

Let's make this the election for education!

Join the campaign against school cuts

Just an hour before NUT General Secretary, Kevin Courtney, was due to address the NUT Conference in Cardiff, the surprise decision to call a general election was announced. Kevin wasted no time in declaring that the NUT intends to do everything it can to make education a key issue in the period before the election.

Kevin highlighted the key concerns the Union will be raising with candidates seeking election:

- **Funding**
- **Grammar schools & Selection**
- **Teacher workload**
- **Testing and assessment**

Our campaign on funding has already hit the news and we will be focusing on this in the election. Throughout this month the Union will seek to build on the campaigning that has already been done across the country by parents and teachers.

Education has never been so high on voters' list of priorities during a general election. We want to make sure that every candidate is confronted with some important questions:

Do you support the cuts affecting local schools?

Do you believe that some children do not need subjects such as Art, Music or Drama?

Do you think it is right that vital TA support for vulnerable children is being cut as a result of budget cuts?

Why do you think so many teachers are leaving the job?

In Coventry we need to organise street stalls, letters to the press, parents' meetings, an education question time, rallies, demonstrations and more – We need your help.

This is not just about the election, we need to ensure the next government addresses the crisis in education.

So, the NUT is asking every single member a simple question, **"What can you do to promote NUT education policies during this election?"**

Wherever you teach or wherever you live, you can do something - nothing is too big or too small.

GET INVOLVED!



"If politicians tell you that education is expensive, tell them to try ignorance as the alternative"

Watch Kevin Courtney's speech to NUT Conference www.teachers.org.uk

Coventry Says No to School Cuts!

How will the cuts affect Coventry schools?

-£29,212,415

Total estimated reduction across all Coventry schools in real terms by 2020

-£634

Average amount that will be lost for every pupil in Coventry

-784

The number of Coventry teachers that will be lost

More information available @schoolcuts.org.uk

The Big Assembly

Tuesday 16th May at 5pm

We are calling on teachers, parents, pupils and headteachers to stand up against these cuts. We are organising a 'Big Assembly' for everybody to come together and demonstrate against these proposals. We will be sending out more details soon. If you would like to be involved in organising this event, or if your school group has any ideas for this event, please contact the office.

NUT Conference Report – Cardiff 2017

school cuts, grammar folly, workload issues



This was the last ever NUT Conference, prior to the formation of the National Education Union in September. Coventry NUT sent a delegation of 7 members, had speakers in several key debates and were also represented on a Workload Panel meeting to discuss the work that has been going on locally to produce the Coventry Fair Workload Charter, aimed at reducing workload in our schools.

Guest Speakers – Sharing the NUT's vision

Conference began with several guest speakers, including Mary Bousted, General Secretary of ATL following their decision to amalgamate with us to form the NEU. She was warmly welcomed, and the sense of optimism and opportunity with the formation of the largest education union in Europe fed through the whole 5 days.



Leanne Mohammad and John McDonnell address delegates in Cardiff

Other guest speakers included **Leanne Mohammad**, the current Year 11 student and winner of the 'Speak Out' award who faced horrendous online abuse following her speech in defence of her homeland, Palestine, and the persecution that Palestinians face every day. "How would you feel if you were woken every day by bombs and not birds?"

Conference also welcomed **Juel Miah**, the NUT member refused entry to the USA, post Trump election, whilst taking students on a school trip, for no other reason than his ethnicity. We were also addressed by the 2016 winner of the Global Teacher Prize, **Hanan Al Hroub** of Palestine, who told us that "We just want peace; we want our children to enjoy their childhoods in peace."

The Shadow Chancellor, **John McDonnell** was invited to speak to Conference. He started by saying he wanted to outline Labour's vision for education and said "It's one that you'll recognise, because it's your vision". He stated, as our School Cuts website outlines, that schools are facing the first real terms cuts for over two decades. He promised that a Labour government would reverse the spending cuts, end austerity and invest in education.

He also spelled out the Labour vision of a National Education Service, similar in scope to the NHS, for all childcare and early years education to be free for all, for the profession to be involved in producing educational policy, not just teaching to the test but broad and balanced curriculums for all and promised free school meals for all nursery and primary children. He said it is their ambition to scrap tuition fees, and said that they would restore the role of the local education authorities and that schooling would be comprehensive. He promised that Labour would repeal the Anti-Trade Union Laws passed by this government, return collective bargaining to education trade unions and scrap the restrictive pay cap that we have faced for 7 years.

We were also spoken to by inspirational members of the Durham TAs campaign, fighting and winning against outrageous pay cuts.

