

SEN funding

Council backs down on SEND

by Hackney Special Educational Crisis Campaign (www.hackneyspecialeducationcrisis.co.uk)

Parents/carers, children, teachers and supporters came together to celebrate the news that Hackney Council has backed down on its consultation plans to change Special Educational Needs funding arrangements.

The support outside the Town Hall on 21st February was overwhelming and the eloquence of our young speakers filled us with admiration. However, we were disappointed that councillors and MPs did not take the opportunity to engage with us outside. A deputation of representatives from Hackney Special Educational Crisis attended the council meeting to present their case and to request that further planned cuts be dropped.

Although Cllr Antoinette Bramble (the Deputy Mayor) has committed to a more open dialogue, we remain extremely concerned that the Council is planning to proceed with cuts of 5% to all Education, Health and Care Plans



and huge cuts to special school funding, with indications that further cuts are planned for next year.

We are also worried about the Council's lack of strategy regarding its £3.8m overspend on independent and out-of-borough provision, and the fact that this is rising year after year.

We can certainly celebrate the SEND funding victory, which was thanks to an incredible response from Hackney residents. We need to build on this to protect our children's education and stop further planned cuts.

It was a fantastic evening. Thank you to everyone who came and all those who weren't able to be there.

London weekend

Future's bright

There was high energy, good discussion and planning for action at the 'London weekend', a meeting of NEU activists to discuss campaigning strategies, held on 26-28 January in Eastbourne.

We had a strong and energetic delegation from Hackney, 10 of us representing the diversity of the borough and covering all sectors.

Having started teaching in 1984 it was useful to reflect on past successes and struggles over the past 50 years in order to consider our position today. We spent time considering the best ways to engage young teachers in the union and looking at how to win on workload.

Workshops on pay and housing, fighting academisation, on funding and assessments provided the opportunity to share stories and ideas in order to plan for campaigns on our return.

It was good to get out of London and feel the sea breeze. It was exciting to have time to talk to colleagues from different areas of London and to hear about what is happening in other schools or areas.

I came away with hope for the future especially given the passion and commitment of the Young Teachers.



NUT

Hackney News

March 2018

A striking answer to failing academy policy

Workers at three east London schools struck together at the end of February against the threat of academisation, with lively picket lines joined by parents, teachers, and support workers.

The three Newham schools – Avenue primary, Cumberland primary and Keir Hardie secondary – held an 80-strong strike rally, where they raised their demand of binding parent and staff ballots at each school considering academisation.

They received a message of support from Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who said, "Our schools should be accountable to parents, staff and the whole community – and with Labour's National Education Service, they will be".

With Avenue on their seventh strike day, Cumberland on their third, and Keir Hardie taking their first strike, there is a growing campaign to stop academies across the borough.

Also fighting academisation are NEU members at The Village School in Brent, who have taken 10 days of strike action in an attempt to roll back the academy juggernaut.

We are strongly opposed to the academisation process as it breaks up the education system, undermines teachers' national pay and conditions and reduces the democratic accountability in the system.

There are a number of examples of problems with academy chains, such as the conduct of a multi-academy trust accused of asset-stripping its schools before collapsing. Wakefield City Academies Trust announced just days into the new term last September that it would divest itself of its 21 schools because WCAT could not undertake the "rapid improvement" they needed. The



United at Keir Hardie school.

Department for Education is in the process of arranging for new trusts to take over management of these schools.

On top of this sort of financial mismanagement we are seeing vast sums of money being paid to executive heads. The CEO of Harris Academy chain receives £500,000 a year, far more than anyone else involved in education.

However, the strong response by NEU members across the country is

starting to have an effect; in Ealing last year strike action or the threat of it prevented three local schools from becoming academies.

Also in Newham after the joint strike action by schools followed by a march and lobby, Newham Council passed a motion opposing academisation, backing parental ballots over transfer proposals and calling for existing academies to recognise unions and national conditions "until such time (as) the government abolishes the academy system".

The government's plan for total academisation has stalled, partly because of the national strike of the NEU in July 2016, but also due to a backlash from Local Education Authorities provoked partly by the slew of negative experiences of academy chains in dire trouble.

There is no pressing need for any school to start the irreversible process of becoming an academy. Any school that becomes an academy could potentially be moved into any one of the vast (and, quite often, failing) academy chains. The only protection from this is to remain a community school.

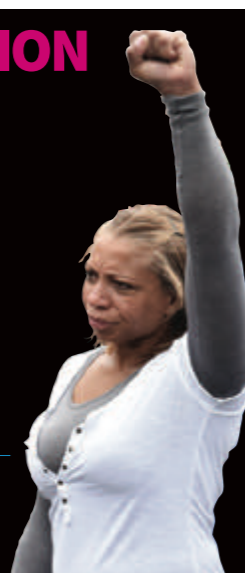
If you are aware that your governing body is thinking about going down this road contact us immediately.

