

Printout

into 
Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann

May 2016



Assessment Page 8

Northern Conference

Page 10

Art Competition

Page 16

INTO with TUFP in Palestine

Page 18

Education – what we need to see

“Education, Education, Education”, was the mantra of a former Labour leader, Tony Blair. However, for education to have the impact that is possible, it needs one vital resource – money. As teachers, we all know how often we have put our hands in our own pockets, to ensure that the children in our class have the materials necessary. On a national scale, we ask no more than central government do the same and deliver adequate funding for our schools. Yet, education funding is surrounded in percentages, spin doctoring and grandstanding. As a result, over the last number of years, the money available to schools has declined continuously, while the school population and the demands on schools to do more with less, has increased.

The 2016/2017 academic year is going to be another difficult and challenging one for INTO members, as the continuing reduction to the education budget bites even further into the fabric of our education system. A reduction of 0.8% to the education budget as announced by the Education Minister, now appears to have masked the reality of a much deeper cut brought about in the main, by an increase in National Insurance Contributions. The net reductions to school budgets being in reality, somewhere between 5% and 6%.

Schools who had been careful to manage their budgets and those who had endured considerable pain to reduce existing budgets, have found their efforts reduced to nought, as a consequence. For INTO members this reality translates in further job losses for teachers, and additional and unrelenting pressure of School Leaders and Governors, a lot of who are also INTO members. This continued downward pressure on school budgets and education spending in general, calls into question the commitment of our politicians to a better and brighter future for our young people. It also makes a nonsense, of their repeated praise and expressions of

thanks, to teachers from the entire educational administration.

From a purely trade union perspective, it is completely unacceptable that teacher numbers continue to reduce, whilst the demands placed upon teachers increase year on year. Teachers’ salaries are now approaching a level that is 15% less, than they were worth, prior to the financial meltdown of the late noughties. School Leaders, hundreds of whom are INTO members, are trapped on ISRs that no longer offer the prospect of payment that is reflective of their workload, or the demands placed upon them. Yet, the profession as a whole continues to deliver improvement year on year, as measured by the



GERRY MURPHY,
Northern Secretary

Department, in terms of exam results. The inevitable outworking for the education system of this state of affairs will be growing industrial unrest, leading to systemic disruption, putting at risk the hard won progress delivered in the main, by frontline education professionals.

To avoid any worsening of an increasingly toxic industrial relations environment, the Executive at Stormont, Department of Education and the Employing Authorities need to take a number of urgent steps, of both a practical and strategic nature, to arrest the situation that is unfolding. To begin with, the Executive needs to as a matter of urgency, to commit in the forthcoming Programme for Government, that education will be placed at the very centre of Executive policy making. This commitment must be demonstrated in two ways: firstly, by allocating a substantially increased level of funding to the education budget for the entirety of the next mandate; secondly, it must insist that policies impacting on our children and young people, no matter the Department from which they originate, are fully funded by that Department and are in line with Department of Education targets.

The Department of Education itself needs to ensure that its budget

management is such, that schools will be able to do their financial planning over the three year period demanded of them, in the knowledge that negative changes to the fiscal environment will be compensated for, by the Department. The Department also needs to act on the issue of pay restoration for teachers and school leaders. Demanding more whilst paying less, and then hiding behind the skirts of the Treasury in London, or the local Department of Finance and Personnel skirts, is a recipe for chaos. Further progress on student achievement will rapidly begin to slow down and plateau before falling back, if professional development and resourcing budgets allocated by the Department to the Education Authority, are not restored to meaningful levels.

The Employing Authorities need to stand up and assert themselves. Pretending that they are helpless in the face of Executive pay policy and Departmental guidelines is a cop out. The Department has been dumping unpopular policy outcomes and cost saving measures onto them, in the knowledge that their desire to maintain control over their particular sectors, will trump any distaste they have for the particular policy outcomes. If the employers are serious about teachers and school leaders’ welfare, then we need to see them campaigning to have funding increased and pay restored.

INTO for its part, remains committed to seeing continued improvements to pay and terms and conditions of employment. We will continue to seek to protect and create jobs, while also pushing for meaningful professional development. The INTO has a proud tradition of contributing to improvements in education at all levels, and we remain open to working with like-minded bodies and organisations. What we are not prepared to do is stand by and ignore a continuation of the stripping back of educational provision, and the consequences this is having for our members.

Vere Foster said, “The greatness of a society depended on the importance placed on the education of its children.” Those who can make a difference need to decide how great this nation is going to be before another generation is lost.

Stress at Work

Frequently, the third term is characterised by a rise in reported teacher stress. However, work related stress is a feature of a considerable number of calls to the Northern Office. This article is designed to look at the causes of stress in schools, and give some practical examples of how to cope with a condition that can damage the teacher’s health in the long-term, if not recognised and treated.

TIPS TO REDUCE AND MANAGE JOB AND WORKPLACE STRESS

While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with your productivity and impact negatively on your physical and emotional health. Your ability to deal with it can mean the difference between success and failure. You can’t control everything in your work environment, but that doesn’t mean you’re powerless—even when you’re stuck in a difficult situation. Finding strategies to manage workplace stress isn’t about making huge changes or rethinking career ambitions, but rather about focusing on the one thing that’s always within your control; you.

COPING WITH WORK STRESS IN TODAY’S UNCERTAIN CLIMATE

For teachers everywhere, the economy may feel like an emotional roller coaster. “Redundancies” and “Budget Cuts” are common in the workplace, and the result is increased fear, uncertainty, and higher levels of stress. Your emotions are

contagious, and stress has an impact on the quality of your interactions with others. The better you are at managing your own stress, the more you’ll positively affect those around you, and the less other people’s stress will negatively affect you.

YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO MANAGE JOB STRESS

There are a variety of steps you can take to reduce both your overall stress levels and the stress you find on the job and in the workplace. These include:

- Taking responsibility for improving your physical and emotional well-being;
- Avoiding pitfalls by identifying knee-jerk habits and negative attitudes that add to the stress you experience at work;
- Learning better communication skills to ease and improve your relationships with management and colleagues.

RECOGNISE WARNING SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE STRESS AT WORK

When you feel overwhelmed at school, you lose confidence and may become irritable or withdrawn. This can make you less productive and less effective in your job, and make the work seem less rewarding. If you ignore the warning signs of work related stress, they can lead to bigger problems. Beyond interfering with job performance and satisfaction, chronic or intense stress can also lead to physical and emotional

health problems. Signs and symptoms of excessive job and workplace stress include:

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed;
- Apathy, loss of interest in work;
- Problems sleeping;
- Fatigue;
- Trouble concentrating;
- Muscle tension or headaches;
- Stomach problems;
- Social withdrawal;
- Loss of sex drive;
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope.

Common causes of excessive workplace stress:

- Fear of losing your job;
- More work demands due to staff cutbacks;
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations, but with no increase in job satisfaction;
- Pressure to work at optimum levels—all the time!

REDUCE JOB STRESS BY TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

When stress at work interferes with your ability to perform in your job, manage your personal life, or adversely impact on your health, it’s time to take action. Start by paying attention to your physical and emotional health. When your own needs are taken care of, you’re stronger and more resilient to stress. The better you

Continues on page 4

Committee Information

Area	Branches	Name	Surname	Title	Mobile	INTO Email
CEC 1	District 1	Mary	Cahillane	CEC Representative	07522100726	mcahillane@into.ie
CEC 2	District 2	Dorothy	McGinley	CEC Representative	07736550457	dmcginley@into.ie
BFC	-	Paddy	McAllister	BFC Representative	07828769034	pmcallister@into.ie
NEP	NEELB Primary	Mark	McTaggart	INTO Northern Committee	07505113560	mmctaggart@into.ie
NES	NEELB Post-Primary	Seamus	Hanna	INTO Northern Committee	07720 775425	shanna@into.ie
SEP	SEELB Primary	Brendan	Sadlier	INTO Northern Committee	07793243954	bsadlier@into.ie
SES	SEELB Post Primary	John	Kelly	INTO Northern Committee	07809694954	jkelly@into.ie
BP	BELB Primary A	Caroline	McCarthy	INTO Northern Committee	07977935988	cmccarthy@into.ie
BP	BELB Primary B	Una	Herdman	INTO Northern Committee	07738833672	uherdman@into.ie
BS	BELB Post-Primary	Caoimhin	MacColaim	INTO Northern Committee	07710234126	cmaccolaim@into.ie
SP	SELB Primary A	Mary	Dorman	INTO Northern Committee	07733020269	mdorman@into.ie
SP	SELB Primary B	Cathy	Crozier	INTO Northern Committee	07763197253	ccrozier@into.ie
SS	SELB Post-Primary	Kevin	Daly	INTO Northern Committee	07568528951	kdaly@into.ie
WP	WELB Primary A	Paul	Groogan	INTO Northern Committee	07857851969	pgroogan@into.ie
WP	WELB Primary B	Annette	Comey	INTO Northern Committee	07834380550	acomey@into.ie
WS	WELB Post-Primary	Anmarie	Conway	INTO Northern Committee	07701049789	amconway@into.ie

Stress at Work (continued)

feel, the better equipped you'll be to manage work stress without becoming overwhelmed. Taking care of yourself doesn't require a total lifestyle overhaul. Even small things can lift your mood, increase your energy, and make you feel like you're back in the driver's seat. Take things one step at a time, and as you make more positive lifestyle choices, you'll soon notice a reduction in your stress levels, both at home and at work.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR REDUCING JOB STRESS

Analyse your work responsibilities and daily tasks. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities, solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

Don't over-commit yourself. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "should" and the "musts" and drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list.

