

# Printout

into   
Irish National Teachers' Organisation  
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

May 2014

## Northern Conference 2014

Page 12



## Assessment Directive Page 6

**INTO Art Competition 2014** Page 7

**SEN Seminar** Page 19

**Nursery Leadership Seminar** Page 21

# Conference Season Concludes

Now that the Conference season has largely concluded, looking back, it's been an interesting, challenging, tiring and ultimately informative period.

The Conferences kicked off with our own gathering in Enniskillen and concluded with INTO members across the island coming together in Kilkenny, over Easter, at our Annual Congress. In between, we attended the UTU Conference in Newcastle in County Down, whilst Rita Fox, the Northern Chairperson of INTO, attended the NASUWT meeting in Derry and later this month I will be attending the ATL's Conference in Belfast. Officials and members of the Northern Committee also attended, on the members' behalf, the NIC-ICTU Biennial Conference in Derry, where the entire trade union movement in the North came together to discuss the way forward for organised labour.

These events are an opportunity for the teacher unions concerned to do a number of things. Primarily, they are about setting policy agendas for the incoming year and, importantly, they allow the memberships to have a direct voice in this process. The sec-

ond major thing that happens is, the trade union concerned has an opportunity to project itself to a broader audience and some of us take the chance this presents to put ideas out into the public domain. An-

other very important aspect of Conference season is the social aspect; it allows trade unionists to come together, where they can share ideas and experiences, in a relaxed atmosphere. Indeed, these conversations often prove just as useful for delegates to conferences as the formal set piece conference debates.

INTO here has, in recent years, led off the conference season in the North. Our Northern Conference has become the "you must attend event" in the educational calendar for the education policy makers and

administrators, as well as INTO members, our fellow trade unionists and politicians. This year Northern Conference passed more than twenty resolutions that will inform our work in the years ahead. We had contributions from a wide variety of contributors and delegates, representing members in schools across all sectors and phases. The capacity of the INTO to debate com-

plex issues and arrive at practical and progressive ways forward was demonstrated for all those parties out there who somehow have remained unaware of the union's leadership role in education.

Delegates to the INTO Northern Conference are an impressive lot, considering they each bring a variety of experience and issues to inform their contributions. These delegates are passionate about the subjects they speak on and knowledgeable in respect of the practical outworking of Departmental policies and initiatives. Their contributions are not only vital to INTO itself, but they serve as a valuable measure for all in education interested in the service teachers are central to.

Of course, with the Conferences now over, it falls to the Northern Committee and the Officials to get on with the work of giving effect to the decisions taken at our Conference. This is work the Northern Committee has already begun and, with the continued support of the membership, we expect to see progress before Conference 2015. In the meantime, Branches have a year to consider what issues they will want to raise at the next Conference and whom they will send to represent their views. These are important pieces of work for the decisions they reach in relation to both will be key to sustaining and enhancing the INTO, as the North's leading teacher union.



**GERRY MURPHY,**  
*Northern Secretary*

Membership Plus — great deals for INTO members

The new membership Plus cards will be issued to all members along with the INTO diary this year. Look out for

the new card, which you can use from 1 September 2014, and your diary, being delivered to your home

address from late August. Please note replacement cards will be cost £5, subject to availability.

## Committee Information

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## Number 24 College Gardens, Belfast – So near and yet so far!

In the January 2014 edition of Printout we told you that the next update and photos on 24 College Gardens would be of the completed building. We are now in May 2014 and although we are using parts of the building, we are not at the finishing line yet.

Anyone who has renovated their house or taken on a building project will know that it is always the little things at the end that take most time and effort. It is also at this time that you encounter all the snags and issues that perhaps were not

carried out the way you thought they were. The building, exterior and interior, does look well, and members and visitors will be pleased to know that we do have some car parking again but we are still sharing it with the builders.

If you are coming to the office, we now have a new front door – the entrance is through number 24. Please note the buzzer/intercom is outside the front door, not in the vestibule, as in the old entrance of 23.

Work has started on the installing a lift in number 23 so the general office has moved temporarily into the new reception area in number 24.

The glass roof was safely installed on the bridge between the two buildings at the back without any mishaps, thankfully,



though it was a big job and not without a few tense moments!

You may be aware if you were trying to contact the office towards the end of March that the new telephone and technology systems have been installed and following a few teething problems they seem to be working well.

We're getting used to the constant dust everywhere, no matter how often the office is cleaned but we're told that will eventually settle down and we'll stop looking like we've been through an ash cloud when we leave in the evenings.

In the next edition of Printout, in August, we sincerely hope that everything will have been completed and that 23 and 24 College Gardens will be fully functioning as the INTO Northern Office and Training Centre – here's hoping!

## September 1984 – 30 years on! Where are you now?

I started my teacher training in St Mary's College Belfast in September 1984, along with 169 other student teachers. Of the 170 undergraduate students, 133 were female with only 37 males. We were the first year that there wasn't a separate intake of males and females. Prior to 1984 St Mary's Training College and St Joseph's Training College admitted equal numbers of female and male students each year for teacher training. September 1984 was the start of admission by grade regardless of gender and as generally more females apply for teacher training the profession has become predominantly female.



**NUALA O'DONNELL,**  
*Senior Official*

training colleges were amalgamated and the new college, called St Mary's University College, came formally into existence. St Joseph's or 'The Ranch' as it was known, officially ceased to exist but St Mary's University College, as it is today, is still unofficially and fondly referred to as 'The Ranch'. They also closed the accommodation for males in Trench house after 1984 – I wonder why?

If you were one of those undergraduates, like me, in September 1984, it may come as a shock to you to realise that it will be 30 years this September since you first embarked on your teaching career!

Where are you all now, how many have remained in teaching and how many like me have

left the classroom but remained involved with education? How many others have left education altogether or maybe emigrated to another country? If you would like the answers to these questions and would like to catch up with the student teachers you first met thirty years ago please email Nuala O'Donnell at reunion1984@into.ie having talked to a number of past students of 1984 recently I am undertaking to organise a reunion of our year. The plans are a bit sketchy at the moment but in brief, the reunion will be in the College on a Friday night this September. Please email me if you are interested in getting further details or even helping with the organisation. I will then be able to email the details as they are finalised. Also please pass on the information and email address to anyone from our class of 1984. It would be great to meet up again and see how we've weathered the last 30 years!!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Nuala O'Donnell

– email at reunion1984@into.ie

# Study finds that Catholic middle-class girls enjoy remarkable educational success, while Protestant working-class boys experience equally remarkable failure

The study, carried out by the Community Relations Council, compared ethnic groups across the UK, using five good GCSE grades, including Maths and English, as the measure of success.

A main finding was that Protestant boys from poorer backgrounds here are seriously underachieving at school, with only Roma and Traveller children getting poorer results. The study also found that 76% of Catholic girls from better off backgrounds are among the highest achievers, beaten only by Chinese girls in the UK table.

Commenting on the finding that just over half of Northern Ireland's Protestant boys who do not get free schools meals achieve five GCSEs, Dr Paul Nolan, the academic who carried out the research, warned of long-term consequences, if action was not taken.

Dr Nolan said, "They are being locked out of employment. Even if we get investment into places like east Belfast, these kids will not be able to get jobs because they won't have the qualifica-

tions. I think we have been sleep walking into an inequality gap."

The study noted that primary school pupils in Northern Ireland are amongst the best in the world in reading and mathematics but that problems develop when children move into post-primary provision. Another striking finding was that, whilst Northern Ireland broadly conforms to the pattern observed in relation to PISA results i.e. the close correlation between socio-economic background and exam success, Catholics do better than might be expected. Their overall performance is better than that of Protestants, despite patterns of socio-economic background running in the other direction.

Responding to the CRC report, Education Minister, John O'Dowd, said, 'Frankly, its findings should come as no surprise. I am on record as saying that our education system continues to fail too many young people. The figures for young people from all disadvantaged sections of our community are simply unacceptable.'

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. How much leave am I entitled to for a bereavement?

- a. The recommended entitlement in the event of the death of a near relative or other relative who is a member of the household is up to 3 days' leave with pay.
- b. The recommended entitlement in the event of the death of other relative who is not a member of the household is 1 day's leave with pay (2 days if extensive travel is involved).

- c. The recommended entitlement for attendance at a funeral other than a relative is leave with pay (for the minimum part of the day required) if attendance is a necessary social duty.

### 2. How many written pupil reports must I write each year?

- a. Teachers are required to write one pupil report per year. The time to write the reports must be provided to teachers

within their individual time budgets.

