

East Riding Association of the NUT Conference Report



Promoting Teacher Unity and State Education

Boycott of SATs

The newspaper and TV headlines from the Easter conference only partly reflect the reality of our annual conference. Very often at breakfast delegates to conference meet and say “what does the TV say we’re going to do today then?” The press has a very narrow view and anything makes news over an otherwise quiet Easter weekend. The SATs debate was thirty minutes out of more than twenty hours of debate! One thing that the headlines did get right was the unanimity of resolve about the proposed ballot to boycott SATs in May 2010. Please note **nothing** can be done without the agreement of a majority of members.

The conference resolution was to hold a **ballot** of members to allow legal industrial action to take place if necessary. It is not calling for a strike, we would merely refuse to administer these pernicious, narrowing tests. If the Heads’ Union, the NAHT, vote in the same way the tests simply will not happen. We will be able to broaden the educational experience of our year six pupils and return to a broad, balanced curriculum not tainted by teaching to the test. Sadly this May the testing arrangements remain in place.

Pay Claim

Aware that there was little other national news the press had to dig deeper to sensationalise the more mundane aspects of conference. Much of the conference is spent in fine tuning and strengthening existing NUT policy.

Our policy on pay has always been to track what happens to our pay compared with similar graduate professions and to compare our increases with the ongoing inflation situation. This year it was noted that to put these two aspects of pay right would need an increase of the order of 10%. We are not going to strike for it at the moment but we do need some starting point when we make a claim. Older colleagues may remember previous large pay rises such as the one following the Houghton report many years ago.

If governments kept their promises then large pay claims would be unnecessary. Reviews were promised in recent years if certain cost of living increases triggered them - the Government ignored them and denied the review, hence the need for our policy. The cumulative effects of recent years amount to far more than a 10% cut in real terms.

Classroom Protocol

Our secretary proposed a motion in the primary debate. He spoke about the need for a Primary Workforce Protocol ensuring that a qualified teacher is present in the classroom. This was passed unanimously. Unfortunately further strengthening amendments were not debated as Conference voted to move on to the next motion.

Mental Health

There was a long, detailed memorandum from the Executive on the issue of Teacher Mental Health. There were several powerful and moving speeches acknowledging the pressures that teachers are under today. We now have a foundation of policy, based on research, which will allow us to move forward on these issues.

Martin in the Chair

Local teacher Martin Reed proved to be a highly competent, fair President. Steering debate with a firm but good humoured hand making sure that all sides were considered and all points of view heard. A great credit to our association. Well done Martin!

Being National President is a very demanding role with an

incredible schedule of events to run. Martin not only coped well but managed to chat with our delegation in and amongst engagements.

His Presidential address to conference puts the detail to his choice of keynote for conference - "Promoting Teacher Unity and State Education" and is available in full now by contacting sue.green@eastridingnut.org or when published later electronically via our website.

Martin spoke with warmth of his own education in Wales and of his continuing commitment to a fully funded, state education system.



From the left: Martin Reed, National President; Sue Green, East Riding Assistant Secretary; Brian Swinton, East Riding Secretary; Martin's wife, Ros McNeil. The picture was taken at a conference reception.

Remember, for more detail about conference or any of the activities of your local association look at www.eastridingnut.org . The website also includes advice and guidance and articles from previous newsletters.