UNIONS UNITE TO STAND UP TOGETHER FOR EDUCATION PROVISION & JOBS PROTECTION

TAKE A STAND TOGETHER AND MAKE IT A

Yes VOTE
In November the President, Sandra Brown and Audrey Stewart, Field Officer attended the ETUCE Conference which focused on Early Childhood Education. This term refers to education in its broadest sense of child care and development, including early child care services provided in kindergarten, nurseries, pre-school classes and other similar settings.

It goes beyond what is referred to as pre-school education. Education is a human right and as such ETUCE advocates for an ECC curriculum in framework that is holistic and designed to meet the educational, developmental, nutritional, health and individual needs of children. Early Childhood Education is seen as an essential foundation for successful life-long learning, social integration, personal development and later employability and therefore should be prioritised by all governments.

We heard from a number of speakers how ECC is progressing in a variety of different countries. One of the most interesting was Matthias Urbahn, from The University of Bolton (Roehampton) who had undertaken an exploratory study on impacts and implications of Privatisation in Early Childhood Education.

The study included case studies from a range of countries e.g. Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Ghana and Ireland. The study has shown that there is an increasing trend towards privatisation in ECC, which threatens to overshadow public provision. This trend has the very serious outcome of fostering discrimination within the ECC workforce in terms of the reciprocity between teachers' qualifications, contracts and remuneration and therefore is a very significant factor influencing equality in education. This in turn widens the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged. Providing high standards and safeguarding the best quality of ECC is the responsibility of governments, helped by working in close collaboration with teachers and teacher unions.

The UTU has always promoted the importance of Early years Education and the necessity for all children to be able to access teacher-led provision.
UTU News

To Teachers... they have lost a minimum of 15% from their earnings during recent years and it will be yet another increase in pension contributions in April 2015!

Unions refuse to sell out teachers hard earned rights on pay progression

Increased class sizes and a seriously increased workload. Teaching Allowances are not being replaced, yet the work still goes on, with volunteers papering over the cracks doing more and more for less.

Teachers kid themselves that they don’t mind, that they are doing it for the sake of the pupils – and that is all very well. But they are doing it at a huge cost to themselves in terms of work/life balance. Many teachers feel guilty that they do not have enough time to spend with their own children just in order to ensure other people’s children don’t miss out.

The Education Service cannot go on like this. More and more teachers are experiencing burnout. Are the pupils really getting a fair deal out of teachers who are over-worked and under-valued? Schools often bear the brunt of society’s problems as well – of all the problems parents are facing due to job losses and society’s problems as well – of all the problems they end up dealing with their own children just in order to ensure their children’s education can go on. What are teachers doing to help their children in this crisis?

PAY PROGRESSION

Automatic progression costs the employers more than 1% – it has already been paid to any teacher who was entitled to move up a point in September 2014. It is a contractual right, and has been for many, many years. Our concern is that at some point in the future there will be an attempt to change the legislation to take that contractual right away.

Enough is enough. It is time for teachers to show that they are not going to be treated in this contemptuous way. We may have to forgo the few pounds that the Education Minister is preventing us from getting this year, but it is time to try and make a mark – teachers are not going to be tempted to sell the rights they have under their current contracts for a mere 1% in their salary!

Indeed, they might consider all the extra that they do already and adjust that to fit in with what they are actually being paid for – I am sure teachers would appreciate that extra 15% of time.

TEACHING ALLOWANCES

In parallel to this, the schools have experienced cuts to budgets, loss of staffing leading to disappointing, but prepared to go into negotiations to fight for what we could on the principle that something is better than nothing.

When we got to the negotiating table and found that the price for getting the pay 1% was to enter talks to end automatic incremental progression up the pay scales, the UTU Central Executive Committee took the decision that this was totally unacceptable and UTU should not be doing anything that might take us to the same place as teachers in England and Wales who had their right to automatic pay progression stripped from them last year.

PAY OFFER

Following a paltry rise of just over 2% in April 2015, a Board meeting in July this year it sought a “substantial” pay rise, and quoted all the reasons why this was justified.

In all, the teacher unions estimate that teachers have lost a minimum of 15% from their earnings during recent years and it will be yet another increase in pension contributions in April 2015!