### 4. We have no school rep, how do we elect one?

- a. A member(s) should inform all members of INTO on the staff that they wish to elect a school rep. This can be done by placing a notice on the staff notice board or by circulating an email.
- b. You should inform the Principal that you are planning a meeting to elect a rep. If the Principal is a member he/she should also be invited to the meeting.
- c. At the meeting you should request nominations for the position. If more than one person is nominated then you should hold a ballot.
- d. When a school rep has been elected they should contact Northern Office (0289 038 1455 or infoni@into.ie) to inform it of the election. INTO will then inform your Principal that you have an accredited Union representative and ask for the appropriate facilities to be made available.
- e. If it is a large school then it may be appropriate to have joint reps elected. If you need any support to undertake the process, contact your Northern Committee Representative (details in your INTO diary or on the INTO website).

### 5. My Principal wants to open the school to pupils in August. Can she do this without consulting staff?

- a. School closures should be arranged in consultation with staff. This will require sufficient notice to allow staff with caring duties to make suitable arrangements.
- b. Schools must be open for 195 days. 5 of these days are Baker days when pupils

### 3. What is statutory content of pupil reports?

*Pupil reports must contain:*

Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1&2	Key Stage 3
<p><b>1 The assessment of the pupil's progress in relation to Communication (taking account of achievement in the Language and Literacy Area of Learning) and Using Mathematics (taking account of achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy Area of Learning).</b></p> <p><b>2 Brief particulars of the pupil's achievement in any other Area of Learning or activity which forms part of his/her curriculum, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ using ICT</li> <li>✘ Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</li> <li>✘ Areas of Learning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The arts</li> <li>– The World Around Us</li> <li>– PDMU</li> <li>– Physical Development and Movement (FS) or Physical Education (KS 1&amp;2)</li> <li>– Religious Education (optional);</li> </ul> </li> <li>✘ Interests and Strengths</li> <li>✘ Focus for development</li> <li>✘ Additional Optional Content</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 The assessment of the pupil's progress in relation to Communication (taking account of achievement in the Language and Literacy Area of Learning) and Using Mathematics (taking account of achievement in the Mathematics and Numeracy Area of Learning).</b></p> <p><b>2 Brief particulars of the pupil's achievement in any other Area of Learning or activity which forms part of his/her curriculum, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Using ICT</li> <li>✘ Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities</li> <li>✘ Areas of Learning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Modern Languages;</li> <li>– The Arts;</li> <li>– Environment and Society;</li> <li>– Science and Technology;</li> <li>– Learning for Life and Work;</li> <li>– Physical Education;</li> <li>– Religious Education (optional);</li> </ul> </li> <li>✘ Interests and Strengths</li> <li>✘ Focus for development</li> <li>✘ Additional Optional Content</li> </ul>

do not attend. In recent years, the Department of Education has allowed up to 5 further days to be taken as of staff development, in relation to the Curriculum and Assessment changes.

**6. How do I find out about my local INTO branch?**

- a. Branches are drawn up to reflect the ELB boundaries. Northern Committee is made up of elected reps from the ELB areas. There is one post primary and up to two primary reps in each board area.
- b. Contact your Northern Committee member. Their details are in your INTO diary or visit our website [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie) for more details.

**7. Do I have to complete weekly planners?**

- a. No. Teachers are required to undertake long term (yearly) and mid-term (6 weekly or half termly) planning and evaluation. This planning is made available to SMT, ETI etc.
- b. Many teachers, in addition, will undertake short term planning. Some do daily notes, others prefer weekly plans. These plans are personal, professional notes and the teacher is not required to share them with others.

**8. A Classroom assistant will not follow my directions to work with a group of pupils. She says she must only work with the Statemented pupil. Can I insist that she works with a group?**

- a. The deployment of a classroom assistant within the classroom is the responsibility of the class teacher, in line with the school policies. The role of the classroom assistant is to support the teacher in fulfilling her statutory duty of educating the pupil. This may involve the Classroom assistant
  - i. Working with the Statemented pupil on a 1/1 basis
  - ii. Working with the Statemented pupil as part of a group
  - iii. Working with another group while the teacher works with the Statemented pupil
  - iv. Compiling or individualising additional resources.

**9. I am teaching many more exam classes than my colleagues and subsequently I have an unfair workload. How can I ensure a fair workload?**

- a. The Workload Agreement (TNC2011/8) requires Boards of Governors to ensure (2.2i.) 'That workloads will continue to be managed in an open, fair and equitable

way at departmental/school level and that all staff are able to challenge unfair and/or unreasonable workload.'

- b. Raise your concerns with your line manager and direct them to the Workload Agreement.
- c. If this does not resolve the issue contact your Northern Committee Rep for further advice.

**10. How can INTO represent my interests as a Principal if my staff are also in INTO?**

- a. INTO is the only union in primary schools in the south of Ireland and represents the interests of teachers in all posts, in the North it does the same in a large number of schools across all sectors. It is because we have a wide range of members, holding the full range of posts, that we are able to represent all teachers on a daily basis, engaging with DE, Employing Authorities or with Boards of Governors.
- b. If a specific issue arises between two members of staff who are both members of INTO, it does not matter what post of responsibility they hold. INTO will appoint two separate officials to advise the members. Each official will work to promote the best interests of the member they are representing .

**FAQs on Teachers' Maternity Leave/Pay**

- SMP** Statutory Maternity Pay (£138.18 per week, from April 2014)
- SMA** Statutory Maternity Allowance (£138.18 or 90% of your average gross weekly pay, whichever is the smaller)
- OMP** Occupational Maternity Pay
- EWC** Expected Week of Childbirth

**How soon must I let the school know that I am expecting?**

A teacher must submit a TR160 Form, not later than the end of the 15th week before the EWC. The teacher must also submit an MB1 Form, or other medical evidence, showing the EWC.

**Can I change the date that I gave for my return to work from maternity leave?**

Yes, as long as you give the school at least 28 days' notice of the change. You can make the return date earlier or later than first given.

**Can I go straight on to sick leave from maternity leave?**

Yes, you can. You should try to let the school know, at least a week in advance, that you will not be returning to work and will be going on sick leave.

**Do I have to go back to work before the end of June, to qualify for my summer pay?**

No, this is a myth. A teacher can return to work from maternity leave on 1st July.

**Can I be off on sick leave immediately before my maternity leave?**

Yes, you can. However, if you are sick with a pregnancy-related illness in the four-week period before the baby is due, maternity leave will be triggered, as soon as the four-week period begins. If the illness is not pregnancy-related, it will have no effect on maternity leave.

**What are KIT days and do I have to use them?**

KIT days are 'keeping in touch' days, which a teacher can use to go into work, without ending her maternity leave. They are completely voluntary and the school does not have to offer them to the teacher. A teacher will receive full pay for any KIT days (less any maternity pay she is receiving).

What maternity leave/pay am I entitled to?	
Qualifying Service	Entitlement
Less than 26 weeks' service. A week's service means having worked for at least one day in that week.	Up to 52 weeks' maternity leave. SMA will be payable for up to 39 weeks, provided that the teacher has been working for at least 26 of the 66 weeks, ending with the week before her EWC.
26 weeks' continuous service, leading into the 15th week before the EWC.	26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave, plus 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave. Statutory Maternity Pay will be payable for 39 weeks.
52 weeks' continuous service immediately prior to the beginning of the 11th week before the EWC.	26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave, plus 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave. 39 weeks' Statutory Maternity Pay and 18 weeks' Occupational Maternity Pay. This breaks down as: 4 weeks' full pay; 2 weeks' 90% pay; 12 weeks half pay plus SMP; 21 weeks SMP only.

# INTO directive on the new assessment arrangements

## Where are we?

INTO has continued with our directive to all members to place the New Assessment arrangements (Cross Curricular Skills Assessment-CCAs) in industrial action. INTO has led the campaign to convince CCEA initially and DE latterly that the arrangements are neither Fit for Purpose or Manageable. We worked collectively with our colleagues in other teaching unions to try and achieve adjustments before the introduction of the arrangements.

When this failed to achieve an effective outcome INTO and UTU wrote to every MLA in the Assembly to lobby for changes to the proposed arrangements for assessment. This strategy had immediate impact with a meeting between the Minister of Education and the Chair of the Education Committee. The Minister demonstrated a willingness to listen and some adjustments were made. While these adjustments signalled the start of a positive engagement with the Department of Education to date the progress has not been sufficient to make the arrangements acceptable to INTO.

Our concerns and warnings to both CCEA and DE are reflected in the widespread adherence to our directive for members to have no involvement in the CCAs. The message has been reinforced by the resolutions passed at Northern Conference. We have facilitated meetings with INTO members and the Department of Education to discuss the impact of the CCAs at school and classroom level.