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

MARCH AGAINST RACISM

SATURDAY
17 MARCH

LONDON – Assemble
12 noon, Portland Place,
W1A 1AA



Hackney

How to contact Hackney NEU

Write to us: 2nd Floor,
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Twitter: #HackneyNUT



DfE's 'sluggish and incoherent' approach to teacher shortage 'crisis' slammed by MPs

On 31st January the Commons Public Accounts Committee produced a devastating report on the failure of the Department for Education (DfE) to tackle teacher shortages.

They reported that there is a "growing sense of crisis" in schools – with teachers leaving due to heavy workloads at the same time that pupil numbers are rising.

For teachers this does not come as a surprise, as we have constantly highlighted the issue of workload as one of the main factors driving our colleagues out of the profession.

Despite various initiatives developed

by the DfE (in conjunction with the NEU) we have not managed to make a serious dent in workload. These initiatives consist of:

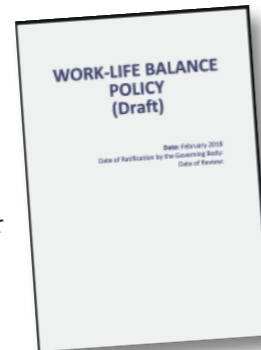
- 1) The Ofsted myth-busting document on the DfE website which clarifies what Ofsted's expectations are around for example type and quantity of marking.
- 2) The DfE working party workload booklets on Data Usage; Planning and Marking.
- 3) The joint DfE-NUT poster on reducing workload.

Part of the reason for this is that these initiatives have

not been taken seriously in most schools or in some cases have not even been known about by senior management.

We ourselves have made various attempts to use these and other measures such as Action Short of Strike Action which has had some effect in a number of places.

We have decided to attempt a new strategy this year. Firstly, we have prepared a detailed workload survey to be used in school. The aim of this is to try to identify common



workload practices that have high workload costs but have low impact on outcomes and learning. If we do identify such practices (like triple marking) then school groups should come together and argue that they should be dropped. Hopefully, if school leaders are serious about reducing workload, this should be a relatively uncontroversial process.

However, it may not be the case that these practices are easily identified or are widespread enough to be dealt with collectively. Alongside this we need to develop a culture as well as processes that constantly monitor and address the issue of workload. We are

developing a work-life balance policy which we will be sending out to school reps shortly.

The key elements to this policy are:

- 1) Consultation with staff about any new initiative that has workload implications.
- 2) Time costing carried out on any new initiative and a commitment to reduce workload commensurately in other areas if introduced.
- 3) A review of current working practices with an aim to reduce workload.
- 4) A regular (termly) survey of staff to determine if the aim to reduce workload has been successful.

- 5) To have a governor whose responsibility it is to oversee the schools attempt to reduce workload.
- 6) To have a regular report from the head to the governing body outlining the steps taken by the school to reduce workload.

At the beginning of the academic year Sean Harford (director of education for Ofsted) stated that from now on school leaders would be asked about what measures they are taking to reduce workload. We feel that the measures suggested above would more than satisfy inspectors and indeed may very well be judged outstanding.

LGBT History Month

Flagging up vital issues

We have much to celebrate but there is still much to do.

As part of LGBT History month there was a focus on two events. The first was the 40th anniversary of the murder of Harvey Milk, the USA's first out-gay elected councillor commemorated in the film 'Milk'.

The second was the 30th anniversary of the passing of Section 28 (also known as 'Clause 28') of the 1988 Local Government Act.

This was a law designed to gag teachers stating that Local Authorities: "Shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."