There is some comfort for those closer to the end of their careers – there is protection for those who are within 10 years of pension age 60 at April 2012 and tapered protection for those in the next three and half years beyond the protected group.

Many teachers into the future will have different entitlements depending on which part of the scheme they have contributed to – NP60 (Normal Pension Age of 60), NPA 65 or NPA 68 so teachers will probably need much more comprehensive advice on what their options and entitlements are.

The powerpoint presentation, expert prepared by Seamus Gallagher, DE, and his team is available via the UTU website at www.utu.edu and a series of Frequently Asked Questions will accompany the new deal. These are also available via the Department of Education website at www.deni.gov.uk. Any UTU member who wishes to discuss any aspect of pensions can contact UTU Headquarters for information.

The UTU also recommends that members contact Platinum Financial Services (see your UTU Diary for contact details) for a more detailed assessment of their entitlements and advice on the best way to plan for retirement.

While the scheme is considerably less attractive than it once was, it still provides a better deal than many private sector schemes so anyone who is contemplating opting out of superannuation contributions should most certainly take advice from an independent financial advisor(such as Platinum), before making that decision.

Pension Offer

Driving an even better car insurance deal for members

Cornmarket Insurance Services now have joined forces with Aviva to provide UTU members with:

- More choice
- Value for money
- A trusted household name

Register for a quote and WIN on iPad

Online: www.cornmarketinsurance.co.uk

Or phone: 028 9044 2200

You’ll then be able to provide us with your renewal date.
The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) is an inter-agency regional forum bringing together over 25 statutory and non-statutory sector organisations, promoting a coordinated approach to tackling bullying in our schools and communities. The Forum is hosted by the National Children’s Bureau (NCB) NI and funded by the Department of Education. Despite levels of bullying behaviour having remained constant during the past decade, the types of bullying that are taking place have changed greatly. This is possibly most clearly established through Department of Education Library Boards.

Throughout the review process, the Forum members found that legislation and guidance do not go far enough in many respects. Consequently, practice across schools is often inconsistent both in terms of the content of anti-bullying policies and also the measures taken to combat bullying behaviour. In June 2014 the Minister for Education informed the Assembly of his intention to develop new anti-bullying legislation and its proper implementation in the school. The document also made proposals around the scope of this policy, seeking to address concerns surrounding schools’ responsibility (and legal ability) to take action on cyber bullying incidents that happen outside school hours. It is proposed that the legislation would include “all pupils in their conduct towards and interaction with other pupils.”

TARGETED APPROACHES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Determined approach can make difference standing the many backgrounds that children come from and how teachers have to be mindful of that in the classroom. It helped me to see the issues facing children and parents and the value of a holistic approach to my teaching and the great importance of ‘the child’.

Reflecting on the challenges of her profession Barbara continued, “Generally I enjoy all of that teaching but the lows points come when I felt that bureaucracy and external pressures often caused myself and others to risk losing sight of ‘the child’. There was, and still is, in the profession a danger of getting overwhelmed with administration resulting in the sapping of teachers’ energy with the losers being the children.” Barbara feels passionately that she always endeavoured to find balance between external demands, account-ability and targets with the preparation and delivery of quality teaching and learning experiences for the children in her care, whilst supporting parents and encouraging and inspir-ing her colleagues.

A passionate advocate of the professionalism of teachers Barbara became a member of the UTU in the early seventies when at college. In 1987 she became more actively involved by attending local meetings and eventually became Northern Ireland Branch Treasurer in 2000. She states, “I attended numerous conferences and made tremendous friends, shops with other Union members over the years. I will always value the leadership, structure and a feeling of security it has being part of the UTU.” She reflected that, “Although I enjoyed all of my teaching years and I speak highly of all the schools I worked in my heart is very close to Enniskillen Model where I spent 26 full-filled years. The leadership is second to none. I had enthusiastic, hard-working colleagues and above all the children are the best one could ever hope to teach. Parents are supportive and are encouraged to take a very ac-tive part in their children’s education. The partnership between parent, child and school is what wins in the end.”

