content may be subject to change, depending on Assembly business.

All participants receive an educational pack with information and resources for follow-up work in the classroom.

When are Educational Visits Available?

Educational visits may take place between 09.00 and 16.00 each weekday. In exceptional circumstances, evening or Saturday visits can be arranged. The maximum group size is 40.

How Much Does it Cost?

There is no charge for an educational visit to Parliament Buildings. School groups may bring packed lunches.

How Does an Educational Visit to Parliament Buildings Meet Syllabus Requirements?

Primary

An educational visit to Parliament Buildings provides pupils with a valuable learning opportunity, helping them to understand what the Northern Ireland Assembly does and how it is relevant to them. It will increase pupils' awareness of the role of elected representatives in



dealing with issues and problems in Northern Ireland and highlight the right of children and young people to have a say in the decisions that affect them.

Primary visits involve a presentation on the Assembly, activities to reinforce learning and a tour of Parliament Buildings. Pupils and teachers receive an education pack for follow-up work in the classroom.

Citizenship

The Learning for Life and Work Key Concept, Democracy and Active Participation, requires young people to have the opportunity to understand 'key democratic institutions' and 'how to participate in, and to influence democratic processes'.

An educational visit to the Northern Ireland Assembly will help pupils to understand the relevance of government to their lives and the importance of exercising their right and responsibility to participate in the democratic process, particularly in relation to voting. It will encourage their interest in current affairs and issues concerning the people of Northern Ireland.

During a Citizenship visit students learn about the work and structure of the Assembly, the Executive, the role of an MLA, how decisions are made and how young people can get involved. They take part in activities to reinforce their learning and receive an educational pack for extension work in class. The teacher's pack includes answer guides and further activities and support materials for development in class.

A-Level Government & Politics

An A-Level Government and Politics visit is geared towards AS Module 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland. During a visit students will receive a presentation on the Assembly, covering its powers and how it works; the Executive; Committees; the role of an MLA; elections to and composition of the Assembly; how

legislation is passed etc. Content can be adapted to suit the needs of the class and both introductory and more comprehensive presentations are available.

In addition, students can also meet with MLAs/party representatives and Committee staff for question and answer sessions, and, if visiting on a sitting day, will have the opportunity to see the Assembly in action from the Public Gallery (subject to available seating). Resources packs will be provided for all students and the teacher's pack includes extra activities and support materials which can be used for further development in class.

History

History students will learn about the history of Parliament Buildings and how history has helped shape the way in which Northern Ireland is now governed. They will also learn about the current work of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

General Studies and Youth Groups

It is important for all young people to learn about how Northern Ireland is governed and about how they can participate and influence the making of decisions that will affect their lives. A visit to Parliament Buildings can offer young people the opportunity to meet with politicians and discuss issues that interest them, encouraging their interest in current affairs and motivating them to participate in the democratic process.

How do I Book a Visit?

1. Contact the Education Service who will arrange a visit for you, sponsored by the Speaker.
Phone: (028) 9052 1833
Email: education.service@niassembly.gov.uk
Address: Education Service, Room 401F, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX.
2. Ask an MLA to sponsor your visit and to book the Education Programme on your behalf. MLAs can be contacted through their offices here in Parliament Buildings. Contact details are available in the Membership section of the main Assembly website at www.niassembly.gov.uk
Further information and educational resources are available on the education website: <http://education.niassembly.gov.uk>

SCOTENS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 13th SCOTENS annual conference on the theme, Teacher Education for Social Justice took place on Thursday 15th & Friday 16th October 2015 in the Strand Hotel, Limerick.

The Conference theme allowed discussion to look at the socio-economic context in which all members of the teaching profession, both newly qualified and more experienced, seek to lead learning.

The conference highlighted the need to evaluate how we, as a profession, ensure that all our children are taught in a spirit of mutual respect, taking account of those who are educationally marginalized. It examined the degree to which we support and prepare newly qualified teachers for the educational landscape they are coming into in relation to the social justice issues that they will encounter in schools.

In his opening of the conference, Education Minister, John O'Dowd reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that pupils from challenging socio-economic back grounds would have the same opportunities to reach their educational potential as children from more affluent communities. He spoke about the Shared Education project and the Signature Project in Numeracy and Literacy as demonstrating this commitment. It was unfortunate that at the end of his speech, there was no opportunity to ask why while he could 'talk the talk', he was only able to 'limp the walk' on these matters given the barrier he has put up schools taking part in Shared Education.

