



The Scottish Educational Journal



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# A Beneficial Return?

**Many investors have suffered financially in a time of falling stockmarket returns and the lowest interest rates in over 50 years are set to drop further, so is it time to cut your losses or is there a future for stockmarket investment?**

**In this edition of the SEJ, Iain Pollock – Independent Financial Adviser for EIS Financial Services – looks at the potential benefits to be found.**

At a time when returns from investments have fallen, it is understandable that many people are concerned about what financial return their money is earning for them. It's not easy to know the best time to move your money when you can't predict what the future holds, especially when bank interest rates are so low and forecast to drop further.

Most investments should be seen as medium to long term (5 years +) and this generally helps to smooth out the return – if you look at the performance of a fund over one year you could well see a fall in value, however, look at the same fund over a five year period and it might actually perform very well. The stockmarkets have been through crashes before and have still managed to pull through to provide good returns over the medium to long term.

Another thing to consider is the risk profile of your investment or portfolio. It's important to realise that not all investments are high risk. In fact, a lot of investments cater for the cautious investor and there are even some that offer stockmarket growth potential with capital guarantees and, in some cases, guaranteed levels of return.

Investing while the stockmarkets are low means that you are buying at a low price. This offers great potential for a good return while the markets are in recovery. If you wait until the markets have fully recovered you will have missed out on this window of opportunity.

If you want further information on investment planning or ISAs you can contact us on **0141 332 8004** or Email [SEJinvest@eisfs.co.uk](mailto:SEJinvest@eisfs.co.uk) and an EISFS Independent Financial Adviser will be happy to discuss your individual requirements in more detail.

**[www.eisfs.co.uk](http://www.eisfs.co.uk)**

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## Key points

- Stockmarkets have pulled through bad times before.
- Not all investments are high risk.
- Investing while markets are low offers great potential.
- Some investments offer capital protection and guaranteed growth rates.
- Seek Independent Financial Advice before investing.

## A bright start for Scotland's new teachers?

This month, the SEJ looks at the future for Scotland's newest teachers. Our cover story features the thoughts of two new induction year teachers as they start putting theory into practice and embark on their careers in the classroom. These two new teachers describe some of the expectations, hopes and even the fears that many of their peers across the country will share as they make the big step from trainee teachers to fully-fledged classroom teacher.

The support available for newly qualified teachers in Scotland is now better than it has ever been. The guaranteed induction year, available to every teaching graduate from a Scottish University, has been one of the successes of the 21st century teaching agreement. It has provided an enhanced induction programme for all new teachers, with structured support from mentors who can offer the type of advice that is invaluable to new classroom practitioners.

Scotland will need many new teachers over the next few years, both to meet the educational requirement to reduce class sizes and also to maintain the teaching force as many experienced teachers approach retirement age. So it is nothing short of a national scandal that so many new teachers, upon completing their induction year, find themselves unable to secure a permanent post and struggle even to gain regular supply work.

This is not an issue of supply and demand, nor is it a question of a lack of finance. The Scottish Government repeatedly stated that teacher numbers would be maintained, and that local authorities had been allocated sufficient funding to allow this to be achieved. However, under the freedom afforded to them under their Concordat, many local authorities have opted not to spend this money on employing new teachers or in replacing members of staff who have retired.

The Scottish Government's recent budget announcement that they would cut back on the number of teacher training places in the coming year to "fix" the problem has only served to let local authorities off the hook on their obligations. And it potentially could create a bigger problem down the line, with insufficient numbers of teachers being trained to meet Scotland's future needs. The end result will be even fewer teachers in our schools, and larger class sizes for our pupils.

The Scottish Government and local authorities have a social and moral obligation to Scotland's education system and to its pupils and teachers of the future. Without action to reverse the falling number of teachers in our schools, the outlook for new teachers and for Scottish education could begin to look considerably less bright.

### Fresh look for SEJ

This month's SEJ sees the launch of a fresh new look, designed to make the Journal brighter and more accessible. We hope that you enjoy the SEJ's new look, and we look forward to receiving all feedback from readers. Contact [sej@eis.org.uk](mailto:sej@eis.org.uk) to share your views.

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# A Fresh Outlook

Cover Story **08**



## Class size regulation a “step in the right direction”



Ronnie Smith

Image: Alan Richardson

The EIS has welcomed the announcement by Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, of the intention to regulate a class size maximum of 25 for primary 1 classes from August 2010 and to initiate a review on all class size arrangements.

Commenting, EIS General Secretary Ronnie Smith said: “While the decision to set P1 classes to a maximum of 25 is less than our aspiration – and less than the SNP manifesto commitment – the EIS has been seeking a more enforceable mechanism to limit class sizes. This has now been accepted by the Scottish Government. The statutory limit of 25 is clearly a step in the right direction and provides a platform for enabling all class size maxima in law. We need to build on this quickly in the years ahead.”

Mr Smith added, “The EIS has drawn attention in the past to the current ‘patchwork quilt’ of class size arrangements and the means of promulgating such arrangements. A review offers an opportunity to provide a coherent approach to class size maxima and the EIS will play its part in this review. However, the review will only succeed if it addresses issues of coherence. It cannot afford to be sidetracked into a debate on the merits of reducing class sizes. The need to reduce class sizes was accepted by the major political parties in the run up to the last elections to the Scottish Parliament.” ●

## EIS speaks up on human rights and education at TUC



Image: Andrew Wiard

This year’s Trades Union Congress was held in Liverpool in mid-September. As ever, the EIS was prominent with both President Helen Connor (pictured) and Past-President David Drever amongst the speakers at Congress.

Ms Connor introduced a major motion on Human Trafficking, and told delegates, “Despite the efforts of Government and a range of other agencies, the trafficking of men, women and children into this country continues apace. Trafficking is carried out to take advantage of vulnerable people either in an employment context or as a means of exploiting people sexually.”

The motion won the unanimous support of Congress, and the TUC will continue to raise awareness amongst affiliates of the extent of trafficking and of the efforts being made to bring this abhorrent practice to an end.

Mr Drever spoke in support of a broad ranging composite motion on public spending cuts and the economy. The motion, also supported by colleagues in other public sector unions, rejected the notion that the solution to the economic crisis must be found in public spending cuts. Indeed, he argued, those who rely on public services should not be made to pay the price of a crisis caused by the bankers.

Mr Drever’s speech focussed on the need for investment in training and infrastructure, especially Further and Higher Education. He pledged that the EIS would campaign with other public sector unions to defend public spending in the coming months up to and beyond the General Election. ●

## Unions into Schools

The EIS is committed to promoting awareness of trade unionism and rights at work as part of the curriculum for all secondary pupils. An STUC Unions into Schools resource entitled “A Better Way to Work in Scotland” is available to assist teachers in delivering trade union education.

This resource pack is designed for use by teachers and trained trade union school tutors in Scottish schools. Some of the activities within the pack were written and evaluated for use in Scottish schools during 2007-2008 when STUC school visit tutors visited secondary schools in Scotland. ●

The resource pack can be downloaded from the STUC website at

[www.stuc.org.uk/unionswork/education/a-better-way-to-work-in-scotland](http://www.stuc.org.uk/unionswork/education/a-better-way-to-work-in-scotland)



## On-line LGBT Forum

The EIS has established an on-line LGBT forum. It is a confidential, password protected, site for LGBT members only. All existing LGBT members have been contacted advising them of its existence and how to access it through the EIS website.

The EIS wants to provide a safe place for LGBT members to discuss current issues, to provide up to date information and to hear people’s views on their workplace experiences.

It is administered and monitored by Ann Brand, EIS Equality Department, Veronica Rankin, National Officer, (Equality and Education) and Marilyn O’Brien, EIS LGBT network member.

If members wish to be part of the network and gain access to it, they should contact Ann Brand at EIS Headquarters on 0131 225 6244 or [abrand@eis.org.uk](mailto:abrand@eis.org.uk). ●

## Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card, the anti-racist charity, has launched its 2010 creative competition supported by the SQA, LTS and the EIS.

The 2010 competition is bigger and more inclusive than before, with categories for further education colleges and special schools. Entries are welcome from individuals and class groups.

All entrants have to do is develop a piece of creative work that gets across loud and clear the message that racism is not welcome in Scotland. It could be:

- Artwork
- Poetry
- Short story/  
Creative writing
- Music composition
- Multimedia presentation
- Dance/Drama
- Research project
- T-shirt design

Or anything that is creative, inspirational and stimulated by the anti-racism theme.

Scottish football clubs and organisations fully support our campaign and will attend the prize giving ceremony at Scotland's national stadium, Hampden Park. Winners will pick up superb prizes. There will be commemorative certificates for everyone who enters the competition.

### The competition is now open for entries.

Please register your interest in taking part in the competition by **27 November 2009**.

The closing date for receipt of entries is **29 January 2010**.

Full details of the competition, plus entry details, can be found at **[www.sqa.org.uk/redcard](http://www.sqa.org.uk/redcard)**

### Fortnight of Action

Show Racism the Red Card's annual Fortnight of Action takes place in Scotland from 16th - 31st October, 2009.

This period of concerted action encourages participation from all sections of communities to celebrate diversity and tackle racism. A major aim of the Fortnight of Action is to encourage anti-racist actions, events and initiatives to take place throughout the year. Many organisations begin their actions during October and run follow-up events during the year. There are other organisations including schools and community groups that look to the Fortnight of Action for ideas and inspirations. One proven way of making a difference is to act on a local level to break down barriers that lead to racist attitudes and behaviour. ●

Further details can be downloaded from [www.theredcard.org/get-involved/foa](http://www.theredcard.org/get-involved/foa)

### Out of Site

#### Challenging racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Travellers

Show Racism the Red Card's resource pack "Out of Site", which aims to challenge racist attitudes towards Gypsy and Roma Travellers, can be downloaded at

[www.srtrc.org/news/news-and-events?news=480](http://www.srtrc.org/news/news-and-events?news=480)



## Go back to school this Christmas with a great ticket offer!



Let the Festival Theatre Edinburgh take you back to school this December with The Corstorphine Road Nativity, a brand new stage show from acclaimed writer Tim Firth (Calendar Girls, Kinky Boots).

Set in the fictional but instantly recognisable Corstorphine Road Primary School in Edinburgh, all parts in the annual school nativity are played by adults – with hilarious consequences.

Backstage nerves take hold as the trembling narrator tries desperately to learn his lines, the wise man struggles to overcome his lisp and pronounce the word Frankincense, while playground politics come into force as the school bully attempts to steal the role of Mary from the teacher's pet. And with fluffed entrances, forgotten lines, brazen upstaging and distractions of excited parent-spotting, the nativity performance itself soon descends into a chaotic but hilarious charade.