Our campaign for meaningful changes to ensure the assessment arrangements are manageable and fit for purpose are reflected in the very organised and widespread campaign by Principal Groups. We commend in particular INTO members of these groups for the quality contributions that they have made to this campaign. Their concerns were sharply brought into focus by the publication of flawed and inaccurate data based upon the End of Key Stage assessments. INTO support our Principals view that data for assessment cannot be used for teaching and learning and accountability purposes.

Our action is ongoing. INTO directive is to have:

- ✘ No training for the new assessment arrangements
- ✘ No assessment using the levels of pro-

gression

- ✘ No internal moderation using the Levels of Progression
- ✘ No compilation of portfolios of evidence for the new assessment arrangements
- ✘ No external moderation of levels of progression including school and pupil portfolios.

## What are we doing?

We are working to build upon the adjustments that have been made to the CCAs. We are meeting CCEA and DE to negotiate assessment arrangements that will contribute to the teaching and learning process in schools and are workload proofed.

To do this we are:

- ✘ Supporting teachers who are placed

under pressure to participate in the new arrangements.

- ✘ Providing specific advice to our Principal members who face particular pressures in their role as school leaders.
- ✘ Meeting with other teacher unions to sustain an agreed approach to negotiations
- ✘ Facilitating meetings between DE and teachers from a range of settings to highlight the reason that the arrangements will not work as presently constituted.
- ✘ Consulting with assessment experts, including Carmel Gallagher GTCNI Registrar, to research fit for purpose solutions.
- ✘ Developing a paper (Rising to the Challenge) illustrating workable alternatives for assessment and accountability requirements.

## Where are we going?

INTO requires

- ✘ A process that separates assessment from accountability
- ✘ Assessment that is pupil centred and teacher led.
- ✘ An accountability system that uses a range of sources of data (of which assessment would be an element).
- ✘ Accountability data is used in an intelligent and supportive way.
- ✘ A system level process that does not distract schools away from their core task of teaching and learning.

## What lessons are to be learned?

DE needs to learn from the current situation. The engagement with teachers and the teaching unions prior to the introduction of the CCAs (and the CBAs) was inadequate and ineffective. The problems that have arisen were highlighted by INTO at every stage of the process.

Educational change should be research directed and teacher led. Pilots need to be effective (INTO could see the arrangements for CCAs were unmanageable and unworkable but the ineffective pilot did not detect this).

INTO members should learn from this how effective we can be when we act collectively. INTO is a membership led organisation. All key decisions are made by our teachers who are working in schools of all shapes, sizes, settings and phases.



# INTO Art Competition 2014

*'Creativity Takes Courage' – Henri Matisse*

Building on the success of 2013's inaugural competition 2014 saw more than twice as many members from across the North enter this year's INTO Art Competition. The 2014 Competition attracted a fantastic variety of work in terms of subject matter – from dancers to dream scenes, media – graphite to oils and scale – bold and impressive to smaller and intimate.

The Competition is intended to showcase the artistic talent of members and to create a collection of original art work for permanent display in Northern Office. Each year the winner has received a substantial cash prize. The creation of a 'Highly Commended' category is a reflection of the high standard of work submitted.

The entries submitted were considered by a selection panel constituted from within the INTO and the professional art world: Brendan O'Sullivan – President, Rita Fox – Northern Committee Chairperson, Gerry Murphy – Northern Secretary, Eimear Maguire – founder of Dollybirds Art, and Julian Friers – Academician and past President of the Royal Ulster Academy.

'Frozen Fury' by Mona McGreevy,



*Judges deliberating*

Newry branch, was chosen as the 2014 winner. This year's highly commended entry was 'Sligo Cornfields at the End of the Day' by Olivia Conlon, Belfast West branch.

The 2015 competition will be launched this autumn in Printout and also on the INTO website. Thanks to all those who participated this year; members are at the heart of the competition and all are

encouraged to enter. Members with ideas about or feedback on the competition are invited to submit comments to [infoni@into.ie](mailto:infoni@into.ie)

As this year's winner put it, '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 could be your year!



*LtoR Rita Fox, Gerry Murphy, Brendan O'Sullivan, Eimear Maguire, Julian Friers, Trevor Leonard*

## Competition winner

Fitting hobbies around my family and work can prove almost impossible at times, as many of you will well know. However, I decided a few years ago that needed to make some time for myself. I have always been the creative type putting much of my energy into crafting and sewing but I wanted another challenge. I knew it would have to involve colour as I use this to relax. Nervously I picked up the brushes and paints for the first time since I was a pupil

myself many moons ago.

I spotted the INTO competition in the PRINTOUT magazine and was encouraged by my cousin Mary Doran, a professional artist who specializes in using bitumen. So I went home and took another look through my paintings and settled on 'Frozen Fury' as I knew that many friends admired it when they visited, but could never quite put their finger on why it caught their attention!

I am really thrilled and proud to have

been chosen as this year's winner. I am delighted that other people are also drawn to the painting's depth and that it will be on permanent display along with other winners work in the years to come. 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!

**MONA MCGREEVY**, *Newry Branch*



2014 winner: Mona McGreevy – Frozen Fury

*Rita Fox and Mona McGreevy*



Highly commended: Olivia Conlon – Sligo Cornfields At The End Of The Day

*Mary Dorman and Olivia Conlon*





INTO Art Competition entries



Martina O'Connor – Amelia Street



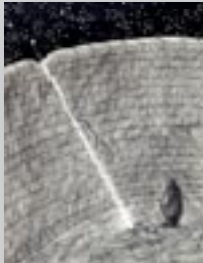
Magdalena Beldowska – Botanic Gardens Summer



Magdalena Beldowska – Night Stories li



Aileen Cassidy – Downhill Beach



Magdalena Beldowska – Night Stories I



Aileen Cassidy – The Front Street



Anne Marie Ritchie – Incandescent



Olivia Conlon – Evening On A Sligo Beach



Aine Gallagher – Ruby Red



Marcella McAuley – The Young Ones



Sean McErlean – Back Streets I



Sean McErlean – Back Streets III



Marcella McAuley – Back From The Nature Walk



Kelly McCabe – My Home I Love So Well



Aileen Cassidy – Pear



Kieran McTaggart – Portstewart Strand



Pauline Murphy – All You Need Is Love



Mona McGreevy – Life Blood



Martina O'Connor – City Hall



Marcella McAuley – The Boss



John Rafferty – Autumn Woodlands Co Wicklow



Pauline Murphy – The Heart Of The Sea



Caroline Sadlier – Nude With Fuchsia Pink Hair



Anne Marie Ritchie – The Dancers



Martina O'Connor – Obel



Caroline Sadlier – At The Beach



Pauline Murphy – Hopes And Dreams



Stephanie McKee – Loves Embrace



Sean McErlean – Back Streets II



Caroline Sadlier – Peach And Lemon Roses

# Assessment – Time For Change

Gary Farrell, Principal

As a principal, I was delighted to learn that INTO was continuing with its industrial action in relation to the End of Key Stage Assessment Process. For far too long, twenty years or more, this model has been allowed to run quietly along with all stakeholders in education fully aware that the entire process from the collation of portfolio evidence, to the awarding of individual levels and the resulting NI average data that followed was fundamentally flawed. More farcical was the fact that this knowingly skewed data was used as a mechanism which influenced other aspects of education such as funding and providing the benchmark used by ETI to determine how a school was achieving.

In September 2013 discussions began in earnest within my 'learning community' about the nature and extent of the difficulties with the process, from which emerged a first ever meeting, organised by principals for principals within the SELB, to put together a campaign to highlight the extent of anger of school leaders to the entire assessment model.

As a result of this meeting a significant amount of work has taken place to ensure that the powers that be, eventually listen to what school leaders have voiced, via DENI/CCEA surveys for years;

- ✦ All ELBs were informed of the SELB Campaign and many have joined us in highlighting the fundamental flaws within the process
- ✦ Principals have written to their MLAs, Union Representatives and Employing Authorities
- ✦ Principals have informed their Boards of Governors of the extent of feeling within the profession towards this ill fated process
- ✦ A significant meeting between DENI Management, CCEA, Principals, Teachers, Union Officials and ETI has



Gary Farrell, Principal, Our Lady's & St Mochua's PS Derrynoose

taken place within the past fortnight to discuss in detail the many concerns.

- ✦ Principals, in principle, agree that, any new system must separate a systems check from pupils attainment – especially if it is to be used for accountability purposes
- ✦ The levels are far too broad to be used for AFL purposes, planning intervention programmes or for informing both parents and secondary schools of a child's ability
- ✦ The NI averages cannot be relied upon therefore preventing a school from setting realistic targets or allowing them to compare how their own school is performing
- ✦ More emphasis is needed on the purpose of assessment and what we do with results taking account of other factors including 'value added'

Without being too optimistic I do feel that certain influential elements within education are beginning to listen and take cognisance of what we are saying. I hope that in the short term we might hear formally that there is an acceptance that the current system is too problematic to solve and that discussions on a new model are underway.