The Principal of Enniskillen Model, Mr Winston Glass, is delighted for his former colleague stating, “I was delighted when I heard about Mrs Brand’s recognition in the New Year’s Honours List. She has served Enniskillen Model P.S., and the local community with great commitment professionalism and dignity for many years. It was wonderful to hear about this such a worthy recipient being so suitably acknowledged.”

When asked what receiving the award will mean to her and her family Barbara concluded, “I am delighted to receive the MBE award. It is such a honour and complimentary that one from Enniskillen Model has been chosen. I enclose a selection of the very good work that is done in ‘The Model’ each year. I didn’t receive this award on my own. This is due to the support and encourage-ment of many good colleagues, family and friends over the years of my years of teaching”. As Barbara enjoys her retirement and now throws her energies into her community involvements. Her former colleagues in Enniskillen Model wish her well and, whilst she is highly appre-ciative of her link with the school, they in turn feel her absence keenly as a caring and insightful mentor and friend.
TLP helps to develop:
- LISTENING - supports attention, scholastic and study skills.
- COMMUNICATION - supports language, voice, speech, and communication skills.
- INTERVENTION - supports therapeutic, rehabilitative, neu-redevelopmental, and sensory needs.
- WELLNESS - supports a healthy life balance of mind, body, emotion, and spirit.
- PERFORMANCE - supports achieving higher states of physical, mental, musical, and creative ability.

My world, Glastray College raises £1,157.50

Glaslary College raised £1,157.50 in the Pears Sponsored Read It during the month of October. Pears raised over £1.5 million in that time.

Included in the photo are the four top raisers who among them raised over £1,000. They are pictured with Mr. Donald Bell, the Principal of Glastray College. Mr. Bell presented them with their certificates.

Pears provides a range of support-selling services to people experiencing mental health issues. Glastray College also provides home response domiciliary care, and a day activity, ‘In and Out of Home’. The children who are involved in the scheme and who are on the waiting list, are encouraged to work with others in the community.

Mr. Bell said: “My classes are usually small groups or one-on-one and I love to work with people who spend one and a half days at each of the schools. The programme gives me the chance to make a difference - I feel that I am changing lives in a positive way.

“I wish my students could see that learning a new language is a gift to yourself and lets you enter a new world. French for example, isn’t just France, it’s also places like Belgium, Luxembourg and Senegal - it’s bigger than a nation. In my classes, I try to work outside the boundaries of France and teach from a world view. For me, being a French speaker is more important than just being French. And if France opens up you to a new world, think what a Korean, Japanese or Mandarin could do!”

Prancing Regis’ work in the classroom Ellen McCrea, Vice Principal at Shimna Integrated College, said: “Nothing compares to having a native speaker bringing their language and culture into our school. Most importantly, Regis has brought his language, his fabulous cooking skills and his French connections to our students.”

For schools interested in hosting a Chinese Language Assistant the British Council is offering additional funding support - for more information on this, or any other language, visit http://www.britishcouncil.org/language-assistants. Deadline for applications is March 27 2015.

The Language Assistant programme is supported by the Department of Education Northern Ireland and is just one of a number of educational programmes available through British Council Northern Ireland.

For more information visit nireland.britishcouncil.org


**DROMORE PUPILS RAP MINISTER**

As Dromhiliary Primary in Armagh deservedly celebrated the opening of their new extension, Dromore Central was making a plea for their promised, and much needed 28 classrooms.

Please Mr Minister! We are immensely proud of the children in Dromore Central Primary School. Realising their school was faced with a seemingly insurmountable problem they rallied up their sleeves and decided to appeal to Mr O’Dowd themselves.

They worked as a group (community working together); and, employing their creativity and ingenuity (thinking skills) came up with a plan. They wanted their presentation to be relevant, not only to today but in the future (sustainable) and, of course, it had to be cost effective (financially viable).

Their finished product – entirely their own work (independent thinking) can be found on YouTube. Simply search for ‘Please Mr Minister, Dromore’.

So, why was this necessary? In 2008 Department of Education approved a new build for Dromore Central Primary School. The new school was to be 28 class based – ideal since the school has had 4 classes of each year group for some time and predicts no change.

However, the Department has now “downgraded” the building, on which construction is underway, to a 25-class based school.