SEJ readers can buy tickets for just £12.50 - simply phone the Festival Theatre Box Office on 0131 529 6000, or visit the theatre in person at 13 – 29 Nicolson Street. ●

#### Terms and conditions:

- Offer valid from Thu 3 – Wed 9 December
- Must quote 'Scottish Educational Journal Offer' when booking
- Maximum of 4 tickets per transaction
- Does not apply to tickets already purchased
- Not valid in conjunction with any other discount

**December Thu 3 - Sat 19 at 7.30PM**

**Thu 10, Sat 12, Thu 17 & Sat 19, 2.30PM**

Tickets: £9.50 - £24.00 • Box Office: 0131 529 6000

[www.festivaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.festivaltheatre.org.uk)

## Sunshine for RBS Gala Day

Hundreds of coloured balloons, a roving magician, Dr Recommenda Book's reading surgery, a Powerpod (a device which teaches young people about the environment), an overflowing Children's Bookshop and, of course, fabulous children's authors: these were the special ingredients which went into creating the Edinburgh International Book Festival's RBS Gala Day on 1st September this year. This unique day of learning and fun saw 3,320 primary school pupils from 56 schools from all over Scotland take over Charlotte Square Gardens for the day.

The EIS provides support, through its Sponsorship of the Arts Programme, to the Edinburgh International Book Festival's schools programme.

Pupils from P1 to P7 were catered for in an exciting line-up of events. Highlights included Julia Donaldson entertaining wee ones with her Songbirds Show, Debi Gliori introducing Witch Baby & Me to an enchanted audience of P3s to P6s and Joan Lingard engaging older pupils in an interesting discussion based on three of her novels, each set in a different era and location. In a special focus on the Scottish language Matthew Fitt read from The Eejits, his hilarious Scots version of Roald Dahl's The Twits, to



an audience of guffawing youngsters while Linda Strachan's Hamish McHaggis taught children new Scots words and phrases.

Fine weather gave children the opportunity to play on the grass and enjoy an outdoor picnic (and the odd ice cream!) in between events. A grand day out was had by all! If you would like to find out how to take part in next year's RBS Gala Day please visit [www.edbookfest.co.uk/education](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/education). ●

## GENERATION SCIENCE brings science to an even younger generation

In 2010 Generation Science will, for the first time, tour to nursery schools as well as over 600 primary schools throughout Scotland. Last year the team travelled to some of the most remote parts of Scotland including Shetland, Uist and the Fair Isles, communicating the benefits of science and technology and bringing science to life for over 60,000 pupils. In 2010 the tour will kick off in January and it is hoped that even more pupils will be inspired to explore and understand the world around them, through Generation Science's programme of shows and workshops which complement the schools science curriculum.

Generation Science is run by the Edinburgh International Science Festival, which takes place each year, during the Easter holidays.

Following the success of the Festival's 'Wee Wonder World' a selection of shows aimed at ages 0 to 6 years, Generation Science will be touring 'Ella's Wobble' to nursery schools throughout the spring and summer terms.

Ella's Wobble is an interactive show where pupils build their own instruments and discover how sound is made, how pitch changes and where echoes come from. It follows the adventures of a young girl Ella, who loses the sound of her voice and sets out on a journey to find it, meeting various creatures along the way.

Generation Science has been touring for over 19 years and its experienced team of science communicators are well versed in bringing science to life and making science fun. Its programme of shows and workshops supports teachers in the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence. The programme reflects the challenges that primary teachers have with teaching certain areas of science and provides pupils with first hand experiences of innovative and exciting science activities. There are seventeen different shows programmed for 2010. ●



EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL  
SCIENCE FESTIVAL  
**generation  
science**  
Visiting Scotland's schools

To book any of this year's Generation Science workshops and shows call **0131 553 0321** or email [generationscience@scifest.co.uk](mailto:generationscience@scifest.co.uk). Office open Monday to Friday **8.30am to 4.30pm**

Full programme details available online at [www.generationscience.co.uk](http://www.generationscience.co.uk)

### 2010 Tour Dates:

**Spring Tour:** 25 Jan to 26 March

**Summer Tour:** 26 April to 28 May

(Note: depending on demand the tour can extend into June)

## NEWS & COUNCIL NEWS

# October Council News

### EIS to fight back against budget cuts

October's EIS Council meeting was dominated by discussions around the planned EIS campaign to fight local authority cuts to education budgets. The EIS AGM resolved that EIS will mount a major campaign, including a national demonstration, to fight back against reductions to public sector budgets and, in particular, cuts to education spending.

A proposal in the name of Andrew Fullwood (South Lanarkshire), calling for the EIS to organise a national demonstration against cuts on 7 November to coincide with the G20 Finance meeting in Scotland, was rejected overwhelmingly by Council. Many Council members highlighted that they shared Mr Fullwood's concerns and determination to fight the cuts, but questioned the planned timing of a demonstration to coincide with the G20 meeting.

### Protecting Education Budgets

Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) won the clear support of Council with a Motion calling for the EIS to campaign for a return to ring-fenced budgets for education. He said, "Currently, under the Concordat, local authorities are free to raid education budgets to shore up spending in other areas. We need to return to ring-fencing to protect education spending." ●

### Bill Speirs Remembered

Council members noted with sadness the death of former STUC General Secretary Bill Speirs, who had passed away in the week prior to the meeting. Leading the tributes to Mr Speirs, EIS Past-President David Drever said, "Many colleagues will have been shocked and distressed at the news of Bill's early death at the age of 57. He was an outstanding individual, a committed trade-unionist and a good friend of the EIS. Bill also had a remarkable international reputation, and achieved a great deal through his work for the international trade union movement." ●

### Honour for EIS General Secretary

General Secretary Ronnie Smith has been honoured with an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Mr Smith was honoured for his services to education in Scotland and internationally.

Commenting on the honour, EIS President Helen Connor said, "This is a well-deserved honour which recognises all the work that Ronnie has done for Scottish pupils and teachers, and for education both in Scotland and also internationally."

Other EIS members honoured in the Queen's Birthday list included: Brian McAlinden, headteacher at Castlemilk High School in Glasgow (CBE); Stuart Leask Hay, deputy headteacher at Anderson High School in Shetland (MBE); Carol MacGruer, Study Co-Ordinator, Ayr College (MBE); Hamish MacPhee, Principal Educational Psychologist, Fife Council (MBE).

The SEJ adds its congratulations to the General Secretary on his OBE, and to each EIS member honoured in the Queen's List. ●

### St Andrews Day March & Rally against Racism and Fascism

Equality Convener Bill Ramsay advised Council that the date for this year's event is Saturday 28, November. ●

And Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire) argued, "We are already committed to a demonstration at the appropriate point where it will have the greatest impact. But the 7 November is not that point. We have to build capacity and support to ensure that our demonstration and campaign are a success."

Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) agreed, and said, "My main worry is timing – would the four weeks available give us enough time to organise and publicise a meaningful national campaign?"

Council members agreed and rejected the proposal, instead electing to allow the EIS Strategy and Executive Committees to continue their work on a co-ordinated campaign strategy and to present their recommendations to the November meeting of Council. ●

### Annual Charity Cycle Sweepstake

For many years delegates to the AGM have been asked to guess the distance EIS Council member John Cassidy and some of his colleagues and friends from Cardonald College cycle on a pre-determined route. This year's Charity

Cycle was over the Burns' Trail to coincide with the 250th Anniversary of the birth of the Bard and the Year of Homecoming.



Marion receives her prize from John at the October Council Meeting

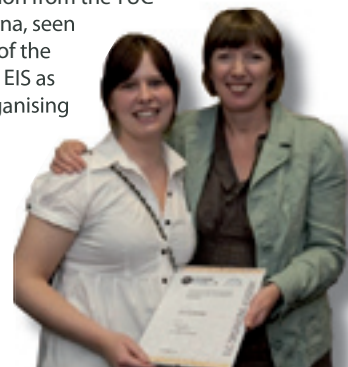
The overall distance covered/cycled was 113.8 miles. The guesses for the distance cycled generated over £850.00 which helped make up the overall total of £6,500.00 raised over the 2008/09 academic year.

The main nominated charity, Rachel House received £3,500, 3 other charities received £600, and another 8 received £150 each. This year's Sweepstake was won by Marion Ross from Moray Local Association, one of the delegates to this year's AGM, with a guess of 114.1 miles. ●

### Graduation Day

Joanna Sinclair, EIS Student Liaison Development Worker, pictured here on her recent graduation from the TUC Organising Academy. Joanna, seen here with Frances O'Grady of the TUC, was sponsored by the EIS as she undertook the TUC Organising Academy Programme.

The TUC Organising Academy was established in 1998 to help trade unions in the UK organise for growth. ●



# A Fresh Outlook

## Looking ahead with Scotland's new teachers

With the start of the new school term, Scotland's newest teachers are putting all that they learned in teacher education to good use as they embark on their induction year in classrooms across the country. Here, two new secondary school teachers, Elaine Peat and Ellen Angus, share their experiences and feelings of their first few weeks as "real" teachers in real classrooms.

### Education + Experience + Support = Real Teacher

*Elaine Peat, Abrohill High School*

After thinking my probationary year would never actually arrive, here I am in my fifth week as a Maths probationer and still smiling (OK, maybe not always!). On walking into the staffroom on day one, still unsure if I was ready to be Miss Peat – Maths Teacher, I came across my very own tray in the staffroom. This simple gesture made me feel like I had already been slotted in to the staff team. My first day as a real teacher passed in a bit of a blur after that, not meriting the many sleepless nights beforehand. It was a day of meeting classes, discussing classroom routines and rules, and explaining the structure of courses. I was fed up with the sound of my own voice by the end of the day – something I never thought I would say!

In the transition from student teacher to teacher, I have kept in mind ideas and techniques learned from my teacher education programme, especially those relating to co-operative learning and AiFL strategies. Such ideas for co-operative learning have been altered slightly along the way - putting 20 co-operative, motivated adults into groups is certainly different from organising 20 slightly less co-operative pupils.

Support from colleagues has been vital to my survival through the first few weeks. From experienced teachers to clerical staff to janitors, there has always been someone on hand to help me work through my seemingly endless list of questions. Talking to my fellow probationers and looking at their tired eyes also gives me peace of mind knowing I am not the only one who feels that they could sleep for a month.

Having a designated mentor and a timetabled mentor meeting each week is already proving invaluable. The meetings are informal and relaxed, providing a chance for me to delight in lessons that have gone really well or off load and seek advice on ones that haven't gone to plan. I don't feel like I have to watch what I say - asking for advice or acknowledging a lesson went badly is not viewed as a sign of weakness but a willingness to improve. Before starting my probationary year, I was sure the observed lessons were going to be like more dreaded crits, but have been amazed at how different they are. As well as my designated mentor, the department's open door policy means there is always someone to go to when needed, ensuring that I never leave school worrying about the next day.

