

Decision time

Value education, vote education in the election. See page 6.

Post-16 strikes

Staff walk out over chronic underfunding. See page 13.

“Did toxic air kill my daughter?”

How a bereaved mother took action over pollution. See page 18.



November/
December 2019

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November/December 2019

Climate change protest, 20 September, London.
Photo: Jess Hurd

Welcome



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AS you receive this magazine, we're a month away from the most significant General Election for the country and for education in most of our lifetimes.

The union isn't affiliated to any particular party and is proud of its independence. The fact remains, however, that we are at a crossroads when it comes to the future of education and the wellbeing of our young people. It is incumbent upon us to use our power to stake a claim for change.

For the last ten years, we've seen huge cuts in education and systemic changes that have left teachers and support staff gasping for air (as documented in the pages of this magazine).

The promise that a portion of some of those cuts will be reversed goes nowhere near laying the foundation of an education system fit for the future.

The National Education Union's (NEU) members are on the frontline and we have used our voice at political party conferences to make the case for change. It is to our credit that both the main opposition parties are listening to our arguments and have turned their backs on Ofsted and SATs. It has revived our hope that another kind of education is possible.

But to realise this vision the approach we need to take is twofold: to inspect the party offers on education at close quarters and make a judgement on that basis; and to cast our votes according to the overriding need to put an end to the austerity onslaught that has for a decade ravaged the education system and social fabric of the country.

Use your vote, and use it well.

The election is not the only thing that matters to the future of the country and the future of the children we are educating. In this edition we are also focusing on the ecological and climate crisis.

Hundreds of thousands of our students are actively engaged in this issue, and many educators have eagerly followed their lead, bringing it into the classroom, often working beyond and across the confines of the curriculum. We feature some of them in this issue.

This crisis is a real threat to all of us, to our species, and to the planet. If we are to have any chance of confronting it, education is key.

If students, educators, unions and activists work together, from the grassroots up, we can make a difference.

Kevin Courtney

National Education Union
Joint general secretary



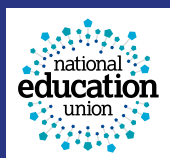
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The rest is history 3 December 1984

A cloud of lethal gas leaked from a poorly maintained pesticide factory in Bhopal, India – the world’s worst industrial accident. Campaigners say 25,000 people have so far died and US operator Union Carbide’s settlement of \$470 million – about \$500 apiece – was woefully inadequate. American executives have been charged but have never stood trial. Thirty-five years later, the campaign for justice continues.

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“Give these inspiring children a voice.”
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Documenting the stark effects of deprivation on children’s ability to learn in one northern constituency.

12 December: our chance to right

IT is vital that this General Election becomes about more than Brexit.

Schools, colleges and parents know the damage that an underfunded education system is doing to children and young people's education. And 12 December is the time to put that right.

There is not a school or college in England that has not been touched by funding cuts. Opposition and protests from parents, school staff, and political representatives from all the major parties forced the Government to pledge more money.

At the end of August, it announced a £14 billion package for primary and secondary schools. What every prospective parliamentary

candidate needs to know is that this sum is nowhere near enough to reverse the cuts.

Parents, head teachers, teachers, support staff and governors, who all make up the communities they want to represent, also know this.

Crisis goes on in schools, post-16 & SEND

Even with the additional funding, a staggering 83 per cent of schools – that's 16,523 – will still be facing cuts in April (see page 9).

The 16-19 sector has been promised £400 million, but with the huge cuts it has been subjected to this means it needs another £700 million to keep afloat.

The crisis in SEND funding continues,

leaving our most vulnerable pupils either out of education or without the support they need to get the most out of their time at school.

Perfect storm of pay and workload

Teachers' pay has not kept pace with the cost of living, while workload has spiralled upwards.

And the profession has been hit with an unprecedented recruitment and retention crisis, leaving vacancies unfilled and an ever-narrowing curriculum.

In response to the recruitment and retention emergency, the Government has also announced it will raise the starting salary of an NQT to £30,000 in 2022 which, while welcome, does not restore teachers' pay to



Register to vote at gov.uk/register-to-vote

NEU lobbying gives a real voting alternative

A HIGH-profile political party conference season for the NEU ensured voters concerned with education have a real choice when they cast their votes.

■ In Brighton, Labour pledged to scrap SATs and the new reception Baseline test.

■ Those commitments on SATs and Ofsted were also agreed by the Liberal Democrats, meeting in Bournemouth.

■ Our message on testing was heard at the Green Party

conference in Newport, where a spokesperson said "toxic testing only tests what is easy to test".

■ Only the Conservative Party continued to reject the growing consensus at its gathering in Manchester, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that scrapping Ofsted "would stamp out excellence in schools".

There has been no change to the former Education Secretary Damian Hinds' insistence earlier this year that "it is not and never will be the time to get rid of primary standardised assessment".



NEU member Elaine Bennett from the More than a Score coalition at the Labour conference in Brighton in September PHOTO by Jess Hurd

the wrongs inflicted on education

2010 levels and does not apply to educators in sixth forms. It may help recruitment, but does nothing to address the retention crisis.

Desperate though this situation is, this election is about more than school funding and pay. Schools are at the centre of our communities, many of which have been laid to waste by austerity.

Our members tell us heart-rending stories of areas pushed to breaking point: schools running foodbanks to feed pupils and their families, and washing facilities to clean uniforms. Children with holes in their shoes. Pupils pretending they don't feel the cold because their families can't afford to buy them a coat.

The Government has got rid of the target to end child poverty, despite 4.1 million children still being trapped in poverty, a figure expected to rise to 5.2 million by 2022. In one of the richest countries on the globe, we must and can do better – and expect this to be reflected in party manifestos.

Devastating impact of austerity

Poverty leaves a myriad of problems in its wake. Poor, overcrowded or insecure housing, a lack of heating, never having enough to eat – all impact on children and young people's learning.

There is a mental health crisis in our schools, with savage cuts to local authority

provision meaning pupils go without the help they desperately need.

We know all these things because our members are on the frontline, doing their best every day in sometimes impossible circumstances.

Our children get one chance at education. Be under no illusion – schools and colleges are in a dire situation, and real solutions are needed.

This election gives us all a chance to turn our sights to the future and vote for the education and communities that our children deserve. And we cannot afford to waste it.

If you value education, vote for education.

Please watch and share our video

THIS NEU election video (pictured right), shot on location in Maryport, Cumbria, features leadership member Yvonne Craig, who spoke about funding cuts and child poverty in her community. Yvonne, who is head of Ewanrigg

Primary School, appeals to viewers to use their vote wisely and value education. "Enough austerity, enough cuts," she said. Visit youtu.be/Up5qBHFfcOM



Visit schoolcuts.org.uk for funding figures, per-pupil cuts and class sizes.

Join us for Super Saturdays

THE NEU has organised Super Saturday events in 19 marginal constituencies, to put the issue of education firmly to the fore of voters' minds before 12 December.

Visit the NEU on Facebook to find dates and times of each event.

Constituencies hosting Super Saturdays are:

- Chipping Barnet, Kensington
- Thurrock, Stevenage, Canterbury, Hastings and Rye, Southampton Itchen
- Dudley North, Ashfield, Northampton North
- Camborne and Red Ruth, Crewe and Nantwich, Bolton West, Newcastle under Lyme
- Keighley, Pudsey, Hull West, Barrow and Furness
- Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland

What can I do?

Visit our new website at valueeducationvoteeducation.com/take_action

Leaflet at the school gate and talk to parents and the community about the funding crisis

Use the union's text system to encourage the public to attend local events, get out to vote and hand out leaflets in their area

Share graphics and videos about school cuts with your family, friends and social media groups

Enter data on those opposed to school cuts who have signed our petition

Funding reprieve for nurseries only a start

THE union has welcomed the last-minute extension of funding for maintained nursery schools that will secure their immediate future, but warned that the Government must commit to longer-term funding.

All 392 nursery schools, which provide high-quality early education for some of England's poorest children, had been under threat of closure next year, when supplementary funding allocated by the Government in 2017 was due to run out.

Following campaigning by the union, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced that the Government would extend the supplementary funding until April 2021.

