

# NUT Wrekin News

A Newsletter from The Wrekin Division of the National Union of Teachers

Summer 2006

## Conference 2006

### Education and Inspections Bill

NUT conference in April voted overwhelmingly to launch a campaign of opposition to the Education and Inspections Bill. The Bill represents a fundamental attack on education at every level. Primary, special and secondary schools will all be affected. It will undermine and fragment pay and conditions for all teachers. It will deny a broad and balanced curriculum to millions of children. The bill will mean further steps towards the privatisation of education.

The Bill will allow governors to vote to turn schools into 'Foundation Schools' run by business or religious sponsors. The sponsor will have a majority on the governing body and can use it to narrow the curriculum and damage your pay and conditions. Parents would not be given the opportunity to vote in this process. The bill will allow these schools to have control over admissions leading to even more selection. It could lead to wholesale asset stripping of school buildings and grounds as the new trust gets ownership of the school grounds and buildings! It could transform the curriculum, denying many children access to subjects such as history, geography art, drama, music and languages. Any school which is regarded as failing by the new tightened Ofsted guidance will have only a year to 'improve'. Otherwise it will close with most teachers losing their jobs and only reopen as a trust or foundation school.

Send an email to your MP from the [NUT website](#) – thousands of colleagues have already done this and encourage other members to email.

Write to the governors asking them to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue.

Come to a meeting and play a part in the campaign.

### Salaries

Delegates criticised RIG and argued that no union should be prepared to be Ruth Kelly's crony. When highlighting our need to stay 'outside the RIG tent', John Howarth from Bradford paraphrased Martin Luther when he said, "Here we stand. We can do no other."

Conference reaffirmed our commitment to a fair and transparent pay policy, and reaffirmed our opposition to performance related pay. Discussion also focused on the STRB's attempts to worsen our conditions of service and to seek to link professional development with pay.

### Pensions

**We have achieved some success on Pensions, but delegates argued that just because we have safeguarded the pensions for existing teachers for the time being, we should not forget the reduced pension rights for people entering the profession.**

### Behaviour

**A motion on Pupil Behaviour was passed welcoming the Union's Behaviour charter. This highlighted the reasons why the Government should introduce system-wide reforms if the fundamental causes of unacceptable pupil behaviour are to be tackled.**

### **Ofsted**

A motion stating that the new procedures have an intrusive effect upon the running of schools. It called for a national campaign to show the inadequacies of the system and highlighting the bias of the system. Ian Murch (Bradford Association) compared Ofsted to the Spanish Inquisition. "They used to pop in to torture us with a four year rolling programme of inquisitions. Now we have 'light touch inquisitions' where we regularly torture ourselves, with the possibility of the inquisitors popping in at any time to ensure that we are doing it properly."

Some quotes from the much missed Ted Wragg on Ofsted: "After carefully plundering my 100,000 word thesaurus of educational terms, I have come to the conclusion that the whole system is utter crap." "Why bother with mere rebranding? It wouldn't have made much difference to Vlad the Impaler to rename him Nigel the Nice Guy."

### **...two more Ted Wragg quotes on Ofsted**

"Tiers of bureaucracy? 'Tears' of bureaucracy might be a better word. The government did set up two committees to look into the problems of duplication (you can't make this stuff up.)"

"Ofstedese is hopeless. Where does it get anyone to be told they are 'generally sound?' It should be a criminal offence to use such vacuous tosh with intelligent human beings, or with dogs for that matter."

### **Workload**

Delegates called for national action to defend members in schools against increased workload instead of, as members of the National Executive wanted, school by school action in those schools worst affected. It was argued, successfully, that a national problem needed national action and that we needed solidarity not isolation.

In an emotional speech that reduced many delegates to tears, John Illingworth described how cumulative stress over many years had made him so ill that he had had to leave teaching. He described the cause as increased workload and bullying by government. His speech was well reported in the Guardian ([I can't go on, tearful head tells NUT](#)).

### **SEN**

A motion on Inclusion called for the features and facilities currently found within special schools to be available for children with Special Educational Needs currently taught in mainstream schools.

The motion stated that some pupils will continue to benefit from an education in a special school. Wherever this education takes place it should be fully resourced and funded.

### **Other Issues**

Motions were also passed on Anti-Trade Union Laws, Middle East, Class Size, Equal Opportunities, Anti-Racism, Academies, Bullying and Faith Schools.

## **Locally**

Come to the meeting on the **16<sup>th</sup> May** and hear a full report on Conference. The issues discussed at Conference are **all** issues for us in the Wrekin.

We are dealing with issues locally on TLR's, Redundancies, Pupil Behaviour, Bullying, amalgamation issues, Workload and many more.

The Authority is planning four huge schools with satellite primaries (all are planned to be Academies). As seen in other areas this has severe implications for teachers.

We are currently in dispute with the Authority over a failure to adhere to the agreed protocol on the amalgamation of schools.

## **General Meeting**

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May**  
**Station Inn Horsehay 7.00pm**

### **Aly Langford**

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