In one way the weeks are flying in, and yet at the same time I feel like I have been teaching for months instead of weeks. I no longer feel like I am 'acting' like a real teacher, hoping the kids believe it - I actually feel like one! The supportive ethos in the school makes me feel confident in dealing with whatever challenges I may face this year, and I look forward to both the ups and downs that teaching life will bring. ●

### Learning in Motion

*Ellen Angus, Northfield Academy*

For me and my fellow Physical Education graduates, probation year was a prospect we all felt similarly about. On one hand we couldn't wait to get started; finally putting our knowledge and skills into practice without the pressure of someone else constantly watching us, and finally doing the job we had trained so hard for and get paid for it! On the other hand, the idea of total independence in the classroom was quite a scary prospect and the nerves seem to set in when we sat there and began to think of all the things that could potentially go wrong in each individual lesson.

I was lucky enough to be placed at a very familiar school for my induction year. Having only taught there a matter of months ago on my final 4th year university placement, I knew the school well, got on famously with the PE department and other teachers in the school, and also knew a lot of the pupils already – the good and the not so good.

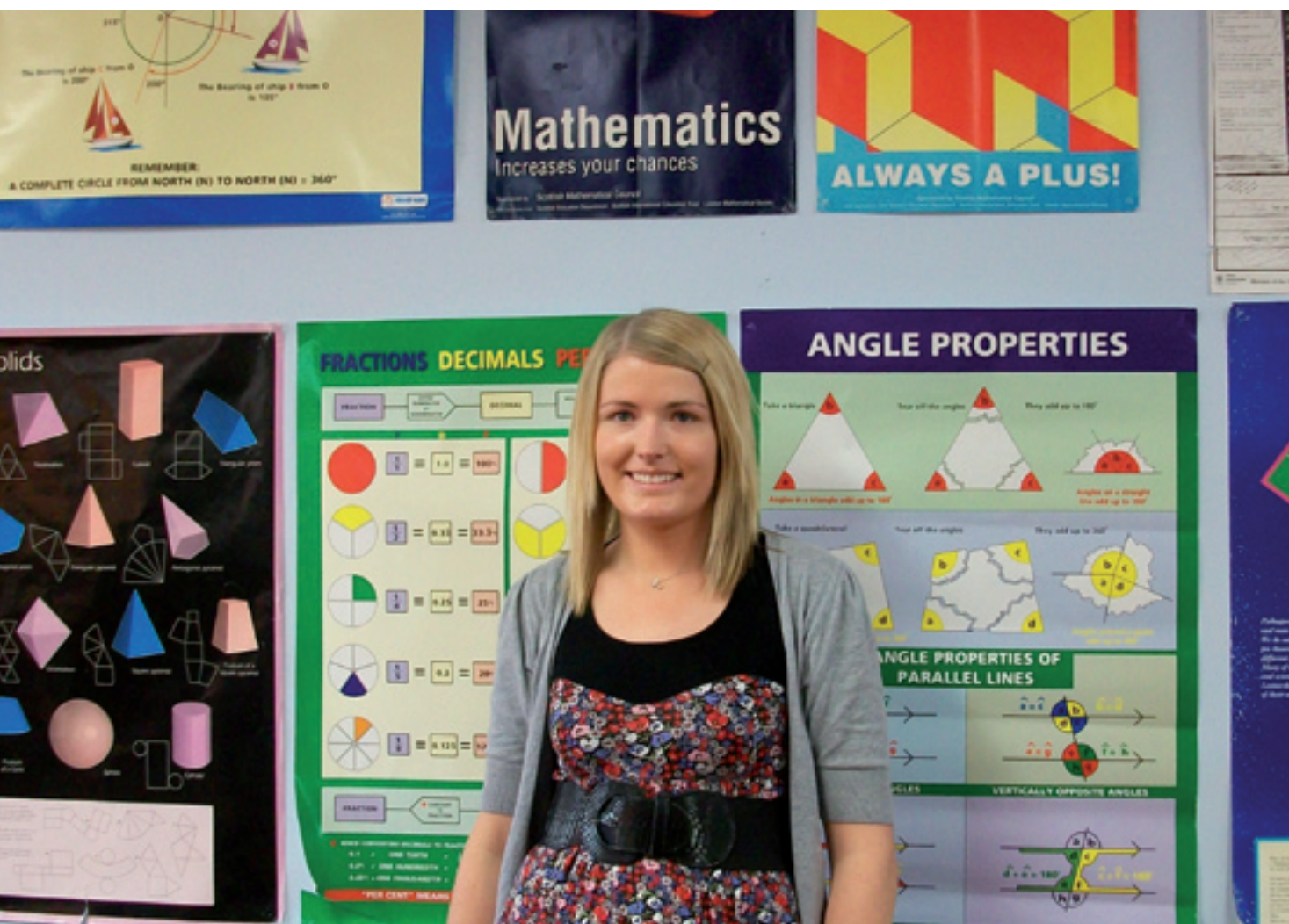
However, returning to Northfield Academy in Aberdeen with this experience behind me hasn't made life easy and I have



**Ellen Angus** "brilliant support"



## COVER STORY



## Elaine Peat "still smiling"

still been faced with a lot of situations, some more difficult than others, in my first few weeks as a probationer.

There have been times when I have returned home after a hard day at school, reflected on that particular day and found the whole experience overwhelming. Behaviour management of pupils, lesson content and general school activity are all aspects I felt that after four years studying at university I was ready for. I now feel very differently in that you learn how to teach whilst teaching and that this will only develop over time.

I think this is why the probation year is so important. Only one month into the year now and the support I receive as a probationer is brilliant at the school and local authority I am in. Being given a CPD calendar from the word go shows the provision and assistance already being received from the senior management team at the school; local authority CPD events and support is communicated throughout each week and the enthusiasm shown from my

own individual mentor and department principle teacher makes the hard work that I intend to put in over the next nine months very worth while.

" I no longer feel like I am 'acting' like a real teacher, hoping the kids believe it - I actually feel like one! "

Personally as a newly qualified teacher, I think the hardest thing so far is getting to know the pupils I teach. Not literally their names but getting to know the way they work; what forms of teaching benefit them and also the forms that don't work. I know that will definitely take longer for some pupils/classes than for others. However, the best day I've had so far was definitely with a new first year class. Straight away, I seemed to understand how they worked and they were the same with me. From the word go, we managed to storm through copious amounts of work and have had lots of fun along the way. The sense of pride and enjoyment that that gives you is something which I really want to experience throughout the rest of my interim year and even my whole career as a PE teacher. ●

# Protecting new teachers

As part of our focus on new teachers, EIS Salaries Convener Dougie Mackie looks at the lack of permanent posts available to many post-probation teachers. With many established teachers approaching normal retirement age, coupled with political commitments to reduce class sizes, there is surely an increasing need for more new teachers in our classrooms. Yet, teacher numbers fell last year, while many recently qualified teachers struggle to find permanent jobs. Councils and the Scottish Government are failing to meet their commitment to maintain teacher numbers, he argues.

The current difficulties in teacher employment are a national scandal. That young teachers cannot find work is a potential waste of human capital at a time when young teachers often are at the forefront of new initiatives in schools. Behind the figures, there is personal loss to individuals who, having committed time and effort, find their career prospects blighted or permanently damaged.

Teachers will ask how this situation has arisen and how those who plan teacher workforce numbers can have got things so badly wrong?

Some demand suspension for the Teacher Induction Scheme – this is a scheme the EIS strongly supports. It was a major achievement of “A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century” and we are firmly opposed to any attempt to suspend it. To do so would simply resurrect the previously discredited system, when teachers could spend the probationary period in a vast number of schools, subject to the vagaries of teacher supply and take a considerable time to obtain full registration.

It would be a major political mistake to undermine the training period provided through the Teacher Induction Scheme. Not only is it highly valued by probationers and schools but it has earned an international reputation for excellence.

Workforce planning is not a precise science. There are always variables to influence the balance between the supply of, and demand for, teachers. But, it has become more problematic for a number of reasons. Local authorities have cut staffing standards either directly, by altering locally applied formulae, or indirectly by, for example, reducing management time for promoted staff. The

Scottish Government has also failed young teachers – it pledged that Scottish class sizes would be cut within the lifetime of the current Scottish Parliament. You cannot plan for the number of teachers required to reduce class sizes without being precise about the timing and

nature of such changes. Only by setting out a timetable of reductions and enshrining class size maxima through legislation can it plan efficiently.

There is little doubt that a number of councils have cynically prevented staff from acquiring employment rights or rights to a permanent contract through local or national arrangements. The result is that members who have worked continuously for a whole school session have found that councils intentionally did not offer fixed term contracts at the start of the session. Consequently, such teachers have to find irregular short term supply posts. Even if these teachers now acquire long term fixed term contracts, continuity of employment has been broken.

The EIS proposes a number of urgent actions to address these issues:

- The Government needs to enable teachers who wish to retire to leave without taking actuarial reduction on pensions.
- We need a minimum national staffing standard to avoid councils cutting staffing numbers. This would allow for consistency in national workforce planning.
- There should be national minima of management time for promoted staff in schools, helping to generate a number of teaching posts.
- Government should make statutory provisions for class size reductions. ●

“ There is little doubt that a number of councils have cynically prevented staff from acquiring employment rights...”

## Worrying Headline

Dougie Mackie highlights teachers' job woes at the EIS AGM

Image: Alan Richardson



# Teachers' Pay - A Deal is a Deal

The SEJ looks at recent press reports that claim some local authority leaders seek to renege on the current pay settlement for teachers. Under the terms of the 3-year pay deal - agreed by all sides in the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) two years ago – teachers received a 2.5% pay increase this year, with a further 2.4% increase due in 2010. The current financial climate sees some local authorities arguing that the pay deal cannot be honoured. The EIS is adamant that a deal is a deal. Here, we examine the current pay deal and outline why employers must honour the contract that they entered into freely.

Press reports that COSLA, which represents the employers' side of the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers, may seek to re-open the final element of the Agreement reached within the SNCT in 2008 is of grave concern to the EIS.

The SNCT Agreement (SNCT/07/04) for teachers and associated professionals promulgated the following pay settlement:

Effective Date	% Increase	During discussions leading up to the Agreement, the parties to the SNCT (Scottish Government, COSLA and teaching
1/4/2008	2.25%	
1/4/2009	2.50%	
1/4/2010	2.40%	

unions) discussed the benefits and drawbacks of agreeing a multi year deal. There was unanimous agreement that a further multi year deal would provide stability and certainty for both teachers and their employers.

The Teachers' side also sought to include in the agreement a clause to re-open negotiations in light of certain movements within the economy. The previous pay arrangement, agreed from 2004-2008, provided a re-opener clause which could be triggered by certain movements in the Consumer Price Index. Members will recall that, arising from the trigger being met, a supplemental increase was paid in December 2007.