National Education Union (NEU) joint general secretary Mary Bousted said: "We are pleased the Government has bowed to pressure from parents and educators by extending the stopgap funding for maintained nursery schools for a further two terms.

"But it is deeply damaging to these schools that they have to live hand to mouth in this way. The Department for Education's own research shows that costs have risen by 13.5 per cent because of the impact of the

"Many children at risk at age three had caught up by the age of five."

**Ken Jones,
NEU policy officer**

national living wage, which most people working in early years are paid.

"After three years of a funding freeze with absolutely no money for early years, this is an insult to our nation's children. The Government needs to invest a further £230 million to restore cuts to early years provision in order to stop providers having to close down.

"We call on the Government, yet again, to guarantee their future. These are the most highly rated schools in the whole system."

On brink of closure

NEU member and nursery head Cathy Earley, who leads Greenacre Community Nursery School in Bootle, in one of the ten most deprived wards in the country, is among

those who have been campaigning.

Cathy, who spoke at a recent nurseries summit in Lancashire, told Educate: "This funding is a small step in the right direction but we need more certainty and financial acknowledgement of the work we do if our high quality is to be maintained."

Around 40,000 children, many of them from deprived areas of the country, attend a maintained nursery school.

Many maintained nursery schools across the country have already been forced to shut, and a fifth are in deficit.

NEU policy officer Ken Jones said: "Maintained nurseries make a difference.

In 2018 they had the highest percentage of children who were at risk of developing special educational needs. Yet many children identified as at risk at age three had caught up with their typically developing peers by the age of five."

He added: "Maintained nurseries are one of our greatest educational treasures and demonstrate how inclusive education can make a real difference to the fight against social disadvantage."

■ The NEU has organised a nurseries summit in London on 13 November (bit.ly/33hmLF3), which will be chaired by NEU member and nursery teacher Stella Carefull (see below).

"They would fall through the cracks"

STELLA Carefull has been a teacher at Effra Nursery School in south London for 20 years.

"The funding is a sticking plaster that doesn't help us in the long run.

"Class sizes are a lot bigger, as a result of losing two teachers and a highly experienced, qualified early years educator. We really care about the little people who come to our school, and when our ratios were better, we could offer much more one-to-one support.

"We already have to fundraise to top up our budget, and parents donate resources. We give children



newspaper to paint on.

"We have a lot of vulnerable parents, who trust us, and we are able to link them up with other services. Without the nursery, they would fall through the cracks. What

children get from us, as experienced, qualified teachers, is unmatched.

"The policy to give 30 hours to children of working parents only has had a huge impact on a lot of disadvantaged children, such

as those on child protection plans, who can only access 15 hours."

■ Spread the message on social media [#saveournurseries](https://twitter.com/saveournurseries)

■ Visit neu.org.uk/funding/save-maintained-nursery-schools

Britain now has the largest class sizes in the developed world, according to the OECD. One in eight secondary students are in classes of 30+.

School cuts still savage despite Government's new funding pledge

EIGHTY-three per cent of schools will be financially worse off next year than they were in 2015, despite the £14 billion announced by the Government.

An analysis of Department for Education cash allocation figures by the School Cuts coalition shows more than 16,500 schools across England will lose out in April next year.

“The overwhelming majority of schools are now significantly poorer,” said NEU joint general secretary Kevin Courtney. “New funds promised won't make up for money snatched from them in the past. Children who started school in 2015 will have seen no relief by 2021 in 83 per cent of schools – their whole school career will have been blighted.”

Schools in poorest areas lose most

Schools in the country's poorest areas are the biggest losers. Primary schools with the most deprived intakes have had an average cut of £382 per pupil a year, compared with £125 in the least deprived.

In secondaries, there is a £392 difference between the cut to per-pupil funding between the most and least well off areas. Schools in the most deprived have lost £509, compared with £117.

“The unfairness of the distribution of Boris Johnson's additional school funding is breathtaking,” said Kevin. “He promised that there would be no more ‘winners and losers’ in education – a noble commitment – but it does not match reality.”

Across the country, the average cut per pupil is £245 in primary and £304 in secondary.

Schools in the London borough of Tower Hamlets teach the highest proportion of



children on free school meals – 33 per cent, compared with the national average of 14 per cent. The cuts per pupil are £735 compared with 2015-16.

Of the ten poorest local authorities in England (Tower Hamlets, Hartlepool, Knowsley, Newcastle upon Tyne, Halton, Hackney, Middlesbrough, Islington, Liverpool, Birmingham), the cuts are above average in seven of them.

Below average cuts in richest boroughs

Of the ten most prosperous local authorities in England (Rutland, Wokingham,

Buckinghamshire, Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, West Sussex, Surrey, Central Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire), the cuts are below average in eight of them.

Our analysis shows that by 2022-23, funding will only be £7.1 billion higher – less than half of what the Government has promised.

“For years, heads, teachers and school staff have done all they can to mitigate the impact of funding cuts on children,” said Kevin. “But the buck stops with the Government.”

Visit schoolcuts.org.uk

Heads believe SATs have negative effect on pupils

HEAD teachers remain overwhelmingly negative about SATs, according to research released at the Labour Party conference in September.

A report, Anxiety, Pressure and Collateral Damage: The Headteachers' Verdict on SATs, found 83 per cent believe SATs have a negative

effect on pupils' wellbeing. Dr Alice Bradbury at the Institute for Education surveyed 288 primary heads and conducted 20 in-depth interviews.

The study, commissioned by the More Than A Score coalition, also found that 74 per cent of heads admit that the pressure of SATs makes them teach to the test. The high-stakes

tests affect the whole school, not just year 6, they said.

“For many head teachers, SATs are an indication of a system that has the wrong priorities, with negative effects on children, teachers and the curriculum and pedagogy,” said Dr Bradbury.

New Ofsted grillings leave teachers ‘broken’

TEACHERS are being grilled for hours as part of new-style inspections introduced by Ofsted in September, according to school leaders.

Heads debated the impact of the new inspection framework at the first NEU Leadership conference, held in London, saying subject leads are being left distressed after facing lengthy, in-depth questioning.

Under the new framework, Ofsted inspects the intent, implementation and impact of a school or college’s curriculum, which feeds into a new quality-of-education judgement.

Inspectors now carry out “deep dives” into a sample of subjects, which includes interviews with subject leaders about the curriculum content, how it is structured and sequenced.

Left broken by ‘interrogation’

Former head teacher and executive member Anne Swift said a music teacher was “left a broken woman” after being interviewed by an inspector as part of Ofsted’s pilot on inspecting the curriculum. “I think you can only call that curriculum interview an interrogation,” said Anne. “It took a lot for the head to build up that teacher’s confidence again.”

The union raised many concerns about the framework, including the curriculum interview, when Ofsted consulted on its plans earlier this year. The conference heard more



Anne Swift described how an Ofsted interview left a music teacher “a broken woman” PHOTO by Sarah Turton

tales of teachers left in tears by the process, which NEU assistant general secretary for education, policy and research Nansi Ellis said was ultimately demoralising and made some teachers terrified of being inspected.

“I heard from a member yesterday who

had just had her inspection,” Nansi told the conference. “When the phone call came [notifying her], her NQT took herself off to cry and be sick, she was so scared of it. That is no way for anybody to feel in a professional job like the one you and your staff do.”

‘Stick to your guns. Be proud of your school’

A TEACHER employed at a ‘good’ London primary, which was among the first to be inspected under the new framework, shares her experience.

We did very well and yet we still feel really bruised from it. The word most of us use to describe those two days is brutal.

The meetings were interrogations; questions were fired at us, and there was no opportunity for us to highlight things we were especially proud of. Our voices weren’t heard. They were out to look for our weaknesses, not our strengths.

It felt like we were under scrutiny. At one stage, three inspectors were observing a teaching assistant doing a phonics lesson with a very small group of children.

“My advice is don’t go into Ofsted meetings on your own.”

And it was almost like the inspectors didn’t trust that we knew our curriculum areas. I understand they need evidence, but if you come in the second week of term you’ve got to understand there might not be any evidence. And the sense of responsibility is huge.