For the time being my staff and I will continue to assess our pupils in a way that provides us with a meaningful analysis of their ability and needs so that we can ensure that we put the best support in place for them.

The use of the current levelling process and the insurmountable time spent on producing portfolios of evidence followed by the collation of data does not serve the children or the parents in my school well. In simple terms it is unjust and unfair.

## Teachers have told INTO ...

“The old end of key stage assessment was bad, but this new assessment is simply ludicrous. An absolutely impossible task for all teachers”

“The current process has gone on too long, with many stakeholders, including the employing authorities, CCEA and DENI recognising the flaws but failing to speak out and address the issue”

“The whole system is not fit for purpose, and needs transparency, honesty and a suitable assessment tool to succeed”

## Rita Fox - Chair's Report

As the end of my year as Chairperson of the Northern Committee nears it is opportune to reflect on the year that has just passed and on the intervening ten years since I was last Chairperson.

The highlight of my year as Chairperson was the Northern Conference in Enniskillen on the 29th February and the 1st March. This was the first time the Conference had been held in Enniskillen. The setting and the weather certainly added to the event. All the speeches can be accessed on the INTO, Northern Ireland site, via the Web-cast Archive. If you have never attended a Northern Conference this will give you an insight into the event.

A special thanks to the Enniskillen Branch, who along with Northern Office staff, were responsible for the organisation of the event. Thanks also to all the invited guests who attended especially the pupils from the Erne West Learning Community Choir. These pupils from Belleek No2 Controlled Primary, St John the Baptist Primary, Belleek and St Martin's Primary Garrison, made a sixty mile round trip to attend and to sing, and play and to entertain. Their being there was much appreciated.

When you have time to reflect on the workings of our education system you realise that nothing happens quickly. When I was Chairperson ten years ago assessment was an issue. The Department of Education wanted an assessment system which could be used to assess pupils' progress and also be used to compare school against school. This union opposed the dual use of the outcomes then as we do now.

This time round there is universal opposition to the current revised method of assessment because there still remains a tension between the dual use of the data. All unions, the General Teaching Council and

the large number of Principals have all articulated their discontent with the current system and alternative approaches have been put forward. After two years of concerted opposition the Department of Education and CCEA have made some changes to the process but they don't seem to comprehend that this method of assessment never worked and will never work.

The devolution of education to the Assembly has ensured that we have not had to follow the policies introduced in England by Michael Gove, for this we are very grateful. The downside of devolution is that some major education initiatives which were proposed here have become derailed due to the lack of political consensus. This development has not been helpful.

A prime example of this is ESA. Seven years ago there was a realisation that the administration of education here was too complex, multi-tiered and unwieldy. There was consensus that the whole system should be streamlined. A lot of time and expertise was invested in developing a new model of education administration, now seven years later the whole concept has been parked, possibly indefinitely because cross party agreement cannot be reached.

The removal of academic selection met the same fate. Some unionist parties continue to hold the view that to select the brightest and best at eleven years of age, give them preferential treatment to develop their potential is good for our education system. They fail to recognise the damage such a system does to the pupils who are not perceived to be the brightest and best. An education system should, at least, strive to help all reach their full potential, not leave some pupils resentful and devalued.

The accountability agenda, which has been developing for years, is now driving

everything we do in school. There is uncertainty as to what the ETI expect to see during an inspection so schools prepare for every eventuality. While we would agree that planning, preparation and evaluation has its place in teaching the accountability agenda has created a monster which is in danger of damaging real teaching. Do teachers really have to write down what they are going to teach, why they are teaching it, how they are teaching it? What equipment they might need and then evaluate how it all went.

Paper work needs to be streamlined and teachers must be allowed to put all their energy into actually teaching, not writing about it. That is why INTO will shortly be running a number of seminars to empower schools to use the Workload Agreement to make their workload more manageable.

What will happen in the next ten years? That to a degree depends on how determined teachers are to protect their terms and conditions. Teachers, through their unions, can resist changes which are not good for schools or teachers. Our colleagues in the Republic did resist and did not allow the Government to have all its own way. Teachers here have to be more aware, more willing to challenge. It's your profession, you are the key cogs in the wheel. Don't undervalue your collective power.

During the summer Annmarie Conway will assume the role of Chairperson of Northern Committee. Annmarie is a long-time member of INTO, fulfilling the roles of school representative and area representative. In those roles she has demonstrated her commitment to the organisation and its members. She will now bring that experience, vision and energy into her new role. I wish her well and hope she has a rewarding year.

### Annmarie Conway – Incoming Chair of Northern Committee

I am a former pupil of St. Brigid's High School Omagh, (currently Sacred Heart College) and a 1997 graduate of University of Ulster Coleraine, where I studied for my BA Hons. and PGCE. I am a native of Omagh, and as such I've never strayed too far from the fold, taking up a full time teaching post in St. Joseph's High School Plumbridge Co. Tyrone as a Drama/History and English teacher in 1999, after spending two years supply teaching in the WELB area. Following my first year teaching in Plumbridge I took up the role of school representative and began attending the much admired; if not for its stunning geographical surroundings at least for its superbly attended branch meetings, Tyrone Central Branch. After a few years observing the 'old guard' in action I, bravely, or perhaps naively, put myself forward for Western Area Post Primary Rep, and I count this as one of the best decisions I have ever made.

My appointment to Northern Committee coincided

with the closure of St. Joseph's High school whereupon I found myself in the transfer redundancy procedure. This is not an enviable position for anyone to be in and it was only through my involvement with INTO that I felt empowered and forthright enough to ask the right questions and expect my employment needs to be met.

I subsequently returned in 2007, to the post primary school I myself attended, Sacred Heart College Omagh, taking up the post of Drama and English teacher where I hold responsibility for the Drama Department in the school. I've also worked in Hazelwood Theatre School in Omagh since 1995, this is a drama school run by my former drama teacher, Sr. Aengus Fitzpatrick, a cross community school for children and young adults from Omagh and the surrounding areas. Without a doubt I'm kept busy!

That said I am really looking forward to the challenge of Chair of Northern Committee 2014-15. It's

going to be a very new experience for me, a baptism of fire perhaps, but an experience I will relish. It will be a great privilege for me to take on the role, to be able to represent the members of INTO in the north. In my capacity as Post Primary Rep. for Western Board area it has been a pleasure to have been able to visit branches from Lisnaskea to Limavady and as such in my new role I hope to get out and about the branches of District I and II, to see the activism at its best, on the ground, the activism this union depends upon. I am looking forward to this new stage in my career, but of course it is with some trepidation that I leave behind my classroom and my A Level Performing Arts class, I assume I can't be done without. We all know that is often far from the truth, however, I'll be keeping a close eye on the goings on in Drama 1 at SHC. As for next year I'll keep Dr Seuss at the forefront of my mind and 'Step with care and great tact, and remember that life's a great balancing act.'

# My experience of the INTO Northern Conference 2014

Noreen Kelly, Newry Branch

Although I have been a primary school teacher for eighteen years, it is only recently that I have begun to take an interest and play an active role within my union, the INTO. Indeed, until a year ago, I, like many of my colleagues in our school, was a member of the NASUWT. However, a collective decision was made that our needs would be better served if we, as a teaching staff, were to unite together under the auspices of a single trade union. After much consideration and debate a decision was reached and we all became members of the INTO. I was delighted when I became one of two elected representatives for our school.

I found my new role as union representative both challenging and rewarding but the INTO office staff and officials plus regular attendance at my local branch meetings provided an excellent source of information and support for me and my colleagues. During one of these branch meetings, I, alongside other members present, was asked if I would like to attend the INTO Northern Conference as a delegate. Eager to discover more about the union for which I was now a representative and never one to pass up an invitation for a weekend away, I readily agreed to attend!

Subsequently, on 28th February 2014, a beautiful, sunny Friday morning, I joined over 150 INTO members in the idyllic setting of The Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen as a delegate for the INTO annual Northern Conference. As this was my first experience of Conference, I really had no idea what to expect and was a little anxious as I was effectively going to be spending the next forty-eight hours with a group of relative strangers. However, it quickly became ap-



*Noreen Kelly & Bishop of Clogher John McDowell*

parent that any such fears were unfounded. As soon as I entered the hotel lobby I was greeted by friendly INTO administrative staff, who quickly completed my registration process and ushered me towards the scones and coffee – a much welcomed breakfast! I was not on my lonesome for long as I was soon joined by the Bishop of Clogher who informed me that he also was a ‘newbie’ to Conference. Other delegates were very welcoming, especially upon discovering this was my first time at Conference and I quickly was made to feel at ease.