During discussions on the present deal, COSLA and Scottish Government strongly opposed the inclusion of any re-opener clause linked to movements in the economy. The irony of the present attitude of some COSLA representatives will not be lost on EIS members.

It remains to be seen if COSLA will formally seek to re-open discussions on the deal agreed in 2007 or resile from the agreement. To do so will raise fundamental questions about its integrity and its commitment to collective bargaining.

The EIS accepts that councils face difficult budgetary situations. Daily, our members see the reality of cuts in workplaces and many EIS members, particularly younger teachers, have lost work due to the financial situation. The EIS, however, has an obligation to protect our members' living standards and to uphold the 2004 settlement.

The inflation measures in July 2009 show a fall in inflation. (The Retail Price Index sits at -1.4%, the Consumer Price Index is 1.8%.) It should not be forgotten that in July 2008 inflation was running well above the 2008 element of the Pay Agreement (RPI was 5.0% and CPI was 4.4%). Inflation is also expected to rise in 2010.

The UK Government accepted in full the recommendations of the Independent Pay Review Body for teachers in England and Wales. When employers in Scotland are threatening to resile from a done deal, teachers in England and Wales will receive 2.3% from September 2009 and 2.3% from September 2010.

As a reminder to all parties, the 2001 Agreement, "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century", stated that the process in reaching the Agreement demanded a "determination to seize the opportunity presented to create a package of conditions and pay on which to build a confident and highly regarded teaching profession". That is no less true now.

Older teachers will recall when independent reviews provided a catching up of salaries for teachers. The values established in these reviews were quickly eroded by inflation.

At a time when OECD notes that the pay of Scottish Teachers is stepping down the league table of teachers' pay in the developed world, the aim of the EIS in future salary discussion is to maintain and enhance the salary values established in the final element of the 2001 Agreement. ●

" COSLA and Scottish Government strongly opposed the inclusion of any re-opener clause linked to movements in the economy. "

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## Monitoring the new curriculum

EIS Education Convener Larry Flanagan (below) offers his perspective on the process of implementing Curriculum for Excellence in schools across Scotland.

The key premises underpinning Curriculum for Excellence were welcomed warmly by the EIS, on their initial articulation – greater professional autonomy; less curricular prescription; rejection of narrow assessment practices in favour of assessment based on professional judgement; and the celebration of creativity in the classroom are all policy objectives of the EIS. CfE continues to receive our support, therefore, and we are keen to see its effective implementation.

For that to happen, however, there is a need for a realistic assessment of the resource implications of CfE, not least that most precious commodity – time. At a time of financial austerity in classrooms – and that is a fact that teachers experience as a daily reality, irrespective of the cause or source of cutbacks – CfE demands a visible commitment from local and national government if teacher enthusiasm and commitment is to be maintained.

The programme is often characterised as needing to be a classroom-led development, focussed particularly on pedagogical change rather than simply looking at curricular

content. This is largely true – and, indeed, is welcomed – but that should not obscure the very real requirement for school resources to be enhanced if the challenge of implementation is to be fully met. The recent additional in-service day, for example, saw a huge leap forward in teacher engagement, particularly in Secondary schools, as colleagues were able to enjoy an uninterrupted focus on CfE. Significant progress can be made when time is carved out for teachers in this manner.

It is essential, therefore, as we move towards fuller implementation, that realistic assessments are made regarding the capacity of schools to progress. School Improvement Plans should be detailed and specific about targets, linked to the National Framework for Implementation, and where remedial action is required, action needs to be taken. Local Authority Improvement plans need to demonstrate the CPD opportunities being made available and ensure that staff needs are fully met.

It is important to remember, however, that we are not starting from scratch – everything good that works in classrooms today should be retained and built upon. CfE offers an opportunity to regain professional control of teaching and learning – a change, certainly, in contrast to the over-prescriptive practice of the last decade plus and a challenge, also, but not one that should overwhelm teachers. We should be confident about our own professionalism. Somewhere between evangelical enthusiasm and world weary cynicism, there is a way forward. ●

“...everything good that works in classrooms today should be retained and built upon.”

## New assessment plans welcomed

The EIS has welcomed the publication from the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Management Board, which outlines future assessment arrangements to be used in support of Curriculum for Excellence.

EIS Education Convener Larry Flanagan said, “The outline assessment arrangements for Curriculum for Excellence are a significant step forward. The EIS welcomes these proposals, which set out an improved assessment system to support the broad educational experience that is central to the Curriculum for Excellence.”

Mr Flanagan added, “This new system will support teachers’ professional judgement in assessing how individual pupils are progressing in their learning. It also marks an important move away from the discredited tick-box approach that some education authorities continue to cling to. Such simplistic, target-driven methods of assessment have no place in the new, enriched learning experience for all pupils that CfE is helping to enable. This announcement re-affirms the commitment given in Building the Curriculum 3 to

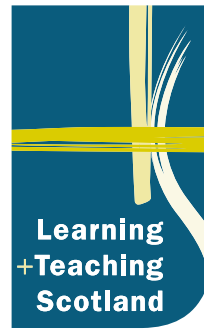
delivering an assessment system that is based on teachers’ professional judgement.”

“It is now essential that all local authorities sign up fully to these new methods of assessment in order to ensure that Curriculum for Excellence can deliver all that it promises for Scottish pupils,” Mr Flanagan said. He added, “In particular, there must be a commitment to high quality CPD arrangements for all teachers to support the understanding and application of the standards embedded within CfE.” ●



# Celebrating ten years of learning

## Scottish learning festival 2009



Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and bringing together the global education community, the Scottish Learning Festival in 2009 was an educational feast of inspirational seminars, speeches and discussions. The EIS is an official supporter of the Scottish Learning Festival.

Organised by Learning and Teaching Scotland, the Scottish Learning Festival is internationally recognised and firmly established as Scotland's largest annual national education conference and exhibition. This year's event (held on 23 and 24 September) drew over 7000 education professionals to Glasgow's SECC where key staff from The Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland, SQA, HMIE and the EIS were on hand to chat to about all aspects of education and learning.

The theme was Curriculum for Excellence: Making the Change, focusing on the recently launched experiences and outcomes. Delegates also learned how Glow, the Scottish schools intranet, managed by Learning and Teaching Scotland, is now an essential tool in the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

### Keynote Speakers

Visitors to the festival enjoyed energising keynote speeches from Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Professor Ferre Laevers, pioneer of 'Experimental Education', Professor Carol Dweck, author of *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* and Dr Frank Dick OBE, renowned motivational speaker.

In her keynote address, the Cabinet Secretary spoke of the Government's ambitions for a Smarter Scotland and how the Curriculum for Excellence helps the education community in Scotland to work together and embrace a lifetime learning and teaching system.

Professor Ferre Laevers talked of creating a single curriculum to bring strategic coherence at all levels, from pre-primary and primary to secondary education. He examined the possibility of a shared framework for assessing and improving the quality of practice in these diverse provisions, underpinned with the notion of 'Experimental Education', which he initiated in 1976 at the University of Leuven, Belgium.

Presenting on 'Developing Growth Mindsets: How Praise Can Harm and How to Use it Well', Professor Carol Dweck from Stanford University in California discussed what education professionals in Scotland can learn from vital insights into children's developing mindsets. She says: "More and more

research from cognitive psychology and neuroscience shows the brain as a dynamic organ that changes with learning and that intellectual abilities can be developed. When I was a young researcher just starting out, I was fascinated by students who relished challenges and who welcomed setbacks. I was determined to discover their secret and bottle it. Their secret is a growth mindset and it is something we can give to all students."

Former Director of Coaching for the British Athletics Federation, Dr Frank Dick OBE, used his keynote speech to look at the lessons Scottish education can learn from successful coaches in the world of sport, creating a truly inspirational presentation.

### Glow

Once again this year, the Glow Group, SLF Extra, added to the Scottish Learning Festival experience with a virtual venue for users to discuss expectations and experiences.

Many of the festival's events had a Glow flavour and through SLF Extra offered visitors the chance to question presenters and access a range of their materials. There were more than ten Glow-related seminars covering all areas of the curriculum, and a daily Spotlight to show how Glow works as a vehicle for Curriculum for Excellence.

The main hub of Glow activity was the Glowing Lounge - in its second year and twice the size. Delegates were able to drop-in to access presentations by practitioners and showcase sessions where recent and forthcoming Glow news was discussed. New this year was 'The Brilliance Bar', where delegates could come and ask questions and test out new ideas with the Glow team. The team, on-hand in the lounge over the two days, helped visitors with their queries, while LTS staff were ready-armed with tips to help practitioners get the most out of their Glow experience.

### Launch of CANVAS

In an exciting seminar hosted by LTS's Derek Robertson, the world's first virtual world for learning was officially unveiled, setting a benchmark in education technology for the future.

Developed by LTS and the Aberdeen-based virtual world company Second Places, the CANVAS (Children's Art at the National Virtual Arena of Scotland) is a state-of-the-art online resource which will give pupils from all over Scotland a chance to exhibit still or moving images in a virtual 'gallery'. Accessing it through Glow, users aged 3 to 18 will be able to upload their art in a safer and more secure environment, making it visible to a huge audience of teachers and pupils across the country.

The resource is participative and pupils can exhibit their work and appear 'in-world' represented by a virtual character or 'avatar'.



Derek Robertson, says: "I am hugely excited about CANVAS and the future possibilities it is opening up for technology in education. The participative nature of the design of the virtual world contributes to the core principles of Curriculum for Excellence."

" I am hugely excited about CANVAS and the future possibilities it is opening up... "

CANVAS includes a main exhibition space and 32 separate galleries, one for each local authority area. There is also a virtual auditorium for live and interactive seminars and tutorials that can sit up to 150 avatars.

Viewers of the art will also be able to leave comments beside images of their choice and access embedded videos recorded by the artists describing their thoughts and inspirations, enhancing the opportunity for dialogue and the interactive learning experience.

Derek adds: "CANVAS has the potential to be a truly transformational resource that will exceptionally enrich learning in art and design for Scottish children."

### **Seminars and activities**

Festival delegates benefited from over 170 seminars, covering a range of topics from games-based learning, financial education and reciprocal teaching to accelerated leadership, literacy in primary schools and teacher learning communities. EIS education convener Larry Flanagan and vice convener Susan Quinn led seminars on the introduction of a Curriculum for Excellence in schools.

The ever-popular Scottish Education Village, which brought together LTS, the Scottish Government, the SQA and HMIE, featured dedicated areas for each organisation where visitors could speak with staff directly.

The Health and Wellbeing Exchange Wall made its debut this year, allowing delegates to network, share ideas and exchange information on all things health-conscious. This area was inspired by the Early Years Exchange Wall, introduced to the festival in 2008 and back again this year to provide early years practitioners with a dedicated space.

