

TEACHERS ASSURANCE RETIREMENT SEMINAR

For NUT members and members of
Teachers Assurance aged 50-60.

Visit www.teachersassurance.co.uk or telephone
free on 0800 7311093 to book your free place.

Weds 24th February 2010

Tea & Coffee served at 6.30 pm
Seminar 7.00 – 8.00 pm.

*Riverside House Watermoor Road
Watermoor
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1LF*

If you are approaching retirement in the next few years, you will have many exciting and challenging decisions ahead - not least those relating to your finances and in particular your pension. Teachers Assurance has over 130 years' of experience in providing financial advice to teachers and their families. We are specialists in the Teachers Pension Scheme and are committed to offering the best possible information, education and advice to members of the education profession.

Our seminars will provide valuable advice and information about the issues that concern you - the seminar will enable you to make informed decisions about:

What to expect from the Teachers Pension Scheme, State Benefits and other pension arrangements you may have, and how to apply for them.

As well as reviewing your existing retirement benefits and options, the seminar will also address: -

- How to boost your income in retirement
- How to invest your capital for security, income and growth
- What other financial areas you should be considering.

The seminars are being offered free and without obligation to members of the NUT, with whom we have a long-standing relationship.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION NUT CONTACTS

Members can make contact with all the Officers listed below through the Association's website.

Members requiring assistance should contact Gloucestershire Association Divisional Secretary:

John Pemberthy: 01594 560 105
Email: jpemberthy@glosnut.co.uk
or visit www.glosnut.co.uk and click on the help and advice tab for answers and details on how to send us details of your case or enquiry.

Deputy Divisional Secretary:

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Update your membership: 0845 300 1666

Are you a new teacher struggling to manage on your main scale pay? The NUT is looking for stories to send home the message to the Government that below inflation pay increases is causing suffering for young teachers. Send in your story and it may be used in our national campaign materials. Entries may be anonymous but we would need to have details (not attributed) for verification.

The Gloucestershire Teacher
is published by Gloucester NUT Association
Email: secretary@gloucestershire.nut.org.uk
Secretary: John Pemberthy Tel: 01594 560 105
Members' Articles and letters welcomed

Local Association website: www.glosnut.co.uk



Newsletter of the Gloucester Association of the National Union of Teachers

January 2010

Wednesday January 20th 7.15 pm GENERAL MEETING

**An opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the
LA proposals for the National Challenge Schools**

A panel of local politicians from the major parties will explain their
education policies and answer your questions
University of Glos (Oxstalls Campus) Room LC017

Can't make the meeting? Then let us know your views via www.glosnut.co.uk

Directions to the meeting can be found on the meetings page.

If you would like to attend the annual conference or join the executive committee contact the
Divisional Secretary for details of how to apply. Nominations close at the end of January.



Dear Colleagues

May I wish you all Season's greetings and congratulations on surviving the long autumn terms. Your union has been extremely active on your behalf and we have been dealing with an ever increasing number of members requiring support over the past months. The new OFSTED regime is, as we predicted, causing great distress in schools where

safeguarding or attainment issues are causing other good work to be overlooked. Our General Secretary, Christine Blower, is putting together a portfolio of OFSTED horror stories to put pressure on them to be more rounded in their inspections. I have some local contributions already but please send me any from your school at the usual address or e-mail them direct to inspections@nut.org.uk Members in some of the National Challenge schools most affected by the Badman recommendations are anxious about the disruptive effect these will have on their students and on their own careers if accepted by the LA following the current consultation. Please go online and have your say on the consultation at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/nationalchallenge Our meeting on the 20th January will be a great opportunity to ask questions and find out what factors have gone into this decision making process. I am very pleased that the Deputy Leader of the Local Authority and Group Director of Children's Services, Jackie Hall, has agreed to be on the panel as well as other locally elected and prospective politicians from the 3 major parties.

Our SATS Saturday event in the centre of Gloucester was a great success with pretty much unanimous support from parents who passed by and signed our petition. It was also well covered by both major local radio stations and the press. The recent statement from Ed Balls that SATS will go ahead in 2010 is clearly disappointing, however, the

Government has said it will introduce "a light touch moderation process" for teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 from 2011. It will consult on the introduction of this system.

