

## **Schools Report - Branch Committee – February 2017**

### **School Visits:**

On 17 and 18 January I visited Byker Primary to conduct a presentation on There for You. Shop Steward, Angela Brudnell, who is based at Byker kindly organised the events. I have received very positive feedback from the members with at least two new members to UNISON and a new ULR! Other than There for You, topics of discussion included the campaign of teaching assistants in Durham, pay and other general queries.

### **School Census Nationality:**

\*The spring school census started on 19 January. For the second time this academic year, parents and guardians have been asked to share their children's nationalities and countries of birth with the state – another seemingly innocuous tick-box on another official-looking government form.

But parents aren't legally obliged to hand over this information. And it is widely believed by school staff and other organisations and campaigners that they should not.

When parents were first asked for this information the Department for Education (DfE) insisted the information was needed to assess "the scale and impact immigration may be having on the schools sector", and that it "would not be passed to the Home Office" and was "solely for internal DfE use". It then emerged the current approach was born from Theresa May's previous plan to force schools to demand passports and withdraw places from children whose parents could not provide sufficient documentation. That idea was resisted by her Cabinet colleagues at the time – but this compromise is its legacy.

Last month a leaked data-sharing agreement revealed the DfE had agreed to give the personal details of up to 1,500 school children a month to the Home Office, specifically to "create a hostile environment". The government has insisted nationality and birth country data wouldn't be included. But other census data is routinely disclosed, and there's no law to stop this happening in future. Pupils may be kept at home because parents fear deportation. Schools must make it clear that there is no legal obligation for parents to provide their children's country of birth and nationality and that they also have the right to withdraw that data if they gave it in the autumn.

\*Excerpts of this article were taken directly from SchoolsWeek Newsletter

<http://www.schoolsabc.net/>

### **Council's Schools Forum:**

Discussion topics included the School Funding Formula for 2017/18 and the Early Years Funding Formula 2017/18. Julie Cordiner gave a presentation on the updated budget strategy and the de-delegation of former Education Services Grant functions. Future meetings are to be held at Benton Park Primary School's lodge.

### **School Worker Group:**

The next meeting of the School's Worker Group will be held at the Civic Centre on Monday, 16 February, 4:15-5:30pm. Agenda will follow closer to date.

**Regional Schools Forum:**

The next meeting of the regional schools forum will be on 26 January 2017 at the regional office.

**SchoolsWeek Newsletter:**

The latest edition of the SchoolsWeek Newsletter can be found at

<http://schoolsweek.co.uk/>

**If you would like more detailed information regarding this report, please email [lori.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:lori.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk)**

**Lori Wilson**

**UNISON Schools Organiser**

## Schools Report - Branch Committee – February 2017 Addendum

### Valour Consultation:

Beech Hill Academy and Walbottle Village Primary, currently members of the Outer West Learning Trust, propose to combine to create the Valour Multi-Academy Trust.

I wrote to all members at both schools asking for their questions and concerns on 24 January but as of yet, haven't received any. I have a list of standard questions I will present to the school before our initial consultation meeting on 13 February.

### Walkergate Consultation:

Due to budget cuts and operational reasons, Walkergate Primary has proposed to reduce staff by two; one N5 Admin and Finance Officer and one Support Assistant L3. I have met with the staff concerned.

### Heaton Manor:

After an OFSTED inspection the school was put into special measures which wasn't released until very recently. The Head resigned after the inspection. The LEA have arranged for interim Leadership Support from St Mary's, and they will be with the school for the next two terms. The assumption is that after that, the school will have to become an Academy as that is the usual route for Schools in Special Measures.

As far as members are concerned in the short term it's carry on regardless - any changes the new management have implemented is at SLT and Middle Leaders level and the focus appears to be on getting the Year 11s through exams and reinforcing behaviour systems.

I am arranging a staff visit after half term so that staff can share their concerns.

### Walker Technology College:

I have contacted the Head Teacher who has stated that although presentations have been given to staff, as yet there is no public consultation and no information has been formally shared with UNISON. I await further information on the proposals to join the SOUTH TYNESIDE ACADEMY TRUST SPONSORED BY SOUTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE, a multi-academy trust.

### Linhope:

The latest update is the Newcastle Bridges have expressed an interest in sponsorship, unfortunately I have no further information. Jeff Lough, the Head at Linhope retired recently. Jeff always worked well with the unions and will be missed. We wish him the best of luck. Rob Candler (assistant head) is acting head for now.

### School Worker Group:

The next meeting of the School's Worker Group will be held at the Civic Centre on Monday, 16 February, 4:15-5:30pm. Agenda will follow closer to date.

### Regional Schools Forum:

The topics of discussion included, an update on Stars in our Schools, the Durham/Derby disputes and the Professional Standards for Teaching Assistants.

We also shared concerns regarding the schools census nationality situation and a national response is forthcoming.

The regional officer shared a useful website [www.schoolcuts.org.uk](http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk) where one can look up any individual school and see exactly how much has been cut from their budget over all and per pupil.

**If you would like more detailed information regarding this report, please email [lori.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:lori.wilson@newcastle.gov.uk)**

**Lori Wilson  
UNISON Schools Organiser**