

The Scottish
Educational
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eis
The Educational
Institute of Scotland

From Dundee to Orkney

David Drever
succeeds Kirsty
Devaney as
EIS President



Poetry and Motions

Liz Lochhead
receives EIS
Fellowship
at AGM



SEJ

Special
AGM
supplement



The 2008 Annual General Meeting

162nd Annual
General Meeting

eis

The Educational
Institute of Scotland

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Comment



This special edition of the SEJ reports on the 162nd Annual General Meeting of the EIS. This year's AGM was held in the Caird Hall in Dundee.



Of course, the AGM is an important event for the EIS but the debates at conference are also closely followed elsewhere. The decisions taken at the AGM send out a clear message to Scotland's political leaders at both a national and a local authority level.

This year, the AGM provided members with an opportunity to highlight priorities in education to the Scottish Government and to local authorities. Key issues such as budget cuts, class sizes, pupil indiscipline, and the Curriculum for Excellence played a major part in this year's AGM.

Over the 16 pages of this special SEJ, we highlight the issues discussed and the decisions taken at this year's AGM. We also report on the conference addresses by outgoing EIS President Kirsty Devaney and by General Secretary Ronnie Smith.

We hope you enjoy reading this special AGM edition of the SEJ, and we wish all our readers the best for a refreshing and enjoyable break over the summer period.

Social Inclusion

The EIS is to carry out research on the impact of social inclusion as the result of a successful motion from North Lanarkshire and Moray. The research will cover areas such as pupil indiscipline, the burden of paperwork, impact on other pupils and impact on teachers' health and well being. Margaret Conway, speaking in support, spoke of the "need for hard facts and then enter into informed debate on social inclusion at a local and national level." Eileen Morrison (Moray) said that, on issues of inclusion, "CPD for teachers is not the only answer."

In a separate motion Kathleen Summers (North Lanarkshire) called for significant and increased funding of staffing and resources to meet the needs of schools in providing Inclusion and Education for All."

AGM vows to fight budget cuts across Scotland

Emergency motion

The AGM condemned the budget cuts that have been announced by a significant number of local authorities across Scotland, as the result of an Emergency Motion from EIS Council which won the unanimous support of delegates in the Caird Hall. The EIS will now mount a sustained and coordinated campaign at a local and national level to fight the cuts, with the real potential for ballots on industrial action in authority areas where insufficient progress is made in addressing teachers' concerns on budget cuts.

Presenting the motion to the AGM, incoming President David Drever said, "It is apparent that the problems that have existed in the last year will be multiplied in the coming years. There is a potential colossal waste of energy and expense in training new teachers only for them to be lost to the profession due to a lack of teaching posts because of budget cuts. We are already seeing the prospect of compulsory redundancies for teachers in some parts of the country. At a local level and on a national level, we need to let local authorities and the Scottish Government know that we mean business. We cannot and will not allow ourselves to become committed to a 3 year cycle of cuts to education budgets."



"The problems that have existed in the last year will be multiplied in the coming years."

David Drever



"Cuts are definitely back on the agenda."

Willie Hart

Seconding the motion, Willie Hart (Glasgow), said "Cuts are definitely back on the agenda. In the vast majority of council areas, there will be budget cuts this year and for the next 3 years. We cannot let our newly qualified teachers drift off and to be lost to the teaching profession. It is a nonsense for politicians to claim that this country cannot afford to pay for the education of our children."

One of the worst affected areas of the country is Aberdeen, where the a budget crisis has led to massive cuts to the education budget and a very real threat of compulsory redundancies. Outlining the massive scale of the problem, Grant Bruce (Aberdeen) said "Up to 80 teaching posts will have to go in the city of Aberdeen. None of our 125 probationer teachers will get permanent jobs in Aberdeen. This is extremely harsh treatment for the life-blood of Scottish education."



"There will be no move to cut class sizes in Aberdeen."

Mary Matheson

Mary Matheson (Aberdeen) added, "The signs are that there will be no move to cut class sizes in Aberdeen. Our secondary schools are already collapsing

the timetable and dropping subjects. Schools where windows are broken are not having them replaced, they are having them boarded up. Our present in Aberdeen could well be the future for you and your pupils.”

Bob Fotheringham (Glasgow) said, “If we do not take action to fight these cuts, the poverty of experience for pupils in Scottish schools will increase – a clear result of these widespread cuts. We need to look at industrial action in these local authorities and also at a national level. Political decisions taken by the Scottish Government have directly resulted in these cuts. We cannot have the much-quoted ‘world class education system’ if teachers are forced to go to Costco to buy jotters with their own money.”

Robin Irvine (Renfrewshire) added, “Class sizes will go up, management time will be reduced, learning support will be almost non-existent. Money for even basic necessities will disappear. Each week, new methods of trimming Scottish education budgets are being discovered.”



Gavin Roberts (North Lanarshire) said, “The key issue we need to address is the threat of compulsory redundancies. We need to draw a line that the authorities cannot cross.”

“We need to draw a line that the authorities cannot cross.”

Gavin Roberts

Summing up the feelings of many in the hall,

Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow) said, “The ‘historic Concordat’ is a vehicle for delivering cuts. The hullabaloo around the historic Concordat is masking a dark reality of deep and widespread cuts. There is a real determination from the authorities to drive through these cuts – we need to be equally or even more determined to stop them.”

The delegates in the hall agreed, resulting in a show of unanimous support for the motion. ■

Induction year

The EIS will seek a review of the placement arrangements for induction probationers. Kay Barnett (Aberdeenshire) asked that any review should investigate “why the scheme works well for most, is difficult for many and a disaster for some.” She accepted that levels of success are “hard to quantify”. In support, David MacLeod (Aberdeenshire) spoke as a first time delegate with recent experience of the probation year. He said that there were a number of questions about the probation scheme “which underline the need for an investigation in the form of a review.”

In a separate motion, Addie Thomson (East Renfrewshire) persuaded the AGM to campaign for an agreed minimum level of support for probationer teachers outwith the Induction Scheme.



“It is difficult for many and a disaster for some.”

Kay Barnett

Funding of nursery schools and classes

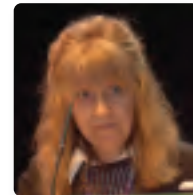
The EIS will explore the implications for nursery schools and classes of current funding arrangements, as the result of a successful motion proposed by Lillian Leitch (Midlothian). “Our Government seems to want nursery education on the cheap”, she said.

The current system of funding nurseries based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) pupils “is purely for the benefit of local authorities”, argued Aileen Scullion (Glasgow). Such funding methodologies, she argued, “do nothing to support children’s education or the work of nursery schools.”

Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian), who seconded the motion, added, “The teacher workload and the resource demands are based upon the number of individual part-time pupils, not on the number of FTE pupils”.

“the resource demands are based upon the number of individual part-time pupils”

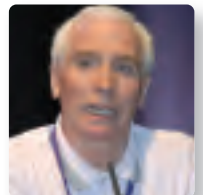
Sonia Kordiak



Fair pay for College lecturers

The EIS will mount a campaign calling for a fair pay deal for FE College lecturers, including a return to national bargaining and a national salary structure for every college in Scotland, as a result of a successful EIS FELA motion proposed by Alan Ferguson and supported by John Cassidy and Joe Kinsey.

In a separate but related motion proposed by outgoing EIS President Kirsty Devaney on behalf of Council, the EIS will begin discussions with the Scottish Government for the establishment of a review of all aspects of salaries and conditions of academic staff in Scottish colleges. “There is not going to be a quick fix,” said Ms Devaney, “But this is an early step in what will be a long, hard campaign to get back to national bargaining.”