It is testament to the staff and senior

management that we are still standing. We know we are a good school, that we are doing good things, but that’s not how they treated us.

My advice is don’t go into meetings on your own. If you’re being interrogated, one person can take a breath and another person can take over.

Be aware that they say they want to talk to you about one thing and then they’ll suddenly switch and start asking you about another, and in a very detailed way.

Also, they are going to take you out of class, so have a plan for how that’s going to work.

Stick to your guns. Don’t change your mind about work you are doing in your school. You know your school, be proud of it.

Dare to dream of an Ofsted-free world



NEU joint general secretary Mary Bousted on what the opposition parties' election promises mean for Ofsted – and for education professionals.

It is a remarkable turnaround in political thinking that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats have pledged that, if elected to Government, they will abolish Ofsted.

These announcements are deeply uncomfortable for Ofsted, an agency which, for too long, has regarded itself as invincible and impregnable. Contemptuous of its critics, Ofsted has refused to engage seriously with the National Education Union (NEU) and with other unions.

Conservatives out in the cold

Depending on the outcome of the election, if Labour wins a majority, or enters into some kind of working arrangement with the Lib Dems, then Ofsted's days are numbered.

The political consensus between Labour and the Lib Dems leaves the Conservatives out in the cold. I hope the Conservatives find this an uncomfortable experience, because they have ignored both the evidence and the voices of education professionals for years.

In 2014 Nicky Morgan MP, then Secretary of State for Education, issued a workload challenge to the profession. Just what, she asked, was causing teachers' and school leaders' excessive workload? And what could the Government do to tackle this problem?

Forty-four thousand teachers responded and told Nicky that the main driver of their unsustainable workload was the framework to which schools are held accountable. At the centre of this was, and is, Ofsted.

Nicky thanked teachers for their responses... and then ignored them.

Ofsted-induced anxiety

Teachers continue to vote with their feet, leaving the profession in droves and earlier and earlier in their careers.

Ofsted has been the root cause of the exodus of teachers and school leaders from the profession. The endless anticipation of the next



inspection and the uncertainty as to whether your school will get a good inspection team or not, have led to huge anxiety.

But now, with the potential for Ofsted's abolition, there is a chance to turn the tide on excessive and unproductive teacher workload. The game played by school leaders and teachers – guessing the answer inside the Ofsted inspector's head – will no longer need to be played. This is an opportunity for schools and colleges to work in collaboration once more, rather than in competition with one another, sharing expertise so that education quality is raised for all.

All change for inspections

Under Labour's proposals, schools will continue to be inspected, but by full-time professional inspectors, who will inspect only those subjects and age phases they have been trained in and have professional experience in.

So, no more maths specialists inspecting

the English curriculum. No more further education lecturers inspecting early years provision. Whole-school or college inspections will be a rarity. Rather, if evidence suggests there could be a problem in the teaching of a particular subject or age phase, or a whole school issue such as behaviour, then the inspection will focus on that.

Under Labour's proposals, single inspection grades will be scrapped. More than anything else, perhaps, this will create a different atmosphere in schools. It will foster a learning culture among teachers and leaders who will focus not on a grade, but on what the inspection judgement tells them about where they must improve their practice.

Teachers have the right to be inspected by professionals who they can respect and whose judgement they trust. The Labour and Lib Dem proposals to abolish Ofsted recognise and take action to secure this important principle.



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School teachers, have you had your pay increase?

WITH the school teachers' pay increase for 2019 now confirmed, the National Education Union (NEU) is embarking on a major exercise to ensure members receive it.

The NEU has emailed every one of its school teacher members – including those in academies and free schools – letting them know that the 2.75 per cent increase, inadequate though it is, may not be paid at all until governing bodies agree to do so.

Visit our website to check pay scales

Members and reps have been sent a link to our website which lets them see what their pay rates should be, before and after the increase, if their school is paying teachers the correct pay scales.

More than half of school teacher members have clicked through to see this and other information on pay – if you haven't, go to neu.org.uk/pay

Ask your head to confirm when the teacher pay increase will be paid and whether your school is using the correct pay scales in line with the joint advice from NEU, ASCL and NAHT. Seek local advice from the NEU if not.

■ The NEU is supporting a ten per cent pay claim for school support staff.

Andrew Morris, NEU assistant general secretary for employment and bargaining

Sixth-form colleagues strike a blow for cash-starved sector

THE first day of strike action against chronic underfunding in the sixth-form sector took place on 17 October after 84 per cent of members voted Yes to action.

Twenty-five colleges took action – and will be joined by more following re-balloting in colleges where turnout just missed legal minimums.

As part of the first day of action, colleagues from the sixth-form sector attended a rally in London before marching to the Department for Education to present an outstanding invoice for the funding still needed. This was followed by a second day of action on 5 November.

Spotlight on pay and working conditions

The NEU is in dispute with the Secretary of State in relation to the pay, working conditions and security of employment of NEU members in the sector, and in particular the detrimental effects caused by the huge cuts in college funding since 2010.

“There's just not enough resources for anybody to do anything as well as we could,” explained Anna Griffiths on the picket line at Saint Francis Xavier College in Balham.

“The inequality between school and sixth forms [is unfair]. Often sixth-form students are vulnerable and need more support.”

6% more students, 16% funding cut

Despite a pledge of £400 million in additional money announced in August, sixth-form



Sixth-form sector NEU members marched to the Department for Education, where they presented an invoice for funding still needed
PHOTO by Sarah Turton

colleges have endured a 16 per cent funding cut since 2010/11 – twice the eight per cent cut from school budgets.

There has been a 15 per cent reduction in teaching staff numbers despite a six per cent increase in the number of students.

“Since 2010 the post-16 sector has been starved of funding,” said Jean Evanson, NEU executive member for post-16. “The announcement of £400 million extra was too little – we need an additional £700 million to restore funding to previous levels.”

Further action is planned for 20 November and more dates will be released up to the General Election.

■ NEU members began six days of strike action starting on 30 October over Salford City College's refusal to pay the nationally agreed “meagre cost of living increase”.

Mark Sullivan, NEU college rep, said: “This is about principles – we need to take a stand now, otherwise it's a slippery slope.”

NI undertakes equality report

THE NEU in Northern Ireland has just completed a report into how the union approaches equalities issues in schools.

Areas such as newcomer children, racism, sexism, abortion and reproductive rights, LGBT+ issues and individual conscience were discussed.

The report concluded that equality issues should be regarded as a professional rather than a political issue, and recommended that training in equality and diversity be mandatory for all staff.

Northern activists' weekend

SOME 50 delegates from across the NEU northern region gathered in County Durham in October for a training weekend.

Workshop sessions and plenaries focused on communicating, engaging and organising, with a healthy dose of equalities and recruiting thrown in.

Sessions were used to gather information and share ideas, as well as draw up plans of action for the next few months. Motion writing was practised with regional TUC and annual conferences in mind.

■ The North of Tyne Combined Authority has announced a mission – the Education Challenge – to make every school good or outstanding. The NEU has been confirmed as a key stakeholder in shaping the initiative.

Joe Waddle, senior regional officer

Your views sought on Prevent

THE NEU is seeking members' input into a Government review of the controversial Prevent strategy.

Since 2015, schools and colleges in England and Wales have been obligated "to have due regard" to the need to prevent students from being drawn into terrorism.

Critics argue it is discriminatory and counterproductive – a blunt tool for a complex issue better served by increased resources in social services, youth work and wellbeing education. The training and support provided, teachers say, has been inadequate.

Email equality@neu.org.uk and we will respond with a questionnaire to complete by 22 November.

Strike over culture of bullying

NATIONAL Education Union (NEU) members have taken the first of six days of strike action in response to unacceptable management bullying at St Catherine's school, Bexleyheath.

The bullying included banning union meetings on site and suspending Rachel Shepherd, the NEU school rep, at the end of last term. She was reinstated at the start of the new term but another member is still off on spurious grounds.

Debbie Jones, NEU Bexley district rep, said: "Most members at St Catherine's have never taken strike action before, but have been forced to as a last resort by a prolonged campaign of bullying and arbitrary behaviour by the head. What was a very happy school has now become an institution with a deep culture of fear."