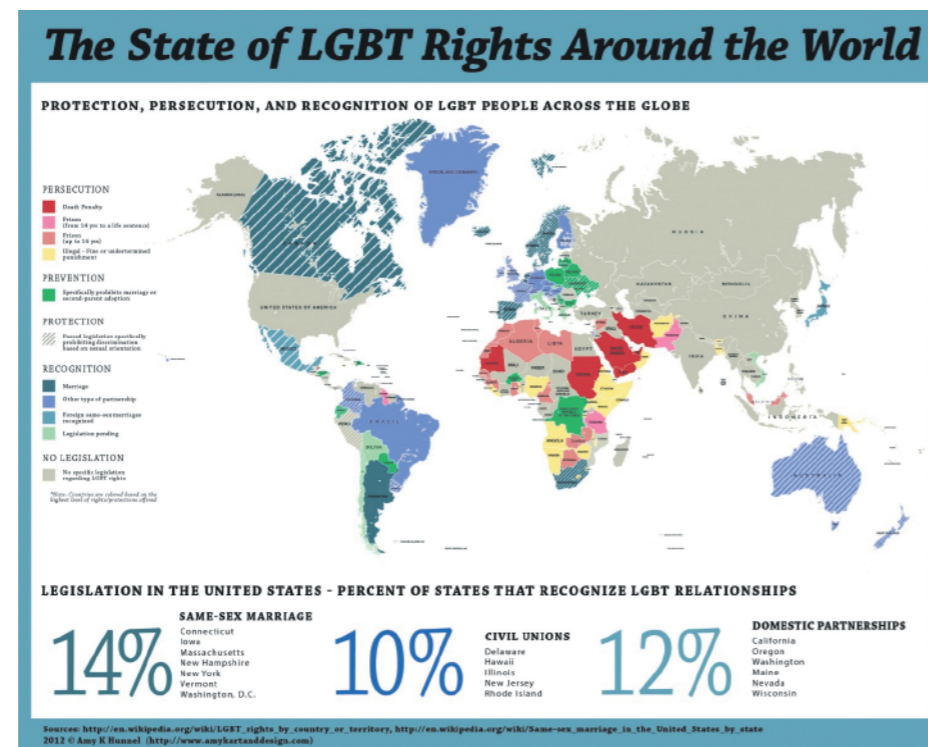
This year, in July, we will celebrate 15 years since the repeal of Section 28. For more information see: <http://lgbthistorymonth.org.uk>

The rainbow flag was flown over Hackney town hall for the first time during Pride 2018 and the borough hosted several events for LGBT history month. Hackney library held an exhibition set up by locally-based Project Indigo which shows how

LGBTQI+ young people from the project have collaborated with a range of council directorates, creatives and service providers to speak out about the challenges they face accessing council services, with the aim of changing the way Hackney designs

leisure facilities to make them more inclusive for LGBTQI+ communities.

As part of LGBTQI+ History Month Hackney NEU organised two events – an LGBTQI+ trans awareness training and social. Our General Meeting was addressed by Susy Langsdale from Project Indigo. If you missed these events then visit <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk> for more information.



In February the LGBT History Month theme was 'Geography: Mapping the World'.

Hackney Schools Group

An alternative to trust?

Hackney Council is looking at the possibility of setting up a new organisation of schools within the borough to be called the 'Hackney Schools Group'. The process is still at an early stage of this process and the Hackney Learning Trust is keen to hear the views of the trade unions.

The rationale behind the idea is because of the expressed aim of the government for all schools to become academies by 2022. In 2016 the then Secretary of State Nicky Morgan announced that she intended to make this process compulsory for all schools. The national strike of the NUT in July of that year, combined with a backlash from Local Education Authorities, forced her to back down.

However, it is still government policy to persuade schools to academise.

This and the cuts in education funding has made the role of the LEA look very uncertain, which in turn has prompted some schools to 'jump before being pushed' into academisation. Hackney Learning Trust last year considered forming a Multi-Academy Trust before being convinced that this would be premature.

Hackney NEU's position is that despite the uncertainty of the future of the education system, it is far too

premature for schools to go down the irreversible route of academisation. Especially when you consider the problems the government is facing over this policy (see front page).

However, it is not inappropriate for authorities to explore other ways of keeping the family of schools together. A Hackney Schools Group is intended to be an alternative to a multi-academy trust based on existing federation rules

of governance.

We would want the following principles to be fundamental to any new organisation:

- a) Working to improve education through a cooperative approach.
- b) Being a voluntary organisation allowing schools to opt in and out.
- c) Allowing schools to maintain autonomy through their governing bodies.
- d) Maintaining national terms and conditions.
- e) Being accountable to parents and the local community.

Cleaners dispute

Victory!

In our last newsletter we highlighted a dispute by school cleaners in six local schools. We are pleased to announce that they achieved success over the failure to pay proper holiday rates.

The details of the deal are:

- All current staff will remain on all-year-round contracts and will not be forced onto term-time-only contracts.
- Staff who were recruited on term-time-only contracts will be allowed to express a preference for a change to an all-year-round contract. The

company will consider the options once it is clear how many staff want to upgrade to an all year round contract.

● Staff who were recruited on all-year-round contracts but who were later misled into signing a new term-time-only contract, will be given the choice to revert to an all-year-round contract.

● The updated London Living Wage (LLW), currently £10.20 an hour, will be applied from 10 February.

The dispute had centred on the refusal to pay the LLW; proposals to cut pay with new term-time-only contracts; and refusing to pay holiday pay in line with its legal obligations, which state that holiday pay should reflect normal remuneration.