Key Themes and Debates

Education Funding and Cuts in Provision

Conference voted unanimously to oppose the governments cuts in education and to bring funding up to 5% of GDP with the aim being an increase to 6%. Per pupil funding is facing a £3bn black hole, whilst they are wasting £320m on Free Schools, with the freedom to be new Grammars, which all the evidence shows drives inequality and worsens outcomes for the vast majority of pupils. Conference pledged to step up campaigning on this issue and support strike action in schools where redundancies are faced, workload increases or provision worsens. We also called for the union to identify regions where strike action can be built for, with the aim of reversing these devastating cuts.

International Policy

Conference discussed the international work of the union, including work in the global South to oppose the privatisation of education, where companies like Pearson are making huge profits from school systems in Africa; heard about the plight of Palestinian teachers and students living under occupation, and the treatment of many thousands of teachers in Turkey following the failed coup of 2016. We agreed solidarity and support with all of those cases, and reaffirmed our call for peaceful resolutions of disputes and conflicts rather than armed intervention as a key international policy.

Workload and Teacher Recruitment: A National Contract for all Teachers

The union affirmed its stance on ever increasing workload and it's causes (Ofsted, the accountability regime, league tables) and agreed a series of action points including the re-publicising of the ASOS guidance, encouraging action in and across schools, continuing projects such as the Coventry Workload Charter

Jane Nellist of Coventry seconded the motion calling for a legally binding teacher contract with clear limitations of what can be expected of us, ends to PRP, protections for NQTs and limits on working hours and the full application of Directed Time limits of 1265 hours and 195 days. Conference passed this motion and agreed to campaign to secure it.

Primary Assessment and a SATs Boycott

Conference was buoyed to hear that the ATL voted at their conference to investigate a boycott of the 2018 SATs. Conference discussed the work done by the 'More than a Score' and 'Let Kids be Kids' campaigns and the work done so far to challenge SATs and high stakes testing in Primary schools, but there was a realisation that our campaign needs to step up this year to remove these hugely damaging assessments. The chaos surrounding the 2016 assessments exemplifies this. Conference called for the continuation of building alliances of parents, teachers, communities to oppose the SATs and the continuation of lobbying of MPs and Government.

The NUT's strategy to move towards a boycott of 2017 SATs includes an internal ballot of all Primary members before the end of the Autumn term for a commitment to refuse to administer KS2 SATs. This will prepare the ground for a formal ballot in the Spring term (as the Trade Union Laws mean a ballot has to be within 28 days of the action being taken). *We now have a clear strategy to build towards a ballot of the SATs in 2017/18, but we will need to campaign locally on this and build coalitions with parents to gain their support. We need primary members in Coventry to be involved in this, so please contact us if you are willing and able.*

Putting Support back into Support Plans

Coventry Delegates Glen Mynott and Chris Denson spoke in this debate about the pernicious use of support plans in schools to force staff out, whilst not being supportive. The motion called for guidance to be produced to show what true support should look like, and to pursue to use of individual and collective action to support members. The Coventry amendment called for the collation of information about the use of support plans, by factors such as age, gender and ethnicity, to allow us to campaign more thoroughly on this issue and to aid collectivising fights to protect members and improve conditions. Glen Mynott also spoke on a motion calling for the union to reinforce its stance on the bullying of teachers and to encourage information and action to support members.

A Curriculum for All

Conference noted with concern the effects of the Ebacc and Progress 8 measurements in schools having a narrowing effect on the curriculum in many of our schools, with the effect that many arts and humanities subjects are squeezed out. Whilst those in private schools enjoy a breadth of opportunities, our state schools are being squeezed by a system which appears to limit opportunity, an opportunity which our students not only deserve, but which for many of our students is a lifeline that they need to engage with schooling.

Class Size and Staffing in Special Schools

Conference was concerned at increased staff to pupil ratios in special education and the increased use of unqualified teachers. Conference agreed to campaign for limited class sizes in line with NUT policy and to ensure that those most vulnerable students are not further punished by the austerity drive and school cuts.

Racism and Migration

Conference noted the rise in recent years of racism, anti-migrant and refugee propaganda in the media and from mainstream politicians across the spectrum. We discussed the plight of refugees in Calais and Dunkirk and praised the action the Union has taken here, but decried the Governments woeful response to the migrant crisis. Chris Denson spoke to a Coventry amendment, jointly written with Nicky Downes, that discussed the plight of the Roma community, the rise of racism in the Trump Presidency and across some European countries, and called for the NUT to produce anti-racist materials for use in all schools, to fight against cuts to EAL provision and to campaign for a mass demonstration during the State Visit of President Trump and the celebration of annual anti-discrimination events. The Union affiliated to Stand Up To Racism.

Supporting Transgender Members and Students

There was a lot of debate around this issue, focusing on the call to lobby the Government to allow transgender members and students the right to self-identify, and for that not to be subject to the approval of an outside body. Conference agreed with this important principle and agreed to support the rights of all of our transgender members.