– fair pay for college lecturers

John Cassidy

Opposing school closures

The EIS will oppose any school closure plans which are determined solely by falling school rolls or unused capacity within the school, following a motion proposed by Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) and seconded by Gill McKinnon with support from Kate Johnston.

PPP schools

The EIS will examine and report on the impact of PPP contracts for school building works, with particular emphasis on Health & Safety issues and Building Design, following a successful motion proposed by Bill Torrance (East Lothian). “We cannot have our colleagues and pupils working on building sites”, said Mr Torrance. Jan McClean (East Lothian) and Joe Kinsey (EIS-FELA) spoke in support, and the Motion won the overwhelming support of AGM delegates.



– PPP concerns

Joe Kinsey

Class sizes

A motion instructing Council to mount a campaign, including industrial action, to achieve maximum class sizes of 20 in P1, P2 and P3 by August 2010 was defeated by a substantial majority.

The AGM was not persuaded by either the wording of the motion or the tactic of including the threat of industrial action on class sizes. Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire) told the meeting that the motion went against the carefully planned class size reduction strategy of the EIS. He criticised the motion for being too specific and being conditioned by the response from the Scottish Government to the issue of class sizes. He concluded that the motion had the potential to be divisive and asked delegates "How do you galvanise support amongst the whole membership if you have a divisive motion?" Aileen Barrie (North Lanarkshire) also raised concerns regarding divisive nature of the motion and reminded delegates that class sizes of 33 still

existed in some S1 and S2 classes. She intimated that while she agreed with most of the motion she wanted to achieve maximum class sizes of 20 in all classes, in all sectors, in all local authorities.

Primary teacher Susan Smith (Aberdeenshire) asked why the reduction in class sizes in secondary was not happening outside English and Maths. She also warned delegates that focussing class size reductions on P1 to P3 could result in an increase in class size numbers in P4 to P7.

Speaking during the debate John Inglis (East Lothian) reminded delegates that Directors of Education had raised concerns about reducing class sizes as this issue had been caught up in the cuts agenda. A campaign, including industrial action, "puts children first." Mr Inglis continued "The EIS is giving



"Giving notice that we are holding the Scottish Government to account."

John Inglis

sizes is the keystone to success in our education system. Without a deadline and the threat of industrial action Councils will not take us seriously." May Ferries (Glasgow) reminded delegates that all political parties had placed the reduction of class sizes in their manifestos. "This is too important an issue for political point scoring. We are not playing games about calling for strike action. If we run a proper campaign then we can take our members with us."

Heather McGrattan (East Dunbartonshire) hitting out at the Scottish Government, told the AGM "Making false promises is not acceptable behaviour" and urged delegates to support the motion calling for a campaign, including industrial action. But Eric Baillie (Dundee) criticised the "narrow and irrational focus" of the motion. "The key strength is unity of purpose and equity of objectives," he said and cautioned delegates of the dangers of fragmenting the union between sectors and within a sector.

Following the defeat of this motion, the EIS was instructed to negotiate a timetable with the

notice that we are holding the Scottish Government to account. It is not appropriate to let the Scottish Government make promises and not hold them to account when they break their promises." Pam Craik (Edinburgh) argued

"Reducing class sizes is the keystone to success in our education system. Without a deadline and the threat of industrial action Councils will not take us seriously." May Ferries (Glasgow) reminded delegates that all political parties had placed the reduction of class sizes in their manifestos. "This is too important an issue for political point scoring. We are not playing games about calling for strike action. If we run a proper campaign then we can take our members with us."

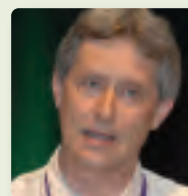
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"Making false promises is not acceptable behaviour."

Heather McGrattan

Scottish Government which will achieve a maximum class size of 20 for all children in all local authorities.

Linda Richardson (Edinburgh) moved the motion and reminded delegates that the Scottish Government expected "year on year progress" in the reduction of class sizes. In this context a negotiated timetable was crucial. She added "We have to force the



"The key strength is unity of purpose and equity of objectives."

Eric Baillie

Scottish Government and the local authorities to have a clear timetable. This motion is a serious attempt to enforce a robust timetable." Seconding the motion, John Inglis (East Lothian) said "The EIS has to set out its stall by creating a timetable for change and will avoid the anomaly of a class size maximum of 20 in S1/S2 English and Maths but class sizes of over 30 in S1/S2 Social Subjects. Delegates and members in schools expect progress on this issue." Margaret Smith (Falkirk) reminded the meeting of the AGM backdrop which read "Uniting Scottish Teachers." "One way of uniting Scottish teachers is ensuring that everyone class a class size maximum of 20," she said.

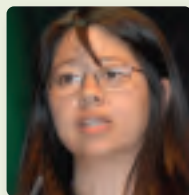
Willie Hart (Glasgow) reminded the meeting that the SNP Government was elected on a robust commitment to reduce class sizes. He went on "I want to ensure that we achieve a maximum of 20 for all classes in all subjects in all schools."

This motion confirmed existing EIS policy of a maximum class size of 20 from P1 to S6 and recognises that the Scottish Government will have to put in place workforce planning measures to deliver sufficient

AGM snippets

Distributive leadership

A motion from Glasgow local association endorsing the principles of distributive leadership was remitted to Council. Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow), moving the motion, said that the principles underlining distributive leadership were consistent with the practice of collegiate working. However, Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire), warned that certain schemes of "adaptive leadership," now in operation were "anything but collegiate," and sometimes "deliberately confrontational".



"Why is the reduction in class sizes in secondary not happening outside English and Maths?"

Susan Smith



"Making false promises is not acceptable behaviour."

Heather McGrattan

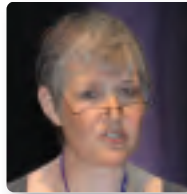
AGM snippets

SQA appeals

The EIS will investigate the current SQA appeals system as the result of a successful motion from East Dunbartonshire. Ken Brown told delegates of “constant changes to the appeals system which leads to inconsistency and confusion.”

teachers to reduce class sizes. The motion was passed with an overwhelming majority.

In a separate debate Council was instructed to highlight the detrimental effects of increasing class sizes elsewhere in the school being used to facilitate the reduction in class sizes in S1/S2 English and Mathematics. Peter Lavery (North Lanarkshire) cited examples of teachers who were receiving larger size classes in S3 because classes in S1 had been reduced and Hamish Glen (North Lanarkshire) outlined the situation where pupils and teachers were worse off since all other classes in English and Maths were at the maximum to accommodate the class size of 20 in S1/S2. ■



“The strength of our nursery schools and classes is based in our communities and led by nursery teachers.”

Kate Johnston

Language Support

The AGM agreed that the EIS should “campaign for an effective, nationally funded strategy to support the inclusion of non-English speaking pupils into Scottish schools”.

Speaking in support, Keith Edwards (North Lanarkshire) said that “Increasingly pupils do not have the skills and language to converse.” He stressed, however, that “pupils all want to learn” whatever their linguistic background. In support, Jack Barnett stressed the EIS “welcome for the arrival of migrant workers and their families together with the diversity and value they bring to Scottish schools and Scottish society.” He underlined the importance of adequate levels of CPD provision “both in mainstream schools and the EAL service.”

In a separate successful motion, calling for improvements for EAL resourcing in schools, John McMillan (Dumfries and Galloway) spoke of the “exponential rise” in the number of pupils with EAL needs – in rural as much as in urban areas.