More than 50 staff, plus parents and students, supported the picket lines.

Email messages of support to deborah.jones@neu.org.uk



NEU member Sue Donnelly on the picket line at St Catherine's school

The fight for Strathcona jobs continues



Parents and staff protest outside Brent civic centre

A CAMPAIGN by NEU members at Roe Green school in Brent to save their Strathcona site has now become a battle to save jobs.

The north London school staff and wider community fought for weeks to keep the site open (see Educate, Sept/Oct). They forced the council to reconsider its decision, but were ultimately unsuccessful.

Jenny Cooper, Brent district joint secretary, told Educate: "We lost the fight to

save the Strathcona site, however members have voted unanimously for strike action in order to protect their jobs.

"They are deeply committed, putting in hours of work and have presented their case at countless council meetings with intelligence, eloquence and dignity."

Their fifth day of strike action was set for 5 November.

Email messages of support to jennifer.cooper@neu.org.uk

THESE children from Charlton Manor Primary School in London are enjoying leek and potato soup made with produce from their school garden.

The soup was made during the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Big Soup Share, a week-long event in October when young gardeners cook thousands of litres of soup to share with friends, family and the local community. Charlton Manor's 'secret garden' was once an overgrown, derelict area, but in 2005 pupils began a project to transform it. Now it has a pond, bird hide, beds of fruits, vegetables and herbs, a beehive, chickens, composting facilities and a teaching area.

The Big Soup Share is part of the RHS's Campaign for School Gardening, in which 40,000 schools and groups across the UK are taking part. Visit schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/home

Photo: RHS/Luke MacGregor



Further blow to SEND funding

THE loss of the court case brought by three SEND families against the Government for failure to provide adequate funding for their children's education was a sad blow to their many supporters.

The unwelcome verdict allows the Government to once again avoid responsibility for properly funding local authorities with enough money to support all SEND pupils properly. There remains a £1 billion shortfall in SEND funding despite the Government's announcement of additional money.

Following the verdict, a damning report by MPs highlighted the crisis in SEND provision, saying families were forced to "wade through a treacle of bureaucracy" to try to access support.

Visit neu.org.uk/funding/send-crisis for updates about SEND cuts, and search for your school at schoolcuts.org.uk to find the latest data on funding.

UCL survey on workload woes

A QUARTER of teachers in England work more than 60 hours a week, research by University College London has found.

The study, based on responses from more than 40,000 primary and secondary school teachers, found that teacher hours remain high despite Government initiatives designed to reduce workload.

On average, teachers in England work 47 hours a week – eight hours more than teachers in comparable Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. During the summer exam period, this rises to nearly 50 hours.

Kevin Courtney, National Education Union joint general secretary, said: "Government must face the fact that it is the culture of excessive accountability, brought on by the Department for Education and Ofsted, that acts as the main driver of workload. For as long as these skewed priorities continue, schools will be in the grip of a culture of fear, over-regulation and a lack of trust."

Secondary school teachers said they spent almost as much time carrying out administrative tasks, planning, management and marking (20.1 hours) as they did teaching (20.5 hours).



First-time delegates to the National Education Union Disabled Members' Conference, Lucie Wheatcroft and Afzal Khan
PHOTO by Kois Miah

Feeling empowered and ready to inspire in the classroom

SIXTY delegates attended the Disabled Members' Conference in Manchester at the end of September. First-time attendees Afzal Khan and Lucie Wheatcroft were among them.

We weren't sure what to expect, but the conference was well thought through, planned and relevant.

It covered a lot of issues that disabled members face – from organising collectively to keep our members in schools, to training on specific issues facing disabled people.

It was engaging as well as educational. Inspirational speakers, including NEU executive member Colleen Johnson, co-ordinator of UK Disability History Month Richard Reiser and disability activist Samantha Renke, had heart-warming experiences to share as well as a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

The breakout sessions were informative, especially the ones about reasonable

adjustments, invisible impairments and mental health.

The conference left us feeling we aren't alone as individuals and it gave us confidence in believing that disability is not a barrier in itself; the barriers are created by ignorance, intolerance and discrimination, which unfortunately are still prevalent in society.

Having the opportunity to share experiences, hear positive stories and talk with others helped us to realise we are not alone.

We all face challenges but the fact that campaigning collectively for disability rights will help both adults and SEND pupils made us feel empowered.

Having the chance to network has been invaluable and has encouraged us to go back to our schools and colleges and become more active and vocal about disability rights.

Afzal Khan, Birmingham NEU, and Lucie Wheatcroft, Worcestershire NEU

Get involved
Go to my.neu.org.uk/login and let us know that you identify as disabled.

What does the NEU president do?

The president – elected by annual conference – chairs conference, the executive and officers’ steering group, and represents the union nationally and internationally.

Testing times for dedicated teachers, says NEU president

SCRAPPING league tables would allow schools to celebrate the things they are good at and give those at the bottom back their sense of pride, according to National Education Union (NEU) president Amanda Martin.

Speaking to Educate, Amanda, a primary school teacher for 22 years, said league tables pit schools against one another, when they should work collaboratively.

She added that Ofsted and high-stakes testing in primaries should also be abolished by the Government.

Describing her own experiences of Ofsted, she said: “There’s nothing worse than an inspector who’s only taught secondary reviewing a reception class. It goes one of two ways: they’re either wowed or they just don’t get it.”

Until September, when she left to begin



“We’ve covered up the damage. Made the best of it.”

**Amanda Martin,
NEU president**

her sabbatical year as the first sole NEU president, Amanda worked at St Jude’s school in Portsmouth, a city with high levels of deprivation.

‘Heartbreaking’ deprivation

“There are kids living in bedsits on the seafront and the stuff some of our pupils experience on a daily basis is heartbreaking,” she said. It is dedication that has held the education system together at a time of savage funding cuts and increased workload, she added.

“We’ve covered up the damage. We’ve made the best of it, so that kids, many of them in deprived situations, can see school as their safe, secure place.”

The public standing of school staff, which has been damaged by the criticisms of the profession by past education secretaries including Michael Gove, has undergone a seismic shift, Amanda believes.

“There was a real hatred of teachers in the press, but the funding campaign has turned that around. Community groups are working alongside us. I think we’ve restored our public image – at least for now,” she said.

Pupils cold and hungry in a constituency where child poverty is as high as 46 per cent

WE know that growing child poverty – a direct result of austerity – is affecting children’s learning, with schools and education staff increasingly providing essentials of daily life to support children’s ability to learn.

Across the country, a third of children are officially poor, but in the North East that figure is significantly higher than the national average.

In parts of the constituency of Wansbeck in Northumberland it is a staggering 46 per cent, and that is why the National Education Union (NEU) is collaborating with Ian Lavery MP in highlighting the negative impact of poverty on the educational experience and attainment of our children.

Many NEU members working in Wansbeck shared their experiences with the union, painting a stark and disturbing picture, including children who are clearly suffering from hunger, turning up to school with no winter coat or winter shoes in

extreme weather, or no suitable PE clothing.

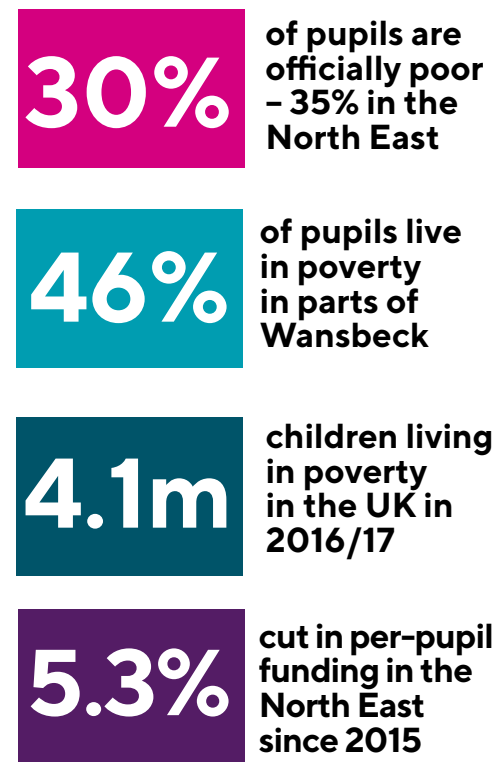
Examples of items provided by teachers include food, books, clothing and sanitary products. The scenarios of a mother keeping her child from attending a school trip to the beach due to the shame of not being able to supply a bucket and spade, and a child wearing her grandmother’s shoes, are particularly upsetting.