In her Key note address, Kathleen Lynch, Professor of Equality Studies, University College Dublin, outlined the diverse needs that children had throughout the island of Ireland. It was telling that many of the points she made were in direct conflict with policies that are being proposed by the Department of Education in relation to how we assess the educational outcomes of pupils from 4 – 18. In using the system of assessment proposed in the north, we reduce children, and indeed schools, to numbers in relation to a final outcome, failing to take account of the educational journey made, and in doing so we continue to fail children who are already marginalized, by not celebrating their successes in relation to their own educational potential.



MARK MCTAGGART,
Chairperson

Discussion took place on the degree to which the full potential of teacher education is being realised to support the profession in working in a spirit of mutually respectful collaborative engagement, aligned with the interests of justice for those who are educationally marginalised, dispossessed, and excluded.

The socio-economic makeup of the teaching workforce was also touched upon, and discussion took place on whether there is a need to bring in a form of positive discrimination to address the lack of

opportunities in relation to attendance at teacher training facilities for students, and to allow for diversity and inclusion throughout the teaching profession.



Mary Cahillane, CEC rep, Mark McTaggart Chairperson, meeting with Berik Zhagiparov, a journalist, representing copper workers in Kazakhstan and Geraldine McGowan, District 1 Chairperson

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INTO response to the NI Assembly Education Committee on Changes to Inspection

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation, (INTO) is the largest teachers' union in Ireland and presently represents around 7000 teachers in all educational sectors in Northern Ireland. INTO has over the past number of years made various representations and responses in relation to inspections in Northern Ireland.

As such we welcome the opportunity to respond to the Education Committee's request for views on the effectiveness of the changes made to the school inspection process.

Revisions to some of the inspection descriptors

INTO welcomes the reduction of overall performance levels from six but believes four is still too many. INTO also welcomes the move away from one word labels but again feels that the performance level conclusions could have been reduced, there is no need for the first one about high level of capacity for sustained improvement. The second conclusion is sufficient and conclusions 3 and 4 could be condensed into a single one as the detail to be added in will differentiate between the requirements of each school to improve.

Changing the number of conclusions but keeping the same number of performance level descriptors has caused confusion among schools. The changing of the last 3 performance level descriptors is welcomed as in the words satisfactory, inadequate and unsatisfactory are no longer used, however the differentiation between outstanding, very good and good, still exists and INTO does not agree with these.

It remains to be seen whether these changes, which INTO believes are superficial, have any real effect on how inspection outcomes are viewed.

Changes to the Formal Intervention Process

The changes to the FIP do not address the issues of why the school has been placed in FIP. In a recent inspection the



initial outcome of the inspection was overturned by the Chief Inspector from the then 'satisfactory' to 'inadequate' and subsequently the DE placed the school in the FIP. The majority of issues to be addressed in this FIP were issues beyond the control of the school to address but no cognisance was taken by either the ETI or DE in determining the school as inadequate and placing them in FIP.

According to the DE and ETI the school will receive support when they are placed in FIP, but again there is a complete ignoring of the lack of resources available through the now EA to provide that support. The school I referred to earlier are severely stressed at the position they find themselves in, the reaction of parents and the lack of support they have received to date. This process is supposed to support school improvement yet all it is doing is causing further stress and difficulties to schools which are trying to address issues with no recognition of their situation and no support to properly address it.

The reduction of two ETI Follow up Inspections to one, is a misnomer as the

second FUI has been replaced by an interim visit by ETI which is to all intents and purposes the same thing!

The INTO response to the DE consultation on proposed changes to the FIP stated that:

The school should be given time and appropriate support to address the issues raised before the follow up inspection but one visit should be sufficient. There should also not be any interim follow up visit from ETI as all visits from ETI currently are inspections.

The changing of the conclusions of overall effectiveness from six to four has been used by the DE to keep schools in FIP even if they are deemed to be 'satisfactory' in the old system. This process is simply about penalising schools, and not a process for school improvement. It needs to be reviewed properly in the context of school improvement, not just inspections, which have not been linked despite the recommendations of the Committee.

The development by ETI of a parents’ panel

INTO is very concerned at the development of a parents’ panel by ETI. On numerous occasions to date INTO has raised concerns about how schools and focus groups of teachers/principals etc. are selected by the ETI for various initiatives. INTO has also highlighted regularly to ETI that there is a lack of trust of ETI from the teaching and wider education community. For ETI to set up a panel of parents, gives cause for great concern and greater distrust.

INTO recognises the importance of parents in the education of their children but cannot condone a panel of parents selected by ETI, particularly in the absence of any information on what powers/responsibilities, etc. this panel would have and the absence of a credible complaints procedure.