Kate Johnston (Edinburgh) raised the issue of EAL in nursery schools and classes. She said “The strength of our nursery schools and classes is based in our communities and led by nursery teachers.” She spoke for the need for a “vibrant multi-cultural society.” In support, Edinburgh colleague Gill McKinnon spoke of the danger of cuts in funding in this area. The Edinburgh motion won the support of delegates in Dundee.

Support for Learning

Susan Quinn (Glasgow) spoke of the workload associated with implementation of the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act, especially within the area of her own local authority. Her move to investigate this workload is to “ensure that implementation of the Act across Scotland is “fit for purpose.” Both Ms Quinn and her seconder, Jean Miller, spoke of the “positive features of the Act.” In a separate motion, Ms Quinn spoke of the resources needed to ensure that full implementation of the ASL Act “meets the needs of all children and young people.”



Resources needed so that the ASL Act **“meets the needs of all children and young people.”**
Susan Quinn



New EIS Fellows celebrate awards

Four new Fellows of the Institute received their degree awards at this year’s AGM. Poet and playwright Liz Lochhead received a special category Fellowship for services to education.

Pictured here (anti-clockwise from front left) are: Liz Lochhead, President Kirsty Devaney, June McCulloch (South Lanarkshire), President elect David Drever, Jennifer Clark (Aberdeenshire), Bob Birrell (Convener of the Board of Examiners), Margaret Sutherland (North Lanarkshire), and General Secretary Ronnie Smith.

Visiting specialist teachers

The meeting rejected the wording of a motion from Edinburgh local association which focused on visiting specialist teachers in primary schools. While the meeting agreed that visiting specialists in Primary Schools should be employed to enrich the curriculum and should be afforded proper working conditions and appropriate non-class contact time, delegates rejected claims that the class sizes for visiting specialist teachers should be different from those in other primary school classes.



Is the “historic Concordat” fit for purpose?

In his annual address to the AGM, General Secretary Ronnie Smith questioned if the much lauded “historic Concordat” between the Scottish Government and local authorities is a suitable vehicle for delivery of the Government’s national commitments on education.

The AGM provides an opportunity to bring together activists to debate and discuss issues which have been generated from local level and also to welcome guests from kindred organisations as part of the process of learning from, and sharing with, each other.

The past year has been one of relative stability and consolidation for the EIS.

Through our unmatched network of establishment and local association representatives and officials we have continued to attend to the bread and butter issues that affect members in their daily work.

I also want to acknowledge the growing importance of the work undertaken by our Learning Representatives. The importance of CPD for teachers cannot be overstated.

And here Learning Representatives have an important role. So we must continue to invest in this aspect of our work – for teachers have as much need for investment in their skills as do any other group of workers.

I also want to single out the good work undertaken by our Health & Safety Representatives, particularly Bob Dow and Cyril Clements in Glasgow. Their persistence and doggedness in pursuing the appalling conditions in which teachers and pupils have been forced to work in Glasgow’s PFI “flagship” schools should be a lesson for us all.

Fair deal for FE

In Further Education – while we continue to meet a brick wall in our efforts to bring some cohesion and order to industrial relations by establishing a national framework for collective bargaining – we have worked assiduously to support individual branches in their struggles. Most often this revolves around individual salaries disputes, but the successful EIS campaign against the attempt to privatise the supply of temporary lecturers at Telford College through the introduction of agency working was a notable achievement.

And we welcome the recent announcement by the Scottish Government that it will seek Parliamentary approval of an order to use their powers in the Charities Act to exempt FE colleges

from the standard requirement that charities operate free of Ministerial control.

This should strengthen the financial position of our FE colleges. But when the Government broadcasts its commitment to developing a wealthier and fairer Scotland – and looks for a contribution from FE colleges to that goal – let them remember the staff who work in colleges. Staff whose wealth has been damaged over the years by the manifestly unfair pay gaps that have opened up for staff across colleges as well as by comparison with other sectors of education.

HE concerns

Our colleagues in Higher Education, both through the ULA Executive and at branch level, have continued to adapt to working within the UK national framework agreement, the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES).

Our HE colleagues face a difficult time as discussions following the review of the national negotiating machinery have failed to produce an agreed outcome among all the unions involved. Bearing in mind the horrendous experience of our colleagues in FE, following on from the break-up of national bargaining, we will need to take great care to respond flexibly and pragmatically to the problems arising within the JNCHES in order to ensure its long term future.

The problems arising from the absence of national collective bargaining are well illustrated by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama – the only Scottish HEI sitting outside the JNCHES machinery and which refuses even to recognise trade unions for bargaining purposes. Here the management have resorted to compulsory redundancy and imposed reductions in contractual terms to try to resolve their current funding problems. And this at a time when the First Minister has just announced a major review by the Funding Council of drama funding.

In some ways, the first year of the new Scottish government has brought a large measure of continuity in respect of school education. There have been no very dramatic changes in direction – we are still working towards Curriculum for Excellence and the forthcoming review of

“The government was elected on some concrete and precise and specific promises – and they cannot subsume these in high level targets or outcomes.”
Ronnie Smith

qualifications. And I think most people generally welcome that stability and continuity.

Curriculum for Excellence

We are now beginning to see some tangible progress, some more meat on the bones, of the Curriculum for Excellence programme. But it is a tender creature. There is a very fine balance to be struck between the centre pushing things forward, while at the same time avoiding falling into the old trap of top down prescription.

While there is an onus on those working on developing the programme to be open, and inclusive, and responsive to the profession's views – there is equally an onus on every teacher to seize the opportunity to make their views known and to influence the design of the new curriculum and associated qualifications. It is not certain that this is happening sufficiently. Yes, it is a huge and burdensome responsibility – but it is one which we must face up to.

And the Government must understand that major innovation demands a great deal of time and effort and commitment on the part of all involved. That means additional resources – including human resources – something both the Scottish and local governments need to recognise whenever they make funding or staffing decisions.

The portents might be better as we scan ahead.

Pay pressures

We have made a real commitment to creating the conditions in which reform can proceed in an orderly manner. The 3 year pay settlement was modest, but realistic, offering the prospect of a period of relative stability.

But if current economic trends continue, pay pressure in the system will build rapidly. And if we overlay that with a raft of local authority education budget cuts – euphemistically portrayed as “efficiency savings” – cuts which might compromise key aspects of the 21st Century Agreement.

Looking at the bigger picture, there can be little doubt that the overarching most important development of the past year has been the changing political scene here in Scotland. Few could have imagined a year ago, the political conditions we now see.

I refer to the government's Concordat with local government and the consequent 32 Single Outcome Agreements which are supposed to be in place by the end of this month. This new

arrangement poses more questions than it answers.

The underpinning philosophy appears to be a belief in broadly stated, high level outcomes, secured by reliance upon “subsidiarity” – setting local authorities free largely to do their own thing. This may be superficially appealing – easing back on central prescription.

But let's get two things clear. The government was elected on some concrete and precise and specific promises – and they cannot subsume these in high level targets or outcomes. Nor can they pretend that outcomes are somehow unconnected to inputs. Put too little in and you will get too little out.

Still, the government has taken the decision to transfer money to local authorities and, with that, responsibility for delivering certain key policy promises. But it means there will no longer be any clearly visible, transparent application of resources to specific national priorities – and the track record of some local authorities in this regard is not good from the perspective of education.

Class sizes

Take class sizes. The case for class size cuts has already been made – though a few unreconstructed dinosaurs still have problems living with the consensus among the political parties, and with the 80,000 people who signed our petition to the Parliament. The issue now is one of delivery. Of fulfilment.