The immediate difficulties are obvious, but coupled with the fact that, in the last eight months, planning permission has been passed for an additional 473 houses in Dromore, there can only be complications ahead.

At a recent meeting the Minister, Mr O’Dowd, along with two Department of Education Officials, offered some possible solutions:

1. Department of Education would cap the enrolment number, thus meaning local children will not be admitted to the school on their doorstep.
2. Children who move into the new houses in Dromore would continue to attend their former school, regardless of the distance!
3. Department of Education would supply mobile classrooms at a cost of £200,000 each to sit in the playground at the new school.

None of these suggestions show forward planning or vision and none of them makes financial or educational sense.

The mind boggles!

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**ALL ROOTS LEAD TO HAMILTONSBAWN**

As Hamiltonsbawn Primary School has been involved in the Roots of Empathy programme since it was introduced within the Southern Education and Library Board area, and it is currently being implemented in the P2/3 class.

This programme teaches children about feelings, their own feelings, and the feelings of others. Once every three weeks, baby Essie and her mummy will visit the classroom. A trained R.o.E. Instructor will gather the children around a green blanket in the school hall and together they watch the baby grow.

The Instructor coaches the children in observing the baby and reading the cues the baby gives as to how he/she is feeling. Is the baby happy or sad? “How can you tell?” We use this discussion as a lever for the children to talk about their own emotions and to understand how their classmates feel.

The Instructor also visits the classroom before and after each Family Visit to prepare and reinforce teachings using a specialised lesson plan for each visit.

For more than ten years across Canada and internationally, thousands of children have been learning respect and care for one another with the lessons started through their R.o.E. baby. We are excited that we have been chosen to participate in Roots of Empathy again this year.

In January we had a visit from Canadian practitioners and they were able to see the programme being delivered within our school.

Mr Mike Donaghy, SELB, was guest speaker and performed the official opening of the extension.

The Principal, Mr Keith Campbell, is justifiably proud of their new look, as are the parents, governors and staff. At its opening, Keith also paid tribute to SELB personnel for the very professional assistance they offered at all stages of the work.
PUTTING THE POLICY INTO PRACTICE

In our last edition of UTU News I brought to your attention the on-going deliberations and machinations of the European Commission and the United States government regarding the proposed trade agreement, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

By now, some of you at least may be better informed about it as it has been making national and international headlines in various media over recent months.

Driven by large global corpora-
tions the agreement seeks to de-regulate goods and services in the interest of profit.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

First you change the terminol-
gy – so “de-regulation” becomes “harmonisation” – but the same thing really.

If two different standards have to harmonise either one is downgraded, one is upgraded, or they compromise.

Past experience of trade agree-
ments, and any understanding of corporate greed, quickly leads us to conclude that the first of these is what happens.

WHAT DOES IT AFFECT?

GOODS

Food Safety & the Environment

US agricultural producers want to de-regulate trade in its growth hormone-fed beef - EU restricted since 1988, is choromated, i.e. bleached, poultry – EU banned since 1997, all GM cereals and salmon – must be labelled within EU, i.e. lossening of pesticide & chemical controls – much tighter in EU. Europe is the last stan-
tural region of the world where ge-
netically modified foods are not endangered, and must be labelled.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

In using the “precautionary principle” with relation to chemi-
cals, the EU was enabled to ban “neonicotinoids”, the pesticide that so decimated the global bee population, so as to risk 80% of the human food supply. Removing this, as the US wants, further enhances the “need” for GM foods. In relation to cancerous cosmetics and the labelling of allergens - the EU cur-
cently bans 1328 chemicals and regulates over 250 ingredients; the US bans 11.

The undermining of European regulations is often then referred to as removal of red tape – presumably to have it seem as something more desirable than it is.

Even with such changes as these, we can begin to see how the landscape of farming, food production and health & welfare would be changed throughout Europe.

SERVICES (N.B. most trade agreements have hitherto not incorporated Services, but rather been confined to Goods.)

We resonate with teaching colleagues around the globe in firmly believing that education is a public good and should be pub-
lically funded. Only in ensuring this can educationalists be sure to be the people who are informing curricula, assessment purposes & procedures and regulating ac-
creditation. An education system at the mercy of corporate profit making is an abuse of public money – it is worth remembering that human. The health service is the transference of public money and assets to a private sector whose main consideration is to make their own profit.