Despite the shocking nature of what has been revealed in this report, perhaps the saddest thing is that the results do not surprise us. If we are indeed the fifth richest country in the world, how can it be that children in areas such as Wansbeck are suffering from such levels of poverty?

The impact this has on their learning is immense, as proven by our survey results, which indicate that behavioural, concentration and attendance issues are all commonplace in the community.

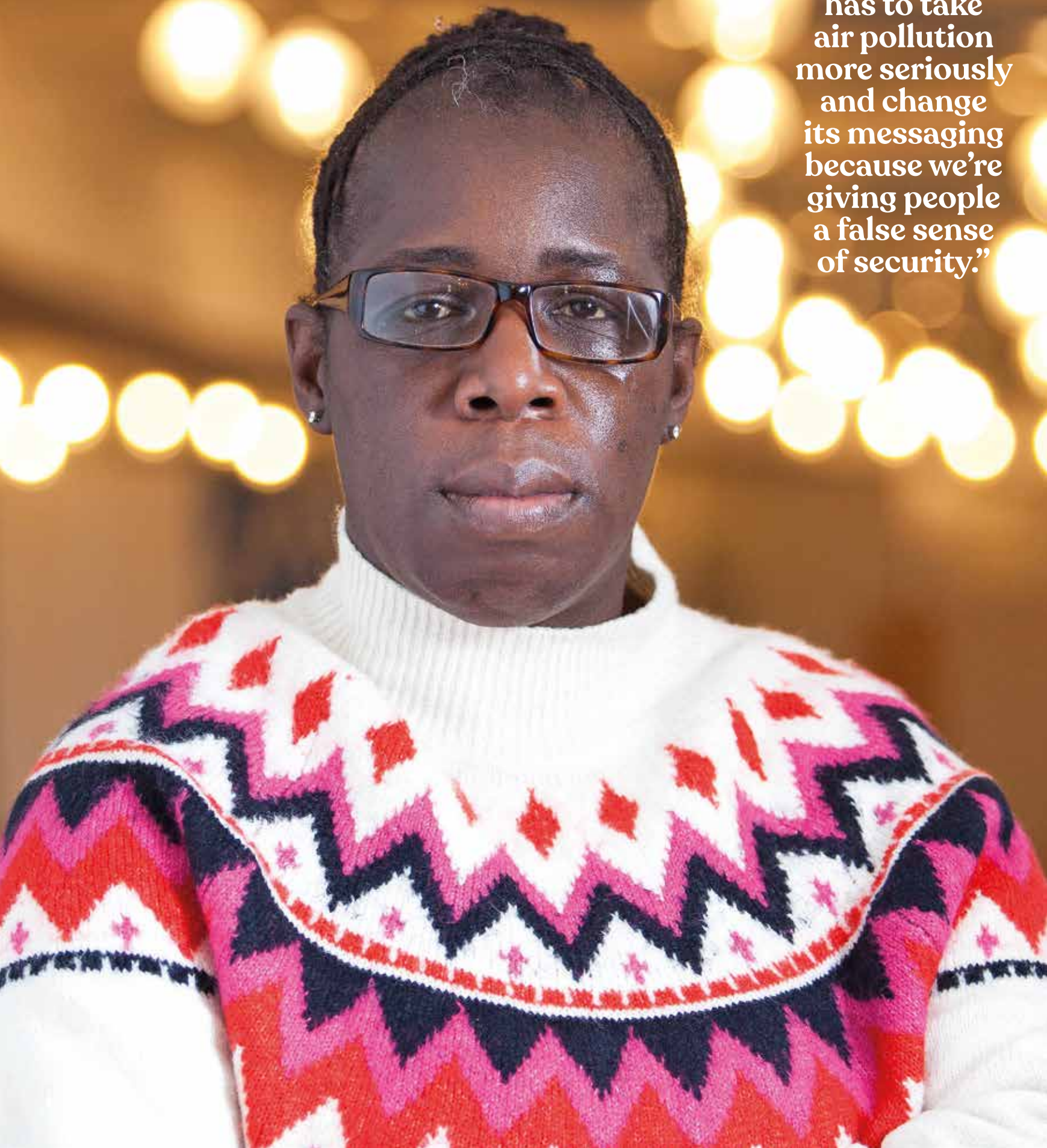
Visit bit.ly/2ozT436 to watch a video and access the full report.

Mike McDonald, NEU regional secretary



Feature

“Ultimately, the Government has to take air pollution more seriously and change its messaging because we’re giving people a false sense of security.”



Rosamund Kissi-Debrah is fighting for the Government to take pollution seriously after her daughter died after breathing toxic air near their home in London. Emily Jenkins reports.

EVERY year in the UK it is estimated that 40,000 early deaths can be linked to breathing polluted air. And it is children who are most vulnerable.

No-one understands this more than Rosamund Kissi-Debrah, whose daughter Ella Roberta died in February 2013, aged nine, after developing severe asthma.

Hospital 28 times in 28 months

Ella was born in Lewisham Hospital and was healthy and happy until just before her seventh birthday when she began to develop what was confirmed at her inquest to be a rare and life-threatening form of asthma.

“It was so sudden and so severe. She was rushed to hospital 28 times in 28 months. Looking back, it could only ever have ended badly,” says Rosamund.

At the inquest, air pollution wasn’t even considered as a potential factor in Ella’s death. “The coroner attributed her death to asthma, and her asthma to ‘airborne triggers’, which is pretty vast and could be anything,” explains Rosamund.

However, after a member of the public got in contact advising her to check pollution levels in her area, Rosamund discovered that Ella’s frequent hospital admissions coincided with spikes in illegal levels of air pollution around her home in Lewisham.

In fact, an expert report confirmed that air pollution levels at the Catford monitoring station – a mile from Ella’s home – “consistently exceeded lawful EU limits over the three years prior to her death”.

“It surprised me that the pollution levels were so fatally high. From what I know now about exposure to air pollution, I believe her asthma built up over time,” explains Rosamund.

Quarter of London children breathe ‘illegally toxic’ air

About two million children under 19 live in London. According to Greenpeace, almost a quarter of school children in the capital are exposed to toxic levels of air pollution so high they break legal limits.

When Rosamund first started looking at the percentage of children with asthma in the capital it was at ten per cent, but a few years later that has risen to 15 per cent.

Why isn’t more being done? “I used to think that if people could see what they’re breathing in, things would change,” says Rosamund, “but actually I now realise it’s also an economic problem.”

For instance, she says, increasing penalties for polluting vehicles hits poorer families hardest, as they tend to drive older cars. Research by the international road safety charity FIA Foundation has also revealed that it’s the capital’s most deprived children who are most at risk – more than 85 per cent of the schools affected

by poor air quality have catchments which are more deprived than the London average.

The FIA Foundation’s executive director, Saul Billingsley, says: “There is growing evidence that children from some of London’s most socially deprived areas are not only affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution around their schools, but also face compounding health risks.”

Lifelong consequences for health

These health risks can extend far beyond lung-related illnesses. Air pollution can also contribute to the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes, experts agree. Early exposure to air pollution can have lifelong consequences, including reduced lung function, harm to the heart, brain, hormone and immune systems, increased risk of lung cancer, and effects on mental health and cognitive function.

Last year alone, the cost of air pollution to the NHS and social care in England was estimated at £157 million – a figure Public Health England warns could reach £18.6 billion by 2035 unless action is taken.

“I’m really frustrated,” says Rosamund. “There’s lots of things individuals can do to reduce air pollution and we definitely need to be more vocal about it, but ultimately the Government has to take it more seriously and change its messaging because we’re giving people a false sense of security.