What followed was truly a memorable experience. Over the course of the weekend we listened to speeches from various key note speakers and were given the opportunity to discuss and at times debate heatedly real issues in education including assessment, pensions, inspections and con-

ditions of service issues. However, it wasn’t all hard work. Both days at Conference were peppered with reviving coffee breaks, delicious food and a fabulous dinner dance during which we had the opportunity to network and get to know other delegates outside those in our district branch.

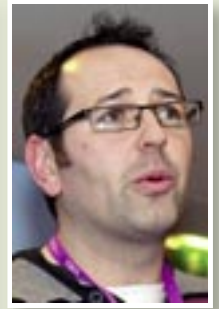
I thoroughly enjoyed my first experience of Conference and would urge other members to consider attending Conference in future. It was both informative and empowering. The enthusiasm and passion of the other delegates was infectious, so much so, that I was inspired to take to the podium on Saturday morning in support of a proposed motion! I left the Northern Conference feeling invigorated and better equipped to continue in my role as INTO school representative and am very much looking forward to attending again next year.

**Marie O’Shea,**  
Enniskillen Branch  
Secretary, Esdelle  
Lappin, Principal Belleek  
PS, Erne West Learning  
Community Shared  
Education Choir, with  
Rita Fox, Chair.



**Brendan McGlone, Retired Teachers Association and Tommy McGlone, North Armagh Branch Secretary**

# Snapshots from Northern Conference







*Winners of bottles of wine in the raffle courtesy of Adelaide and Platinum Insurance*



Thank you to all those who bought raffle tickets at Northern Conference for the draw in aid of Tiny Life. Your support is much appreciated!

Congratulations to Patricia O'Farrell, winner of the overnight stay kindly donated by the Killyhevin Hotel, Enniskillen. Also thanks to Adelaide Insurance for their generous donation. Tiny Life is the only NI based charity working for premature and vulnerable babies and their families.

# Reducing Stress in the classroom

It would be fair to say that many teachers arrive into school every day feeling stressed, worried and anxious.

It is also true that many children arrive into school every day feeling stressed, worried and anxious.

Whilst teachers and pupils may have different stressors in their lives, the physiological and emotional impact of stress is the same for both groups. Sustained elevated levels of stress hormones can have detrimental effects on an individual's physical and mental health.

Teachers today, have become the ultimate 'multi-taskers', often adopting the role of counsellor, social worker or behaviour management specialist, as part of their daily workload. Teachers also, often feel compromised by their increased number of administration duties. It is no surprise that so many teachers feel overwhelmed.

Reports suggest that the number of teachers using counselling services over the last year has increased by nearly 30%.

Whilst most schools recognise that stress is a problem, often they don't know what to do about it.

For many children, school based issues such as coursework, exams, parental expectations, bullying or learning difficulties can be a major cause of stress and anxiety. Many children also have to deal with difficulties in their home lives such as financial problems, substance abuse and family breakdown. The resulting stress and anxiety can have far reaching effects on children, none more so than on their ability to learn. Research has shown that children cannot learn effectively unless they are physiologically and emotionally calm.

10% of children and young people in the UK suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder which is the equivalent of three children in every classroom. A recent study by the NSPCC found that academic worries were the biggest cause of stress for nearly 50% of children.

To enable teachers and children to be calm, they need to know what 'calm' feels like; they need to understand the basics of self-regulation and the importance of being able to achieve mental calm.

Self regulation is the ability to regulate our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physiology and is a key life skill that helps us deal with stress and stressful situations.

Empowering individuals to overcome the challenges and problems they face,



*TakeTen in use*

takes time and resources; there are no quick fixes. However recent developments in technology have now provided a means to develop self-regulation skills and help break the cycles of stress.

**The TakeTen software collects heart rate data ... the patterns provide a visual representation of the user's emotional state allowing them to see the impact of stressful thoughts and emotions in real time**

TakeTen, a Northern Ireland Based Company have developed a simple IT resource for schools. The TakeTen software is designed for use on school laptops or PCs and is currently being used by over 120 Schools in Northern Ireland & GB

The TakeTen software collects heart rate data through an ear sensor attached to a USB and converts it to heart rate variability patterns which are shown onscreen. These patterns provide a visual representation of

the user's emotional state allowing them to see the impact of stressful thoughts and emotions in real time.

Using specific breathing techniques, monitored by the software, the user is shown how to create a calm and focused state, the optimum state for learning.

TakeTen computer games provide an innovative means of engaging children. The games will not progress until the user is physiologically and emotionally calm. Children quickly learn how to manage their responses to reduce stress, reduce impulsive behaviour patterns and consequently be able to maximise problem-solving and learning. Having used the software to learn the skills of self-regulation, children then learn how to transfer and incorporate these strategies into their daily lives.

Teachers can also use TakeTen effectively to help break the cycle of stress and build resilience. With a few minutes practice on their laptop each day, TakeTen can train them to avoid the more harmful effects of stress, allowing them to operate more effectively at work and at home.

**Fintan Connolly, a Pharmacist is the founder of TakeTen. He provides Stress Management Training Sessions for staff and pupils in schools all over the UK. Further information available at [www.taketenteam.com](http://www.taketenteam.com)**

**Email: [info@taketenteam.com](mailto:info@taketenteam.com)**



# Chief Inspectors North and South Report

With the 2010-2012 Chief Inspector Reports now published in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, all eyes are on the state of the education system each side of the border. While both reports pointed out notable changes and improvements in areas of teaching, learning and management, it is evident that there is a lot of work to be done in the future to build and maintain high standards. Many themes ran concurrent in both reports, such as the need to improve the learning of mathematics and the management of schools, but each report cited their own achievements and failures.

Both reports talked about the financial implications of the recession, discussing the effects that diminishing budgets were having on standards of education. Financial pressure was evident both sides of the border but it was reported that expenditure rose in both primary and post-primary schools. Funding and support for special needs education had also increased, suggesting that this particular sector won't take the brunt of future cutbacks.

## Problem areas

Mathematics was seen as the problem child in both jurisdictions. In the south, the teaching of mathematics was satisfactory in 86 per cent of primary schools and 87 per cent in post-primary schools but there were lower performance levels, which were less than satisfactory in over a quarter of lessons. In Northern Ireland, one in five children are leaving primary school without the expected level of mathematics as well as English.

Ruairi Quinn, Minister for Education, called for a cut in Religious Education time to focus on mathematics when the report was published, 'Does it point to a need for reform? No, it screams for reform'. However a recent Irish Times article points out that in Northern Ireland, the same time is allocated for mathematics and R.E. and students excel far more in mathematics, in fact, they are first in Europe, according to a recent international survey.

Irish was the main issue brought to light in the Republic of Ireland education system. The quality of learning in post-primary schools was problematic in 32% of schools and teaching was less than satisfactory in one-fifth of the inspections taken.

## Disadvantage and performance

In a surprising yet not unexpected turn, the link between education and socio-economic levels in Northern Ireland were still very evident. The number of school leavers obtaining at least five GCSE's at grades A\*-C rose from 65% to 73% in the last four years but this didn't spread to disadvantaged areas where only 32% of school leavers entitled to free school meals achieved the same grade in 2011. The report said setting challenging targets was key to breaking the link between disadvantage and educational performance.

'Some schools are failing to break a cycle of underachievement that has persisted over a period of time,' it added. However, this socio-economic

link wasn't evident in the ROI report. teachers have despite learning the language for, on average, 13 years. The Chief Inspector found that learning was 'less than satisfactory in almost a quarter of Irish lessons in primary schools and almost a third of Irish lessons in post-primary schools'. This report also noted its concerns about the competence of Irish teachers.

The tone of the reporting was not much different in Northern Ireland, with both the Belfast Telegraph and the News Letter focusing on the less than positive results regarding management in schools. The quality of leadership and management improved at all levels but is still not good enough. The report, conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate, states that, 'a fragmented



Many themes ran concurrent in both reports, such as the need to improve the learning of mathematics and the management of schools

link wasn't evident in the ROI report.

## Media response

Reporting on the Chief Inspector's Report was divided both sides of the border. While the reports in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland cited significant improvements and changes inside the education system, the media focused on the areas that need attention and the serious cutbacks in funding.

Newspapers such as the Irish Times and Irish Examiner in the Republic of Ireland skimmed the information that the quality of teaching and management had improved since the last report by discussing the serious weaknesses in Irish language, to a less extent mathematics, and communication problems between parents and schools.