Plan regular breaks. Make sure to take short breaks throughout the day to sit back and clear your mind. Also try to get away from your desk or classroom for lunch.

Be willing to compromise. Sometimes, if you can bend a little, you'll be able to find a happy middle ground that reduces the stress levels for everyone.

REDUCE JOB STRESS BY IMPROVING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Even if you're in a job where the environment has grown increasingly stressful, you can still retain a large measure of self-control and self-confidence by understanding and practicing emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage and use your emotions in positive and constructive ways. When it comes to satisfaction and success at work, emotional intelligence matters just as much as intellectual ability. Emotional intelligence is about communicating with others in ways that draw people to you, overcome differences, repair wounded feelings and defuse tension and stress.

REDUCE JOB STRESS BY BREAKING BAD HABITS

Many of us make job stress worse with negative thoughts and behaviour. If you can turn around these self-defeating habits, you'll find employer-imposed stress easier to handle. This includes:

- Resist perfectionism. Aim to do your best, no one can ask for more than that;
- Make to-do lists and cross off items as you accomplish them. Plan your day and stick to the schedule—you'll feel less overwhelmed;
- Flip your negative thinking. Try to

think positively about your work, avoid negative-thinking co-workers, and pat yourself on the back about small accomplishments, even if no one else does;

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable.

FOUR WAYS TO DISPEL STRESS

Take time away. When stress is mounting at work, try to take a quick break and move away from the stressful situation.

Talk it over with someone. Simply sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust can help reduce stress. Talking over a problem with someone who is both supportive and empathetic can be a great way to let off steam and help you become calm and focused.

Connect with others at work.

Developing friendships with some of your co-workers can help buffer you from the negative effects of stress. Remember to listen to them and offer support when they are in need as well.

Look for humour in the situation. When used appropriately, humour is a great way to relieve stress in the workplace.

TONY CARLIN, Senior Official

Review of Negotiating Arrangements gets underway

Over the past number of months there has been a growing frustration at the pace of progress of matters through the agreed negotiating machinery. The time frame for progressing review of policies and procedures continues to lengthen, and a growing demand for a business case for every proposal can be extremely counter-productive to meaningful discussions. As a result of this the parties to the negotiations, the five teaching unions, including INTO, and representatives of DE, CCMS, EA and other education bodies have agreed to enter into discussions facilitated by the Labour Relations Agency. The aim of these discussions is to improve the negotiating machinery and its practices. At present the parties have nominated three individuals who will draw up terms of reference and proposals on the way forward which will be considered by all the parties to the talks.

INTO considers these talks important and hopes that the outcome will benefit all those who are impacted by the outcome of the negotiation process.

EXAM BLOOPERS!!

Here's a few funny exam answers which pupils gave as their educated responses.

- Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada.
- Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines.
- Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock. After his death, his career suffered a dramatic decline.
- Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his subjects by playing the fiddle to them.
- In midevil times most people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the futile ages was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature.
- Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen." As a queen she was a success. When she

exposed herself before her troops they all shouted "hurrah!"

- It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented removable type and the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes and started smoking. And Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper.
- Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when the apples are falling off the trees.
- Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. She was a moral woman who practiced virtue. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.
- Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbis. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the Organ of the Species. Madman Curie discovered radio. And Karl Marx became one of the Marx brothers.

INTO Principals and Vice-principals Consultative Conference

Over 60 principal and vice-principal members from primary and post-primary schools across the North, attended an INTO consultative conference on Wednesday 20 April 2016 in the Glenavon Hotel Cookstown. The members received an update from Northern Secretary, Gerry Murphy and Chairperson of INTO Northern Committee, Mark McTaggart, himself a principal of a primary school in Belfast, on the current issues in education. Discussions focussed on Assessment, Budgetary Concerns, Industrial Action, Inspections and Investing in Teaching. The members also heard inputs from Nuala O'Donnell, Senior Official, and the representatives on the INTO National Principals' and Deputy Principals' Committee for District 1, Martin Short, and District 2, Mario Gribbon.

The members welcomed the opportunity to discuss the issues and to have their views as school leaders listened to by the union. There was clear consensus that the action on assessment should continue as the system was not fit for purpose. The high stakes nature of the Key Stage Assessments in primary schools were clearly problematic and of absolutely no use to schools or pupils, thereby defeating their very purpose. They are an evaluation of children not an assessment. The process of levelling pupils is fundamentally flawed and needs rethought. In post-primary schools the Key Stage 3 Assessments are meaningless as they don't fit with the Key Stage 4 Curriculum and GCSEs/A levels.

Major concerns were expressed about



the further cuts to education budgets through the increase to the employers' National Insurance contributions. While the increased employers' pension contributions have been met centrally by the DE the increase in national insurance – approximately 4-5% for employers is coming directly from schools' budgets and has had a huge impact on many schools' budgets. Principals highlighted the changes they were being forced to make, increased class sizes, reduction in Classroom Assistant hours, cuts in SEN support, etc. all of which directly impact on children's education.

INTO will be raising the Budget Cuts and the National Insurance Payment with the DE now and the new Education Minister when appointed. The thorny

issue of assessment still requires some attention and INTO Northern Committee will continue to discuss this with the DE, CCEA and the new minister to find an assessment system which delivers for the children of Northern Ireland and not the Treasury in Westminster.

The meeting was very positive and productive. Further meetings of INTO principals and vice-principals will be organised through the districts to support INTO school leaders. Details of the times and dates of the meetings will be emailed out to principal and vice-principal members in the near future. All INTO school leaders are encouraged to attend these meetings to raise and progress issues affecting education and schools currently.



UPDATES

INVESTING IN TEACHING

This scheme, which has the potential to offer up to 500 new teaching positions to recently qualified graduates, while allowing teachers over 55 to leave teaching with their pension entitlement intact, continues to be supported by INTO and members of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC).

The scheme had been the subject of a debate around the eligibility criteria for it and at the end of March 2016, a report detailing options was passed to the outgoing Minister for Education, Mr John O'Dowd, MLA. Unfortunately, before the report was fully considered by the NI Executive and a decision made the Minister's mandate expired. The report therefore awaits Executive and Ministerial approval to enable it to proceed.

INTO continues to support the scheme as a mechanism to refresh the teaching workforce in the north. We see the scheme as an innovative and creative approach to the use of monies which are ordinarily used to remove public sector jobs. As a consequence, INTO will be writing to the incoming Minister urging that the recommendations of the report are now implemented.

NISTR

Work continues on a range of issues regarding the employment of substitute teachers. These include:

The Right Of Permanency – Around 100 individuals have been identified as being employed on fixed-term contracts in excess of 4 years. In almost two thirds of these cases, individuals have been now made permanent or will shortly be made permanent. The remainder of schools are being contacted, to ascertain the reasons why the remaining one third of substitute teachers, who have been employed on fixed term contracts, in excess of 4 years, have not been made permanent. In such cases these individuals will be entitled to be considered for transferred redundancies.

Sick Pay – Work to agree definitions and consequently allow individuals to be paid sick pay continues. The matter will require a change to the 1993 pay regulations. INTO continues to demand that all individuals who fell sick from January 2016 will be included in any revised system. Consequently, INTO continues to advise all substitute members, to submit sick certificates to their schools for absences.

Disciplinary Issues Involving Substitute Teachers – Work is ongoing in this area, particularly in respect of the management of allegations of serious misconduct. Exploratory talks with the GTCNI are underway, to ascertain if they

may assist in the process.

Statement of Main Terms and Conditions

– Substitute teachers are legally entitled, after 4 weeks, to be provided with a statement detailing their employment. Work involving the NISTR register is underway and is being piloted. If this proves successful all substitute teachers, employed for four weeks or more, will now be given a statement by the school outlining the details of their engagement in the school.

Appropriate Use of NISTR – Guidance regarding this topic has now been issued to schools. NISTR placements should normally be used only for placements up to six months in duration. Vacancies in excess of six months should be publicly advertised on the EA or CCMS websites.

PAY

Talks remain stalled in respect of this matter. A recent offer of 1.37% was returned with significant strings attached to the process which INTO cannot accept. These include the removal of the automatic right of incremental progression from September 2016. INTO have also requested talks on pay restoration to commence. This is to address the drop in real terms of teachers' salaries resulting from pay freezes, pension rises and inflationary pressures on personal budgets.



INTO raised over £1,000 for the Homeless

Left: Chairperson Mark McTaggart making a donation to Welcome Organisation.



Right: St Malachy's PS, Coleraine, Fundraising for Homeless Appeal

Advertising in Printout

- Have you an event you would like to promote?
- Are you involved in providing a service that may be of interest to our members?

INTO members can place an advert in *Printout* at a reduced rate. Contact Christine McDonnell on 028 9038 1455 or email cmcdonnell@into.ie.

Printout is published by the **Irish National Teachers' Organisation** and distributed to members and educational institutions.

Articles published in *Printout* are also available on our website www.into.ie.

The views expressed in this journal are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the INTO.