In his statement, Ed Balls said that he has "decided to take a step further in recognising the value of teacher assessments" and that "the assessment and testing system is not set in stone". This is significant movement from the Government and is a tribute to the success of the joint NUT/NAHT campaign.

We are pleased with this movement from the Secretary of State. We welcome it and we have called for further discussion with Government to achieve further progress. The Government is responding to the pressure of the joint NUT/NAHT campaign. The NUT will continue to pursue its Annual Conference policy that SATs should go.

Looking beyond SATs at what might replace them, it is important that we do not end up with something worse! We have heard from a number of schools where Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) has been introduced without the proper consultation or preparation. For those who don't know, APP is a methodology for demonstrating pupil attainment in foundation subjects. It is not necessary for every child in a group to be included, just a sample of 3-6 per group to demonstrate that the teacher judgement is consistent with national standards. It should be about developing the teacher as an assessor rather than just a tool to pinpoint pupil progress. It works best when teacher judgement is trusted rather than constantly re-assessed in order to get the 'correct' result.

The NUT has sought further assurances from the QCDA on APP. They have confirmed that it is voluntary, should be used to aid assessment for learning and is a professional matter for teachers. **Crucially the QCDA have clearly stated that APP should not increase workload.** We welcome these reassurances, which vindicate the NUT's campaigning work on APP. See inside for more detailed guidance on how APP should operate in your school if it has been or is being introduced.

With best wishes

John Pemberthy - Divisional Secretary

Local Association website: www.glosnut.co.uk

ASSESSING PUPILS' PROGRESS

Assessing Pupils' Progress – support or imposition?

Teachers need to have control over whether and how to use Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP). John Bangs, NUT assistant secretary for education, equality and professional development, explains how the NUT has successfully fought to ensure that APP remains voluntary and is a help rather than a burden to teachers.

What is Assessing Pupils' Progress?

As many teachers know already, Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) is a structured system of teacher assessment. The focus is on teachers being expected to make judgements about their pupils' progress according to 'assessment focuses'. Each level is divided into three categories: low, secure and high. Assessments are made by teachers against a statement in each assessment focus.

Teachers are expected to provide examples of pupils' work to show how they have arrived at specific levels. As an assessment tool, APP can be useful, but decisions on its use must be made in full consultation with teachers.

What's the problem with APP?

The first problem is that, in a range of policy documents, the government and the National Strategies have implied that APP is a requirement for each school, rather than being voluntary. The National Strategies' annual plan, for example, contains an emphasis on "embedding APP and ensuring schools which have not got to grips with APP are supported to do so".

The suggestion that APP is compulsory is simply not true. It has, however, led to a second problem, which is that local authorities and some school leaders have been promoting this misapprehension in schools. In addition, many local authorities have told schools that nothing less than the production of evidence for every pupil level under every assessment focus – in English and mathematics particularly – is good enough. For some teachers, this has meant an exponential increase in workload.

A snapshot survey of teachers conducted by the NUT yielded such comments as:

"Training indicates all children in each class will be assessed in a running assessment, ie weekly and summarised termly in English, mathematics and science..."

"APP is being rolled out as compulsory, not voluntary."

"APP is very time-consuming and intensive."

What has the NUT done about the misuse of APP?

As soon as we discovered the extent of the misuse of APP, the NUT acted immediately. Anger about the excessive workload created by APP was reflected in a motion agreed at this year's annual conference. At the NUT's instigation, a meeting was convened by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), which also involved representatives of other teacher organisations and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The NUT made it clear that it was not prepared to put up with excessive workload arising from APP, and that its use had to be subject to the professional judgement of teachers.

A statement, Assessing Pupils' Progress: Manageability, was agreed between the NUT, the other teacher associations, the QCA and the DCSF. It contains a key paragraph which emphasises that the use of APP is voluntary, that any implementation of APP should be the subject of discussion and consultation with staff, and that schools can adapt APP for their particular circumstances.

The statement also makes it clear that APP can replace optional and end-of-unit tests and that it reduces the need to "prepare for, set and mark time-consuming tests and assessment tasks".

A second meeting of the working group affirmed that APP should be seen as a 'lean and mean' way of doing teacher assessment.

Even Ofsted has emphasised that it "does not prescribe how learners should be assessed", but that, "inspectors should investigate whether any system is effective in promoting better learning..."