If you missed out on attending this year's festival, or simply want more information, please visit [www.scottishlearningfestival.org.uk](http://www.scottishlearningfestival.org.uk) to access a wide range of materials, images and videos. ●

If you're on Facebook or Twitter, become a fan of LTS at [www.ltscotland.org.uk/facebook](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/facebook) or follow <http://twitter.com/ltscotland> for regular education news updates.



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Stress, Bereavement and Victimisation

**Tel: 08705 234 729**

Legal Helpline

**Tel: 0141 332 2887**

## Q&A – Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People

Scotland’s new Commissioner for Children and Young People (SCCYP) Tam Baillie speaks exclusively to the SEJ about his vision for the future of SCCYP and what can be done to provide a brighter future for children and young people in Scotland.

**Q** | You have recently taken up the post of Children’s Commissioner. Tell us a little about your career history and what attracted you to the role?

**A** I’ve worked with children, young people and families for 30 years, starting in 1979 when I supported young offenders in the community in Bellshill, Nottingham and Liverpool.

Then in Glasgow in 1986, I set up a homeless unit for young people, later spending four years working with young people in the city centre streets.

I set up The Big Step for children leaving care and, most recently, spent six years campaigning on issues affecting children and young people at Barnardo’s Scotland. I was Director of the Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights, which brought home the importance of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and its relevance to children in Scotland. It also made me keenly aware of the importance of the Commissioner’s role.

I am privileged to hold the office, value its independence and that my duties are embedded in statute giving me the bedrock of the Convention as a guiding framework.

“ We can do more to promote the positive contribution of young people to communities and society... ”

**Q** | What do you view as the main priorities for the office of SCCYP, both in the short-term and the long-term?

**A** I have three main work priorities:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at all levels of society, parents, professionals and children themselves.
- Develop good communication between children and young people and my office - driven through all schools and organisations in the children’s sector. I will kick-start this through a national consultation in 2010.
- Reduce discrimination for children and young people, including children of prisoners, looked after children and children with disabilities.

Also, child poverty and the implementation of the early years framework are the two most important policy objectives to improve the lives of children. I will comment on each of these whenever I can.

**Q** | The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child obviously has major implications for every child and for the work of SCCYP. What is currently being done to make children aware of the Convention and their rights under it?

**A** The SCCYP office has worked hard over the last five years to raise awareness of the UN Convention and I am

encouraged that Scottish Government actively distributes information to schools.

I’d like to popularise the Convention and bring it to life for everyone involved with children. Parents who provide a loving home, teachers who provide good quality education, and health staff who provide for good health, are all satisfying articles of the UN Convention, but rarely set their activities in that context. I want us to be proud that we have ratified it and demonstrate how it reinforces the good practice that is already widespread.

**Q** | Schools and teachers, often working in partnership with others, will always have a major role to play in enabling improved life chances for young people. What type of resources can SCCYP provide to schools and teachers to support these areas of work?

**A** My ambition is to have direct contact with many children and young people, mediated through teachers in all education settings. The Glow intranet is a wonderful opportunity to link SCCYP and teachers and pupils.

I am enormously encouraged by the response from LTS Scotland, EIS and other education bodies on the approach I intend to take, with schools and education playing a central role.

I am about to appoint a new Head of Participation and Education to lead on this work. We will work with teachers, developing and testing resources that feed into the Curriculum for Excellence. This is a great time to be embedding the relevance of the UN Convention into the mainstream curriculum and I expect positive joint work in this area.

**Q** | Child protection is obviously a huge issue for schools. What can be done to improve and streamline, for example, the disclosure system without weakening the robustness of the child protection system?

**A** Teachers are vital to child protection, because children spend so much of their time in school. It can, though, be hard to have the confidence and skills to make this happen. That’s why joint working amongst agencies is so vital and teachers have a critical role to play. Information sharing is an area we can all improve on as inspection reports consistently highlight.

The new vetting and barring scheme will remove the need for repeat disclosure and allow for continuous updating of information, reducing administration and bureaucracy. My hope is that we adopt a sensible approach and strike a proportionate response to protecting our children.



**Q** | The new Curriculum for Excellence is designed to improve interdisciplinary learning within schools, as well as to foster improved joint-working between schools and other agencies such as health and social care providers. Can you see a role for SCCYP in this?

**A** Increasing our capacity to engage with education is a priority for me. That the Curriculum for Excellence is developing at the same time means I can dovetail the ambitions to popularise the UN Convention with the rolling out of a new approach to the curriculum.

There are already easily identifiable areas of the curriculum such as Personal and Social Education that are relevant to UN Convention. I am also convinced there is relevance in each one of the four capacities under Curriculum for Excellence. As the curriculum takes a very broad approach, the inclusion of health and social care aspects widens the options for introducing many of the articles contained in the UN Convention.

I am excited about these opportunities and look forward to working closely with education colleagues.

**Q** | Child poverty remains a major problem for Scotland, and one of the main barriers to equality of education. What do you see as the way ahead in tackling this long-standing problem?

**A** I believe that the structural causes of persistent poverty – including the high levels of inequality in income, health and education – must be urgently addressed. This is not just about improving the position of poorer people in society, but a genuine reduction in the differences between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’.

There is evidence that, unless we make the structural changes to produce a more equal society, we will have continuing problems in terms, for example, of mental well-being, levels of drug and alcohol misuse and teenage pregnancy.

The long-term rests with the UK Government, the Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities. In the short term, given the enormous budgetary challenges that the UK and Scottish Governments are facing, I will work hard to make sure services for vulnerable children and young people are protected.

**Q** | Young people can be portrayed negatively in the media, with the result that they are viewed less favourably by sections of society. What can be done to combat such misrepresentation when it occurs?

**A** Young people are certainly misrepresented in the media. This problem persists despite the vast majority of children making positive contributions to their communities, attending school, taking part in activities and a significant number volunteering. It is too easy for a few well-publicised examples of disturbing behaviour to be portrayed as typical, rather than the exceptions that they are. Our perceptions can become skewed, when we have a constant drip feed of negative stories.

We can do more to promote the positive contribution of young people to communities and society, by building a positive engagement between them and legislators and parliamentarians in Scotland. There are excellent examples by which children's experiences are listened to, although we need to find innovative ways to a stronger presence in Scotland's civic society.

**Q** | What is SCCYP doing in terms of positive engagement with children and young people directly?

**A** I am in the early stages of a national consultation with children and young people. There are three main elements to our engagement:

- Through schools – anywhere a child or young person is being educated. This is a basis for building on our own education expertise and working alongside education colleagues.
- Through children's organisations. This will present challenges because of the number and variety of organisations within this sector.
- Visiting schools and children's services in all parts of Scotland.

I want to lay the foundations for sustainable contact with a very large number of children and young people. This will provide an excellent platform to inform the work of my office and for the voices, experiences and views of children and young people to have real impact on the work we do ●

# Your call

**Road Safety Scotland** has developed and produced **Your Call**, a new resource that uses weblogs, Bebo-style graphics and a novel filming style to get its key messages across. Produced in a 'Toolbox' format it targets 11-14 year olds, the group of young people most at risk of being injured or killed in road accidents. In fact, during the period of time it took to make the resource, over 100 young people in this age group were killed or injured on Scotland's roads.

**Your Call** aims to stimulate discussion and debate and provide the opportunity for personal reflection – all key learning elements in Curriculum for Excellence. This ground-breaking resource is presented within a social networking framework which encompasses film, CCTV and camcorders. Whilst it is likely that the resource will be delivered in Personal and Social Education, some topics would sit equally well in Modern Studies or Media.

Road Safety Education has a vital role to play in establishing good practice to ensure that young people stay safe. Positive attitudes developed in childhood form the foundation for responsible road use in adult life. Following the publication of Curriculum for Excellence Health and Wellbeing report, Road Safety sits within the Physical Wellbeing, Experiences and Outcomes: 'I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely.'

The demand for a new approach originated from research that was carried out across Scotland, which revealed that:

- 30% more children are injured on the road in the S1/S2 years than in P6/P7 years
- the number of child casualties occurring on journeys to and from school peaks around the age of 12 – an almost threefold increase compared to 10 year-olds who are injured on the road
- young male drivers are the biggest killers of young females.

" The resource is aimed at 11-14 year-olds, statistically the most at-risk age group. "

Further research, carried out in 2007 – 2008 on road safety resources for young people age 11 - 14, provided the background and rationale for **Your Call**. Opinion was gathered both from young people and teachers, using focus groups and interviews to capture views and attitudes. As a result, **Your Call** includes the issues that teachers identified and the style of approach and image that are relevant to young people of this age. It concentrates on the consequences of a road accident and how the lives of individuals are changed.

Jane Saddler, the teacher who developed **Your Call** said 'The whole thrust of the programme is to fuel discussion between young people, and allow them to challenge both their own behaviour and that of others, in the road environment. 'Risk' cards, 'What if?' cards and 'Wild' cards all involve challenging misconceptions and questioning of stereotypes.'

Distraction in the road environment, such as: text messaging, phone calls, mp3 players, and friends, are huge for young people of this age. Add to that matters relating to passenger behaviour such as seatbelts, CD players, cameras and relationships, and the scene is set for a drama that ends, alas, in disaster. This resource feels and looks like an everyday story for most young people.

One young person said, '**I think the story is very good, things like that could really happen!**' Comments such as '**it's hard to choose who is to blame!**' highlights the analytical thinking that the resource encourages. Most importantly one boy said '**it can relate to real life!**'

Nominated for a Scottish Transport Award for Innovation and Technology, (to be announced in November), **Your Call** also encourages young people to think about the benefits of making good choices when considering how they travel, the environmental impact of the mode of transport that they choose and the benefits to their health of walking and cycling.

Thanks to the network of Road Safety Officers **Your Call** has been distributed to every Secondary school in Scotland. In some areas familiarisation sessions are being offered. ●

For further information about resources contact Road Safety Scotland on **0131 472 9200**, or email **enquiries@roadsafetyscotland.org.uk**

## Other school resources at every level

Early First and Second  
Streetsense & Streetsense2  
[www.streetsense2.com](http://www.streetsense2.com)

Second  
Scottish Cycle Training Scheme  
JRSO (Junior Road Safety Officer)  
[www.JRSO.com](http://www.JRSO.com)

Third and Fourth  
Your Call

Senior Phase  
Crash Magnets  
[www.Crshmagnets.com](http://www.Crshmagnets.com)

Designed for young people  
thinking about driving  
[www.getinlane.com](http://www.getinlane.com)

## SAFETY



Designed for young people with additional learning needs  
[www.a2bsafely.com](http://www.a2bsafely.com)

Currently the Nursery resource is The Children's Traffic Club in Scotland. This will be replaced in January 2011 with a new Early Years Road Safety resource which will be featured in the SEJ March issue.