While every care has been taken to ensure that the information contained in

this publication is up to date and correct, no responsibility will be taken by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation for any error which might occur.

Except where the Irish National Teachers' Organisation has formally negotiated agreements as part of its services to members, inclusion of an advertisement does not imply any form of recommendation. While every effort is made to ensure the reliability of advertisers, the INTO cannot accept liability for the quality of goods and services offered.

For all publications please visit our website at www.into.ie/NI/Publications/ and electronically by signing up at www.into.ie/NI/Publications/E-Newsletter/Subscribe/

PHASED RETIREMENT IN ACTION

Just because you've reached your 60th birthday, doesn't mean that your teaching career has to end if you don't want it to!

I am an 'older' Primary school teacher who has recently discovered the joys of phased retirement. Not something I had ever heard about, or would even have considered, before personal circumstances and a change in state retirement age made me look at all options.

Within my age group, I'm 61, there is now a perceived anomaly between teachers' pension age and the new state pension age for women, currently 66. This being the case I felt financially that I could not consider fully giving up work when I reached 60 but equally I did not think it feasible to expect me or anyone to cope with the rigours of full time class teaching into their late 60's.

I subsequently approached INTO for advice and they described the Phased Retirement Scheme to me and then with the full support of my principal, I applied to work 3 days a week accessing part of my teacher's pension – up to 80% – to top up my earnings.

Since beginning phased retirement, I have discovered a new lease and delight in my teaching life. My focus has become the teaching of Numeracy Support within Key Stage 1. With the backing of a very supportive principal, who could really see the benefit of dedicating extra quality teaching to core subjects, I have taken courses in Maths Recovery and the Numicon Approach, which have upskilled my knowledge in unforeseen ways.

Due to my 3 day work pattern, I now have the time to further research the teaching of Primary maths skills and feed my continuing learning back into the workplace. I have been leading in school CPD on the understanding and development of Mental strategies and skills, and on the basis of my work I have also been invited to speak to coordinators outside of my own school. Currently I am developing parent/child workshops for our Primary One classes, to encourage parents right from the start to get involved in education.

From personal experience I have come to realise that teachers of my age still

have a lot to give to teaching. I think that in this time of change employers need to consider more creative ways of how best to capitalise on this experience and knowledge. I would really encourage the profession to look at ways phased retirement could work – not only in a school based environment but in a variety of settings where best use could be made of our considerable teaching and learning experience.

The way forward, surely, is to work for the greater good of student and young teachers, and therefore, of course, to work primarily for our children who deserve the best possible quality of Education.

Embraced in the right way, I think phased retirement offers a genuine opportunity for teachers who want to extend their career, while also providing a win win situation for all involved in Education.



CATHERINE McBRIDE

ETI and the Teacher Unions

INTO, along with the other teacher unions in the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council, up until recently, met with the ETI once a term. At the last meeting INTO once again raised a number of issues relating to the recommendations of the Education Committee of the NI Assembly in their Report on the Inquiry into the ETI. The lack of engagement by the ETI and the repeated side-stepping of the issues led the NITC to withdraw from the meetings in frustration.

NITC then wrote to the Minister seeking a way forward. A meeting between the NITC unions, the Permanent Secretary, DE Officials and the Chief Inspector took place at the end of February 2016. It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group would be established to try and get agreement between the ETI and the teacher unions on guidance for schools on the information schools are required to produce for an inspection. Mark McTaggart, the current chair of INTO Northern Committee is representing INTO on this group. Mark is a principal whose school went through an inspection last

year so he has recent, relevant knowledge of the inspection system. The group met on 6 May 2016 for what should have been the first and only time. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach agreement and NITC were unable to sign the letter drafted by the Chief Inspector. INTO has written to the Chief Inspector outlining our concerns with the meeting and the draft letter and requested another meeting to try and get an agreed communication for schools before the start of the new school year. INTO will keep members informed of developments in this area.

At the same meeting in February with DE, major concerns were raised about the ETI complaints procedure and the lack of adherence by ETI to the Assembly Education Committee's recommendation; '.....that the school inspection complaints procedure should explicitly allow for the possibility of a revision to an inspection finding and that consideration should be given to a reformed school inspection complaints procedure which would allow for

investigation by personnel outside of the inspectorate or the Department of Education.

It was therefore agreed that ETI would engage with NITC and other stakeholders in this year's review of the complaints procedure. The procedure is subject to annual review but no significant changes have been made since its introduction in 2011. INTO, along with the other teacher unions will continue to pursue a fair, independent and just complaints procedure for teachers and schools in the north of Ireland.

Members are reminded of the INTO School Inspection Monitoring Form, which is available on the INTO website: http://www.into.ie/NI/Schools/Education/SchoolInspections/INTO_School_Inspection_Monitoring_Form.pdf

Following an inspection members are encouraged to complete this form and return it to INTO Northern Office to enable INTO to represent the views of members to the Inspectorate.

NUALA O'DONNELL, Senior official

Assessment



Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) has issued a cautious welcome to the End of Key Stage Assessment arrangements for 2015/16. The search for an effective assessment process to support the Revised Curriculum has been difficult and challenging. The previous proposals have damaged the confidence of teachers in the process. INTO has always engaged positively to develop an assessment system that is 'workload proofed and fit for purpose'. As a result of our engagement we have secured significant alterations to the assessment process.'

The excessive workload, generated by pupil portfolio, and a heavy overbearing moderation process, has been replaced with a process where schools submit internally agreed samples of work, to demonstrate their understanding of the Levels of Progression. This places the teacher's judgement at the centre of the assessment process.

Levels are awarded to pupils by teachers, based upon their holistic judgement of the pupils overall performance. This means that tasks no longer have to be specifically designed to try and meet the artificial hoops previously required by CCEA. There is no requirement for tasks to be submitted for approval.

As a professional body, INTO has always acknowledged the central importance that assessment plays in the teaching and

learning process. Over the years the profession has become more adept at using all the different types of assessment, to support the teaching and learning process. Schools have complex systems to collate and analyse all the data available.

Schools submit internally agreed samples of work to demonstrate their understanding of the Levels of Progression. This places the teacher's judgement at the centre of the assessment process

The original proposals would have impinged significantly upon these well-developed school processes. The awarding of a level to a pupil would be influenced by a wide range of factors, e.g. classwork, observations, weekly assessments, formal tests and diagnostic

assessments. It was an attempt to require this judgement to be evidenced that teachers found unworkable. As a result of our efforts, there is no requirement for teachers this year, or in the future, to collate evidence to support their judgement of levels.

As part of the process of moderation, teachers will be encouraged to engage with their colleagues, within their school or in school clusters. The purpose of the moderation is for teachers to have the opportunity to discuss their assessment processes in a professional setting. As part of this process, no teacher can be required to alter their judgements. It is envisaged that teachers will discuss the level that should be awarded to a sample of work. It is not the forum to discuss the levels awarded to individual pupils.

The CCEA moderation process should reflect the school process. CCEA's role is to take an overview of teachers' understanding of the assessment process. This is not linked to the levels awarded by teachers to individual pupils. A sample collated by the school, as part of the internal moderation process, is shared with CCEA as part of this process. Again at this stage, the agreed levels submitted by the school staff cannot be changed by CCEA. The purpose of the process is to enable CCEA an overview of the judgements of teachers.

There has been agreement between

the stakeholders that the misuse of assessment data for accountability purposes is detrimental to the assessment regime. We share the concerns of our Primary Principal members who have, throughout this process, voiced their opposition to the misuse of assessment data as a school accountability mechanism. They and their schools have had direct experiences of the negative impact of the misuse of assessment data, through such clumsy and inaccurate methods as performance scattergraphs and unfair comparisons to fictional averages. INTO members will not participate in an assessment system that allows this misuse of data at school, area or regional level. DE will only collate the anonymised assessment data at regional level.

Our members, at both classroom and leadership level, would welcome an effective, fair and transparent method of school accountability. Stakeholders have agreed that accountability data should be used within the framework of a Dashboard of Measures. INTO will continue to work to achieve a Dashboard of Measures, as outlined in our paper *Rising to the Challenge*.

As a result of these amendments,

secured by our ongoing negotiations, INTO has issued a new directive to members (Bulletin 2 2016). Members have been instructed to attend training, submit data if involved in Shared Education Signature Project, and to only be involved in moderation when they had volunteered to do so. This will allow our members to road test elements of the process.

Despite all the changes, End of Key Stage Assessment still remains within industrial action. This is because we have three areas of significant concern.

- The operation of the assessment process at Key Stage 3
- The relevance of the current ICT model and the availability of appropriate hardware, software and connectivity.
- The potential misuse of assessment data for accountability purposes.

In an effort to address these issues, INTO will engage proactively in working groups

established by DE, to try and design workable models. INTO will review all aspects of the process at the end of this assessment cycle – training, assessment

processes, moderation and the use of data.

Northern Committee will meet to discuss the feedback from members after the summer break, and will then decide upon the level of engagement for the 2016/17 year.

The solid support of our members, to our call for a boycott of the assessment arrangements, was commended at the INTO Northern Conference.

It has been that unwavering support that has allowed us to enter the discussions

from a position of strength. That strength has forced a sea change in attitudes to assessment. Northern Committee would ask that our members continue to give us this support and follow the directions as outlined in Bulletin 2 2016.