“We’re talking about being carbon neutral by 2050 – that’s 30 years away. Or getting rid of diesel by 2040 – that’s 20 years away. It’s so carcinogenic and bad for lungs; what’s going to happen to the 12-year-old boy growing up on a main road by then? There’s just no urgency.”

Rosamund explains that much of Europe is ahead of the UK when it comes to protecting citizens from air pollution. For example, in Amsterdam the construction of schools and old people’s residences is restricted near main roads. No such restrictions are in place in London. Around the corner from Rosamund in Lewisham, the developer of a new residential block says it will simply advise residents against opening their windows due to high air pollution in the area.

School staff also at risk

A psychology and philosophy teacher and NEU member for over 15 years, Rosamund left the profession after her daughter’s death to set up the Ella Roberta Family Foundation, which supports children with asthma and raises awareness of air pollution.

“Young people are a huge part of the climate movement,” she tells me. “But teachers should be worried about their health as well. That’s why it’s so important to support school parking rules and make sure parents don’t ignore them.”

continued on page 21

Dying for clean air

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Director of Performing Arts, Churchill Academy and Sixth Form

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- **Singing**, to develop vocal technique, acting through song and an understanding of singing for musical theatre productions
- **Dance**, introducing participants to the unique choreography of WICKED
- **Anti-Bullying** workshop created by WICKED and the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), challenging us to look beyond first impressions



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Show your students our collection of theatre careers videos, featuring a range of on stage and behind the scenes roles. Each short film profiles a different theatre career and outlines how our WICKED team members worked to gain experience and were inspired to choose their career paths. As well as offering practical advice for young people, the videos also show some behind the scenes footage and insights of the UK production. Find these on our Wicked UK YouTube channel under the Education playlist.

DEFYING GRAVITY RESOURCES

With the song 'Defying Gravity' now a set work on the Edexcel GCSE music qualification, later this Autumn we will be releasing Stephen Schwartz's personal thoughts and reflections on this signature song. Stay tuned to our Education website to hear how the composer created musical elements to represent the two contrasting lead characters, how he related the song to the rest of the musical, and why the iconic song is positioned at the end of Act 1.

For information and videos on all the above, please see our website: WickedEducation.co.uk



The annual **WICKED YOUNG WRITER AWARDS** were created by the producers of WICKED, in partnership with the **National Literacy Trust** and with the support of **Michael Morpurgo** and Patron **HRH The Duchess of Cornwall**, to encourage and recognise excellence in writing and creativity, and help develop literacy and writing talent, in young people between 5 and 25. Celebrating 10 years of these “prestigious awards” (The Times) in 2020, the Head Judge is *How To Train Your Dragon* author and Children's Laureate **Cressida Cowell**.

Entries are open now. See WickedYoungWriterAwards.com for more details.



“It’s clear that the climate emergency is also a health emergency.”

**Simon Stevens,
NHS chief executive**

Photo by Rehan Jamil

Air quality and life expectancy

IN 2013, Waltham Forest was one of three London boroughs selected to share a pot of money from the Mayor of London to improve road safety, air quality and public health.

The borough’s Enjoy Waltham Forest scheme (pictured) has since delivered 22km of segregated cycle lanes, 104 improved pedestrian crossings, 15 new pocket parks and planted more than 660 trees. Speed limits have been reduced and cycling provision extended, including an additional 250 bike hangars, free cycle skills training and bike hire.

These efforts have had an extraordinary impact, according to research from the Environmental Research Group at King’s College London (KCL). It found that five-year-olds living in Waltham Forest today are predicted to live for an extra six weeks thanks to improvements in air quality since 2013.

“It’s always been clear to us that improving our neighbourhoods to encourage more walking and cycling will have significant benefits for our residents,” said Cllr Clyde Loakes, the borough’s deputy leader. “Now we have independent evidence that it is improving air quality, extending life expectancy and encouraging people to be more active.”

■ NEW research by KCL analysing the impact of air pollution on health calculates that days of high air pollution trigger an extra 124 cardiac arrests, 231 stroke admissions and 193 hospitalisations for asthma across nine major UK cities each year.

NHS chief executive Simon Stevens said: “It’s clear that the climate emergency is also a health emergency. Since these avoidable deaths are happening now – not in 2025 or 2050 – we need to act now.”

continued from page 19

Rosamund argues it’s vitally important that every school has an asthma emergency kit that is accessible and that every member of staff knows how to use. “It can take ten minutes or more for an ambulance to get to you. Those kits can save lives.”

“I’ll keep on doing what I’m doing”

Nearly seven years since Ella’s death, Rosamund is still fighting for answers.

In May, she was finally granted a second inquest. If that inquest accepts the new evidence offered by Rosamund’s legal team, Ella may become the first person in the UK

for whom air pollution will be listed as the cause of death.

“I want the inquest to show it was exposure to air pollution that ultimately caused Ella’s death. And from that, to look at the impact of air pollution in general. If that happens, maybe the Government will sit up and listen.

“I feel her loss. Next year would be her GCSE year. It’s difficult. I have lost a child through this but there are others affected and who will be affected and the Government isn’t doing anything. But it’s not constructive for me to be angry. I just need to keep on doing what I’m doing.”

Resources

■ **Ella Roberta Family Foundation:** ellaroberta.org

■ **NEU air pollution guidance for school staff:** neu.org.uk/air-pollution

■ **Poisoned playgrounds - parents and staff can enter their postcode to see if their school is within 150m of an illegally polluted road:** bit.ly/2ngl6hE

■ **Greenpeace teachers’ resource pack on air pollution:** bit.ly/2naPULk

'Education's inadequacy in face of climate crisis'

CHLOE Tomlinson is a teacher and union activist who helped organise the recent NEU-backed climate education conference.

- 'We're missing our lessons so we can teach you one'
- 'I'll take my exams when you take action'
- 'Seas > GCSEs'
- 'Activism is education'

These slogans, scrawled on placards, along with the decision to strike during school time, send a powerful message to those interested in education. At the heart of these strikes is a burning frustration, not just with adults or society at large, but also with our education system.

What better demonstrates our school system's inadequacy than its neglect of environmental issues? Young people rightly see the fight to address climate change as the



Chloe Tomlinson at the climate emergency conference in October PHOTO by Rehan Jamil

key issue of our time. Our education system chronically sidelines it, squeezing into a science lesson here, a geography lesson there.

The very principles underpinning our education system are completely at odds with addressing the climate crisis. Our high-stakes,

exam-factory approach is designed to cultivate pupils as unthinking, self-interested individuals concerned only with their own exam grades. How can such a system equip them with the skills needed to address climate change?

Our schools need more than eco-councils, or even a climate justice GCSE – though these are a great start.

We need a comprehensive approach to teaching the science and geography of climate change and the politics and economics of it too; which supports young people to think critically, with time to stay engaged with bigger issues; which embeds all of these concepts at its core, not leaving it to socially conscious teachers to squeeze it into their lessons.

The youth strikes are inspirational. As teachers we must support them and see their demands as inseparable from our own.

What do you think?
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Robb Johnson is a well-known singer-songwriter on the protest scene. He retired from teaching in 2015 and is still active in Brighton and Hove District NEU as international solidarity officer.

‘I love the sense of solidarity and friendship’

What did you love about your job?

I loved being part of the alchemical processes by which individuals blossom. Working with children in early years, you see people at their very best, how each of us comes to the planet with such gifts and possibilities.

What do you love about being in the union?

Being part of social progress. Our union has always recognised it has a wider social responsibility – it isn’t just about pay, conditions and cheap insurance, it’s about how education can contribute to social justice. I love the sense of solidarity and the friendship you get with your fellow union members. The union empowers people, encourages and supports their idealism.

What have you been up to lately?

As international solidarity officer I have been attempting to boost our district’s support for the rights of the Palestinian people by



Robb Johnson, who retired from teaching in 2015 to “spend more time on education”

developing a twinning relationship with Al-Tafawk school in Jenin. I have also been writing a lot more songs. I recently wrote

a song for the Hands Off Moulsecoomb campaign (see below), opposing a rather vindictive enforced academisation of a community resource.

What’s important to you right now?

The recent NEU conference motion to boycott SATs and all other forms of high-stakes testing is really important. It was a great step towards reclaiming schools for the purposes of education and for the people who work in them.