Education, like all public ser-
ices, is up for grabs within TTIP. Where private corporations hold the tender, they hold the power.

Instead of our education authori-
ties determining the benefits or otherwise of resources, including human, they will be decided by whatever a particular company demands to be bought. There will be an impact on teaching because the state has abdicated its children’s learning to market forces and profit-seeking. We see the Eng-
lish education system on this path already: free schools and academies that don’t require their teachers to have any formal training or qualification; “low fee” private sector, failing standards!

It is actually this ISDS mecha-
nism that has been most vociferously opposed in Europe generally – from the recently closed European Com-
mission consultation (mentioned in last edition), have resulted in this part of the agreement now being somewhat under threat.

The commission received by far, its biggest ever number of responses - 150,000 – showing the huge degree of civil objection it has generated. And this from a commission that didn’t want citi-
zens to know anything about the agreement until a German newspaper leaked reports in May 2014! Having hoped to have signed off on TTIP completely by end of December 2014, it is currently the wish of the US government and the EC to complete in December 2015. Momentum on both sides of the Atlantic has been mount-
ing in the interim, the NHS in Eng-
land has been showing particular opposition since the summer.

Examples (N.B. under ISDS within other trade agreements)

Cosmetic millionaire, Ralph Lauder sued the Czech govern-
ment because of a change to the regulation of commercial TV licensing – ISDS awarded him damages of $353m – equal to the 2003 Czech healthcare budget. An Ecuadorian court ordered Chevron to pay $9.5 billion for environmental destruction in Ecuador – taken to ISDS Chevron got it overturned.

Hamburg Environmental Authority imposed water quality standards. Hence Vattenfall’s coal-fired power plant. Using ISDS Vattenfall sued, winning $1.4billion from the German state.

The hidden dangers of TTIP

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Win a Hotel Break with your UTU Membership Plus Card

Suggesting where you would like to save with your UTU Membership Plus Card is a great way to help Membership Plus grow in the way which benefits you the most.

All suggestions received by 31st March will go into a draw to win a one night stay at any Select Hotel of Ireland - new offers as they are added. Check the Office Website for all offers and update regularly. If you have any suggestions for new offers, please email office@membershipplus.co.uk. We would love to hear from you and, you never know, you might just enjoy it!

New Offers to Membership Plus Card Holders...
- SD Kells - 15% Discount, branches province wide.
- Grand Opera House - 20% Discount, Belfast.
- Robinson & Cleaver - 15% Discount, Belfast.
- Titanic Walking Tours - 2 for 1, Belfast.
- Mark Nesbitt Hair - 15% Discount, Belfast.
- Frou Frou - 25% Discount, Enniskillen.
- Finn Lough Resort - 25% Discount, Enniskillen.
- Shuphoric Shoes - 15% Discount, Enniskillen.
- Royal Court Hotel - 10% Discount, Portrush.
- Feith Jewellers - 15% Discount, Craigavon & Portadown.
- Corick House Hotel & Restaurant - 10% Discount, Clogher.

To view the full range of offers, see new offers as they are added throughout the year, enter competitions and much more - ensure you have registered your 2014-2016 Membership Plus Card at:

www.membershipplus.co.uk/teachers

Many teachers are unaware of how the Policies and Procedures used in schools are arrived at. In this short article, Avril Hall-Callaghan, General Secretary of UTU and Chair of Teachers’ Side of the negotiating machinery bring us up to date with recent work done in updating and producing new documents...

Winning the President's Award for his key contribution to the North's media, Concordian Andrew McComiskey is this year's FIT Residential Seminar. This year's FIT Residential Seminar took place in the Malone Lodge Hotel, Belfast on the 30th/31st January. It was extremely well attended and the Old Faithfuls were delighted to welcome a host of new faces.

The theme for the Friday evening session was “Steps into Teaching” and we had a panel with a wide range of experience answering questions and giving sound practical advice both to those who have not yet embarked on their journey in teaching and those who are in the early stages of their career. It was acknowledged by all that it was a very useful, practical and informative session and we extend thanks, not only to our panel members, David Thompson, Susan Thompson, Steven Savage and Aaron Davie, but also to the Chair, Aaron Davidson who facilitated the event very effectively, and to all who offered help and advice from the floor.