MARY DORMAN,
Northern Committee

Assessment FAQs – April 2016

What is the current direction about End of Key Stage Assessment?

Members are directed:

1. To participate in training related to End of Key Stage Assessment.
2. Submit levels ONLY if school is part of DE funded Shared Education Programme.

Participation in the moderation process with CCEA is entirely at the voluntary discretion of each member.

As a school Principal I am concerned that the assessment data I submit will be used as an accountability mechanism for my school.

DE will only receive anonymised assessment data from CCEA. They have committed, in writing, not to use assessment data in isolation. INTO would be very concerned if any school was 'measured' by End of Key Stage Assessment results, as that would be a

breach of the agreement that we have negotiated.

My Principal/Assessment Co-Ordinator has asked me to compile a portfolio of evidence to support the levels awarded to my pupils. What evidence is required as part of the End of Key Stage Assessment?

No evidence is required at any stage as part of the End of Key Stage Assessment arrangements.

Teachers should participate in internal moderation events to develop their understanding of the levels. At no stage should the moderation event be used to challenge a teacher's judgement of a level awarded to a pupil.

My Principal has instructed me to participate in the moderation process as the school has volunteered to work with CCEA. Do I have to participate?

No. The INTO directive means only members who volunteer to participate in moderation may do so.

I teach an End of Key Stage class and have to submit levels this year. Am I entitled to any time to do this?

Yes. DE will provide the same level of substitute cover that was available for the previous End of Key Stage Assessment arrangements.

I am head of the English Department in a post-primary school does that mean that I have to do all the work associated with the End of Key Stage Assessment arrangements?

No. The End of Key of Key Stage Assessment arrangements are cross-curricular. The responsibility and workload associated with them should be decided collectively with staff, and implemented after appropriate negotiations.

INTO Northern Conference



A large number of delegates attended INTO Northern Conference this year at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. The delegates were in fine form and passed a number of motions that will inform INTO activity on behalf of members in the year ahead.

In recent years the Northern Conference has been going from strength to strength, with new delegates coming forward from Branches across the north, reflecting a continuing growth in membership and an increased level of confidence on the part of members. This year's Conference was no different, and the new voices made a thoughtful and powerful contribution to the wider education discussion in the north.

The Conference heard from Minister

O'Dowd, who made a very brief speech. It will be remembered only for his attempt to shift onto teacher trade unions, and INTO in particular, Stormont's political failure to resolve the continuing mess around academic selection at age 11 on. The rest of the Minister's contribution had little to say on key issues such as school funding, or pay and terms and conditions, in what was a disappointing speech for INTO members.

The delegates themselves were exercised by a raft of other issues, ranging from the continued devaluation of teachers' pay by the Executive and the Department of Education [DE] to attacks on terms and conditions of employment, and issues of school funding. These three

issues will be central again to INTO activity, in what has become an industrial relations cul de sac for the trade unions and employers. In an attempt to move things along, INTO has sought to change the nature of the debate on pay to an issue of pay restoration, and we are hopeful that DE and the employers will recognise the opportunity this represents for us all.

School funding and budget cuts continue to dominate the entire education debate. It is not only the year on year reduction to school budgets and the knock-on in terms of staffing and services that are an issue, but the uncertainty schools continues to face. Schools continue to face a demand that they produce three year financial plans,





yet DE seems only fit to produce budgets for school on a year to year basis. A school principal is in effect being asked to guess at a budget for the three year period, which, in these days of oppressive accountability, is an unreasonable professional and personal risk to be forced to undertake. Teachers, of course,

are left to worry about their job security for all the same reasons. This is an issue that will not go away. The failure to properly address it makes a mockery of the concerns we frequently hear expressed by DE officials and employers' representatives for teacher well-being.

Other issues such as the unacceptable

assessment regime which DE are attempting to foist on schools and the proposed Investing in Teaching Scheme were also fully discussed. A very interesting debate was had about the proposed SEN Bill and the implications for children and teachers, flowing from the enacting of the Bill. INTO members contributing to the debate were very concerned that DE and the Education Authority need to begin a meaningful engagement with teachers around training implications and the additional resourcing implications for schools.

Northern Conferences may come and go, but the issues remain stubbornly the same. Nevertheless, INTO members do not tire of standing up for education and defending their rights and the entitlements of the young people they teach. This year, like the last 148 of INTOs existence, will see our work of organising and defending teachers continuing to expand.



Resolutions passed and remitted a



RESOLUTION 1

Conference acknowledges the proposed investing in The Teaching Workforce Scheme which would allow teachers 55+ to leave the profession with dignity. Whilst attempts to renew the teaching workforce can be welcomed, Conference condemns the rush to announce such a scheme without the correct groundwork having been completed. Conference notes with concern the salary limit that is to be imposed on the Scheme. Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

- (i) Work to ensure that the Scheme is open to all teachers who have been unable to attain a full time teaching post.
- (ii) Work with DE to put in place a similar scheme to allow Principals and Vice-Principals to leave the profession early with dignity.

RESOLUTION 2

Conference:

- (i) Commends the INTO membership for its continued solidarity in its opposition to End of Key Stage Assessment.
- (ii) Calls on members to continue to adhere to the ongoing industrial action in relation to Assessment.
- (iii) Calls on Northern Committee to continue to negotiate to ensure that any agreed Assessment arrangements are fit for purpose.

RESOLUTION 3

Conference:

- (i) Rejects the Education Budget 2016/17 and condemns the inevitable cuts to jobs and services that will flow from this budget.
- (ii) Congratulates INTO members for their perseverance in maintaining a continuous campaign of industrial action, since March 2015, in opposition to cuts imposed on the education sector.

- (iii) Calls on INTO members to remain steadfast in their opposition to the further cuts arising from the 2016/17 Education Budget.
- (iv) Instructs the Northern Committee to continue to make alliances with, and work along-side those in civic and broader society, who share our anti-austerity agenda in a renewed campaign against cuts to services and jobs.

Conference urges the NI Executive to:

- (i) Commit itself to substantially increase funding to the education sector, over the course of the next Assembly mandate.
- (ii) Move away from the artificial pay ceiling, imposed upon teachers as a consequence of the Executive adhering to the Westminster Government's Treasury guidelines on public sector pay.
- (iii) Remove the power of veto currently enjoyed by the Minister of Finance and Personnel over teachers' annual cost of living increases. Calls on Northern Committee, in concert with the NITC, to lobby the NI political parties to support these changes to education funding, and changes to the Executive's pay policy.

RESOLUTION 4

Conference notes with concern the increasing workload demands and stress relating to SEN in schools directly impacting on the teaching and learning in class and the emotional & physical wellbeing of teachers. Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

- (i) Work closely with the EA to ensure transparency of the statementing system and to ensure that the needs of pupils are identified where this has not been actioned, due to limited allocated slots in relation to Ed Psych.
- (ii) Support SENCOs in assessing their time budget and the manageability of their role in supporting pupils with SEN.
- (iii) Undertake, with DE and EA, a detailed analysis



at Northern Conference

of assaults in schools by pupils with SEN, considering the impact of limited resources and cost savings.

- (iv) Seek assurance that financing, support and resourcing for SEN will not be disproportionately impacted by budget cuts.
- (v) Seek from DE, clarity and reassurance for teachers in Special Schools, Outreach Support and LSCs on the long awaited area planning for SEN provision in NI, not currently provided by the Review of SEN Provision, through a consultation which will ensure that the voice of all stakeholders can be heard.

RESOLUTION 5

Conference:

- (i) Notes with dismay the derisory 1% pay offer, subject to teachers giving up their contractual right to automatic incremental progression put forward by Management Side.
- (ii) Demands the restoration of teachers' pay to the 2008 level in real terms and the remuneration of pay loss since 2008.
- (iii) Further demands that Northern Committee use all means up to and including strike action to achieve a fairer pay offer for all teachers.

RESOLUTION 6

Conference notes with dismay, the method of subsuming schools which has been supported by CCMS in the process of area planning in Fermanagh and other areas. Conference calls on Northern Committee through the NITC to ensure that the School Reorganisation Agreement is in place for INTO members who are affected by this flawed process of reorganisation.

RESOLUTION 7

Conference notes with concern, the high stakes nature of the current ETI school inspection process, which can threaten the viability of schools and have detrimental impacts on

teachers' well-being. Conference calls on Northern Committee, through the NITC, to work to ensure:

- (i) A genuinely open and meaningful engagement between the ETI and the NITC.
- (ii) An inspection system which is not punitive but is supportive, developmental and takes account of individual school situations is developed.
- (iii) That ETI is made genuinely accountable to the schools and the education sector through an open, independent, transparent and fair appeals process.
- (iv) The role of the Chief Inspector is demonstrably supportive of schools and teachers.
- (v) That members communicate their experiences of the inspection process to INTO, so as to better inform INTO engagement with the ETI, in order to gather a body of evidence that will enable INTO should the need arise, to enact a campaign of industrial action against the inspection process.

RESOLUTION 8

Conference notes with concern the withdrawal from NI by the AQA and OCR English Exam Boards. The great loss to the present system, a reduction in choice of GCSE courses offered and accessibility for a vast number of our young people. Conference calls on Northern Committee to engage with DE and relevant exam bodies to ensure that prospects for young people in the North of Ireland are not disadvantaged, and that every effort is made to reverse this short-sighted decision.