What do you do on your day off?

I don’t really have a day off as such...

Tell us something that we don’t know.

Vincent Van Gogh lived at the other end of Worton Road in Isleworth, where I grew up and worked as a supply teacher in schools, in what later became the London borough of Hounslow, where I worked for 25 years.

To hear Robb’s song, visit bit.ly/2MEw7VE

Unanimous vote for strike action at Moulsecoomb

NEU members at Moulsecoomb Primary School in Brighton have voted unanimously to strike in November to oppose their school being forced to academise. This result was on a turnout of 82.6 per cent.

The NEU, UNISON and GMB wrote to Education Secretary Gavin Williamson calling on him to revoke an academy order – issued in April – citing recent improvements, but had no positive response.

NEU school rep and teacher Calvin Cumiskey said: “Every single member of staff at Moulsecoomb is united in opposition to our school being forced to become an academy. Teachers have voted resoundingly to take action to defend our school and we expect the support staff unions’ ballots to show the same result as ours once complete.”

Parents are fully behind the campaign. Brighton and Hove Council – also opposed to the move – balloted parents: 96 per cent opposed academisation on a turnout of 61 per cent.

One parent, Natasha Ide, said: “I fully support the staff at Moulsecoomb taking strike action to save our school. We will not stop fighting. The last thing our children need is the instability of a trust with a poor track record taking over our school.



Hands Off Moulsecoomb campaigners

PHOTO by Lesley White

“If there is a strike, we will be on the picket line with our kids to support the staff and we are already working on plans to support families who need help with childcare during the strike.”

New Horizons Academy Trust (NHAT) is the Government’s preferred sponsor. NHAT had two primary schools until January 2018 when one was left seriously struggling and handed over to a new trust.

CULTURE

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Our best has not been good enough

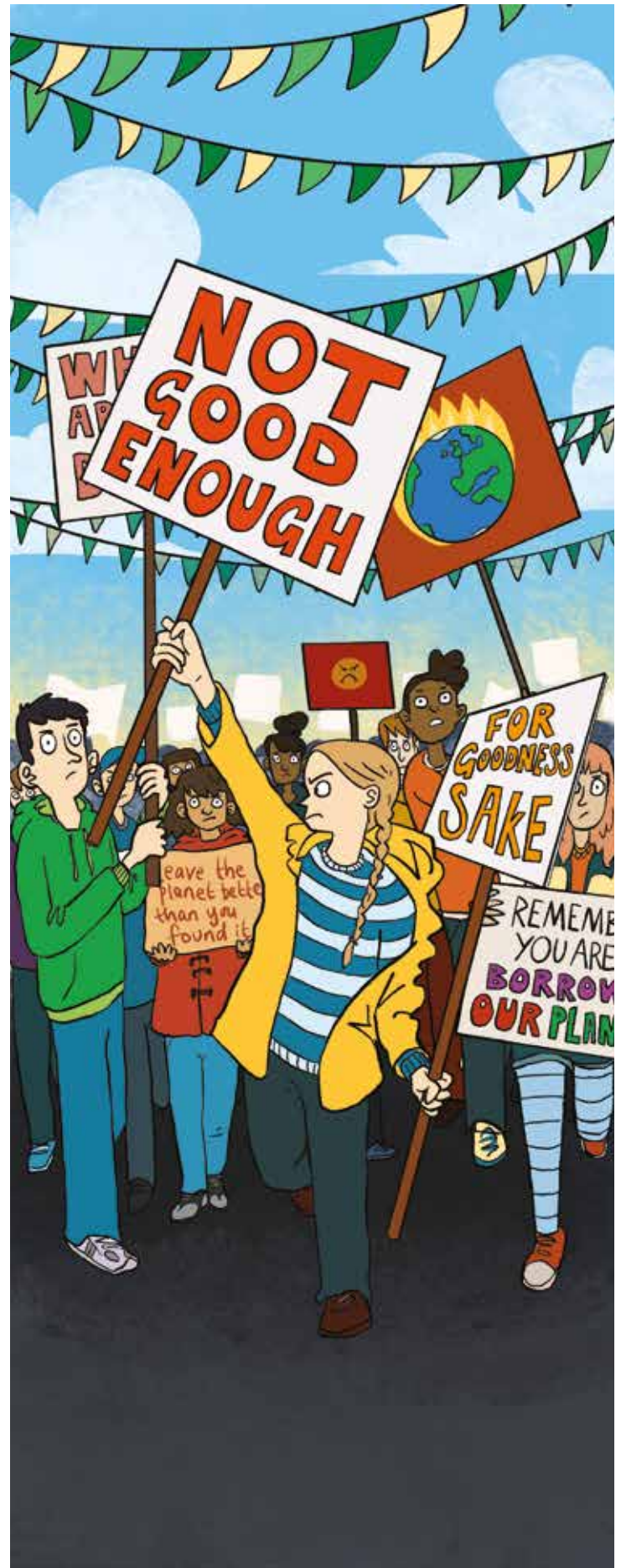
Words by Michael Rosen
Illustration by Dan Berry

Teachers!
Go out and tell the children
the way the world is.
Go out and tell the children
that this is the way
we made the world.

But what if the children ask us
if the way the world is
is not good enough?
What if the children ask us
if the way you made the world
is not good enough?

Tell them that we are the people
who know best.
Tell them that we are the people
who have always known best.
Tell them that we have told you
to tell the children this.

But what if the children say
they have seen what's coming?
What if the children say
that when they are old
you will be gone?
What if the children say
that they don't want
to live and die in a desert?
What if the children say
that your best has not
been good enough?
What if the children say
it's nearly too late?



'The dinosaurs are going

The science is conclusive: there is a global climate crisis. Max Watson met the eco-educators greening the curriculum.

THE Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported last summer that we have just 12 years to reverse a catastrophic rise in global temperatures; some scientists give us a much smaller window.

And people are taking action. Greta Thunberg inspired a growing global movement of millions of school strikers. Extinction Rebellion in the UK has taken weeks of non-violent direct action, recently resulting in 1,800 arrests in London.

The National Education Union (NEU), like most trade unions, is catching up. We passed policy in April which called for "full solidarity with all striking students", to oppose detentions for those who walk out, and to support demands for a curriculum that reflects the emergency.

Then the TUC passed policy this September calling for action by all trade unionists to support the school students on 20 September.

Educate magazine meets the eco-educators and activists who have moved beyond one-day protests to greening the curriculum, their schools and colleges; setting up eco-clubs and using their role as educators to empower students and give them space to discuss what is to be done about the "most urgent problem facing humanity".

The primary school teacher



"There's something in the air," says Jack Marsh, who runs a climate change after-school club at John Stainer Community Primary School in Brockley, south-east London.

He set it up for children who are "not just interested in climate change, but motivated to do something about it".

The club has already made waves.

A petition calling for Crayola to recycle colouring pens – which attracted more than 68,000 signatures in less than two weeks – was set up by seven-year-old Jessica.

"It sounds corny, but they are the future," says Jack.

They're also looking at saving energy in the school, reminding staff to turn off lights and computers when not in use.

"I'm just letting them go with it, which is great. They want the school to be sustainable. Food is a major issue and we're looking at

"It's aiming high and may be a bit ambitious. It's many of us making small changes."

Jack Marsh

stuff that isn't heavily packaged and hasn't travelled half way around the world."

The club invited Greenpeace in to speak to an assembly, and film nights are planned which they hope to open up to the rest of the school community. There are also plans to turn recycled material into bird feeders, to encourage more wildlife around the school.

"It's all quite a big dream," Jack says. "It's aiming high and may be a bit ambitious, but it's about many of us making small changes."

Sign Jessica's petition at bit.ly/32VQuU2



The next climate strike takes place on Friday 29 November

Kal'El, seven, one of Emily Defries' pupils, speaking at a school strike protest

ng to have to wake up'



est in Brighton

PHOTO by Jess Turner

The UN-accredited teacher



Emily Defries also runs an eco-club, at Patcham Junior School in Brighton. Emily is a UN-accredited climate change teacher – the first in Brighton – which the children

in her school are very excited about.

