



# THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE TEACHER

NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS ~ WINTER TERM 2004

EDITORIAL:

## SCHOOL LEAGUE TABLES

Several acres of woodland had to be cut down to provide the paper on which some national newspapers printed English primary school league tables for the key stage 2 test results for every primary school in the country. What did this tell us? You may agree with me - not a lot! But it's worse than that. It's the NUT's contention that these tables are seriously misleading and do damage to many schools and children.

The information for individual schools included value added data for the first time. The BBC website gave subject scores for every school for the last three years, so progress could be measured - although this begs the question of exactly what it is that is being measured. A number of head teachers from the most successful schools were quoted as saying that teacher assessment is now a better diagnostic tool than these annual tests. The Government claims that teachers cannot be trusted and that parents find the tables helpful in judging the performance of local schools. We know better; the information ignores so many critical factors about pupil performance that any judgment of schools made on the basis of these tests is bound to be flawed.

League tables for LEAs are little better. The most successful LEA in the country is the City of London. It has only one primary school. The City's position at No.1 in the charts is based on the performance of 29 children. The Top Ten consists entirely of LEAs in the most affluent parts of the country. Two are royal boroughs. The bottom ten are all inner city areas known for their concen-

trations of poverty. How far it illuminates anything to know that Surrey is in the top ten, while Hackney is in the bottom ten, is debatable.

Given the emphasis placed upon these tables by Government and the media, is it any wonder that Y2, Y6 and Y9 teachers are encouraged to teach to the test? This causes stress for many children, their parents and their teachers.

Can anyone, other than Government ministers, see any possible justification for SATs and league tables? Have the tables, as their proponents claim, helped to improve children's literacy and numeracy? It appears that whatever advance may have been made in the 1990s has stalled, as the results this year are much the same as for last. **Wales has scrapped tests at seven and is thinking of doing the same for those taken at eleven. Scotland is following the same route. In neither country are standards falling as a result.**

With acknowledgements to the EDUCATION periodical

### THE PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF SEC- ONDARY SCHOOLS IN GLOUCESTER CITY...

...will be the main topic of discussion at the next general meeting of the Association. Come along and make your views known to the local Officers of the Union who will be responsible for negotiating with the various employers should any of the proposals come to fruition. The meeting is being held on Wednesday February 4th 2004 at the Longford Inn, Gloucester starting at 7:00 p.m. and finishing by 8:30 p.m.

### YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

Concerned about your employment rights or your health at work? There's free advice on those and many other matters at [www.workSMART.org.uk](http://www.workSMART.org.uk) from the TUC.

### ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

There is to be a conference entitled "**25 years after Blair Peach - Where next for Anti-Racist Education?**" on Saturday 14 February 2004 at NUT Headquarters (Hamilton House) in London. Any members interested in going should contact Andy Johnson, the Divisional Secretary. Applications must reach Hamilton House by Monday, 2 February 2004 at the latest.

### ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT APPLICATIONS REVISED ARRANGEMENTS

The DfES has announced important changes to the ill health retirement application process. From 1 January 2004 it will be a requirement that applications have been considered by employers who will need to have involved their occupational health adviser before applications can be submitted to Teachers' Pensions.

Details of the changes and guidance on applications can be obtained from Regional Office in Exeter: 01392 258 028, [south.west@nut.org.uk](mailto:south.west@nut.org.uk)

# VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE

Advice for members from **Colin O'Hare**  
Gloucestershire NUT's Health and Safety Adviser

The official Gloucestershire statistics show that only 36 teachers were physically assaulted last year and that there were no cases of verbal abuse at all. The LEA do not believe this and nor do we.

The problem is one of under-reporting. It is our responsibility as teachers to ensure that every case of verbal or physical abuse is reported to the LEA. It should be done on the new "Incident Form" which was introduced earlier this year. The old "Accident Book" forms - they were A4 self-duplicating sheets on a pad - should have been thrown out. The new forms are easy to fill in and designed to cope with incidents of this sort.

Please check that your school has changed to the new forms and encourage colleagues to report all cases of verbal and physical abuse. Only then will we be able to assess the magnitude of the problem.

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## Go Teaching

Go Teaching - the new supply agency based on Devon LEA - is now fully geared up to operate in Gloucestershire. You may have seen the article in the current edition of The Teacher detailing the service and they have had a fair number of enquiries resulting from this.

The NUT has a place on the regional steering group for the project which has been taken by Vince Allen (NUT Regional Principal Officer). If anyone has any problems or concerns about the service or wishes to make positive proposals please contact Vince at the NUT Regional Office so he can be informed accordingly.

We now need to make sure that both supply teachers and schools use this service. Leaflets advertising it can be obtained from Graham Nicholl on 01392 383237 or at [gnicholl@devon.gov.uk](mailto:gnicholl@devon.gov.uk)

Many schools will find the lower costs help their budgetary situation and it is in our interest that NUT members urge their schools to use the agency thus freeing up funds for other purposes in school.

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## AGM

The first Annual General Meeting of the Gloucestershire Association will held on the 17th March 2004 starting at 7:00 p.m. and finishing by 8:30 p.m. The venue has not yet been arranged.



As part of the campaign against the SATs, local members of the Union collected signatures from members of the public at mid-day of Saturday 6th December in Kings Square Gloucester.



185 signatures in support were collected in an hour and a half. This activity was particularly popular with passing children who were given a free balloon.



# INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION



Divisional Secretary, Andy Johnson (left), congratulating the new County President, Steve Pugh

At a crowded inaugural meeting of the new Gloucestershire Association of the National Union of Teachers, County President, Steve Pugh, called on the County Council to choose comprehensive education for the children of Gloucester City.