# No Further Forward?

Will Scottish College lecturers ever enjoy a return to a national salary structure? EIS Further and Higher Education Officer David Belsey looks at the lack of national pay bargaining for Further Education lecturing staff.

Since college incorporation of the 1990s, college staff salaries are decided by individual colleges - a system of local pay negotiation that puts the responsibility on each local branch to negotiate with each college.

Nationally, EIS-FELA sets a recommended pay increase, backed by pay seminars and support from the EIS at a national level. If pay negotiations break down, EIS Officers support local branches with disputes and ultimately strike action.

There is now no single salary for lecturers within Scotland, but a range of salaries decided by each separate college.

If we look at 2008-2009 figures, the highest paying college (let's call it College A) pays a salary of £35,982 for a top of the scale unpromoted lecturer, whilst the lowest paying college (let's call it College Z) pays a salary of £31,342.

That represents 15% difference between two lecturers in two colleges who share the same workloads and responsibilities. Were they to work for the same college they may have an equal pay claim, but they don't and there isn't.

In 2000, the pay difference was 12%. That difference is widening and based on current trends will reach 20%. Few would argue then that we had reached a two-tier FE system within Scotland. This would have a number of implications for staffing and teaching.

These include:

- Recruitment problems for lower paying FE Colleges, while they fail to attract the best, or as many, applicants.
- Retention problems for lower paying FE colleges, while unpromoted lecturers transfer sideways to unpromoted posts in higher paying FE Colleges.
- Promoted posts in lower paying FE colleges attracting few applicants from higher paying FE Colleges' unpromoted lecturers, while there are little or no pay increases.
- A perception that some colleges are better staffed than others, resulting in students favouring colleges perceived as better.

- Lower morale and motivation for staff paid lower salaries than comparable others within the sector.

The practice of local pay negotiations may also undermine the relationship between the College and its staff. Pay negotiations considered by some as a specialised (and possibly dark) art, are in almost all teaching sectors carried out by national negotiating teams.

If lecturers are unhappy with a national pay settlement then the employers nationally feel their ire.

Locally, lecturers are isolated and can only air their satisfaction or dissatisfaction within a local area.

It is also possible for local pay negotiations in a college to be influenced by local issues. In a problematic college, staff may enter a pay dispute faster than those working at a happy college.

English FE Colleges have local pay negotiations too, but they have a national pay bargaining process. This body recommends the pay award for English FE Colleges to adopt and, while it is not mandatory, most invariably do so.

Days lost in industrial disputes' in Scottish FE are amongst the highest in any sector in the UK economy, and three times that of the UK average within education. I believe local pay negotiation in Scotland's Colleges are a major reason for this.

With so many problems associated with local pay negotiation, you may well ask. Why have it?

Clearly, it is best left for those who support it, to put the case for it. From what I understand, the main arguments in favour are:

- Flexibility; the ability of a College Board to pay more or less for a lecturer's salary gives them less or more money left to spend. As a trade unionist, I would argue that it should not be for staff to sacrifice their salaries to generate cash reserves for a College.
- Supply and demand argument. Average salaries differ across Scotland, as does the pool of lecturing staff. Crucially, the number of posts available to lecturing staff also differs.

A recent SNP conference passed a motion to support a return to national pay bargaining. Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop acted by offering to facilitate a seminar on a return to national pay bargaining. But there seems little appetite for this within College Boards or College Principals. For the EIS, it is vital that this topic remains on the national agenda.

EIS National Officer  
David Belsey



"With so many problems associated with local pay negotiation, you may well ask. Why have it?"

## FURTHER EDUCATION



*"The danger... is that the idea of fair pay and harmony enshrined within national pay bargaining becomes lost. This would be a mistake."*

As time passes, and salary differences between lecturers at different FE Colleges become larger and larger, it gets more and more expensive to close the gap by any return to national pay bargaining.

National pay negotiations would eventually lead to one salary spine for college lecturers, ideally based on the highest paying college's pay spine. If a new national college lecturer salary spine was based on the average college lecturer salary, we would then need to ensure pay protection for those receiving higher than the average salary, so that they don't lose out.

Funding such changes could be expensive. Just when there was some interest shown in a return to national pay bargaining, the economy took a tumble.

Suddenly, the agenda has moved on. Out with national pay bargaining, in with "more for less". The "more for less" concept comes from *The Wire*, a US TV series in which the editor of a fiscally challenged fictional newspaper tells his colleagues they "simply have to do more with less".

Some college principals espouse the "more for less" concept too. It may even become national mantra like "Dig for victory". The fear is that with colleges doing "more for less" it will soon be college lecturers doing more and being given less to do it.

The danger therefore is that the idea of fair pay and harmony enshrined within national pay bargaining becomes lost. This would be a mistake. ●

## Olives and health

Doctor Lesley Morrison, a General Practitioner from the Scottish Borders, describes some of her family's experiences from a recent visit to the West Bank. Here, Lesley describes the anxiety and humiliation that many Palestinians face as they attempt to go about their daily lives, and explores the debilitating psychological and physiological impact that this can have. The EIS is committed to highlighting the plight of the Palestinian people and to offering support to Palestinian education.

Great oaks from little acorns grow: an analogy for children growing into fine, strong adults. Perhaps the equivalent saying in Palestine would refer to olive trees. In Palestinian culture, the olive tree symbolises the culture and the love of the land, a land not just of milk and honey but of olives, dates, nuts, tomatoes. Sadly, many of the olive trees have been ripped out of the ground by Israeli tanks and machinery building the separation wall or extending Israeli settlements. And many Palestinian children have had their childhoods ripped apart by growing up in an environment where tension is in the air and violence is an integral part of most families' stories. Unemployment rates run at about 25% and rates of poverty are about 65%. The situation is worse in Gaza than in the west bank; in Gaza, two-thirds of the population are refugees and 55% live in eight crowded refugee camps.

The WHO defines health as a state of physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing. Few children in Palestine have health which satisfies this definition. When, last November, we visited friends in the northern town of Jenin, Yousef took us out for an evening walk to the hill behind his house. We looked across to Nazareth on an adjacent hilltop and to the Israeli wall snaking across the biblical landscape. About five kilometres away were the lights of a checkpoint. "There", said Yousef, "is where the Israeli soldiers took my neighbour's sons last night". They were aged 14 and 15, the soldiers had knocked on their family's door at 2am and taken them

away. They would be kept in prison with no contact allowed with the outside world. Their crime was being related to someone who had been accused of being a terrorist.

Jenin houses the refugee camp where, in 2002, the Israeli tanks rolled in, many homes were flattened and more than 90 people were killed. The site is marked now by the Jenin horse, a tall structure made out of pieces of destroyed houses and which children play on. Yousef runs a children's cultural centre, a place where children can go to play, make music and learn about the world beyond Jenin. They live 30 miles from the sea, but between them and the sea is Israel and most of them have never seen it. When Yousef managed to raise enough money and beat the bureaucracy, he took a children's choir to an international music festival in Italy. At the end of it one of the children spoke to the organisers. "Thank you for letting me see the sea". The centre is working to build up contacts with schools and communities in other countries and, in the UK, has established twinnings with Tower Hamlets, Nottingham..... and perhaps yours?

The effects of stress on children living in war zones is well documented. Today's Palestinian adolescents have lived with Political violence for most of their lives. Born during the first Intifada (Palestinian uprising, 1987-93), and exposed to house searchings and street battles, these same children witnessed or actively participated in the second Intifada, 2000-05. As a result of the Palestinian – Israeli violence, civil services such as education and health could no longer supply their services; schools and universities were closed and re-opened according to army order and the ill were sometimes prevented from receiving medical treatment. Research has shown the effects on Palestinian children of seeing victims' pictures on television and witnessing bombardment and shelling and demonstrated that between a third and a half of children showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), jitteriness, irritability, difficulty sleeping, poor concentration<sup>1</sup>. A recent paper in the European Journal of Adolescent Psychiatry looked at exposure to war trauma and PTSD among parents and children in the Gaza strip<sup>2</sup>. Boys were significantly more exposed to trauma than girls and children from higher income families were exposed less.

Parents' emotional responses were significantly associated with children's PTSD and anxiety symptoms.

The factors which predispose to depression in young people, social isolation, lack of purpose and useful work, disconnectedness, disempowerment, family stress and breakdown, are rife among Palestinian youth. They live in a country whose boundaries do not appear on most Israeli maps; their identity is denied and the result is low self-esteem and a tendency to anger and low mood.

After we left Jenin to travel to Haifa, we had to pass through the Jenin checkpoint. There we tasted the humiliation and anxiety which Palestinians suffer on a daily basis. We were

"...between a third and a half of children showed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder..."



The Jenin horse marks the site of a massacre



## HEALTH



"...in Gaza, two-thirds of the population are refugees and 55% live in eight crowded refugee camps."

funnelled into a corridor bounded by concrete, metal and barbed wire. A disembodied voice coming from a loudspeaker told us where to go and what to do. "Move forward, do not touch your bags". Bored young Israeli soldiers paraded on catwalks above us pointing their guns down at us. We were separated and my younger daughter and I were allowed through fairly quickly. My 19 year old daughter was kept on her own and told she had to be strip searched. At first, she was upset. The young women soldiers stroked her hair patronisingly and asked what she expected, "This is Israel". Then she got angry. They gave up on strip searching her but they left her alone in a cell for an hour. After 4 hours, we were released into a dark car park and managed to get a taxi to take us to the bus terminal.

It was an extremely unpleasant experience, but we had British passports and we were confident that we would be alright in the end. No such comfort exists for Palestinians who, on their way to and from work or the market, endure similar and worse treatment on a regular basis. If we had realised what would happen would we have submitted our young people to this stressful experience? No. Having had the experience, was it valuable? Yes. We gained insight not available from a television screen.

My daughter's friend whom we visited in Haifa was a young Israeli refusenik who, having feigned mental illness to escape the draft, was finally exempted when, in the interview with three psychiatrists, he told them he would rather kill one of them than kill a Palestinian. For young people, Israeli and Palestinian, to have to live so close to guns and death is

damaging. The more they can meet and share their views, hopes and fears, the more likely becomes peace for future generations. Many organisations promote such interchange. Servas, an organisation founded after the second world war to encourage international friendship and peace, organises youth exchange programmes ([www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org)) and the "Tent of Nations" is a Jerusalem based initiative which brings young people together in the ancient city ([www.tentofnations.org](http://www.tentofnations.org)).

For Palestinians, old and young, the olive, zaytoun, is more than a crop: it symbolises their culture and their struggle.