This government has already used up 27% of its term of office. After this August – they only have the start of the 2009 and 2010 school sessions in which to see full delivery of their promise.

The real question is whether the Concordat and the Single Outcome Agreements are fit for purpose.

The government wants to see “year on year progress” across the country overall – and not necessarily within each school or authority. But that was not their promise to the people of Scotland. We should not tolerate large class size in any class, in any school in any part of Scotland.

But our concerns go well beyond class size, important though that is. There are other excellent policy promises – which we warmly endorse – which are being entrusted to local authorities to honour.

Nursery education

The commitment to guarantee access to a qualified nursery teacher and to expand the hours of nursery education on offer is

consistent with a focus on the importance of early years. A focus that much research and international trends confirm as appropriate.

But then we see Authorities proposing to cut teacher input to nursery because it is viewed as too expensive a model of provision.

So what is the true story?

Again, we have a good commitment by the government to invest in preparing sufficient numbers of new teachers – a period of renewal and refreshment of the teaching force. We applaud that.

But maybe the problem has something to do with the swingeing local authority budget cuts – including the spectre of compulsory redundancies of teachers for the first time. And we see local authorities shamelessly abusing the Teacher Induction Scheme to minimise their recruitment of fully-registered teachers.

The TIS is internationally recognised as an outstanding scheme – a world class and a world leading innovation. Sadly, because of its abuse, its reputation at home is being undermined. It is creating tensions between those who have just completed Induction and cannot find work and those who are about to enter it and are blamed for blocking off employment chances.

It is important that all teachers show solidarity with each other. All new entrants deserve to benefit from a properly structured induction to the profession.

Colleagues, I have to say that the jury is still out on this new approach to governance. We applaud the broad direction of travel mapped out by the government in much of its education policy. The prescription may be promising, but the dispensing of it is open to doubt. There is a danger of a credibility gap opening up between what the Scottish government promised the people, what it says it wants to come to pass, and what is actually happening on the ground, in our schools and classrooms.

And it will be no defence to plead they have made possible the delivery of their policy promises but that it's the local authorities which have failed to deliver. Every power, every responsibility vested in local authorities has been placed there by the Scottish government of its own volition. ■

“We have a good commitment by the government to invest in preparing sufficient numbers of new teachers – a period of renewal and refreshment of the teaching force. We applaud that.”

AGM snippets

5-14

Assessments

The “madness” of the current 5-14 testing system across many local authorities should be ended, Phil Jackson (Angus) told delegates. He said “The testing season breaks out every year in our schools.” He added “This is damaging for teaching and learning and the standing of teachers.” For Fiona Grahame (Orkney) the testing regime was “not connected to the real work going on in our classroom”.

See Me

Tackling the stigma of mental ill-health

This year's AGM Equalities fringe meeting featured a presentation by 'See Me', an organisation which is working to raise awareness of mental health issues and to remove the stigma often associated with mental ill-health. Here, Suzie Vestri outlines the work of See Me and explains what education can do to help address issues around mental health.



AGM snippets

Shared headship workload

The AGM instructed Council to investigate and report on the workload implications for teachers in schools where there is a shared headship. Jim Lawson (Orkney) told the meeting that "there was a significant extra workload burden in schools with shared heads." The motion was passed with an overwhelming majority.

It Could Happen To Any Of Us

Imagine having a mental health problem. This could be any kind of diagnosable mental health problem, including stress, anxiety or depression. That shouldn't be hard to imagine; 1 in 4 Scots will have such a mental health problem at some time in their lives and it's acknowledged that 34% of teachers surveyed have suffered mental health problems and stress, with 12% needing to visit a doctor and 8% taking leave from work as a consequence.

Now imagine that you're looking for support and sympathy from your family and friends, your colleagues or your head of department. How would it feel to be ignored, ostracised, verbally abused or even 'encouraged to leave' work?

All of these things have happened. In fact, many people with experience of mental ill-health tell us that the stigma and discrimination they experience is worse than the mental health problem itself.

'see me' is Scotland's national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination of mental ill-health. Launched in 2002, the campaign is fully funded by the Scottish Government and run by an 'alliance' of five Scottish mental health organisations. So far,

we have run campaign strands aimed at the general public, as well as to children and young people and to employers and employees.

What Has Been Done?

Our general public work has been aimed at 'making a non-issue into an issue', at getting across the message that mental ill-health can happen to any of us; that any of us could be that '1 in 4'. Latterly we've tried to encourage people with mental health problems to be more open about their condition to their families and friends and asked the general public to look beyond the label

Findings have been generally positive. The percentage of the general public who agree that they wouldn't want anyone else to know if they had a mental health problem has fallen from 50% to 41% since 2002, and the percentage of the population who agree the 'people with mental health problems are often dangerous' has also fallen: from 32% in 2002 to 16% in the last survey in 2006.

Our award-winning campaign aimed at children and young people was a carefully thought through example of social marketing. Young people were identified as a priority because they are key to



Fiona Tannock of See Me Scotland, pictured here with Equalities Convener Bill Ramsay, delivered a presentation on mental health to this year's AGM fringe meeting.

making a generational population-wide change, because they are increasingly people with mental health problems and carers of adults. Over 1000 young people, between the ages of 9 and 22, were consulted before the launch of the first stages of the campaign; in schools and out of school activities from Lerwick to Hawick. They told us that they didn't know much about mental health problems, but that people with them 'talk to themselves', 'get taken away and you never see them again' and so on. They wanted us to be hard-hitting and not talk down to them. The health issues they most wanted us to tackle were eating disorders, and self-harm.

Our two campaigns 'Cloud Girl' and 'Cloud Boy' featured cartoon characters as TV adverts, as posters, leaflets, pen images, key rings, badges and bags. In addition to the national media buying (primarily in selected young people's programming) we have run specific campaigns in selected schools across the country, using local advertising alongside the 'Positive Mental Attitudes' curriculum pack and other in-school awareness-raising activities. Teachers have been instrumental in making this campaign work at a local level. The campaign work is evaluating well but we are already learning that the campaign needs to make clearer that it is about the stigma of mental ill-health.

Our final separate campaign strand focused on stigma and discrimination in the workplace. People with mental health problems told the campaign that it is essential that we tackle this. Getting and keeping a job is viewed as fundamental to mental wellbeing and also to recovery from mental health problems. Many organisations spend vast sums recruiting and training staff, only to lose them through poor workplace policies on mental health or through workplace discrimination. Enabling people

with mental health problems to stay in the workplace works out best for the employer and the employee, and it's not hard to do.

What Could Schools Do?

Many employers have now signed up to 'see me's anti-stigma Pledge, agreeing to work with us to tackle stigma and discrimination linked to mental ill-health. Schools could do likewise.

Signing up is not hard and makes a clear public statement of intent. Words though, are never enough. We expect signing organisations to ensure that they do whatever they can to improve their policies and the levels of awareness of their staff. This could include running internal awareness campaigns, organising training (such as Scottish Mental Health First Aid, or ASIST training) and changing their absence management policies and procedures. Teachers can only look after the mental wellbeing of



their pupils if they are able to protect their own wellbeing.

Schools can pick up and run the 'Cloud Boy and Cloud Girl' campaign; planning curriculum work (based on the PMA pack) to coincide with advertising and any existing Health Weeks you may have. Pupils can be involved in planning activities which are meaningful to them, with free 'see me' materials used as a back up resource.