This report, conducted by the Department of Education and Skills, called to attention the extremely poor standard of Irish that students and some

approach to leadership development, which is not responding quickly or effectively enough to the changing needs of our education system, is evident.'

One in five post-primary school principals was less than satisfactory but the quality of management overall needs to improve across all sectors. 39% of post-primary schools are not good enough and the board of governors needs to be more effective in one in five primary schools and 34% of post-primary.

Overall the media cast a gloomy view of the education system in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a whole. Although improvements have been made across the board in both the North and South, the media believes there is still a long way to go before the education system can call itself a winner.

EMILY MAREE

# Little Seeds Nurture children flourish and grow in St Luke's Primary School

Claire Robinson, Principal

St Luke's Primary School opened Little Seeds Nurture group in 2009, with the support of Big Lottery Funding in partnership with the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership.

At this time the school Foundation Team was concerned about the number of children coming into P1 who were not 'school ready.' Many had not attended a pre-school setting and therefore the school routines were very daunting for these children.

Teachers commented that these children were a real concern, many had immature or delayed speech and language, with little or no knowledge of nursery rhymes, age appropriate stories, such as fairy tales, no basic counting knowledge and they lacked the ability to follow basic instructions, to understand the daily routines of a school setting.

Having been an established Nurture group for 5 years, we have a wealth of data to help us track our Little Seeds as they move through the school, the Senior leadership and Nurture Team believe it is important to look closely at how we baseline the children initially, we feel the background story of each child helps us gain a greater understanding of the child and all the factors which will impact on their learning whilst in the Early Years.

The following information is proof that the Nurture experience has an invaluable role in supporting the child, their family and teachers in ensuring a child makes the progress to help them become happy, confident learners.

The following examples give the background stories of some of our 41 Little Seeds to date; they show how the nurture experience has had a huge impact on these children as they have progressed through primary school.

### Child A

'When Child A entered school aged 5, he hit out at other children, grabbed their toys, disrupted their play and destroyed children's paintings, drawings and tore up

books. He had no measurable attainments and poor coordination and motor skills. He never seemed to listen to instructions and was non-compliant. It soon became clear that he was a very angry child defending himself as best he could.

Child A was the middle child of a young mother who had 5 children under 9 years old. The family was living in extreme poverty with the continuous possibility of the children being taken into care. The mother found Child A difficult to manage and described him to the teachers as an 'absolute nightmare.' In 2009 he was placed in Little Seeds nurture group where the staff focused on helping him to concentrate, to co-operate better with other children and to develop his motor skills.

After less than a year all his skills were up to par; he was obviously a child who could learn quickly. He has learnt to trust the adults in the group, to work with other children and to take pride in his progress. He was ready to return full-time to his mainstream class. His mother, who had been afraid that the school would reject him, was delighted with the change in him, both in school and at home. Once back fulltime in a mainstream class he availed of Literacy support in P3 and P4, by the end of P4 he was deregistered from the Special needs register. He is currently in P6 and is gaining support from the Signature programme whereby he is gaining intensive support with literacy, his class teacher and Literacy Teachers both predict he will gain Level 4 in both Communication and Using Mathematics by the end of P7 in 2015.

### Child B

Child B came to school with no pre-school experience; mum is a lone parent who has very poor levels of literacy and numeracy. She had problems with timekeeping and the child was either very late each day or did not come to school. Year 1 was a wasted year, as when he was in school he cried, he had poor social skills and very poor

speech and language.

Through the nurture programme mum was encouraged to seek support has attended the incredible years parenting programme, which has given her the skills to have a more structured routine at home, she realises the importance of routine to include time keeping and working with the teacher to have shared goals for the child. The nurture team spent time with her on the consistency required to settle her child into school life.

This child was a challenge as he took a long time to settle, but with intensive work, tight targets, he finally moved back into mainstream after 2 terms.

Currently Child B is in P6, he has availed of Literacy support and remains on the Special needs register with in-class support. Mum attends both the Essential Skills in English and maths in the school, which ensures Child B is gaining more support from home.

Little Seeds Nurture gives children the opportunity to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life by providing a secure environment in a small group setting, giving the children the chance to re-experience pre-school routines in a nurturing setting from a caring team who are dedicated and passionate about Nurture and who actively work towards their successful re-integration into the mainstream class.

Children learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults.

One of the main strengths of this programme is the strong partnership between home and school, we offer a wide and varied range of courses to support our parents such as the Incredible years which we feel is an invaluable programme which links very well to the principles of nurture, giving the parents the skills to support their child in the home.

Tracking Data	BRVT 2008	NRIT May 2010	Progress data 2011	Progress data 2012	Progress data 2013	Key Stage levels and year achieved 2012
<b>Child A</b>	70	84 PIM 80	PIE 83 PIM 95 (prediction 82)	PIE 112 (prediction 87) PIM 99 (prediction 96) CAT 4 89	PIE 96 (prediction 106)	English: Level 1 Maths: Level 2
<b>Child B</b>	72	76 PIM 78	PIE 76 PIM 88 (prediction 81)	PIE 84 (prediction 79) PIM 91 (prediction 90) CAT 4 83	PIE 87 (prediction 83)	English: Level 1 Maths: Level 2

# SEN Seminar 2014

INTO has continued to work to provide our members with the opportunities and tools that they require in the discharge of their duties. The Seminar was open and free to all members of INTO who were interested in the area of SEN. The Seminar covered two main topics

- ✦ Working with Allied Professionals – Speech and Language Therapists and
- ✦ Effective working with Classroom Assistants.

The INTO SEN subcommittee selected the Glenavon House Hotel in Cookstown for the location of the 5th February SEN Seminar. The previous SEN Conference in June 2013 had been held in Belfast. This reflects INTO's policy to host events in a range of locations to ensure accessibility for all.

As is standard practice at all such INTO events an opportunity was given to all attendees to chat and exchange experiences and ideas. Members continually tell us how much they value the opportunity to catch up with colleagues working in similar circumstances. This is particularly true for members working in the area of SEN as they can often feel quite isolated within their setting.

The first session was led by Ruth Crampton a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. She outlined how Speech and Language Therapists work with pupils and teachers as an Allied Professional. She outlined the range of communication issues that can impact upon the learning of pupils at all levels. One of the most informative aspects was a breakdown of the aspects of communication and language. Ruth highlighted the signs and benchmarks that a teacher should look for if they feel a pupil may require a speech and language assessment.

The session also included a valuable



question and answer session. This provided members with the opportunity to seek clarification about advice they had previously received from speech and language therapists.

It also provided a forum for an exchange of views about how teachers and Speech and Language Therapists can work more effectively together.

The second session looked at how teachers can ensure an effective working relationship with classroom assistants. Members explored the different duties that the classroom assistants should be expected to undertake. Many class teachers are unaware that classroom assistants are now employed on a wide range of contracts. The duties will vary depending upon the contract that the classroom assistant is employed on.

The effective deployment and support of classroom assistants is an area of interest for ETL. Members were provided



with guidance for ensuring that teachers had in place systems and mechanisms to ensure that the classroom assistant knew the expectations and limitations of their role. Teachers have traditionally had limited training in the field of managing staff. This can present problems when teachers find themselves responsible for the day to day management of staff. A handbook that could assist teachers with this task was provided to attendees. Advice was provided about how to handle potential conflict and challenging situations that may arise when managing classroom assistants. Top tips on developing effective working relationships were shared and have been reproduced here.

## Aspects of Communication and Language

Language is the ability to understand words and sentences so that we can follow what is being said to us. It involves organising our thoughts and ideas using appropriate vocabulary into grammatically correct sentences ready for talking.

1. Speech is the ability to combine sounds together to say words.
2. Communication is the ability to say the right thing, at the right time in the right way. It in-

volves using our speech and language skills to send the messages we want to send to others.

3. Non-verbal communication (NVC) is the ability to understand and use gesture, body language, facial expression and your voice to help communicate your message.

Speech, Language and Communication need (SLCN) encompasses difficulties children may experience with all three areas of communication.

Some children may only have difficulties in one area whilst others may have problems in all three.

## Effective management of Classroom Assistant

1. Be clear and specific about requirements and expectations.
2. Empower them as team members
3. Involve them in the decision making
4. Build upon their strengths
5. Evaluate your relationship on a regular basis

For further information visit the INTO website [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)

## Cumann na mBunscol Awards

Once again it has been a busy year in the Ulster Allianz Cumann na mBunscol calendar. At the National Cumann na mBunscol Awards at Croke Park, in November, INTO President Brendan O'Sullivan, with the GAA President Liam O'Neill, was on hand to present Antrim Allianz school Mount St Michael PS with the runner-up in the Promotion of Gaelic Games in the large school category.