As one farmer says, "Our life, our identity is in the land. We won't leave it". The olive industry is now developing, Palestinian olive oil is being exported and jobs are being created. Go to [www.zaytoun.org](http://www.zaytoun.org) or [www.equalexchange.co.uk](http://www.equalexchange.co.uk) to learn more about fairly traded Palestinian foods, perhaps as a basis for a home economics or horticulture project. The emotional and mental health of Palestinian young people depends on feeling connected with the world beyond the land where they are effectively imprisoned in Gaza or by the Israeli wall. Anything we can do to reduce that isolation and encourage our young people to reach out to them and give them hope, is valuable.

When my daughter went off to university this week, one of the things I gave her was a little framed olive leaf so that, when new friends asked about it, she could tell them about the beautiful land of milk, honey and olives. And encourage them to go and see for themselves. ●

<sup>1</sup> Thabet AA, Abed Y et al (2004) Comorbidity of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression among refugee children during war conflict. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 45:533-542

<sup>2</sup> Quota S, Punamaki R, El Sarraj E (2003) Prevalence and determinants of PTSD among Palestinian children exposed to military violence. *Eur Child Adol Psychiatry* 12:265-272



# Communication is the Key

## Reflections of Additional Support Needs (ASN) Mediators

Meeting the needs of children who have additional support needs is complex. This area of the education world has its own language, processes, deadlines and systems. Legislation and other guidance contains some terms with no objective definitions.

The same child in two different schools could be assessed and supported in different ways. The very nature of the matter in hand invests the process with a level of emotion and potential for tension that is often absent in other professional and parental contact.

The Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act is intended to be a helpful vehicle for managing these complexities. It aims to strengthen the education system for children, parents and professionals. At first sight, the Act and its accompanying Code of Practice may appear complex. But in their intentions and main themes, they are no more complex or unusual than other education legislation.

One of the main themes of the Act is to bring services together in order to meet the needs of children and young people in education. Another main theme is to give parents and young people an equal part in that process. In fact, these two are a single theme: that is, to establish practices and ways of thinking so that it comes to be taken for granted that all those with a part to play will work together and talk together. The ASL Act is clear on this matter: the obligation to work together - and that includes parents - means giving from your own area of expertise (including parents' expertise) to a wider process intended to meet the child's needs in education.

In these matters there are no absolute definitions of the right way to do things. Every child is different, every child's circumstances differ, the schools they attend and the teachers who work in them are different, local authorities differ in how they do things. Parents differ in their approaches and priorities, and so do professionals. Yet these are the people who must arrive at joint decisions, not just over matters such as assessment and intervention, but also over what terms like "significant" and "complex" might mean in the case of an individual child. It is because of this uncertainty that working together, talking together and trying to understand each contributor is so important.



It is inevitable that differences of opinion will arise. Differences of opinion are drivers for change and are not to be feared or avoided. What is to be feared and avoided is allowing them to become entrenched disagreements or even personal grievances.

Two effective ways of working through differences of opinion can be for an opinion to change – possibly in the light of new information and/or a compromise to be reached. Neither of these comes about of its own accord. Both require people to talk, and to be able to understand the other opinion and reasons behind it.

A good starting point for such open discussion is the assumption that whatever differences of opinion there might be, all the contributors have in mind what they believe to be the interests of the child. That is, they are all on the same side.

One of the keys to success is working to explore and understand why someone has the opinion they have. A school/education authority's opinions will probably be informed by the fact that they must take account of what resources they have or can get, and the fact that they have the needs of other children to meet at the same time. Parents want what they believe to be the best for their child. This can cause many education disputes. Some are resolved by the courts. Some are resolved by forced compromises that leave one side feeling permanently hard-done-by. Some are never resolved, and drag on bitterly for years until the child reaches school leaving age. Many feel these situations are battles which are won or lost. Although there will always be differences of opinion like this, the ASL Act offers access now to address situations at different levels.

Communication and establishing mutual trust is important. The more we trust someone, the less formal and detailed our agreements need to be. We trust that plans will be carried out, and we trust that our ability to communicate with the other party will address problems that may arise. If we can communicate with and respect each other, we can create more effective and mutually satisfactory outcomes.

Conflict, or potential conflict, can be a vehicle for positive change. When we disagree, it helps define what the important issues are for us. The solution to conflict is not to win it, or to avoid it. Rather, it is to engage as effectively as possible with other people while keeping the child at the centre. The rewards can be considerable. ●

For more information about ASN Mediation you can request a free copy of the ASN Mediation Users Guide from Kath Paterson at 0131 222 2430 or [kpaterson@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:kpaterson@childreninscotland.org.uk)

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## Partners in Learning - with EIS support



Link Community Development's Link Schools Programme offers Scottish and African schools the opportunity to work in partnership as global citizens to develop an understanding of our shared rights and responsibilities, the programme also supports school improvements that enhance the lives of children and young people in rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa. The EIS provides funding support for the programme. The SEJ looks at one project that brings pupils in Scotland and Uganda together to learn more about the world that they live in.

Castlehill Primary School in Cupar, Fife became partners with Kitwetwe Primary School in Masindi, Uganda after one of their teachers took part in the Global Teachers Programme in Uganda four years ago. The programme, run by Link Community Development with support from the EIS and Learning and Teaching Scotland, involves Scottish and African teachers working together to share knowledge and skills. So inspired was she by her time with the community of Kitwetwe Primary School she decided to set up a partnership between the two schools.

EIS member and partnership coordinator, Kate Nicoll, explains the opportunities offered:

*"Curriculum for Excellence lends itself to international education and encourages global citizenship activities. Our Link Schools partnership provides a first-hand relevant experience, which makes our global citizenship and rights initiatives come alive."*

When the two schools set out in partnership pupils began by considering similarities and differences and identifying shared aspirations. When pupils exchange letters and drawings, Castlehill pupils are always keen to produce their best work – they have been so impressed by the standard of English in all correspondence and the high quality and detail in the

drawings received. Getting to know one another through the exchange of information and ideas has broken down negative stereotypes on both sides.

*"Through building strong links and regular correspondence the children gain confidence in their own ability when they share learning experiences."*

The partnership Castlehill has with their Ugandan partners was central to the school being awarded a full International School Award. Kate Nicoll says their school partnership supports Castlehill Primary School's progress as an Eco-School, and towards level 2 of the Rights Respecting School Award. In 2009, Link Community Development organised a joint project for all schools involved in the Link Schools Programme to exchange posters with their partners on the theme 'Why do you go to school?' This gave schools a focus for discussion around the right to education, the right to play, and the other articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*"Our partnership with Kitwetwe definitely impacts on the children. Our rights respecting schools work makes our children aware of their role in society. They learn that they have rights but with those rights come responsibilities."*

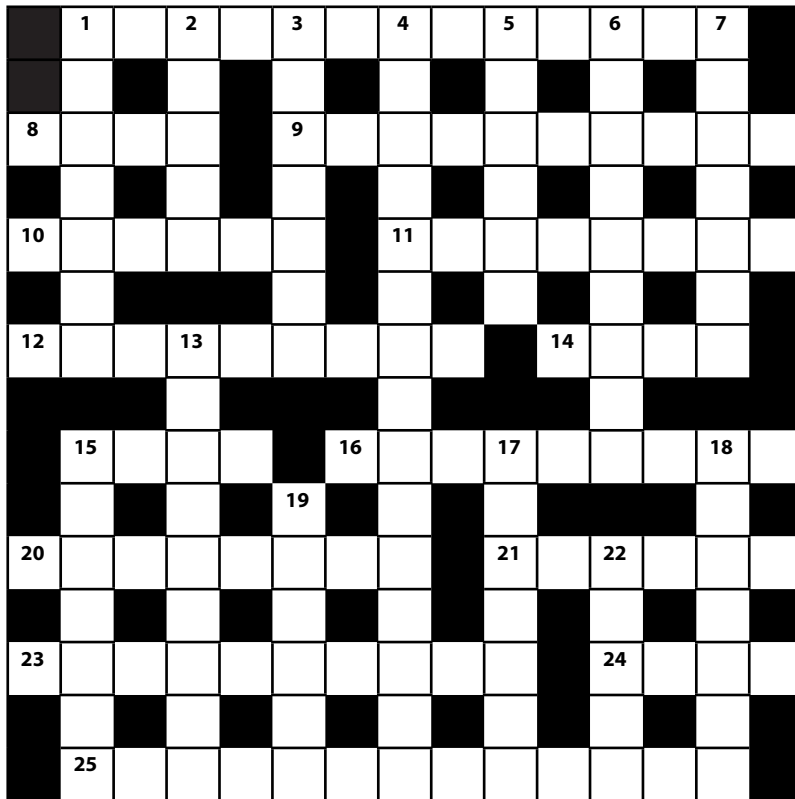
Over the next year, the schools will complete a joint farming project; improving literacy by writing and sharing rhymes, poems and stories; exchanging art and crafts; and building Kitwetwe Primary School's library collection with primary one and two pupils making and sharing phonics big books.

Of the partnership's future, Kate Nicoll says:

*"I think our partnership will grow ever stronger. My dream is for all staff from both schools to experience of each other's school and culture to fully appreciate and understand each other's way of life."*

Link Community Development will continue to support the partnership along with partnerships of over 60 other Scottish schools linked to schools in Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and South Africa. ●

To find out more about joining the Link Schools Programme phone **0131 243 2685** or see **[www.lcdinternational.org](http://www.lcdinternational.org)**



## Crossword 57

### Answers to crossword no. 56

**Across**

**1** Gismo, **4** Night-club, **9** Neatens, **10** Tear gas, **11** Femur, **13** Local, **15** Own, **16** Ear, **17** Navel, **19** Teeth, **21** Trawl, **23** Lance, **24** Err, **25** Leg, **26** Ovary, **28** Surge, **29** Trachea, **31** Urethra, **33** Epidermis, **34** Ulnar.

**Down**

**1** Genuefect, **2** Slammer, **3** Owe, **4** Nasal, **5** Gut, **6** Trail, **7** Leg bone, **8** Bison, **12** Renal, **14** Colon, **18** Villa, **19** Teens, **20** Horsehair, **22** Afghani, **24** Earthen, **25** Lathe, **26** Ochr, **27** Yours, **30** Arm, **32** Emu.

## Crossword winner

Congratulations to Pamela Wanless, Edinburgh, who was the winner of SEJ cryptic crossword no 56.

Pamela receives a £20 book token.