An NUT News newsletter was sent to all schools, emphasising that APP should be voluntary. To complement this, the NUT's national education conference, held in July, focused on how to prevent APP creating excessive workload.

As a result of the NUT's guidance and the joint statement, many schools are now either using other forms of assessment that they believe are more manageable, or cherry-picking the National Strategies' guidance in a way that works for them. For example, APP may be simply used on a sampling basis with small groups of pupils, just two or three times a year.

Feedback from NUT members has indicated the shift by many schools away from believing that APP is a workload-intensive imposition.

One teacher commented: "The recent QCA guidelines and NUT advice have been excellent in helping us decide what we keep and what we reject – and we all know it is voluntary."

One lesson from the controversy over APP is that, for too long, schools have operated in a grey area, with the government turning its expectations into a quasi-statutory

requirement. Determined NUT resistance to this approach has, in many cases, redressed the balance in favour of trusting teachers.

The NUT is absolutely clear that decisions about how and when to use APP must rest with staff, after consultation within the school. Members who come under pressure to introduce forms of APP that contradict their professional judgement and create excessive workload should contact their local NUT representative.

This example indicates the kind of positive changes NUT guidance can make to teachers' professional lives:

APP - one teacher's story

APP was started at my school by a colleague who's on the fast-track scheme and hoped to add something quickly and dramatically to his CV for assistant headship. Most of us had little idea of what it was and what it entailed. It was piloted and led by him and one year group, who used it for maths and writing for two terms. The rest of the school was expected to have it in place by the following summer. By this, I mean that all unit plans should have unit and APP objectives written in weekly and daily by the class, annotated daily by teachers, cover teachers and teaching assistants, with APP sheets for each child in the class highlighted weekly! This was reduced to just maths, but all the other proposals stayed in place until some staff rebelled.

Teachers showed their disapproval about the multiple objective recording, but we were told 'tough!' A week later, planning and APP sheets were called in and monitored and a

number of wrists were slapped for being behind with the input.

So, when I came to the NUT's national education conference and heard the representative from the QCA describe their expectations and read the guidelines from the NUT, I went straight back to school to spread the word and felt quite empowered! Suddenly, the whole thing has calmed down.

The senior management also decided to put a halt to the pace of change. As it happens, this is in line with the borough introducing it gradually and supporting teachers with planning adapted to reduce the burden. APP for writing is being referred to, but only on a half-termly basis or at end-of-unit assessment at most. A sample of children typical of differentiated groups is used.

Primary teacher, outer London

Joint statement agreed by the ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT, DCSF and QCA.

Assessing Pupils' Progress: manageability

The purpose of this note is to provide guidance to schools on preventing excessive and unnecessary workload arising from Assessing Pupils' Progress. Its use is voluntary. Any implementation of APP should be the subject of discussion and consultation with staff. Schools can adapt APP for their particular circumstances.

APP is designed to support teachers' professional judgements about their pupils' progress. It has been nationally developed and standardised to provide a common language for talking about learners' achievement. It is not statutory but does provide a reference point for teachers in relation to national standards.

APP is a straightforward approach to making secure judgements about the standard of pupils' work and what they need to do next.

It:

- supports systematic assessment;
- supports a broad curriculum;
- has been shown to improve learners' progress.

As part of a school development programme, it can:

- use what teachers know about their pupils to improve their learning;
- help learners understand their own learning and where to go next;
- give parents/carers better information about their children's progress.

APP is not

- a knee-jerk reaction
- a quick-fix
- a bureaucratic exercise that just generates data
- a daily checklist to give levels to individual pieces of work
- just about deciding a level
- about creating unnecessary work.

APP

- has been developed over five years and has undergone a piloting and evaluation process in primary and secondary schools across the country
- any implementation is intended to take place over time and with support
- puts learners at the heart of the assessment process. Far from merely reducing them to numbers, APP provides a detailed personal profile that gives a clear and accurate picture of learners' achievements and progress.
- is designed to help teachers get an overview of where learners are in the subject, based on a wide range of evidence. APP works best when used no more than twice or three times a year.
- helps teachers see where their pupils are, where they need to be and how they can get there. It can also help planning by identifying gaps in their teaching.
- does not require special assessment activities but uses evidence from day-to-day teaching and learning. It reduces the need to prepare for, set and mark time consuming tests and assessment tasks.