The piloting of joint lesson observation (including school leaders and ETI inspectors)

The piloting of joint lesson observations is seen by many schools as an additional level of inspection of teachers. If ETI was operating in a supportive school improvement role this may be viewed in a different light. However introducing this pilot in the absence of addressing the recommendation of the Education Committee to have a joint service is lip service and not of any significant support to schools.

The piloting of the inclusion of school leaders in all inspection and moderation meetings

INTO gave a cautious welcome to this initiative as a means in which the inspection process might become more transparent. INTO also cautioned in the early stages of the pilot that the schools being inspected all achieved good outcomes. The school leaders have to sign a confidentiality agreement to be included in the pilot. It has transpired in recent months that where challenges have been made to the inspectorate in relation to inspections and the school leaders are being vilified by the ETI for breaking that confidence clause. INTO fails to see the relevance of this, as if there are issues being discussed, which are relevant to a challenge by the school, the school leader would be failing in their duty to their school and governors if they did not reveal what they knew. The question also arises as why does the process have to be so confidential?

The use of Sustaining Improvement Inspections

The view among schools is that ‘they are damned if they do and damned if they don’t!’ With the new four conclusions only those schools which are identified as

‘The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners....’ Will not

have a follow up visit from ETI. Given the nature of ETI visits currently and the levels of distrust from teachers and schools, this form of inspection is not an effective use of ETI resources. The resources would be better spent on supporting schools through the District Inspectors as identified by INTO and others during the Inquiry.

Other comments by INTO on issues which remain to be address by ETI

ETI Complaints Procedure

INTO remains very concerned that the ETI complaints procedure is not fit for purpose and requires independent oversight. According to their website, the ETI reviewed the complaints procedure recently, in September 2015, with apparently no real changes. There is still no appeals procedure in relation to school inspections. The previous and recently reviewed complaints procedure has no element of independent oversight. All complaints are still dealt within internally by the ETI with the Chief Inspector being the final arbiter. There remains no independent appeal mechanism, despite repeated requests from INTO and NITC to this effect. They have also failed to address the recommendation of the Education Committee of the NI Assembly.

NUALA O'DONNELL, Senior Official

NORTHERN OFFICE RECEPTION



As part of the refurbishment of number 24 College Gardens a new telephone system has been installed at Northern Office. Our new system is intended to respond to the increased volume of calls. Members are asked to have either their INTO Membership Number or Teacher’s Reference number to hand when making a call to Northern Office. Northern Office is open Monday to Thursday from 9am – 5pm (lunch 1 – 2pm) and 4pm on Fridays.



The 4th Annual INTO ART COMPETITION

Members across the North are invited to submit work for the 2016 INTO Art Competition. All categories of member are eligible to enter, this is your competition, celebrating your talent. Entries will be judged by a panel with the award of top prize (£800) being made at Northern Conference.

Entering the Art Competition

- Submit application/s before **Friday 15 January 2016**
- Including **photograph/s** of your submission/s
- Maximum of 3 entries, 2 dimensional, per member
- Entries to be original pieces by the artist named
- Works should be for sale and priced (inclusive of 15% commission to INTO)
- £5 entrance fee per picture
- For full details of entry conditions and an application please see www.into.ie/NI
- Northern Conference, 4-5 March 2016, Hilton, Templepatrick

INTO
VERE FOSTER HOUSE
23-24 COLLEGE GARDENS
BELFAST BT9 6BS
WWW.INTO.IE/NI
INFONI@INTO.IE
028 9038 1455



2013 WINNER – MAGDALENA BELDOWSKA

Castlewellan Forest, 45cms x 44cms, Oil on board

"This art competition has given me an opportunity to show that even in a busy life there is always time to be inspired by the simple beauty of the world".

INTO is aware of the difficulties in terms of distance and timing that members face in travelling to Belfast to hand in work. Therefore it is hoped that by asking members to send in a photograph this should make entering the competition a little more practical. The art competition is about recognising the talent of INTO members – should you have any queries about entering please do get in touch, this is your competition.



2014 WINNER – MONA MCGREEVY

Frozen Fury, 70 x 50 cms, Acrylic on canvas

"I think that anyone who has an interest in art should give it a try. You never know – in years to come, you might receive as big a surprise as I did when you are announced as winner!"



2015 WINNER – OLIVIA CONLON

Where Does the Time Go?, 45 X 55cms, Oil on canvas

"I find painting a relaxing and enjoyable hobby and I was both surprised and delighted to win the INTO Art Competition this year. I think that all teachers give a lot of themselves to their job and I think it is very worthwhile to have interests outside of teaching and to develop your own talents. I would recommend all budding artists to enter the competition as it is a wonderful opportunity to share your work with others."



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