Speaking on the review of Gloucester Secondary Schools Steve said:

**'It has been the policy of the National Union of Teachers for over forty years to campaign for a well funded Comprehensive School system in this country. For far too long the majority of children in Gloucester City have been denied the benefits of a fully comprehensive system of education while a chosen few go to selective Grammar Schools. Parents in Gloucester should ask themselves, "Why can't my child enjoy the same opportunities as the children of Newent and Tewkesbury, Chipping Camden, Cirencester and Fairford?" It's time for the County to put an end to this unfair selective system and have the courage to make the right choice for the City's children.'**

Steve also called for an end to SATs and called on the Union's members in the County's Primary Schools to vote "YES" in the ballot.

The new Association has been formed by an amalgamation of five of the old local associations which covered different parts of the County. The meeting was held at the Moat House Hotel.

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## The ballot to boycott SATs

The Union's indicative survey of KS1 and KS2 teachers showed that 82.5 per cent of primary teachers would back a boycott of KS1 tests and 71.4 per cent a boycott of KS2 tests.

The situation with respect to KS3 teachers was more complex. The indicative survey showed 80% English teachers in favour of a boycott, 56% of Maths teachers and 60% of Science teachers.

In order to take action, 50% + 1 vote of those entitled to vote need to vote in favour. In other words, those not returning their ballot papers are effectively counted as "NO" votes.

Of those voting 66.67% must vote in favour in order that the Union can open its sustentation fund should it be necessary to do so.

As a result the National Executive agreed to ballot all KS1 and KS2 teachers in England. It was decided that further work is needed with respect to KS3 teachers, particularly in the light of the Government's introduction of school league tables of KS3 results.

The period of the ballot was from November 19th to December 15th. A big "YES" vote was imperative. Not to do so would not only mean that SATs will be with us for another 20 years, it would also risk undermining the credibility of Union negotiators nationally and locally when negotiating over other issues such as the 6-term year or pensions.

The situation with respect to a boycott of KS3 requires further consideration. The support for the boycott amongst Maths and Science teachers is not convincing although that may change once school league tables start to be published subject-by-subject.

There is also the problem of whether to ballot those staff in the school who are not teachers of English, Maths or Science. They could be directed to administer the SATs. In order for them to refuse they would have to be balloted. Were they to be balloted, it is not clear how teachers of PE, French or History, for instance, would respond. There is clearly more work needed to be done here.

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Members of the Association's Executive Committee are elected once a year. Those wishing to stand for Office, or simply join the Committee, need to get their nominations to the Divisional Secretary by January 30th 2004. Nominations need to be in writing, endorsed by the nominee and signed by the proposer and seconder. Nomination forms are available for those who wish to use them although a letter is perfectly o.k. Forms can be obtained from the Association's Divisional

Secretary, Andy Johnson (see NUT Contacts at end of this newsletter).

These are the offices for which nominations are being sought: **vice-President, Divisional Secretary, Treasurer, Membership and Communications Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer, Divisional Learning Representative, Health and Safety Adviser, Public Relations Officer, Assistant Divisional Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Student Membership Officer, Divisional**

**Training Officer, Parliamentary Correspondents (one per constituency within the County), District Secretaries (10), Further and Higher Education Secretary, Unattached Members' Secretary, Secretary (for our Supply teacher members), Centrally Employed Members' Secretary, Retired Teachers' Secretary, and 10 Ordinary Members of the Executive.**

# SATs Ballot Result

- a personal statement from your Divisional Secretary

The result of the Ballot was as follows:-

<b>Ballot papers distributed:</b>	<b>103,729</b>
<b>Valid votes returned:</b>	<b>35,327 (34.06%)</b>
<b>"YES" votes:</b>	<b>30,452 (86.2%)</b>
<b>"NO" votes:</b>	<b>4,875 (13.8%)</b>

There were 46 invalid papers returned.

However, for the boycott to be sanctioned the number of "YES" votes needed to be at least 51,866 (50% + 1 vote).

## TO ALL OF YOU WHO VOTED – A BIG THANK YOU.

We do not have a breakdown of the votes cast by members in Gloucestershire. We will never know how many of the 68,402 members in England who chose not to vote were from Gloucestershire.

**As your Divisional Secretary part of my job is to represent the collective views of the Union's membership to our employers, to the press and to the media. Those who chose not to return their ballot papers undermine my credibility when doing so and leave me with no idea of what their views may be. That way, we all lose.**

## NUT CONTACTS

Even though the NUT is forming itself into a single Association in Gloucestershire, your previous contacts will remain unchanged for the time-being.

**Cirencester:** Dave Sutherland: 01285 654 416  
dgs@cirencester.ac.uk

**Cheltenham & Gloucester:** Ian Morgan: 01242 578 793  
ianmorganmor9rf@supanet.com

**Forest of Dean:** Geoff Davies: 01594 544 036  
brum@alderwys1.fsnet.co.uk

**Gloucestershire (North):** John Pemberthy: 01594 564 508  
Pemberthy@btinternet.com

**Stroud:** Nigel Meredith: 01453 546 795  
nigel@hungerhill2000.fsnet.co.uk

**Gloucestershire County Association**  
Divisional Secretary: Andy Johnson: 01285 655 022  
secretary@gloucestershire.nut.org.uk

**Gloucestershire Union Learning Representative:** Garry Wheeler: 014 52 53 13 42  
garrywheeler@blueyonder.co.uk

**National Executive member:** Max Hyde 01217 453 942  
max@piscator.demon.co.uk

**Regional Office in Exeter:** 01392 258 028  
south.west@nut.org.uk

Changed your school or moved house?  
Call: **0845 300 1666** and keep the Union up-to-date.

Know someone who wants to join?  
Tell them to call **0845 300 1669**

**NUT Website:** [www.teachers.org.uk](http://www.teachers.org.uk)