RESOLUTION 9

Conference:

- (i) Condemns the continuing use of unregulated transfer tests, which exclude children from some post primary schools.
- (ii) Congratulates those voluntary grammar



Left: John Dixon (NUT) presentation on retirement

Right: Mary Scullion, long service presentation. South Antrim branch



Resolutions passed and remitted at Northern Conference (continued)

schools who have stopped using unregulated transfer tests and moved away from “selection” and urges all other schools in the grammar sector to follow suit.

- (iii) Calls on the Northern Committee and the other trade unions to renew their campaigns against the socially damaging and educationally unsound practice of “selection”.

RESOLUTION 10

Conference notes the statutory requirement to assess ‘Using ICT’ from 2016/17. Conference notes with concern, the limited broadband access in rural areas. Conference notes the continued industrial action for nonimplementation and submission of results of ‘using ICT’. Conference calls on Northern Committee to:

- (i) Lobby the Department of Education to ensure that no school should be penalised in relation to the assessment of ‘Using ICT’ due to circumstances over which they have no control.
- (ii) Engage with the relevant authorities to highlight this inequality and seek to ensure that all pupils in Northern Ireland have access to the same quality of broadband provision.

RESOLUTION 11

Conference notes with grave concern:

- (i) The year-on-year increase in the number of students with special, additional and/or behavioural needs.
- (ii) The inadequate levels of training and continuous support provided for SENCOs.
- (iii) The worrying amount of liability and responsibility for SENCOs in their continuous assessment of:
 - (a) Support services for students with special, additional and/or behavioural needs.

- (b) Psychology services for students with special, additional and/or behavioural needs.

Conference requires Northern Committee:

- (i) To survey SENCOs in order to establish their main areas of concern.
- (ii) To demand the highest standards of:
 - (a) Training in SEN awareness and pedagogy for SENCOs, Principals and Senior Management.
 - (b) Continuous support for SENCOs from The Education Authority and the Department of Education.

RESOLUTION 12

The effect of food poverty is indiscriminate and is causing a measureable negative impact upon the education and health of our students. Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with and support partner agencies currently engaged in addressing this. Conference calls on the Northern Committee to lobby the Minister of Education to develop a strategy to address the impact that food poverty is having upon the education of young people.

RESOLUTION 13

Conference:

- (i) Notes with concern the lack of Continuous Professional Development available to teachers due to the downsizing of CASS and the establishment of the Education Authority which has added to the workload of teachers in school.
- (ii) Notes with concern the trend for ineffective online training outside of working hours as CPD for teachers in schools.
- (iii) Any definition of CPD should be a broad one to include the wide range of professional development activities

already undertaken by teachers.

- (iv) Calls on Northern Committee to engage with the Education Authority, and other relevant bodies to ensure that proper provision is made to ensure that all teachers have the opportunity to avail of relevant, high quality CPD to address the changes imposed on Education in NI.

RESOLUTION 14

Conference notes with concern, the lack of professional development opportunities for Principals.

In addition, Conference expresses alarm at the rundown of these agencies, designed to deliver professional support to Principals in schools as a result of the continued cuts levied at the Education Authority and other education partners.

In the face of this, Conference calls on the Northern Committee to:

- (i) Engage with the Department of Education and other providers, to agree an adequately funded professional development service for serving and newly appointed Principals.
- (ii) Work with the other teacher unions and education partners, to develop a professional development service that recognises the individual and collective contributions of Principals and enhances their knowledge and skills.

RESOLUTION 15

Conference asks Northern Committee to clarify with DE:

- (i) What is the future strategy for the SEN sector?
- (ii) Which DE publications are relevant to a strategy for the SEN sector moving forward?
- (iii) What are the resourcing implications for this sector?



Staff table



John Kelly receiving “another” award from INTO

- (iv) When will a consultation process take place?
- (v) If the SEN review been replaced by a working document or other publications?

RESOLUTION 16

Conference:

- (i) Commends Northern Committee on a very clear, well publicised and comprehensive strategy for Industrial Action.
- (ii) Notes anecdotally the high level of compliance in schools of our current industrial action, the positive feedback from members at Branch level, with regard to the benefits of reduced workload and stress to teachers.
- (iii) Requires Northern Committee to conduct a survey of the effects, for teachers, pupils and school management of our current industrial action, so that we may continue to plan for further effective industrial action, and that we may have sufficient information to lobby the Department of Education to eliminate unnecessary and ineffectual workload on our teachers.

RESOLUTION 17

Conference instructs Northern Committee to:

- (i) Develop strategies, in partnership with Branch and District Secretaries, which would encourage Union participation at school and Branch level.
- (ii) Encourage inactive Branches to use their funds for the purpose of re-establishing and re-invigorating these Branches.

RESOLUTION 18

Conference notes with concern the recent threats of legal action by the Westminster

Government which would inhibit public bodies, including councils and student unions from taking part in political boycotts.

Conference notes the effect that this would have on ICTU policy to 'vigorously and actively' support a campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israeli goods and services and those who profit from and support the illegal occupation of Palestinian Territory.

Conference calls on INTO Northern Committee to join other ICTU affiliates in resisting this threat being extended to Northern Ireland, and to ensure that INTO in the North of Ireland adheres to the ICTU policy of BDS.

Conference also calls on INTO Northern Committee to campaign with other ICTU affiliates to ensure the public procurement, in education, of goods and services are consistent with ICTU BDS Policy and that companies who benefit from the illegal occupation and restriction of the freedom of movement of the people of Palestine, do not also benefit from the use of public money in NI.

RESOLUTION 19

Conference notes with concern the upcoming referendum on the exit of the UK from the EU (Brexit) and the effect that it could have on:

- (i) The relationship between education partners across the island of Ireland; and
- (ii) Teachers' Conditions of Employment in areas such as mutual recognition of qualifications / mobility and loss of EU employment protections e.g. fixed-term and part-time teachers.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to work with CEC to develop a strategy which reaffirms the need for unity within ICTU and in particular INTO, including

protection of teachers' terms and conditions, should such an exit take place.

REMITTED TO NORTHERN COMMITTEE

MOTION 14

Conference notes with concern the adverse effects the ongoing cuts are having on teacher' health and well-being. Conference calls on Northern Committee to demand that the health and wellbeing of teachers is addressed as a matter of urgency with the Department of Education and other education partners, in order to protect the quality educational provision in Northern Ireland.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION 14

Line 7 Delete from 'in order to protect the quality educational provision in Northern Ireland'

MOTION 15

Conference calls on Northern Committee to vigorously pursue through NITC a scheme that would allow substitute teachers to choose to have their pay distributed over a twelve month period as opposed to ten months.

MOTION 16

Conference notes with concern the number of teachers who have been unable to attain full time employment despite vast experience.

Conference calls on Northern Committee to investigate current schemes available that enhance the prospect of employment for teachers who have had difficulty finding employment, and to negotiate for their implementation.





Congratulations to those members who entered the 2016 Art Competition and gave us another exceptional year of talent and skill to enjoy.

MARGARET FEGAN, SOUTH DERRY BRANCH

Our overall winner for 2016 is Margaret Fegan, South Derry Branch, with her painting "Donegal from Magilligan Point".

"Art has always been an important part of my life. My earliest memory is receiving praise from my parents for little sketches I'd done and encouraging me through school until I graduated from St. Mary's College, Belfast. I love teaching art to children and they get so excited to enter competitions that I thought I'd give the INTO competition a go. I had planned in previous years but with a family and fulltime work, there's always some other demand on your time. This year however, I made sure that nothing interfered.

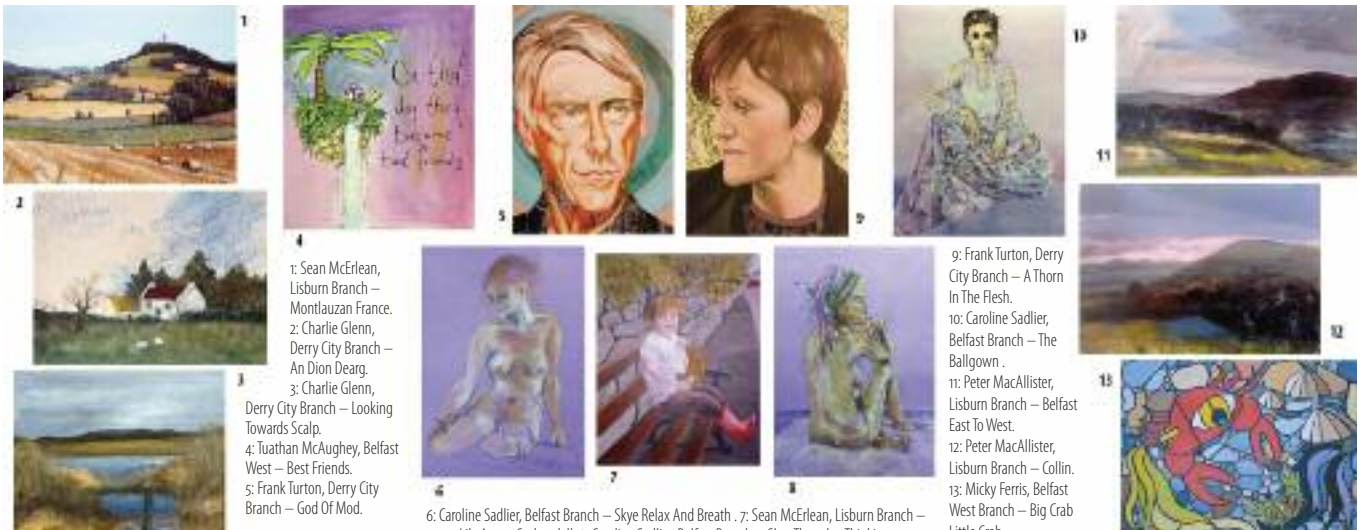
It was a family day out to Magilligan Beach during the summer that inspired me to paint this picture. The weather was glorious and the water was idyllic. A photo my husband had taken on the day had captured the light perfectly and I really wanted to do it justice with my painting.