Teachers being teachers, the conversation and tip-sharing extended throughout the evening where participants enjoyed a meal and some general chatter late into the night. Thanks to Commark Insurance who sponsored the wine and soft drinks which accompanied the dinner – much appreciated at the end of a busy week!

The Saturday morning session focused on the resolutions which will be coming before our Annual Conference in March. Many of those participating in the FIT Residential will also be attending the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle to see how those resolutions progress and perhaps even to take part in the debate. FIT will still be bringing their own resolution relating to concerns around the employment prospects for NQTs and RQOs in this time of austerity, providing an opportunity not only to have their voices heard but also to shape the policy of UTU. We look forward to receiving not-so-old acquaintances there if you are a student or a teacher in the early stages of your career and would like to attend our next event and see what FIT is all about just contact the office on 09662216 or drop an email to office@membershipplus.co.uk.

We would love to hear from you and, you never know, you might just enjoy it!

The partnership working approach is used in the Teachers Side of the Negotiating machinery bring us up to date with recent work done in updating and producing new documents...
It resulted in their children being difficult as so distressing that described these social interaction isolation. Their child frequent distress and other children at school. However, the survey that their child’s ASD behaviours, including difficulties communication and repetitive difficulties they experience children with ASD often conceals distress experienced by some child for Autism and Related Conditions group, Northern Ireland Schools by our recently formed lobbying 2014) alongside results from a of children with HFA/AS (Goodall, 2014). This article synthesises two perspectives of ten parents of children with HFA/AS (Goodall, 2014) alongside results from a research survey commissioned by our recently formed lobbying group, Northern Ireland Schools for Autism and Related Conditions (NISARC, 2013). The survey was completed by 317 parents throughout N. Some of the direct quotes and data presented reflect the emotional distress experienced by some children with ASD who are educated in mainstream schools. ASD and Anxiety Academic ability for many children with ASD often conceals difficulties they experience relating to the dyad of impairments (DIM-S, 2013) of social communication and repetitive behaviours, including difficulties with social interaction and theory of mind. It is therefore unsurprising that 99% of parents insist on the survey that their child’s ASD impacts on their interaction with other children at school. However, 34% of parents describe these interaction difficulties as causing their child frequent distress and isolation. Shockingly, 22 parents (7%) described these social interaction difficulties as so distressing that it resulted in their children being unable to attend school. He becomes distressed the night before school – he becomes so distressed he finds it difficult to sleep. He also self harms by smashing his face into the side of bunk beds until his nose bleeds, punching walls until his knuckles bleed. His mental health regularly becomes so distressed the night it can be so nice to see them happy and thrive as each child so rightly deserves. Parents have found that there is a gap in educational provision through which their child has fallen, with one stating in the qualitative research that “because these kiddies are hitting targets academically their real need when it comes to social, sensory and anxiety issues seem to be overlooked as far as how much mainstream school really caters for them”. Another mother explains how sensory overload impacts on her son. “He becomes distressed the night before school – he becomes so distressed he finds it difficult to sleep. He also self harms by smashing his face into the side of bunk beds until his nose bleeds, punching walls until his knuckles bleed. His mental health regularly becomes so distressed the night it can be so nice to see them happy and thrive as each child so rightly deserves. Parents have found that there is a gap in educational provision through which their child has fallen, with one stating in the qualitative research that “because these kiddies are hitting targets academically their real need when it comes to social, sensory and anxiety issues seem to be overlooked as far as how much mainstream school really caters for them”. A tiered system of educational provision is required to enable all children with ASD in education to communicate with their needs, ranging from ASD specific schools, to ASD nurture units in mainstream schools with every mainstream school having a highly qualified ASD co-ordinator. The benefits of which will be highlighted by one parent who suggests the main reason her son has thrived in mainstream is due to a culmination of knowledge and understanding and enthusiasm. Another parent wants teachers to form joint forces with parents in lobbying for ASD specific schools suggesting these schools would reduce the stress and challenging behaviour exhibited by many children who cannot cope with the mainstream environment, thus benefitting other children. The disparity between educational choice in Northern Ireland and the mainland (where ASD schools exist) is ‘stone age’ according to one parent. Again I agree.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that there are many children being very supportive in mainstream settings, however this article provides insights into the daily lives of children for whom mainstream education is not at all appropriate to meet their diverse needs. Thus, as demonstrated above, one size will never fit all (Crandall-Osoro and Kluth 2009, MEN CAP 2007). ASD specific schools could be viewed as a means of accessing mainstream teachers from the responsibility for teaching and meeting the needs of pupils with ASD (Ravel, 2011). Nonetheless the paramount consideration must be what is in the best interests of the individual child. A different differentiated tiered system of support would hopefully facilitate the needs of more children. Attempting to bring children with ASD to a ‘normalised’ state, through the indiscriminate eulo- gizing of inclusion, will not be in the best interests of all children with ASD and as such inclusion mainstream schools may outwardly appear for the best, but fail to be the best for many.