Looking Ahead

The 'see me' campaign has a vision. A vision of a Scotland where everyone with a mental health problem is valued, included and equal. That includes young people or adults, teachers and pupils, parents and children, bosses and employees.

The 'see me' campaign can't achieve that vision on its own. We need public bodies, schools to act but also individual pupils, teachers and support staff to get involved in raising the issue, speaking out about their own experiences and campaigning for a better deal for people with mental health problems.

Simply carrying on being a good friend to someone with a mental health problem can be enough to make a big difference. That's something every one of us can do.

- Suzie Vestri

acting Campaign Director 'see me' - let's stop the stigma of mental ill-health. ■

Relevant websites for more information:
www.seemescotland.org
www.justlikeme.org.uk
www.positivementalattitudes.org.uk

"Simply carrying on being a good friend to someone with a mental health problem can be enough to make a big difference. That's something every one of us can do."
 Suzie Vestri

'MEETING THE NEEDS OF STAFF AND PUPILS: THE DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY'

EIS Disability Conference
Apex Hotel, Dundee
Thursday 18 September 2008

For further information on the event and an application form please contact Sheila Harris sharris@eis.org.uk or Ann Brand abrand@eis.org.uk or call the Equality Department on 0131 225 6244

Fragmentation – the greatest risk for Scottish Education?

In her final speech as EIS President, Kirsty Devaney warned of the dangers presented by increasing fragmentation in the Scottish education system.

AGM snippets

Classroom Observation

Concern about over-formal schemes of classroom observation in some local authority areas were raised by Susan Quinn (Glasgow). Tom Murphy (Glasgow) said that such schemes were “stressful, invasive and demeaning” for teachers. In support, Kay Barnett (Aberdeenshire) made it clear that the motion was not opposed to classroom observation per se. “Classroom observation is an integral part of teacher education and subject development,” she said. This presented an opportunity for professional dialogue, she added. Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) stressed the “negativity” associated with some schemes of formal observation.

“I did toy with the idea of delivering this speech in Scots for a number of reasons. Scots is the language I was brought up with, it is the language I think in, the language I feel comfortable with and anyone who knows me knows that there is hardly a time when a Scots word or phrase is very far away. Scots is enjoying a bit of a resurgence at the moment and whatever the reason for this I do welcome it. Those of us whose first language it is should be pleased that it is now recognised as a European minority language, that more and more books in Scots are being published, that translations into Scots are selling well – from Matthew Fitt’s rendering of Roald Dahl’s *The Twits* as *The Eejits* to Lorimer’s *Bible*. Some things translate better into Scots than others – Moliere is perfect, but Horace and Ovid have also been done.

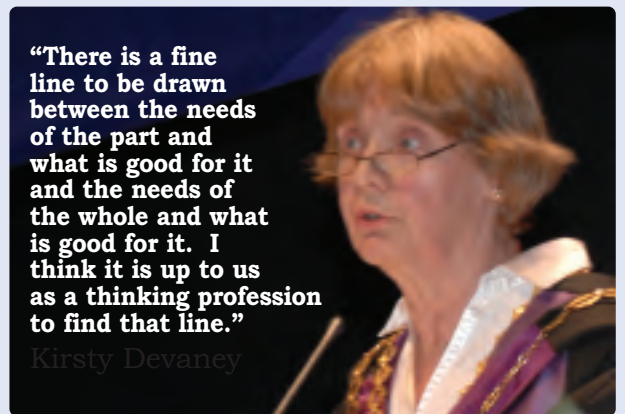
However the Scots that I was brought up with is the everyday speech of the North East of Scotland, the Doric, the plain unornamented speech of Buchan. It is quite different from the Scots of Glasgow, of Fife, of the Borders, of Orkney or Shetland and the Scots that you will hear out in the streets of Dundee is different again, and I may have lived in Dundee for nearly thirty years, but I still keep my own version of Scots. And that is really why I have chosen not to give you my thoughts in the Doric. In the interests of communicating with, hopefully everyone here, I will speak in what is, if I can mix my languages, the *lingua franca* of this country – English. And after all that is what we as educators are about – communication. Scots is the spoken language of every day, and it is the language of comedy, the language of some of the most wonderful insults, the language of poetry but probably not the language of romance – the most you would ever get out of someone from the North East is likely to be “Weel, weel, quine, fit aboot it?”. But it is our duty to teach our young people to be proficient in two, or more, languages and to respect the differences in the strengths and weaknesses of each language for different situations.

I think that we can be proud of our own linguistic roots whilst recognising the need to be understood by others and to communicate with others. This of course should apply to any minority language spoken in Scotland today, be it Polish, Urdu, Gaelic. If any teachers in the past forbade the speaking of Scots in the classroom it was, I would suggest, for the understandably pragmatic desire for their pupils to succeed beyond their own kailyard. You have probably all heard or read Nancy Nicolson’s poem, “Listen to the teacher, dinna say dinna” and I think this poem has done the teaching profession a disservice although there have been some teachers who have dismissed Scots as ungrammatical and undesirable often because of their own lack of knowledge and appreciation. I am glad that most teachers have more open minds and that Scots, in whatever form you know it, is being valued and respected.

I want to move on to another passion of mine – and that is food. Food is very important to me. My family, or at least the women in my family, do tend to remember where we have been by the meals we have had – Proust and his madeleines have nothing on us. I have had a great year enjoying the hospitality of Local Associations, for which many thanks – it would not be fair to single out any particular one. I have also attended conferences and seminars in the UK and Europe and certain places stand out because of the excellence of the food.

“There is a fine line to be drawn between the needs of the part and what is good for it and the needs of the whole and what is good for it. I think it is up to us as a thinking profession to find that line.”

Kirsty Devaney



Looking forward

However, lest you think this has been a year solely to be remembered for conspicuous consumption there have been other events while I have been President. But the AGM is not a time for looking back. It is the time when we make policy and it is the time when we look forward. There are so many issues to be considered here in relation to our schools, colleges and universities.

So I want finally to move now to one of the most important – at least, one that I have seen growing in importance this year and one that I think will take on even more significance in the future.

I’m talking about fragmentation. In the main I want to talk about the fragmentation of the teaching profession but fragmentation is also being seen in political areas both nationally and internationally.

If you look around you today in the hall you will see what is a unique gathering of the Scottish teaching profession. There are nursery teachers, primary teachers, secondary teachers, further education teachers and university teachers – and I use the word “teacher” deliberately – and I will come back to that. There are amongst us classroom teachers, principal teachers, depute head teachers, head teachers and chartered teachers. The list is extensive and certainly not exhaustive. If I have missed out your particular category I’m sorry but, in a sense, it doesn’t really matter because for the purposes of the EIS AGM your

category should not be the prime consideration. Unfortunately more and more teachers are thinking of their own patch as the most important part of their professional life. The fragmentation is growing and becoming more and more acceptable just as it is becoming acceptable and desirable in society. There has grown up the idea that involvement in politics is not a good idea unless it's for a single issue that you are interested in. So becoming involved in a campaign to stop a road or save a school or scrap a bridge toll or highlight international disasters is an acceptable way to take part in politics but membership of national political parties has dropped. Being prepared to commit to an ideology has become a thing of the past. Personalities have become more important than policies – the common cry about political parties is that “they are all the same”.

Accompanying this is the fragmentation in society into smaller units: internationally we have seen the break up of countries, sometimes amicably, sometimes very noticeably not so. There has been devolution of power to smaller and smaller units. The slogan of “Think globally, act locally” has in a lot of cases lost the global perspective. At a time when because of climate change, crisis in food production, the prospect of energy sources disappearing, we should be acting globally we instead find the defence of one's own little patch of the world becoming of supreme importance.