I am absolutely over the moon to win the INTO art competition and I want to thank INTO for this wonderful opportunity for teachers to take some time out to re-engage with their creative side."



PETER MACALLISTER, LISBURN BRANCH

Peter MacAllister's painting "Sheep Island" was Highly Commended by the panel.



This autumn INTO will be inviting members in the north to participate in a photography competition.

Since the inaugural Art Competition in 2012 the painting flair of members has been recognised and awarded. In recognition of the wide scope in members' talent the upcoming 2017 Art Competition is taking a new focus – this summer could be the perfect chance to dust off your camera lens.

The Photography Competition will be launched in the Autumn edition of Printout and on the INTO website. Please check both for details.



INTO Photography Competition 2017



Derry City Branch Presentations

On 20th February, INTO Members from the Derry City Branch gathered in the City Hotel in Derry, to celebrate the former Branch Secretary Anne Sands years of hard work and dedication to the branch.

Gerry Murphy, Northern Secretary, attended the function along with Mark McTaggart, Northern Committee

Chairperson, and Dorothy McGinley, CEC representative. There were a number of retired and honorary members present, including Charles Glenn and Sheila Shanagher, who have worked with Anne over the years. Also present was former INTO Senior Official Brendan Harron. Some retired members were presented with their INTO long

service pins. Gerry Murphy thanked Anne for her dedication to the Branch and presented her with a gift from INTO members. Gerry was presented with a small gift from the Branch, thanking him for attending the event.

Anne will be missed by members of the Derry City Branch and we wish her all the best for the future.



INTO Joins TUFPP Delegation

Trade Union Friends of Palestine [TUFPP], invited INTO to join a recent delegation to the West Bank, as part of a fact finding and planning mission. Five intensive days of meetings with various Unions, Human Rights groups and activists alongside visits to important sites relating to the Occupation and to worker's rights, formed a comprehensive and eye opening programme.

The intention of the trip was to develop contacts with Palestinian Trade Unionists, human rights groups and others, to plan for future delegations both from TUFPP and to explore the possibility of sector specific Union delegation visits. We also aimed to find out what those we met wanted from us and what we could do in Ireland, through the Union Movement, to promote, support and strengthen their on-going struggle. Finally, we wanted to learn from the experiences of the Norwegian delegation we had joined. They had been visiting Palestine for 10 years, developing a wide network of contacts and programmes.

In short the groups we met included, the Palestinian Federation of New Unions, including their Women's section, PGFTU Jericho, the Knowledge and Socialist Thought Institute, a Bedouin Community leader, Teacher Trade Unionists and strike leaders, PACE (Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange), The Land Defence Coalition, Palestine Arab Medical Association. We also visited Hebron, Tulkarem Workers Crossing, an Organic farm worked in between the separation wall and an Industrial zone, a Water Treatment works, the Jordan Valley and parts of Jerusalem.

Throughout the visit it was impossible to escape the heavy military presence, the huge and growing number of illegal settlements and the military infrastructure put in place to protect them. A full report to members will follow but the one experience that, perhaps, best illustrates the situation in Palestine was our visit to Hebron City.

Hebron has a population of 200,000 Palestinians. It can be accessed only through one Israeli Checkpoint and can be closed with minimal effort by the Israelis. In Hebron itself there are around 500 settler Israeli citizens, many of whom originate from the USA.

In the centre of the city lies the historic



INTO banner on May Day at Tulkarem Workers Crossing

old town with its narrow streets and markets. An important religious site, the Il Ibrahimi Mosque is situated at the heart of this area and is a microcosm of the conflict. A site sacred to both Muslim and Jew, it is said to be the burial place of Abraham and Sarah, of Biblical and Qu'ranic fame. The Mosque allowed access for Jews to the site of the tombs, but in 1994 was the scene of what has become known as the Cave of the Patriarchs Massacre, when a New York born settler, Baruch Goldstein, shot 29 Palestinian worshippers dead and injured another 129 before himself being killed. Witnesses claimed that Goldstein had not acted alone and his ability to move through deserted Israeli checkpoints around the Mosque with an automatic weapon has never been adequately investigated or explained. Following the shooting the Mosque was closed for nine months and, on reopening, was divided in two, creating a new synagogue.

The area is now surrounded completely by Israeli checkpoints through which Palestinians must pass at least twice to gain access to their place of worship. Here they must mix with heavily armed Israeli soldiers and settlers who walk freely from their areas to the synagogue. Whole streets of previously bustling markets have been closed to protect the settlers. This area, with 20,000 residents can only be accessed through one permanent checkpoint which is closed at 9pm each night, turning it effectively in to an open air prison.

For Palestinians in this area to leave or return to their homes, to shop, worship, go to school, or attend university, all require passing through two permanent checkpoints. While passing two military

posts between the checkpoints, they are forced to mingle with armed settlers. There is no access for vehicles or indeed buggies or prams. In the middle of this area a Palestinian school has had to abandon its playground as a result of attacks from the settlers and now has a covered and barbed wired area where children must spend their break times. The tension walking through this area is palpable.

The historic market streets outside of this area are protected from above by wire mesh, to catch the rubbish, rocks and human faeces thrown from the settler houses in the buildings, which sit above it. Whole areas of the markets are closed permanently to those who owned the buildings, to protect the illegal Israeli settlements. At this point, it is worth remembering that this is a Palestinian Authority 'controlled' city, where Israeli soldiers can open and close access on a whim, and where they were filmed executing a Palestinian as he lay wounded on the ground a month ago. The Soldier responsible has been charged with 'manslaughter' having shot his victim in the head from close range.

There are signs of hope coming from the variety of Union and activist groups we met, working hard to defend rights, create new forms of resistance and education with a focus on workers' rights. We learned of a successful strike by factory workers in the Gershon Industrial Zone in Tulkarem where 90 workers, unsupported by the Palestinian Authority, established Unions or NGO's, took action to protest various abuses which had led to the deaths of three workers in a fire, the underpayment of wages and poor health and safety conditions generally.

to Palestine

From this sprang the development of the New Unions who are currently organising workers, including women, who suffer even worse abuses and exploitation than their male counterparts. We met with their inspirational Women's Section who are working to organise women workers in the textile and agri-food industries and to provide education and training to women in a range of areas.

Following a successful Fringe Event at Northern Conference and huge support coming from a variety of Branches as well as a huge majority passing a Motion supporting BDS, it is clear that there is a great deal of sympathy with the plight of the Palestinian people among INTO members. I would encourage members to think carefully about how they can personally adhere to the campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanction, encourage the Union at National level to strengthen our position on this and to contribute to TUFF campaigns, organise branches to send delegates on future visits and so on. The importance of visiting Palestine on such delegations cannot be overestimated. The support it gives to those we visit, the inspiration for future action and indeed the professional development it offers, make such delegations extremely valuable. INTO should continue to play a leading part in solidarity with our colleagues overseas. TUFF are also considering the possibility of seeking to bring out twinning amongst schools, councils, Unions and activist groups to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters as they search for a lasting and just peace.



From the top: Meeting with Teacher Union Rep in Jericho PGFTU Building, Checkpoint in Hebron City, Separation Wall.

Below: Palestinian School in Hebron,



An Invitation from the Retired Teachers' Association

The Retired Teachers' Association strives to keep its members in touch with former colleagues through a broad range of social events. There are branches throughout Northern Ireland and, apart from our Christmas Lunches which are a firm favourite, our members have enjoyed theatre visits, boat trips round Lough Erne on the Inishcruiser, the Folk & Transport Museum, the Ulster-American Folk Park, Glenveagh Castle, Percy French themed outings, the Castle Museum Enniskillen, NT Florencecourt House, the Somme Heritage Centre and many other popular social activities.

We also campaign at Stormont, Westminster and alongside other local and national stake-holders, like the Public Service Pensioners' Council, London to protect our interests and to keep our members informed and updated on issues affecting our teaching-pensions.

Founded in 1943 to provide a voice for the concerns of retired teachers and currently with around 2500 members, our association comprises colleagues from every type of school, college and university; Controlled, Further Education, Integrated, Maintained, Nursery, Primary, Special, Secondary, Grammar, High, Sixth Form College etc. and from all the various unions and associations and from every background and level within the profession.

Should you wish to become a member, you can authorise an annual deduction in December from your Teacher's Pension of the appropriate subscription, to be paid to the Retired Teachers' Association, which can be cancelled at any time, of £10 per annum.