Grammar Schools

Conference passed an emergency motion on Selection in schools and the reintroduction of Grammars. The evidence is clear that a divided system breeds inequality and the real effect is to differentiate by wealth and class. Overwhelmingly those from more deprived backgrounds do not get to grammar schools, and all international studies show it harms achievement and is an expensive folly, at a time when school budgets are being slashed. The NUT will campaign vigorously against the imposition of selection.

Teacher Pay

Teacher pay has stagnated since 2010 resulting in a real terms cut of 20% to our pay packets. NUT will campaign for an end to the pay freeze and to restore pay levels to restore the losses felt since 2010. Conference welcomed the Labour proposals for real terms increases in pay and a reintroduction of national collective bargaining on pay.

Supply Teachers

Conference confirmed the dreadful pay and conditions supply teachers face and resolved to campaign and organise both locally and nationally. A proposal for a 'Supply Seat' on the National Executive was voted against as it was felt that this would move to a more sectional union, whereas the rights of supply teachers should be a fight and a concern for all teachers, irrespective of their employment.



The NUT agreed to support the 'Wear Red Day' campaign by 'Show Racism the Red Card'.

Speak to your colleagues about all wearing red on Oct 20th.

Coventry NUT – Taking a lead on Workload

Coventry NUT is at the forefront of a national pilot challenging excessive workload in our schools. The work done by Coventry NUT Officers on this issue was highlighted by Kevin Courtney in his address to NUT Conference. For the last few months we have been working with fellow trade unions, local headteachers and the Local Authority to see if we can break the log-jam of workload which so drastically effects our members and the employer's ability to recruit and retain staff.

COVENTRY Fair Workload Charter

Included in this mailing you will find the **Coventry Fair Workload Charter** which we have developed with this group. Our aim is to get it adopted in as many schools as possible. We already have School Reps working to get it implemented in their schools and some Headteachers looking to adopt it in their school or chains.

This Workload Charter is designed to be mutually beneficial to staff, schools and pupils.

It aims to help significantly reduce your workload by focusing on things such as data entry, marking policies, planning requirements and reasonable time expectations beyond our directed time limit of 1265 hours per year.

It will benefit pupils as it will free up teachers' time which is currently taken up by too many tasks that do not benefit students. It will allow teachers to spend more time and have a greater ability to produce great lessons, resources and to plan collaboratively.

Equally importantly, it will benefit the schools. Apart from having happier, healthier and more productive staff, those schools proving that they are implementing the Charter will also be able to use a Charter Kite Mark on their documentation, particularly when advertising posts. This will show applicants that yours is a good school to work in with fair terms, conditions and practices, and therefore enable your school to attract the best candidates and retain staff.

We are still working with the LA and Heads groups to finalise the approval and monitoring procedures, but we are hoping to start to get the Charter adopted by schools this term and continue through next year.

How can I get it applied in my school?

There are several ways to tackle this. Firstly you should organise a NUT or joint union meeting in school to discuss the Charter and how you can adopt it in your school. If you would like an Officer to come in to support please let us know and we can arrange that.

There are many ways that this could be raised with your school, including:

- Agree for the Rep, or a spokesperson/group to approach the Headteacher to request that the school adopts, or begins to work towards adopting the charter.
 - Pass a motion calling on the school to adopt the Charter, and for this to be relayed to the Headteacher and to the Union.
 - Agree for the Charter to be raised at your school Governors meeting by a staff governor and request for it to be adopted
- We want to help you reduce workload in your school. Don't be left behind – arrange for an Officer to meet with your school group.**

Do you have an NUT Rep in school?

The rep is a vital role in school, a key point of contact between members and the union office. Having a Rep makes a huge difference. In schools where we have reps, we tend to have better terms and working conditions, schools run much more smoothly and members find it easier to access support.

Could you be a Rep in your school? Or maybe share the role with another member? We are always here to support Reps and there is lots of quality training available. Contact the office for more information.

Q: How can we ensure Education is at the heart of the General Election?

A: Coventry Education Question Time

We have organised an 'Education Question Time' and have invited local politicians and a national NUT speaker.

Join us to hold prospective MPs to account and ensure that Education funding, teacher workload, primary assessment, our position on grammar schools and other key points are at the heart of the Election debate. Let's make sure that whoever wins in Coventry will fight for Education.

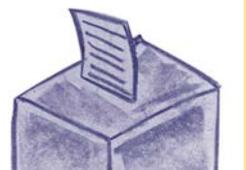
Tuesday 23rd May – 7pm

Warwick Road United Reformed Church

Free entry but please book a seat at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/coventry-education-question-time-tickets-34277370538>

If you have any other ideas of events or activities that we can organise, please contact us on coventry.nut@btconnect.com



Dates For Your Diary

Tue 16th May – The Big Assembly

Tue 23rd May – Education Question Time

Weds 7th June – NUT General Meeting

5pm Railway Bar and Grill

ATL Secretary Invited to discuss the new union

Launch of Coventry Fair Workload Charter

Every school needs to be represented at these key events