Devolved responsibility

Scottish education is not immune from this trend to devolution. I teach, as you know, in Further Education – the sector of Scottish education which is the most fragmented – 42 colleges each with its own agenda, its own structures and its own staffing policies. The higher education establishments are also institutions which are very separate from each other. But local authorities are now being encouraged to have their own policies and practices which could result in very different conditions for people in different parts of the country. The Concordat and the single outcome agreements devolve so much to local authorities that it is hard to see how there will not be large scale winners and losers in what is often called the post code lottery.

In the teaching profession the fragmentation is becoming very evident. There has always been a very valid debate about the

relationship between the parts of anything and the whole. The Greek philosophers would spend hours debating the subject, usually using the metaphor of the human body and speculating on whether losing an arm or a leg would lead to the destruction of the body. But we have to be very careful that we don't get so fixed in our own little part of education that we cannot see beyond it. I am very proud that I teach Maths and that I teach in Further Education but I don't see these areas as the most important or above all others in teaching.

It is understandable that each of us wants to promote our subject or our area of expertise. It would be a sad world indeed if we could not enthuse about our specialism but just as the fact that you are a Scot or a Dundonian may be important to you does not blind you to the global picture so being a Primary teacher or a Chartered teacher should not blind you to the needs of the teaching profession as a whole. The most obvious place where this happens, I'm afraid, is when people get promotion, when they become managers, when they become head teachers. FE sold the jerseys on this one some time ago – our Principals and senior staff are usually on completely different terms and conditions from the majority of the teaching staff. But I believe very strongly that you do not stop being a teacher just because you have a different role in the education system. And I do not think that you selfishly forget the rest of the profession and think only of your own particular difficulties and challenges. Although it may be important to see that your own interests are catered for it is just as important to make your contribution to the good of the whole.

Promoting teaching

There is a fine line to be drawn between the needs of the part and what is good for it and the needs of the whole and what is good for it. I think it is up to us as a thinking profession to find that line, to pay attention to each part but to also demand of each part that it participates in the whole and does not seek to break away and be too inward looking.

Because – whatever part we are in we are all teachers. If the teaching profession is worth entering it is worth defending and promoting. This year I have been privileged to see different schools and meet many different teachers in different sectors and I have been impressed by what is going on in our schools and colleges. The primacy of

teaching, in fact the primacy of good teaching is absolutely necessary if the profession is to continue to be the driving force in a civilised society. The quality of people in teaching and the quality of people entering teaching is high and must remain so. Recruitment into the profession is very important but people can be put off coming into teaching by the perception that it is hard – and yes it is – and that the rewards are few and nobody appreciates teachers. Here I only want to quote from Robert Bolt's A Man for All Seasons. When the baddie, Richard Rich, says to Thomas More that he is leaving for higher things Thomas More tells him he should stay because he is a good teacher. “Who would know?” responds Rich bitterly. More says quietly, “You, your pupils, God. Not a bad audience.”

Now some of us may wish to omit God from that audience, that is up to you, but I would also like to add to that audience. I would add “your colleagues” because these are the important people who you want to be your judges. You know when you are good or bad. Your pupils know it and your peers, your colleagues know it and that is what matters. The respect of fellow professionals is essential to the maintenance of good teaching and good teachers.

So whatever part of the profession you inhabit, whatever sector you are in, whatever post you hold, whatever part of the country you are in, rural or urban you should feel part of a greater whole not a small fragment inhabiting its own private domain.

And yet there are signs that collective action has not been totally forgotten. There is in Scotland a growth in trade union membership; this year action has been taken to defend weaker sections of our members who have been under attack, notably in Perth College and Telford College; even the famous former students of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama have made their views known on the attacks on their old institution.

We do need to remind ourselves every now and again that we are part of a great profession and that that is more important than any personal or individual notion of status or position. So as I look around at the breadth and depth of experience here I hope that the profession represented here will resist the trend to fragmentation and will realise that the gains of the past can be maintained only by unity of the whole profession.” ■

“This year I have been privileged to see different schools and meet many different teachers in different sectors and I have been impressed by what is going on in our schools and colleges.”

AGM snippets

Health promoting schools

The AGM decided that there should be a review of local authority health promoting schools accreditation schemes. John Black (Aberdeenshire) said that “an inevitable cottage industry around the accreditation scheme” for health promoting schools had now arisen. Susan Quinn (Glasgow) welcomed the health promoting schools initiative, but criticised the paperwork and bureaucracy now associated with the accreditation aspect.

Leadership for Learning

A number of CPD issues arise from the HMIE report “Leadership for Learning,” Alan Morrison (Aberdeenshire) told the AGM. The EIS is now charged with issuing guidance and advice on the implications for teachers.

Disruptive pupils

Council is to investigate means whereby teachers can refuse to accept disruptive and abusive and pupils back into their classrooms. Brian McLean (North Lanarkshire) moved the motion and urged the AGM to protect the mental and physical health



“impossible to create an atmosphere of trust and well-being in the classroom.”

Margaret Conway

of teachers against “the rising tide of growing indiscipline.” He continued “We must recognise the serious danger of pupil indiscipline wearing down the classroom teacher.” He concluded that the EIS must act on this issue as teachers can no longer rely on headteachers and local authorities to address the issue of continuing disruption and short-term exclusions. Seconding the motion Margaret Conway (North Lanarkshire) told delegates that teachers were faced with abusive and

threatening pupils on a daily basis making it impossible to create an atmosphere of trust and well-being in the classroom. She questioned why teachers should be exposed to disruption and threatening behaviour and urged the EIS to investigate this matter. Peter Lavery (North Lanarkshire) argued that every pupil has the right to the best education we can give them. “This right is violated when there is disruption in the classroom. Who will stand up for the right of pupils if not us?” Olwyn McGarvey (Renfrewshire) urged the meeting to support the motion and to safeguard the emotional and mental health issues of teachers. Joe Kinsey (EIS-FELA) made a plea that any subsequent paper produced by Council covered pupils engaged in the schools-college partnership. Andrew Fullwood (South Lanarkshire) urged delegates to reject the motion and instead to demand additional funding from the Scottish Government for children who are “the victims of a society that does not care.” However, the motion was passed by an overwhelming majority.



“the victims of a society that does not care.”

Andrew Fullwood

For better or for worse? Scotland Transformed 1980 – 2008



A Lecture by Professor Tom Devine,
Sir William Fraser Chair of Scottish
History and Palaeography,
University of Edinburgh

Introduced by
Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP
Chaired by
EIS President David Drever

Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh
Thursday 2 October 2008
6.30 – 8.30pm

A drinks reception will
follow the lecture

To register interest in attending
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Risk assessment



“risk assessments are not always clearly understood.”

Rob Peaker

The AGM instructed Council to produce guidelines for local associations on the use of risk assessment in relation to pupils exhibiting violent or abusive behaviour. Moving the motion, Gavin Roberts (North Lanarkshire) stated that “A risk assessment is a powerful tool which can be used for the benefit of our members.” While Mr Roberts acknowledged the helpful material already produced by the EIS on this matter, Ian Scott (North Lanarkshire)

seconding called for the production of more specific rather than generic advice. “We don’t have any elaboration on the existing advice and we need to think long and hard about how risk assessments can help teachers in the classroom.” Rob Peaker (Aberdeen) reminded delegates that risk assessments are not always clearly understood and this can lead to a failure to exclude and Olwyn McGarvey (Renfrewshire) highlighted the production of highly effective and well designed set of procedures developed locally in Renfrewshire on risk assessments. The motion was passed by an overwhelming majority.