Membership forms may be downloaded from the <Downloads> page of our website www.rtani.co.uk.

BRENDAN MCGLONE, Hon. Secretary



NIC-ICTU BDC 2016 report

Last month, the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions hosted the 2016 Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) for the unions and trades councils affiliated to the ICTU in Northern Ireland. The BDC was held in the Derry City Hotel and ran for two full days of debate and discussion.

For the past two years, the Northern Ireland Committee has been well served by the committed and efficient leadership of the Chair, Jackie Pollock of UNITE, and he has now been succeeded in this role by Maria Morgan of NIPSA. The vice-Chair of the NIC is a certain Gerry Murphy, who requires no introduction to readers of this journal.

The key themes of the 2016 BDC were those of decent working conditions and a fair income – at work and in retirement. These are essential components of any civilised society, along with the provision of high quality public services that meet every citizen's needs. In the past year, Congress has promoted this positive vision across both jurisdictions on this island.

The Congress Charter, launched last July and available to download from www.ictuni.org, sets out the key elements required to make Northern Ireland a better place in which to work, live and raise a family. A strong economy cannot exist without a fair society.

The Congress Charter for Fair Conditions at Work identifies five key principles which can achieve that goal. They are:

- A Living Wage which affords an individual sufficient income to achieve an agreed, acceptable minimum standard of living, taking account of the need for food, clothing, heating, accommodation, transport and other essential costs.
- Fair Hours of Work which provides

security of hours and certainty of income. There must be an end to low and zero hour contracts and precarious work practices.

- Right to Representation & Collective Bargaining – the right to have union representation without fear of victimisation and to have a union represent them in collective bargaining negotiations with their employer.
- Respect, Equality & Ethics at Work – No one at work should be subjected to bullying or any other form of abusive behaviour.
- Fair Public Procurement so that every worker employed under a publicly-tendered contract is entitled to enjoy all the rights and protections outlined in the Charter.

Congress believes this is an opportune time to develop a broader consensus on fair conditions of employment. To date, our campaign has focussed on seeking support for the Charter from MLAs in Stormont. In recent weeks, ICTU Assistant General Secretary Peter Bunting has addressed some of our reformed and enlarged local councils, as part of promoting the Charter and its values in person to all 11 District Councils.

Now, with the NI Assembly election and the inter-party formation of a new Programme for Government, Congress is keen to ensure that the principles outlined in the Charter are widely disseminated among incoming MLAs, so that they may inform discussions on how best to develop our society and economy.

For delegates the BDC, these core rights for workers are all things which can be won. This movement has shown its strength and gained wide public support for its constructive opposition to the

ideology of austerity. Proof of that was the immediate and welcome rejection by every Stormont party of the provisions of the Tory Trade Union Bill. The Employment Act just passed by the NI Assembly is a real improvement in employee protection compared to the fragile state of workers' rights in Great Britain – conditions which could deteriorate further if the UK votes to leave the EU in June, the subject of an USDAW motion which supported the Congress position on 'Brexit'.

There were resolutions from trade unions and trades councils calling to raise the standards of all workers, that those improved workers' rights are a floor and not a ceiling.

Up for debate were the components of the Congress Charter, new models of industrial relations, management and dispute resolution, industry-wide collective bargaining, flexible working, and industrial democracy. All of these, when underpinned by a firmly grounded culture of human rights could revitalise our movement and its role in the continuous advancement in the collective power of our members.

For the education sector, there were motions which are now resolutions on the governance of schools, on flexible working and on the NI Executive to undertake a series of measures to improve the skill set of the population.

Resolutions such as those mentioned show that trade unions and trades councils are thinking with creativity as well as compassion, as well as advertising the real advantages to being in a trade union – better pay, fairer treatment, more training and political influence.

JOHN O'FARRELL, ICTU

INTO Congress 2017 to be held in Belfast

INTO Congress 2017 will take place in Belfast at the Waterfront Hall. As is traditional at Congress, a local organising committee will liaise with INTO Head Office in Dublin in order to ensure that INTO delegates from across the island who will be attending are facilitated to participate fully in the Congress experience.

INTO Congress last came north in the mid-1990s to the Europa Hotel on Gt. Victoria St, Belfast and what a great Congress it was, riding as it did the post ceasefire high that engulfed the entire city of Belfast. The 2017 Congress affair whilst lacking that dramatic backdrop will

nevertheless be an exciting event for both INTO members and citizens of Belfast alike.

The local organising committee will make Congress 2017 a memorable one for INTO delegates by facilitating them with access to all that Belfast and the wider north has to offer. Delegates can expect a warm Belfast welcome and to receive advice and information on the excellent visitor attractions across the city and the north.

Delegates from INTO Branches across the island can be assured that they will be looked after in the best INTO traditions.



Brexit

The announcement of a referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union has provoked some intense debate over the last few weeks. Much of the debate has focused on the economic impacts of this proposition, but facts can sometimes be sparse in a heated debate.

The most recent statistics indicate that Northern Ireland had total exports of £9.7bn in 2015 and 59% of these exports went to the EU. Of those EU exports, just over 40% come from Northern Ireland's Manufacturing sector which sells almost as much to the EU as it does to the rest of the world combined. A further 19% of EU exports are accounted for by Wholesale and Retail sales to the Republic of Ireland alone. The manufacturing sector would likely see the largest impact from a BREXIT in terms trade in goods while the retail sector would be most affected in the trade of Services.

If we look specifically at goods exports, Machinery, Transport, Textiles, Plastics and Rubber manufacturing account for over half of all NI's EU trade. Food

accounts for 26% of goods exports many of which are processed goods originating from the manufacturing sector.

Employment in the manufacturing sector in Northern Ireland is highly correlated with EU trade. Of the 80,000 people employed in manufacturing in Northern Ireland almost one quarter are employed in the manufacture of food, another one third are employed in the manufacturing of Transport, Machinery, Rubber and Plastics. Northern Ireland's manufacturing jobs also have a large geographical spread; the three constituencies with the largest share of jobs are Fermanagh South Tyrone, Upper Bann and Mid Ulster. While Belfast does have large manufacturing base, these three constituencies have a much larger proportion of females employed in manufacturing, specifically in food.

At UK level there has not been much discussion of the threat to the Agri-food sector from a possible BREXIT and there is a very good reason for this. The economy of Great Britain is very different to that of Northern Ireland in

terms of both output and employment. For instance while Food and Beverages account for nearly one third of all NI's goods exports to the EU the equivalent figure for GB is just 8%. Employment in food manufacturing in Northern Ireland is three times that of Great Britain as a percentage of total employment.

Previous studies have shown that EU membership is vitally important in boosting the volume trade in food, much more so than would be the case in bilateral trade agreements.

The truth is that nobody can forecast the long term economic impact of BREXIT. To do so requires an assumption about the future trading relationship between the UK and the EU and that is a subjective political judgement not in the gift of economists. However, what needs to be acknowledged is that there will be disruption in the short to medium term and those impacts will not be uniform across the United Kingdom.

PAUL MacFLYNN, Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)

St Mary's Hosts Second Annual STRE@M Conference

St Mary's University College recently hosted its second annual student teacher research conference with the title "STRE@M", an acronym for Student Teacher Research Conference in Education at St Mary's.

Dr Beth Dickson from the University of Glasgow opened the conference with a keynote address entitled: "Why is student teacher enquiry important?"

Fifty BEd undergraduates then presented the findings of their final-year Capstone Projects in three parallel sessions. Capstone Projects were introduced into the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programmes at St Mary's in 2014 to enable students to pursue their particular areas of interest in educational research and to assist them in developing individual professional identities. The STRE@M Conference now has become embedded in the annual College Calendar of Events.

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) generously sponsored the conference, along with the prize for the best project. Eight papers



were nominated for this, but given the high standard of presentations, the prize ultimately was awarded to two students: Carla Darragh for her project, "Making Friends with the F Word: The Fear of



Above: Mr Martin Hagan (BEd Programme Coordinator, St Mary's University College), Dr Beth Dickson (University of Glasgow), Professor Peter Finn (Principal, St Mary's University College), Mr Mark McTaggart (Chairperson, INTO).

Left: Recipients of the INTO Capstone Prize Carla Darragh, Aislinn Fitzgerald

Failure and Coping Strategies for High-Ability Children", and Aislinn Fitzgerald for a project entitled "Production of a Storytelling Resource to Teach the Topic of Negative Numbers at Key Stage 3".

'Testing' times for NQTs: 5 apprehensions of a new teacher

I have mixed emotions as I enter the world of being an NQT. After a challenging yet enjoyable teaching degree program, I am admittedly nervous about starting my new career. I am however, equally excited and optimistic (yes, optimistic). I have many questions (unlike many of our students), and many ideas (I haven't run out of any, yet). I am proud to call myself a teacher.

This article is for both NQTs and existing teachers, and aims to admit frankly the apprehensions and challenges an NQT feels when entering their new world of work, and hopefully help us all to understand how we can get the best out of ourselves in a changing world, and profession, I'm sure you'd all agree.

1. What's going on out there?

There is so much to tune in to; is the NQT Workforce Scheme going to happen in the new Assembly? Are the proposed education cuts going to affect me? What do I do if I can't get enough hours to complete my NQT? There are a lot of questions, and it's hard to know who to turn to for advice. The truth is, it is not really our job to know. Our job is to shape and mould the minds of people in our classrooms. My first point is an important one that many may not have considered, it is important to engage with a union. They represent your rights and indeed, can give advice on all the boring stuff, but it is still essential to start a career on solid footing.