Is it not better for these children to feel included in an ASD specific school as opposed to being effectively excluded through inclusion in mainstream? More choice is needed. NISARC is campaigning for schools specifically for the mainstream ability children with high functioning autism and related conditions in Northern Ireland who cannot manage in ordinary mainstream school settings.

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Is it Time for ASD Specific Schools?

By NISARC Committee and UTU member Craig Goodall
Every picture tells a story as UTU members see positive results from their support of the Ray Of Hope initiative

The Ulster Teachers’ Union has supported a Ray of Hope, UNESCO Youth Ambassador for the Culture of Peace for many years. Uniquely, it has no overheads, salaries, expenses or remuneration of any kind, enabling all monies raised to be dedicated to children in need across the globe. As each year passes, increased numbers of projects are supported, developed and enhanced, affecting the lives of many more children.

Although the major focus is on education, related programmes and initiatives also take place. Photographs from November demonstrate the diversity of project, each having a very different set of circumstances and requirements.

Philippines – feeding programme for children - now in its 47th week - to date over 12,000 meals have been distributed. The initiative “Henry Penny Library”, India, commenced in August 2011 - there are currently 35 libraries for disadvantaged, street and orphaned children. Workshops, guest speakers and specialist instruction are part of the programme. “School Under the Bridge” rebranded “School Under the Rainbow” continues to be supported with educational resources, including, the Gambia, Nigeria, Uganda, support programmes for various countries such as furniture, computer packages, educational expendables, school uniforms and clothes to every reader in every library. Traffic overhead. A partnership with a third partner has provided over 12,000 meals have been distributed.

“It was a gruelling twelve months of perfecting but the resulting product has been well worth the effort and time,” says Joe. “Phonics Master is action packed. It contains 7 levels, with each corresponding approximately to a primary school year, and has almost 220 different games and activities. Each of the activities specifically targets sounds to develop reading and writing skills. Phonics Master covers all six stages/phases of the phonological approach to reading and spelling. Not only is the app useful to educators but parents and students alike can benefit from the easy-to-use format in which the levels and games are presented.”

Phonics Master is already being used in over a dozen schools in Northern Ireland and continues to grow in recognition and popularity. Following on from this, Joe and Stephen aim to have ‘Spelling Tilt’ released in early 2013 – a spelling app that targets the most commonly misspelt words.

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If you’re looking for the greatest gift you could leave your children and grandchildren, you don’t need to look any further. For a leaflet or leaving a legacy to NI Chest Heart & Stroke, please phone Alison in confidence on: 028 90 266 706

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Spot prizes too, if you don’t manage to bag the silverware!
1. Draw to show 1 turn anticlockwise.
2. 174 = hundred tens units
3. 70 + 10 =
4. 8 + 8 =
5. 14 + 10 =
6. 2 + 2 + = 8
7. The canteen has a sale on! Ice-cream normally £1.00 is reduced to 70p. How much do you save?
8. 83, 77, 40, 92,
9. 3 + 3 + = 9
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New wave mental maths is a school-wide series that aims to strengthen pupils’ mental maths abilities; essential skills that underpin effective interaction with all aspects of the maths curriculum and problem-solving situations.

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