Early intervention

Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) persuaded the AGM of the need to seek reassurances from the Scottish Government on the continuation of funding to support early intervention aimed at addressing challenging pupil behaviour in schools.

Permanent exclusion for violent pupils

The AGM overwhelmingly instructed local associations to seek to negotiate agreements with local authorities that any pupils found in possession of weapons in schools or who assault or threaten to assault members of staff or other pupils should normally be permanently excluded from the school in which the offence takes place.

Moving the motion, John Dennis (Dumfries and Galloway) told the meeting “For too long we have tolerated a downward spiral of extreme behaviour.” Mr Dennis went on to say that social inclusion had been used as “moral blackmail” to persuade teachers that accepting violent behaviour was part of the job. He urged delegates to commit the EIS to seek to establish a negotiating position which encouraged good practice and which put pressure on the Scottish Government and the local authorities to spend more on alternative provision. In seconding the motion, Timothy Birrell (Dumfries and Galloway) said “We have to seek to improve the attitude of our employers”. He told the meeting that in his own school staff had to lodge a collective grievance and even go to the lengths of conducting an indicative ballot for industrial action before their concerns about violence in school were taken seriously.

Other delegates favoured automatic exclusion rather than negotiated agreements in 32 local authorities. Christine Alison (Glasgow) told the meeting that it was normal practice to exclude pupils who had committed violent offences but that simply was not happening. She cited examples of headteachers being assaulted and sworn at and that this sent the message that violent behaviour was acceptable. Other delegates gave examples of pupils wielding knives, axes and baseball bats in

schools. Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow) reminded the AGM that some pupils “carry real knives in real schools.” He argued that automatic exclusion would “create the kind of schools we want – safe, happy, secure, achieving schools”. Carolyn Ritchie (Glasgow) called for automatic exclusion as the management side will not negotiate on this issue. However, Moira McCrossan (Dumfries and Galloway) described automatic exclusion as “a pious hope.” She said “The AGM and Council have no locus in permanent exclusion. Most of our schools are safe and well-ordered places. But the EIS should negotiate agreements to cover the small minority.”

Delegate Andrew Fullwood (South Lanarkshire) urged the AGM to keep this issue in proportion. “I do not go into work worried that I am going to be stabbed or assaulted,” he said. However, Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) reminded the meeting that the EIS was interested in protecting EIS members and in protecting pupils and urged the meeting to support the motion which covered everyone affected by violence. The motion was carried by an overwhelming majority.

In a separate debate Linzi Moore (South Lanarkshire) successfully moved a motion instructing Council to produce guidelines to ensure that the care, welfare and right to a safe place of work for the teacher are considered. Ms Moore highlighted that violence is an increasing problem in schools and that violence towards teachers is unacceptable. She added “Many Councils compile statistics on violent incidents but do not support the victim on their return to work. She concluded that “Every teacher has the right to feel safe and secure” and the meeting passed the motion with an overwhelming majority. ■



“create the kind of schools we want – safe, happy, secure, achieving schools”.

Hugh Donnelly



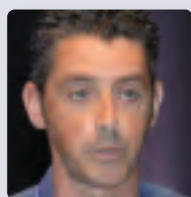
Automatic exclusion **“a pious hope”.**

Moira McCrossan

Staff health and wellbeing

A motion instructing Council to report on examples of good practice in relation to staff health and wellbeing was carried by an overwhelming majority of delegates. John Black (Aberdeenshire) highlighted the vast majority of initiatives regarding pupil health but contrasted that situation with the absence of any proactive initiatives on staff wellbeing and health.

“There is a significant role for the employer to promote staff health and wellbeing,” he said. Supporting the motion Robin Irvine (Renfrewshire) outlined instances of “teacher burn-out”. He highlighted an initiative for the promotion of staff health and wellbeing in Renfrewshire but lamented the passing of this successful pilot scheme. He concluded “It is not enough to vote for this motion but it is the responsibility of all of us to persuade employers to do more to ensure that good health is part of our daily lives.”



“absence of any proactive initiatives on staff wellbeing and health.

John Black

Campus Police Officers

The EIS will investigate the appointments procedures, duties and responsibilities of campus police officers as a result of a successful motion proposed by Vice-President Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire). This is intended to lead to a draft protocol for such appointments with involvement of teachers’ representatives at LNCT level.

“We want to ensure adequate consultation before police officers are deployed on our school campuses”, said Ms Connor. “These officers must also be there to play a supportive role within the school community, not to enforce their own discipline within the school.”

Speaking in support, Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire) said, “My school ended up with a full-time campus Police Officer without any consultation whatsoever. Appropriate protocols have to be put in place before officers are deployed in schools.”

AGM snippets

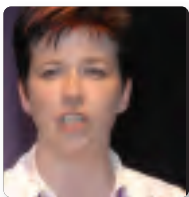
School/College partnership

All lecturers and teachers teaching classes as part of schools/college partnerships or NEET programmes should be both educationally and technically qualified in the subjects they teach. This was stressed by John Cassidy (FELA) in his speech to the AGM, where he won support for his motion on the subject.

AGM snippets

Electronic pupil reports

The AGM reaffirmed that teachers should have the option of submitting handwritten or electronic pupil reports. Hamish Glen (North Lanarkshire) highlighted two key issues regarding electronic pupil reports. The first issue was training as not all programmes were user friendly and the second issue was resourcing as not all classrooms were equipped with a dedicated computer access to individual teachers. Others questioned the requirement to complete these reports on school premises and upheld the principle that teachers should retain the facility to submit hand written reports.



“allow our own children to gain a clearer view of the Palestinian situation”

Nicola Fisher

HMIE

The EIS will call for a review of the role of HMIE, including a request to commission independent research on HMIE impact on schools, as the result of a successful motion from Glasgow and Aberdeenshire.

In support of the motion, Larry Flanagan (Education convener) welcomed the announcement the previous week of a major change in HMIE procedures, including increased professional dialogue and clearer processes of self-evaluation. He hoped that the announced changes would “change things for the better.” Mr Flanagan said that they “chimed with issues raised by EIS with HMIE in the course of the year.” He said that in the past there had been a lack of a collegial approach in carrying out HMIE procedures. There was a need “to tell the real story of schools in place of a simple review of attainment statistics.” In support, Kay Barnett, Aberdeenshire, said that the recent Crerar review presented an opportunity for the review now sought by the EIS. Delegates spoke of recent experiences of HMIE visits. Fiona Smith (Glasgow) said that HMIE had come to her school “with pre-conceived ideas.” Speaking of the work done in schools in anticipation of an HMIE visit, she said “HMIE, like the Queen, exists in a world that smells of new paint.” A review, she said was “long overdue – HMIE are not always right.”

A proposal that HMIE should be required to teach in a school for an academic year for every eight years in post, was defeated by 146 votes to 143. A narrow majority of delegates agreed with Tom Tracy that, “There are practical implications of finding full time jobs in schools.” In agreement, Willie Hart spoke of “issues of contract law, and of people’s rights.” In support of his unsuccessful motion, Peter Lavery argued that the return of Inspectors to classroom teaching “should be an extra asset in schools – experts helping the situation in the classroom.”



“tell the real story of schools in place of a simple review of attainment statistics.”