## Clues

**Across**

- 1** Could be 292.5 degrees but throws wet nets off course (4-9)
- 8** Primarily a little green aquatic plant (4)
- 9** Periods for former pupils to develop compulsive behaviours (10)
- 10** Flour round old short jacket (6)
- 11** The lone rook became a nosey parker (6-2)
- 12** Some schools still are but the Forth Road Bridge is no longer (3-6)
- 14** Discovered link between mosquito and malaria in ear ossicle (4)

- 15** Without hesitation was correct in the front row (4)
- 16** Not well but could have an internal contradiction (3-6)
- 20** Shifts a difficult echinoderm (8)
- 21** Place of worship where a thermos quenched ones thirst (6)
- 23** German intellectual hasn't no mam perhaps (6,4)
- 24** Weapon which could travel from Europe to Asia for example (4)
- 25** School for Scoundrels involving Hendry the snooker player (7-6)

**Down**

- 1** First Prime Minister with a limited power over little England to begin with (7)
- 2** I want to steal the least stale tales of this roof covering (5)
- 3** New word only ego could understand (7)
- 4** Ordinals the French north man produced "Dusty Answer" (8-7)
- 5** Mint soundly belongs to him to pacify (6)
- 6** Germinal lo maize the spanish re-wrote (5,4)
- 7** Flimsy decimal you said to you and me (7)
- 13** A sequence of instructions either in booklet form or broadcast (9)
- 15** Clarence Carter song about rough pacts he signed up to (7)
- 17** Saki could find a blood group beside a large mountain (1,1,5)
- 18** New Yorker contributor in the Arthur Berry mould (7)
- 19** Composer of his rich concoction I left (6)
- 22** Gulliver was written very quickly indeed (5)

## Work out and win

A £30 book token is the prize in the SEJ cryptic crossword. Send your completed entry to SEJ, 46 Moray Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BH by Friday 6 November 2009. The first all correct entry picked at random will win. Details of the winner, along with the solutions to this month's puzzle, will be published in the next SEJ. Employees of the EIS and their families are not eligible to participate in the competition.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: SEJ, 46 Moray Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BH

# ADS & GAMES

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## Sudoku

supplied by: Lovatts Publications

					6			
5		8			1	2		3
	7		2			6		9
1				4				
		4	6		8	5		
				2				8
8		5			4		9	
6		3	8			1		4
			5					

**To play** Complete the grid so that every row, column and every three-by-three box contains the digits 1 to 9. Just use the logic to solve – no maths required! Have fun!

**Rating** medium

### SEJ May 09 Sudoku solution

6	5	4	3	9	1	2	8	7
1	7	8	2	4	5	6	3	9
3	9	2	6	7	8	5	4	1
2	6	3	4	5	9	7	1	8
9	4	7	1	8	2	3	5	6
5	8	1	7	3	6	9	2	4
4	1	5	9	6	3	8	7	2
8	2	9	5	1	7	4	6	3
7	3	6	8	2	4	1	9	5

## Letters to the editor

### Where have our Residential Schools gone?

#### Dear Editor

More and more children in Scotland are growing up in homes where drug or alcohol addiction is common, where violence and neglect are an ongoing experience and where anxiety and distrust are bred. For many of these children, their home experience stands in the way of thriving at school. Emotionally disturbed, they not only cannot properly engage with the education offered, but often their behaviour hinders other children in their class to experience a secure and happy learning environment. Even the best interventions from understanding and caring teachers, LSAs, CSWs and other professionals cannot undo the daily and nightly damage inflicted by their home experience. Some of these children take to roaming the streets at any hour, as they feel safer there than within their own four walls. Others give in and follow their parents into addiction at an increasingly younger age (some still in Primary School).

As teachers, we easily feel guilty of failing these children, yet at the same time we have to acknowledge our powerlessness.

If only these youngsters could grow up in a safe and healthy environment!



This is where the question comes up: Where have our Residential Schools gone? What happened, for example, to Raddery on the Black Isle, a centre of excellence visited and praised by professionals from all over the world, and more importantly by children and adolescents whose lives were transformed by it? Do the politicians not realise that by closing such places to save money, they simply have to spend more on expanding prisons? For where else are these children headed, if they do not get adequate help in time? Perhaps there is a way of challenging the government if we all stand up together with the backing of the EIS. The longer we wait, the more youngsters we fail.

**Elkie Kammer, Inverness**

### Post graduate concerns

#### Dear Editor

I am wondering with incredulity, why the person who responded to B.Ed course criticism in Scottish Educational Journal May 2009 wrote so earnestly about how she had gained prior experience to the course and therefore was not a 'wet behind the ears' school child, could then go and insult Post Graduate trained teachers at the end of her letter. Apparently as a postgraduate trained teacher I do not have an "avid interest in the learning and teaching of the whole child" because I hold an unrelated first degree. My first degree gave me the chance to thoughtfully decide what career I wanted to follow. I firmly believe that had I undertaken the B.Ed as a 6th year school leaver I would have quit the profession during

the course or straight after it, because I did not have the confidence, maturity or life experience to make the most of it. At 18 years old I was not ready to undertake such a massive responsibility. Teaching is a difficult but brilliantly worthwhile profession and I most certainly do take an 'avid interest in the learning and teaching of the whole child.' The reasons why people go into teaching are subjective. Post Grads should not be pigeon holed into the 'teaching as an easy option' bias, just the same as B.Eds shouldn't be labelled as 'wet-behind the ears school children.' This nonsense of snide remarks and jealousy on the part of both sides – Post Grads and B.Eds – has to stop. I myself experienced this bias during a placement, where the primary teacher in question told me to my face that she did not pass Post Grads!!

Isn't it time we focussed on the important things – educating children to the highest standard?

#### Name and address supplied

### Newly qualified teacher

#### Dear Editor

Yet again it is with great disappointment that I read about the lack of permanent posts available to NQTs in the year following their probationary year (p5 June issue). I am now beginning to wonder why I bother to pay my union fees as I (and 100s like me) seem to have been forgotten by the EIS. While it is terrible that these NQTs are not securing permanent posts it is even more of a disgrace that teachers who completed their probation year 2, 3, 4 or more years ago have still not secured permanent posts and with a severe imbalance between the number of teachers looking for work and the amount of work available supply work is no longer the alternative it used to be.

If you think I am over exaggerating, go into the Scotland Supply forum on the TESS website and see how many of your members are disillusioned with teaching and the perceived lack of support from the EIS.

#### Michelle Hughes

(completed probation year 4 long years ago)

### Domestic abuse of men

#### Dear Editor

At this year's AGM I proposed motions on domestic abuse in the name of Edinburgh Local Association.

The motions clearly sought an overhaul of union policy. I felt strongly that our approach to the issue of domestic abuse had got lost at some point. In its efforts to deplore the unacceptability of domestic abuse against women the plight of men who were on the receiving end of abusive behaviour by a female (or male) partner had been rendered invisible.

Men on the receiving end include our male colleagues and parents of the children we teach.

Attempts to highlight the plight of male victims of domestic abuse are often met with disbelief, ridicule, dismissal, denial

## LETTERS/FORUM

and even anger. It has long been a taboo subject but there comes a point when those who know the truth feel morally obliged to raise their heads above the parapet.

Scottish police statistics on recorded incidents of domestic abuse have shown a steady narrowing of the gap between men and women victims over the last decade. The police acknowledge that men are several times less likely to report abuse than women.

One of the reasons, of course, why some activists find it so difficult to acknowledge the experience of males on the receiving end of domestic abuse is that by doing so they will also have to acknowledge that women can be perpetrators.

Denial is no basis for a responsible organisation to build policy.

We have policies providing advice to schools, on providing support for members who need help – but, in the case of domestic abuse, that has hitherto been directed only to female members.

The EIS also has a policy on recognising and supporting pupils from abusive homes. Again the unacceptable assumption in our literature has been that these would be the children of abused mothers. If abused fathers are not recognised, how can their children get the support they need?

By a large majority delegates supported my motion that EIS policies and documentation on the subject of domestic abuse from now on should state explicitly that we acknowledge the damaging effects domestic abuse can cause to men, as well as women and children, and offer support accordingly.

**Alison Waugh, Edinburgh**

“ Attempts to highlight the plight of male victims of domestic abuse are often met with disbelief... ”

**THE EDITOR welcomes your letters but reserves the right to edit them.**

**Please write to:**

The SEJ Editor, 46 Moray Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BH  
**F:** 0131 220 3151 **E:** sej@eis.org.uk

Please note that to be considered for publication, letters sent must include a full postal address. All opinions expressed in letters and articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect EIS policy.

## EIS News Extras

### CPD NEWS

#### **EIS/University of Aberdeen**

As part of the partnership between the EIS and the University of Aberdeen, a series of CPD events, each of them linked to the development of 'Curriculum for Excellence', are being held over the coming school year.

The first of these, "Numeracy Across the Curriculum" focuses on learning and teaching numeracy in both primary and secondary schools, in all curricular areas and subjects.

**This event will be held in the School of Education, University of Aberdeen on Saturday 7 November 2009 from 09:00 until 13:00.**

Keynote speaker will be Allan Duncan from the University of Aberdeen, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics Education. There will also be two series of practitioner-led workshops, continuing the theme of the EIS/ University of Aberdeen partnership, which is "CPD for teachers by teachers".

Promotional material will be sent out shortly to all schools giving further details of the event and this will also appear on the EIS website under the CPD events section.

#### **Dumfries and Galloway**

A joint CPD event entitled "CPD - My Way Forward" is being held in the Dryfesdale Country House Hotel, Lockerbie on Wednesday 4 November 2009 from 4.30 pm to 6 pm. Buffet available from 4 pm. There will be two keynote speakers as well as local colleagues talking about their experiences of Chartered Teacher and Professional Recognition. This will be followed by a Question and Answer session.

Promotional material will be distributed to schools shortly and if you require any further information or wish to attend please contact John Thomson, Dumfries & Galloway LR at [jthomson@eis-learnrep.org.uk](mailto:jthomson@eis-learnrep.org.uk).

# Financial Advice for Retired or Retiring Members

Retirement can be a time of change and uncertainty. Your income and outgoings will change dramatically, as will your needs and objectives. If you are approaching retirement you may need advice on the best way to put your savings to work or, if you have already retired, you may want someone to check that you have done the right thing with your investments.

## Lump Sum and Investment Advice

If you joined the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme prior to April 2007, when you retire you will receive a lump sum from the scheme equal to 3 x your annual pension. We can help by offering independent advice on a number of ways to invest this lump sum to provide you with an additional regular income. In many cases you can still access your capital if you need to and even retain potential growth on your investment!

Investing in this way could provide an extremely tax efficient regular income to supplement your Superannuation pension. In addition to this, many of you will have savings or investments such as ISAs, PEPs, Bonds etc. that might not be suitable any more given your change in circumstances.

It is important to review these investments and we can offer independent advice on

restructuring your existing portfolio, or even on improving on the low rates of return from some Bank and Building Society accounts.

## Commutation

From April 2007 a new option called Commutation was introduced for members of the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme. Commutation lets you reduce part of your pension and increase your Tax Free Lump Sum by a ratio of £12 increase for every £1 of pension reduction.

If you're considering Commutation, or want to know a bit more about it, then it's highly recommended that you talk over the advantages, disadvantages and the calculation with an Independent Financial Adviser.



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