On behalf of the staff and community, Principal Liam Magee from St Columban PS Belcoo received the award for the 'Promotion of Gaelic Games' in the Small school section while the Fermanagh Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Committee lifted an award in the Public Relations Section. A special presentation was made to Malachy McGeeney from Armagh Allianz Cumann na mBunscol for his many years of service to the Promotion of Gaelic Games in the Orchard County.



Antrim Allianz Cumann na mBunscol's Mount St Michael PS Vice-Principal Phillip Lavery and staff receiving the award for the Promotion of Gaelic Games in the Large School section from INTO President Brendan O'Sullivan and the GAA President Liam O'Neill



Principal Liam Magee from St Columban's PS Belcoo received the award for the 'Promotion of Gaelic Games' in the Small school section while the Fermanagh Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Chairman Brian Tracey receives an award in the Public Relations Section

## Launch of the Championships

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, hosted the committee and pupils from the Antrim Allianz Cumann na mBunscol leagues in Belfast as he launched this year's championships for Boys and Girls Football, Handball, Hurling and Camogie.



Children from many schools in Belfast who play in the Antrim Allianz Cumann na mBunscol leagues meet the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, on the steps of City Hall



Members of the Antrim Committee with the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir



Pupils from Holy Trinity with teachers Mr Leslie McCrory and Mr Daniel Armstrong at the launch of the Antrim Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Championship with the Lord Mayor of Belfast Máirtín Ó Muilleoir



Pupils from Gaelscoil na bhFál with Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir



Pupils from Victoria College with their teacher Mr Ronan O'Brien at the launch of the Camogie Championship at the City Hall

## Ulster Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Handball Finals

Donegal Allianz Cumann na mBunscol hosted the 2014 Ulster Cumann na mBunscol Handball Finals at Glenfin Handball Alley and Sean Mac Cumhaill's Handball Alley, Ballybofey recently.

The young handballers of Ulster provided a fantastic day's handball. Many thanks to the organising committee, caterers and officials who made this an enjoyable day, for all concerned. Many thanks also, to all of the children, teachers and parents who travelled from the four corners of Ulster.

In the girls' section, Tyrone Allianz Cumann na mBunscol and Monaghan Allianz Cumann na mBunscol schools shared the titles as Clodagh Mc Namee and Clodagh Munroe from Saint Colmille's Primary School, Carrickmore, lifted the Under 11 doubles title while Mairead Fox took the Under 13 Singles title back to Saint Theresa's Primary School, Loughmacrory.

Louise Mc Ginnity from Saint Louis Girls National School, Monaghan proved too strong in the Under 11 Singles while Megija Kulite and Gabriele Minkstimaite from the same school lifted the Under 13 Doubles.

In the boys' section, Scoil Mhuire, An Cnoc, from Monaghan Allianz Cumann na mBunscol made a



clean sweep with Jakub Szkub and Deivydes Kaklauskas lifting the Under 13 Doubles and Eoghan Mc Ginnity the Under 13 Singles title.

In the Under 11, Ailandas Jocys teamed up with Sean Callan to lift the Doubles while Tiarnán O'Rourke from Scoil Mhuire, An Cnoc, Muineachán completed the cleansweep.



Top left: The boys from Scoil Mhuire, An Cnoc from the Monaghan Allianz Cumann na mBunscol who had a clean sweep in the Ulster Handball Championships. Centre left: Children from Tyrone Allianz Cumann na mBunscol Schools who competed in the Ulster Handball Championships



Bottom left: Handballers from Armagh Allianz Cumann na mBunscol. Left: Winners from the Girls' Ulster Handball Championships

# Nursery Leadership Seminar



INTO and UTU hosted a very successful Seminar targeting the leadership in the nursery sector at the beginning of this term. The seminar took place in the very pleasant surroundings of the Tullylagan House Hotel near Cookstown. The seminar started with a light lunch and the opportunity for participants to catch their breaths after a hectic morning in school. It also provided the opportunity to catch up with colleagues in other schools.

The purpose of the seminar was to fill the vacuum that has been created by the running down of the ELBs and CCMS and the failure of the education authorities to establish ESA. INTO and UTU have become aware that our members in the nursery sector was feeling isolated and unsupported. As unions we represent teachers and principals, and recognise the iniquitous treatment that continues to be experienced by our members eg limited access to CPD for

nursery leaders and no access to Principal Release Days for Nursery Principals.

The first session was focused upon the Learning to Learn Policy from DE. Perhaps most concerning was the lack of awareness about this strategic document. The contribution from Deirdre Martin from RTU certainly raised its profile. The session highlighted the disadvantageous position of leaders in Nursery Units who often miss out on the rollout of new initiatives that are targeted at Principals.

The INTO Northern Secretary Gerry Murphy and UTU General Secretary Avril Hall Callaghan briefed the teachers about how the two unions are working collectively in the interests of the Nursery sector. INTO and UTU are continuing to press for Principal Release time for Nursery Principals and the specific professional development needs of the nursery sector are being tabled at the strategic forum. Both leaders urged the nursery sector to ensure that it had a strong voice through them to challenge the status quo. This will help to ensure that the rhetoric from government that Early Years Education is so important is transformed into meaningful and effective support and provision for the teachers tasked with delivering this key educational phase.

The final session of the seminar was entitled ETI – experiences and expectations. This session reflected the membership led ethos of both INTO and UTU. Gillian Donnelly a UTU member who had labelled herself an Inspection Survivor spoke about her experience of ETI a few weeks earlier. Mary

Dorman labelled herself as an Inspection Veteran and spoke about her ongoing experiences with ETI as a teacher and as a member of the Northern Committee of INTO.

Gillian spoke about the collation of paperwork for the visit of ETI and reassured the teachers present that in fact most of the work had been done before the brown envelope arrived. She found that the ETI member that visited her was professional and unobtrusive. A lot of time was spent talking to the pupils and asking them about their activities. Gillian highlighted how working as a supportive team had ensured that the inspection was an affirming experience. Mary Dorman had undertaken an analysis of recent inspections in the Statutory Nursery Sector. This analysis combined with information highlighted in the latest Chief Inspector's Report was used to draft a top ten observations of ETI.

1. Relationships between staff, pupils and parents
2. Pupils engaged in purposeful activities
3. Quality interactions including open questions
4. Planning linked to evaluations
5. Use made of observations
6. Opportunities for progression
7. Leader's Early Years knowledge and skills
8. Self-evaluation and reflective practice
9. Links to community and transitions
10. Safe guarding

Further information about the seminar including the Top 5 Tips for those planning or experiencing inspections will be available on the INTO website on [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)



# A meeting of Minds!

Dorothy Mc Ginley, CEC District 2 Representative

**A**s a child born and raised in Donegal, travelling through the North was always a delight in terms of comfort. The roads were wide, smooth and well sign posted! This was in stark contrast to the South's narrow, bumpy roads which blighted the otherwise beautiful countryside. But then like the Phoenix, the economy grew at such an intoxicating rate, that it soon became the envy and enchantment of its neighbours. This was none more evident than in Education.

While the South's teaching fraternity enjoyed the benefits of the Celtic Tiger their colleagues in the North were disappearing under a tsunami of initiatives, being enveloped by targets, monitoring and evaluation. The buzz word became Accountability!

However as I drove back from this year's congress in Kilkenny, it was clear that things in the South were also changing. The collective voice of the delegates analysed and debated issues which have been familiar to us in the North for some time

The new reality for teachers in the South is that their salaries have been cut between 18% -30%. There is now a three tier salary structure in place, class sizes have increased, there is a moratorium on promoted posts, and school leaders are coping with an increased volume of work and demands. With all these changes, I ask myself, is their Educational road narrowing? Is the tsunami about to hit the South?

It's in this context that as CEC representative for District 2, I have been afforded the opportunity of contributing to the decisions and policies of one of the largest teachers' union in Ireland. Of course the functions of both educational systems at a structural level are somewhat different, but the core issues remain the same. CEC and Northern Committee both realise that teachers both North and South are working in an education landscape which is changing at an extraordinary pace.

**C**EC has always valued the experience and expertise of representatives, members and officials in Northern Ireland, especially in relation to initiatives which have already been implemented in Northern Ireland. At the recent Northern Conference in Enniskillen, CEC representatives witnessed delegate after delegate speak of the impact constant change in education is having on a dedicated and pro-

fessional workforce. The CEC recognises that similar challenges lie ahead in the South.