2. Uncertainty

It is true that full-time permanent roles are like needles in haystacks. Trying to put a positive spin on this, subbing around will help to give me the opportunity in building friendships with schools and teachers. It will afford me the opportunity to experience different school environments and see what one I would like to be teaching in. Everyday is a

learning day (only if you reflect, of course).

3. How difficult is it?

Having spent a year in a Student Union post, I have had the entertaining (it was) position of my former college classmates, now NQTs, tell me about the relentless workload they are doing each week in preparing, assessing, reflecting, marking etc. I know I face this reality myself (if I get work) in the coming months. The growing bureaucracy required by teachers in my opinion is stifling, it is the *bête noir* of our profession. It is getting to the stage where teachers are leaving the profession solely for this reason. We should not be flirting with the potential for high teacher turnover rates, which in turn can harm student achievement (Loeb, 2013). A recent article in the Guardian Online reported that 4 in 10 new teachers quit within a year. I am determined (and yes, naïve) to maintain a work / life balance so teaching doesn't become my work and life. Perhaps I am being too optimistic.

4. How can I CPD?

After my final teaching placement last year, if you had given me another reflective task to do I would have screamed. Then I had to do my reflective journal. My point is, whilst this is a "Reflective Profession" (thanks, GTCNI), I don't need to reflect on my reflection.

CPD needs a radical overhaul. I have heard and seen many teachers going on courses as an excuse to get out of the classroom for the day, to sit and listen to someone talk at them about what they should be doing when they themselves haven't been in the classroom in 20 years. Sound familiar? The majority of the learning from these days comes from the coffee break in between when real teachers actually share real world ideas.

This year, our student union held an 'ImaginED' discussion evening around 'The

future of the Classroom'. Here we invited any teachers via social media to discuss and share ideas around this theme. Feedback was great from attendants. This is, in my opinion, how CPD is going to go in the future. ImaginED, TeachMeet and other such discussion platforms which brings like-minded teachers together to share ideas around key themes.

5. Should I stay or should I go?

I would say comfortably that about a quarter of my year group are teaching outside of Northern Ireland. It is a very appealing option indeed. Take my three closest friends, one is off to Japan as part of the 'JET program', one is off to Canada, the other is hoping to teach in Barcelona. Improved lifestyles, working conditions, opportunities to experience new cultures whilst working, and better pay, to name a few of the benefits. Many of my friends have also jetted off to the Middle East to Qatar, Dubai and so on, posting regular Instagram selfies of 'life by the pool' after the day's work is done. As NQTs, they earn £25k tax free, have free accommodation, a driver, the lot. Certainly food for thought.

6. Am I really ready?

I think everyone is self-conscious going into their first day as a paid teacher. We all have our apprehensions. There is no way a degree program can prepare me for every little issue that I am going to be faced with. Like all work, there is an element of learning on the job. It is okay not to have all the answers. Ask for HELP. Note to those in positions of management or leadership; be a mentor not a micro-manager!

My plan? Walk before I can run. Enjoy the journey. Make an impact on my students. Do my best.

AIDAN FORKER, Vice President, St Mary's University College

Dungannon Branch raising their profile



Dungannon Branch of INTO during the month of April, gifted four Gaelic training balls to every school in their branch area in an attempt to raise the profile of the Branch. The distribution of the balls to twenty eight schools in total was undertaken by two current and one past Tyrone Senior footballer (Niall Morgan, Peter Harte and Ciaran Gourley respectively) who are also INTO members in the Dungannon Branch. The Dungannon Branch Committee would like to extend their sincere thanks to all those who assisted in this promotional event.



Mahdi Abu Dheeb President of the Bahrain Teachers Association is finally freed

Good news from Bahrain at last!

Since 2012 INTO had been very active at INTO Congress and other fora, adding the voice of Irish teachers to the international campaign for the release of the leader of the Bahrain Teachers Association, Mahdi Abu Dheeb. Last week, news of his early release from prison was announced by Education International and warmly welcomed by INTO.

On the right is an independent report from Tim Sandle of the Digital Journal, posted on the web on 7 April 2016.

There is also mention in this report of another 2 teacher trade unionists, held in prison without trial, in Iran and Colombia respectively.

International action can help and INTO will continue to do its part in campaigns for the release of teachers standing up for human and trade unions rights around the world. We need your help to do this and look forward to your continued support in this endeavour.



JOHN O'BRIEN,
INTO Global
Solidarity Network
Co-ordinator.

Bahrain teachers' activist Mahdi Abu Dheeb freed after long campaign

By Tim Sandle, Apr 7, 2016, in Politics, *DITIGAL JOURNAL REPORT.*

Mahdi Abu Dheeb, the leader of the Bahrain Teachers' Association, who was jailed for his work promoting human rights in his country, has been freed after over three years in prison.

Mahdi Abu Dheeb was imprisoned in 2012 along with his colleague Jalila al-Salman. Jalila was released in November 2012, however Mahdi remained incarcerated. The reason was, as leader of the Bahrain Teachers Association, Dheeb had called for a teachers' strike in support of democratic reforms. This was part of the February 2011 pro-democracy protests that began in Bahrain as part of the international Arab Spring.

According to Amnesty International: "Mahdi was then subjected to 64 days in solitary confinement. According to the United Nations, subjecting to more than 15 consecutive days in isolation amounts to torture... When he was interrogated, Mahdi says the police beat him."

The trigger for Dheeb's release was due to petitions and campaigns organized by Education International and Labour Start. These organizations decried the disregard for human and trade union rights by Bahraini authorities.

Education International's General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen welcomed the release, stating: "Mahdi didn't commit any crimes. He called for quality public

education for all and asked for the unions to be involved in the reforms. He fought for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly."

Van Leeuwen added: "In our view, the authorities' harsh reaction and Mahdi's long imprisonment were not justified. We do hope that this is a sign that trade union rights and quality education can become a reality for all in Bahrain."

Despite the successful release of Dheeb, other teacher activists remain behind bars. For example, Esmail Abdi, a teacher trade unionist, has been jailed by Iranian government for six years. Abdi was detained while travelling to Armenia, with the intention of obtaining a travel visa to attend Education International's World Congress in Ottawa, Canada.

The charges against Abdi were for "gathering and colluding with intent to harm public order" and "propaganda against the system." He was found guilty of these 'crimes' by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in February 2016.

A third jailed teacher trade unionist is Dr Miguel Ángel Beltrán in Colombia. Beltrán was arrested, and charged with rebellion in July 2015. He was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment in a high security prison. Beltrán's charge was because of his academic studies into conflict and turmoil within the country.

Lights, Camera, Action!

As part of 'Safer Internet Day 2016', Mrs Noreen Kelly (INTO Newry Branch Secretary) and her P7 class of 32 children from St Dallan's P.S. Warrenpoint, entered a film competition for schools, run by Czk, EATV, Capita and the Education Authority, in partnership with the Safeguarding Board for NI and UK Safer Internet Centre, based on the theme 'Play your part for a better internet!' The pupils had to plan and create a short film to raise awareness of the importance of keeping safe online.



Judged by a panel of experts from Czk, EATV, UK Safer Internet Centre, NI Anti-Bullying Forum and Safeguarding Board NI, the St Dallan's film was awarded 1st place and the pupils will now see their film used as a Czk Internet safety resource. The talented P7 film-makers also took home the top prize of a Pro-Book Computer, Laptop and trophy.

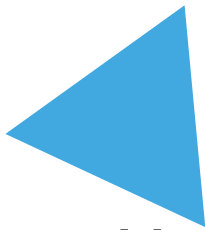
In addition to the SID Award the young moviemakers also emerged as overall winners at the recent Ulster Council GAA 'Live to Play Oscars' in the Tyrone GAA Centre at Garvaghey. Again, Noreen and her class planned and filmed a short video, this time highlighting the importance of road safety to young road users.

Left: David Wright, Director of UK Safer Internet Centre and Emma Louise Johnston, TV Presenter, with Mrs Noreen Kelly and pupils from St. Dallan's PS Warrenpoint, overall winners at the 2016 Safer Internet Day Awards.

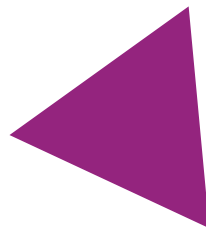


Ulster GAA President Michael Hasson and DOE's Jim Liddy with Mrs Noreen Kelly and pupils from St. Dallan's PS Warrenpoint, overall winners at the 2016 Live to Play Oscars.

Cornmarket, Britain's **best** car insurance provider?



most trusted
voted by motorists **2016**
*research by consumer intelligence



most recommended
voted by motorists **2016**
*research by consumer intelligence



best service
voted by motorists **2016**
*research by consumer intelligence



Best Insurance Company
IAM Surety
Administered by Cornmarket
Insurance Services

60,000 Auto Express readers and 24,000 motorists who took part in independent research by Consumer Intelligence have voted Cornmarket Insurance Services the UK's best car insurance provider.

To avail of this award-winning service,
Register at: www.cornmarketinsurance.co.uk
or Call: 028 9044 2200