Larry Flanagan

Curriculum for Excellence

Larry Flanagan (Education convener) called on Government for a “full engagement with the teaching profession” if a Curriculum for Excellence is to succeed. He said that, to date, “the EIS has not been involved in taking forward the principles [underpinning CfE].” Mr Flanagan spoke of the need to learn from the errors of 5-14 and Higher Still implementation. In particular, any introduction of assessment associated with new levels within CfE would “run contrary to the idea that we won’t have an attainment driven curriculum.” Mr Flanagan stressed that “for CfE to be realised, it must be resourced” Appropriate CPD must also be put in place.

Twinning with Palestinian schools and colleges

The EIS will support schools and colleges in seeking twinning links with Palestinian schools and colleges, as a result of a motion proposed by incoming national President David Drever on behalf of Orkney Local Association.

Mr Drever highlighted an article entitled “Scaling the Wall” by Dr Hala al-Yamani which was published in the October 2007 edition of the SEJ. The article was, Mr Drever said, “a graphic and harrowing account of the circumstances facing Palestinian teachers and learners.”

Seconding the motion Mary Maley (Orkney) said, “Palestinian pupils and students are extremely keen to make contact with the outside world, as their mobility is severely limited by the presence of the Wall.”

Speaking in support, Nicola Fisher (Glasgow) said, “Twinning will allow our own children to gain a clearer view of the Palestinian situation than that which is often presented through the media”.

AGM voted heavily in favour of the motion.

Disability

The EIS will work to raise awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), as a result of a successful motion proposed by Equalities Convener Bill

Ramsay (South Lanarkshire). “We should attempt to encourage our members to reflect on mental health issues and on the stigma that is often associated with mental health. We know that between 15% – 30% of all employees will experience mental health issues during their career, according to

Government statistics.” Mr Ramsay also highlighted the very good work on mental health issues currently being undertaken by the “See Me” organisation (see page 8-9 of this SEJ) who were to give a presentation to delegates at the AGM Fringe meeting the following day.

Speaking in support, Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) added, “There is still a stigma attached to mental health issues. Many members see becoming mentally ill as a sign of weakness, or are worried that others will see it as such.”

The AGM agreed that more work needs to be done to highlight mental health issues, and voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion.



“We know that 15-30% of all employees will experience mental health issues during their career.”

Bill Ramsay

Standard Grade

A move by Education Committee convener Larry Flanagan to have a motion in relation to Standard Grade remitted to Council was agreed by the AGM. In support of the original motion re-affirming EIS support of Standard Grade, Michael Dolan (West Dunbartonshire), spoke of the “hotchpotch of certification, sometimes as young as S2” which is currently in place. He added “Parents are totally bewildered” about current arrangements. The remit move by Mr Flanagan will allow the EIS and secondary teachers to become fully involved over the summer and autumn in the government consultation exercise on post 14 exam structures.

Password protected section of EIS website

A motion calling for the removal of the password restricted members' section of the EIS website, proposed by John Dennis (Dumfries & Galloway), was remitted to EIS Council for further consideration as this element of the website will be covered by the widespread Communications Review that is set to be undertaken by Council over the next year.

Council attitude to AGM motions

EIS Council will cease to provide a written commentary on its attitude to AGM motions, following a successful motion from Mary Matheson (Aberdeen City). Ms Matheson successfully argued that, "it is the job of AGM to debate the issue of motions fairly and openly" and so the commentary was not required. In a vote, delegates backed the motion by 160 votes in favour to 104 against.

Learning Agreements

Stephen McCrossan spoke of the growing work of Learning Reps in most local association structures, including his own LR role in North Lanarkshire. He believed that Partnership Learning Agreements between the EIS and local authorities would help take the agenda forward. "Access to reasonable time off for LR is a key factor", he said.

Bullying of Gypsy and traveller pupils

The EIS will work with partner organisations to prevent the bullying of Gypsy and traveller pupils, following a successful motion from Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian). "92% of the children of Scottish Gypsy travellers have experienced discrimination in school or in the street on the way to school. This can impact on the pupils' engagement with their school and damage the educational experience of these children." Seconding the motion, Bill Ramsay (Equalities convener) said "The situation is not getting any better, in fact it is getting worse." The AGM agreed and backed the motion overwhelmingly.

Private charity

A motion proposed by Edinburgh local association, with an amendment from Inverclyde LA, calling on the EIS to campaign for the abolition of any form of central or local government support for private education, was remitted to Council for further consideration.

Presenting the motion to the AGM, Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) said, "The reality is that private schools encourage inequality. They re-enforce and encourage social division." Ms McCrae also highlighted that the issue of charitable status for some private schools must also be questioned.

Speaking on the amendment Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) said, "This issue needs to be thoroughly investigated. No funding should go from the state to private education."

However, Kenn Bryce Stafford (Edinburgh) argued that many small charitable specialist schools providing services for pupils with very acute special needs would be impacted by the removal of all public support. This would, he argued, be to the detriment of some pupils who were supported in these schools by local authority funding.

The AGM agreed that the issue warranted further investigation and consideration, and agreed to remit the Motion to Council following a call from Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire).

WINDING DOWN SCHEME

Colin Mackay (Edinburgh) successfully moved a motion instructing Council to investigate and to seek to address any provisions of the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) Winding Down scheme which may indirectly discriminate against women teachers or which penalise teachers whose service is broken by illness. Mr Mackay stated that the Winding Down scheme "...is a life-saver, logical and necessary." However, he pointed out that a significant number of women teachers may not qualify as there is a requirement to have 25 years service. In seconding the motion, Jim Lawson (Orkney) reminded delegates that under SPPA rules any period on zero pay counts as a break in service thereby denying access to the Winding Down scheme to certain applicants. Applicants in these situations will not have completed 10 years of continuous employment immediately prior to application. "An investigation is required to put right these injustices" he added.

Employment of Asylum Seekers

Improving the employment rights of Asylum Seekers was the subject of a successful motion from Equalities Convener Bill Ramsay (South Lanarkshire). "This motion is not even a true call for progress, we are simply seeking the re-instatement by the Government of rights that Asylum Seekers previously had", said Mr Ramsay.

Seconding the motion, Andrea Bradley (South Lanarkshire) said, "We must challenge a Government policy that condemns hundreds of families to years of enforced poverty. Current policy does nothing but alienate Asylum Seekers by separating them from society."

She added, "Allowing Asylum Seekers to seek employment also makes economic sense, as many of these workers bring valuable skills that would benefit our country and our economy."

The AGM agreed that this was an issue that must be addressed, and voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion.

Supporting young teachers

The EIS will create a Young Members' Network, following a successful motion proposed by Damien Etherington (Moray) who said, "This will help to encourage young members to become active in the EIS and will give us an edge in recruiting young members." The motion was seconded by Jo Hill (Orkney).

As the result of a separate motion, the EIS will investigate ways of improving communication with probationer and student members. Speaking in support of the motion, Nat McMullen (Glasgow) said, "Students and probationers are the lifeblood of our union."



"The reality is that private schools encourage inequality."

Annie McCrae



"Impact on pupils with acute special needs."

Kenn Bryce Stafford

Deprivation & poverty

The impact of deprivation on pupils' educational opportunities was the topic of a motion from Glasgow local association. Larry Flanagan (education convener) referred to the recent OECD survey which had underlined the impact of poverty in Scottish schools. He said that the effects of deprivation can be compensated for to some extent. However, he said "The ability to compensate depends on the resources made available to us as teachers."

In a separate motion, Orkney delegates Fiona Grahame and Jim Lawson persuaded the AGM that the EIS investigate and report on the links between poverty and attainment in Scottish schools.

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