Firstly there is the demographic challenge where the population, in some parts of the country will increase significantly between 2020 -25 resulting in the need for an extra 4000 teachers, while in rural communities the population is declining. School closures and amalgamations is the current mantra, both North and South. Indeed the Sustainable Schools' Policy in the North, which advocates the rationalisation of the school estate is a major concern for INTO. The issue of sustaining a network of small schools in both jurisdictions will be a huge challenge for CEC and Northern Committee but they will continue to actively engage /negotiate with the departments to find a way forward which will protect teacher's jobs.

Budgetary cuts are undoubtedly a challenge both North and South. A reduction of 11% in the delegated schools' budget in the North has the potential of undermining the Department of Education main objective, which is raising standards.

In the South there have been rumblings that the Minister for Public Expenditure, Brendan Howlin intends to look at new ways of funding schools. A pilot Local Management of Schools Scheme, similar in nature to our system has been discussed. The contributions that the northern CEC representatives can make to this debate will be useful because they have knowledge, through practical experience, of how LMS actually works. This knowledge will be useful in helping CEC to respond the issue as they arise.

**T**he professional challenge is one of huge debate. INTO has been the key and leading voice in the spectrum of influence in educational matters. Both CEC, Northern Committee representatives and officials have been consistent in recognising that the voice of the teacher should be at the heart of education policy making. This has been evidenced in so many different ways. For example, in the South early Remediation for SEN became a focus in the 90's. INTO successfully campaigned for this recognition to be backed up with proper funding. Today, thanks to the INTO, there are 10000 Resource and Special Needs teachers and 11000 Special Needs Assistants employed in primary schools. In May

2013 INTO strongly condemned a proposed 10% cut to resource teaching and as a result of their powerful lobbying and effective protests the minister of Education reversed his decision in June. We here in the North would cherish such a system.

The Minister for Education in the North is all too aware of the 'tail of Underachievement' that exists in the North. Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), a strategy which was launched by the Department of Education in the South in 2005, focused on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through to second level education. The strategy has been hailed as a flagship of good practice. This is an initiative which we in the North would like to see introduced.

**I**n the North the whole area of Assessment is currently a major issue for the teaching profession. INTO have been emphatic and consistent in warning CCEA and DE that the proposed new Assessment arrangements are not fit for purpose. Meanwhile in the South, Assessment is not an issue, yet! But it's only a matter of time, before they too will have to rise to the challenge. They will surely benefit from the knowledge and the expertise of their Northern colleagues on the out workings of assessment and the practical implications that statutory assessment could cause.

It goes without saying, that on both sides of the border, the ever increasing workload coupled with diminished resources is leading to a build-up of resentment, despair and anger right across the teaching profession. School leadership is fast becoming an undoable job.

The final challenge and one of the most significant for the CEC and for The Northern Committee is a Trade Union Challenge. The relentless attacks on Public Sector pay and an erosion of the Public Service pensions are forcing living standards down. Finding ways to negotiate some restoration is most certainly a continued priority for INTO. In order to address this challenge INTO will engage with our sister unions in the ICTU to robustly protect our cherished profession. There is much more to be done but Our Union is an investment. While substantial challenges confront us, the atmosphere at Northern Conference and Congress show we're more than ready for it!

## Member's Contribution

## Straitéisí don Mhata ó mheabhair

Nuair a amharcann tú ar thuiriscí ón ETI, is léir go bhfuil ról tábhachtach le himirt ag na straitéisí don mhata ó mheabhair ar dhea-chleachtais agus caithfidh mé a rá go bhfuil mé féin den bharúil chéanna. Má tá páistí compordach le mata meabhrach, bíonn siad níos muiníní sa mhata agus níos oscailte don fhoghlaim. Téann mata meabhrach leis an churaclam athbhreithnithe, ag tabhairt scileanna agus neamhspleáchais do pháistí, rudaí atá de dhíth, gan dabht, sa lá atá inniu ann.

Nuair a bhí mise i mo mhac léinn, bhí dearcadh nua ann ó thaobh an mhata ó mheabhair de. Luadh é linn go minic gur chóir deich mbomaite mata ó mheabhair a dhéanamh ag tús gach ceacht uimhearthachta chun é a chur i bhfeidhm. Táispeánadh réimse cluichí agus gníomhaíochtaí dúinn agus ba léir dom ag an pointe sin gur chóir don mhata ó mheabhair a bheith sultmhar agus praiticiúil do na páistí, rud a spreagadh iad chun na foghlama agus a d'fhorbródh muinín s'acu.

Agus mé ag tosú amach mar mhúinteoir, mhothaigh mé go fóill san fhaopach nuair a bhí orm an mata ó mheabhair a phleanáil agus a theagasc go fádtéarmach. Tabhair áireamh nó fadhb mhata dom agus thig liom é a fhreagairt duit, agus an dóigh is fearr chun é a oibriú amach sa chloigeann a insint duit. Tá mo straitéisí féin agam, ach cad é mar a fhaigheann tú na straitéisí trasna do na daltaí? Cá háit a dtosaíonn tú? Níl deireadh leis na féidearthachtaí.

Tá seacht straitéisí in úsáid sa scoil ina bhfuil mé, a chuidigh go mór liom ciall a bhaint as an ábhar seo mar mhúinteoir óg. Tagann an chur chuige atá in úsáid againn



i nGaelscoil Uí Néill ón Straitéis Uimhearthachta, a chuir na boird amach breis agus deich mbliana ó shin. Nuair a cuireadh mé ar an eolas faoi na straitéisí seo, thug mé faoi deara nach raibh aon rud nua ann, ach rinne sé an pleanáil agus an teagasc i bhfad níos fusa agus níos éifeachtaí dom, agus fios agam go raibh ainmneacha ar leith ar gach straitéis.

Tugtar na straitéisí seo isteach de réir mar a théann daltaí tríd na ranganna. An chéad straitéis atá ann ná **cuntas a dhéanamh chun tosaigh agus siar**, atá úsáideach ón bhonnchém go dtí eochairchéim a dó. Is féidir neart den straitéis seo a dhéanamh ar an bhata chuntais, idir chuntas a dhéanamh go dtí a deich agus chuntas a dhéanamh i ndeich-

nithe. Má tá páistí ábalta **uimhreacha a chur in ord eile** le suimeanna a dhéanamh níos fusa, tá siad ag úsáid straitéis éifeachtach, chuideodh sé sin leo le clanna uimhreacha. Tosaímid ag amharc ar an straitéis **oibríochta inbhéarta** in Eochairchéim 1 nuair atá páistí ábalta an gaol idir suimiú agus dealú, agus iolrú agus roinnt a úsáid. Tá an fhéidearthacht ann le **deighilt** a fhiosrú ó Eochairchéim 1 ar aghaidh chomh maith; nuair atá dhá uimhir dhédhigiteacha le suimiú, deighil an dá uimhir ina ndeicéanna agus aonaid. Tá an straitéis **slanú agus coigeartú** an-úsáideach le hairgead, nó nuair atá iolraithe de dheich agus dubailtí ar eolas ag na páistí. In Eochairchéim 2, tá **fachtóirí** ann le hionlú agus roinnt a eascú, mar shampla, muna bhfuil páistí compordach le hionlú fána sé, thig leo iolrú fána trí a dhéanamh agus an freagra a dhúbailt. Tá **comhionannas** in úsáid go minic le céadatáin ag barr na scoile, mar shampla, ma tá 50% le hoibriú amach, thig leo leath a fháil mar is ionann an dá rud.

Mothaím féin nach bhfuil sé furasta teacht ar thacaíocht nó ar áiseanna don mhata ó mheabhair, go háirithe sa Ghaelsoideachas, agus, cosúil liomsa, dhéarfainn go mbeadh múinteoirí óga eile buíoch as tacaíocht ar bith ar an ábhar seo. Mar gheall air sin, spreagadh mé le páirt a ghlacadh i ngrúpa 'Thuaidh Theas' atá ag iarraidh pacáiste a chur le chéile ar na straitéisí seo. Agus deis agam bheith ag obair le múinteoirí eile a bhfuil taithí agus smaointí iontacha acu, ón Tuaisceart agus ón Deisceart, is fiú go mór an obair. Mar a deir an seanfhocal, *'Ní neart go cur le chéile.'*

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*Printout* has a readership of over 7,000. As a membership led organisation INTO is offering the opportunity for members to contribute to future editions of *Printout*.

- ✦ Are you a Branch that has organised a social or trade union event?
- ✦ Are you a school that is involved in

an educational initiative?

- ✦ Are you a teacher with experiences or knowledge that you could share with your colleagues?

If so we want to hear from you!

Contact Christine McDonnell on 028 9038 1455 or email [cmcdonnell@into.ie](mailto:cmcdonnell@into.ie).

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