The course she completed, run by EduCCate Global, gave her “a greater understanding of the science behind climate change, to be more confident about it. It’s been brilliant,” she enthuses.

Her pupils are very tuned in to ecological concerns – some will tell her they’ve been on a beach clean, for example. “These children are inspirational and they really want to talk about it, so it’s my role to give them a voice.”

Emily held a whole-school assembly about climate change. The children then sent postcards to the Brighton mayor, calling for a climate change teacher in every school. On the day of protest on 20 September, they held a We Love Our Planet day, and the mayor visited to tell them that she would indeed

The teacher who inspired students to become ambassadors



Fiona Heslam is an accredited climate change teacher and maths specialist at Energy Coast UTC, Cumbria. “I’m not a caped crusader,” she says. “My role is to empower the students.”

Fiona’s eco-club enrichment programme is heavily oversubscribed. After students collected sacks of plastic rubbish, school governors responded by declaring a climate emergency at the school. Now their canteen sells hardly any single-use plastic.

The students have also encouraged a huge reduction in the use of the school photocopier. A portion of the money saved as a result of this goes to the eco-group.

“These children are inspirational and it’s my role to give them a voice.”

Emily Defries

write to all Brighton head teachers to urge them to nominate a climate change teacher in every local school.

“It was great to show the kids that their postcards made a difference.”

They’re looking at the whole ethos of the school, not just the curriculum, such as tree-planting in the school grounds.

Emily realised that as a teacher she was in a privileged position to do something for the next generation.

“Not everyone has the capacity to go on these demonstrations and get arrested in Westminster, but we can all play a role.”

Emily is now hoping to establish a network of climate change teachers who can work together to share ideas and actions.

Not only has Fiona completed the course herself, but some of her students are well on their way to completing it and becoming the world’s first UN Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change Learning.

“The task is so big, but it can’t all be doom and gloom. We all need to take small, manageable steps.” **continued on page 28**

“Our students will be the world’s first UN Youth Ambassadors for Climate Change.”

Fiona Heslam

Feature

continued from page 27



The head teacher leading the way

Fiona Cowan is head teacher of Bolsover Infant School in Derbyshire. Her entire staff voted to complete the UN climate change course and

she has allowed time during Inset days for all classroom-based staff to complete the course in work hours.

The school is embedding climate change into the curriculum: "Rather than it being an add-on, it becomes part of who we are."

It's a whole-school approach and Fiona is developing a comprehensive climate change curriculum for early years. The onus is on keeping activities age appropriate, but parents have been supportive and agree it's the school's place to educate their children about this.

"It's not just about climate change, it's about global responsibility."

Fiona Cowan

"One of the outcomes we want is to teach children that they can make a difference to their own lives, to their own community. It's not just about climate change, it's about global responsibility," Fiona says.

For Fiona, leadership is crucial.

"In order to be impactful, I think it's really important that there is a leadership approach. If the leaders are on board, then you're going to affect how schools change."

Fiona is part of a network of head teachers talking about this whole-school approach to climate change education.

The climate course creator



Melanie Harwood is infectiously enthusiastic about her mission – to have a climate change teacher in every classroom. "Knowledge is power," she says. "People need to go to someone they trust."

Melanie co-founded Harwood Education, which partnered with the UN to repackage an already existing climate change course into the EduCCate Global course.

Since its launch in April, more than 11,000 teachers have signed up, with over 4,000 schools already involved. The target was to have 80 in two months. "It's snowballing so quickly," she says.

Phase one – to train all teachers with

"It starts from the bottom up, the middle out, then the top down has no choice."

Melanie Harwood

robust, evidence-based research that's been thoroughly checked by 192 scientists – is going well. The second phase, to network those educators so they can share lesson plans and ideas, is already well underway too.

The next phase is to work with leaders who are pushing the whole-school approach (like Fiona Cowan, far left). And pushing for wholesale reform of the curriculum which, Melanie says, is "not fit for purpose".

"We want the powers-that-be to get behind us and support what we're doing. The Department for Education will look foolish if it doesn't recognise there is a need for this.

"It starts from the bottom up, the middle out, then the top down has no choice but to join you. I know it's a tough one for bureaucracies, but the dinosaurs are going to have to wake up or they'll become extinct."

Sign up to the free UN course at eduCCate.global.org

Students make their voices heard with viral video

Dr **Nick Smith** is head teacher at Torquay Girls' Grammar School. "As you know, many under-18s have strong views on climate change but they are struggling to have their voices heard," he says.

So his students made a two-minute video, Earthsong, adapting the song We Didn't Start the Fire, which is going viral – watch it at bit.ly/2ByJmkm

It's linked to a Parliamentary petition calling for students to be consulted on climate change action.

Sign at petition.parliament.uk/petitions/272167



The head striking for climate action



Sue Harte is too close to retirement now to worry about the culture of fear which leads to so many heads staying firmly below the parapet.

Which is why she is happy to tell

Educate how she authorised taking the entire John Stainer Community Primary School council to the demonstration in central London on 20 September (pictured right).

“It’s about participating in democracy and British values. It’s about their right to peaceful protest, which is how I authorised it,” she says proudly sharing photos of her impeccably behaved students.

Not only were their parents on board with this fully risk-assessed school trip, but around 100 parents also took their children out of school that day to join the protests.

“We’ve had a lot of parents saying how proud they are of leading the way, to be part of the day and how their children spoke so eloquently.”

And the students have written to the Lewisham mayor urging the council to become 100 per cent renewable and non-nuclear.

“So despite not having a vote, these kids do have engagement with the process.

“No-one on the planet is perfect. We can all do small things. My hope is these children are going to grow up to be articulate, intelligent respondents in the political world they’re growing up in.

“I want them to feel they have a voice and they have the right to speak, even if what they are saying is different from the status quo. And these kids want to see concrete action being taken.”

“We’ve had a lot of parents saying how proud they are... of how their children spoke so eloquently.”

Sue Harte



Head teacher Sue Harte with pupils from John Stainer Community Primary School on the 20 September strike for climate action

PHOTO by Jess Hurd

The NEU activist

Catherine Boothman devotes much of her time to ecological issues – both as an NEU activist and through her work on the Trades Council in Wakefield.

Developing discussions around a “Just Transition” (see NEU policy on climate change, page 35) and a green economy is central for her – especially in a mining town where “we know all too well what an unjust transition feels like”.

“There are jobs in this,” Catherine says.

The union itself needs to have networks of environmental reps and the NEU should train them up in every workplace, Catherine says – as the International Trade Union Confederation has called for.

What would that mean? “We’ve been discussing it locally and we don’t really mind if it’s a newly recognised, specialised role, or whether it is embedded in the established role of health and safety reps.

“There’s a beautiful crossover with air quality, for example, which is a really important issue for us.”

Union districts, she says, should have climate change as a standing item on their agendas – as in Wakefield. “It provokes discussion,” she says. When a local rep raised a concern that their school was going to chop down a tree on site, the branch was able to respond quickly and prevent it. “This wouldn’t have been raised under any other item of business, so it has had an impact.”

Wakefield Council also declared a climate emergency after Catherine lobbied it on behalf of the Trades Council, where she has worked closely with colleagues in other unions on this. “It was the easiest bit of lobbying I’ve ever done,” she laughs.

“It’s like a sea-change in people’s thinking – you know: the school strikes, Extinction Rebellion, David Attenborough. We are playing catch-up a little bit, but then everybody is in many respects.

“The good thing about climate change is the solutions have been known for ages – the zero-carbon plans have been devised already, the Green New Deal and so on. We just need to get on with it.”



JOIN STREET CHILD'S INTERNATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME IN AFRICA OR ASIA!

There are 125 million school-aged children out of education across the world. Millions more are in school but failing to learn. Street Child is supporting communities with the tools they need to help their children access quality education. And the key to this is better trained local teachers and community volunteers.

The charity Street Child is calling on UK teachers to support their teacher training programmes in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Sri Lanka next summer. The programme offers teachers the opportunity to spend two weeks working alongside local teaching specialists, sharing skills, and empowering local teachers, in doing so, improving the quality of education for children in some of the hardest to reach areas.

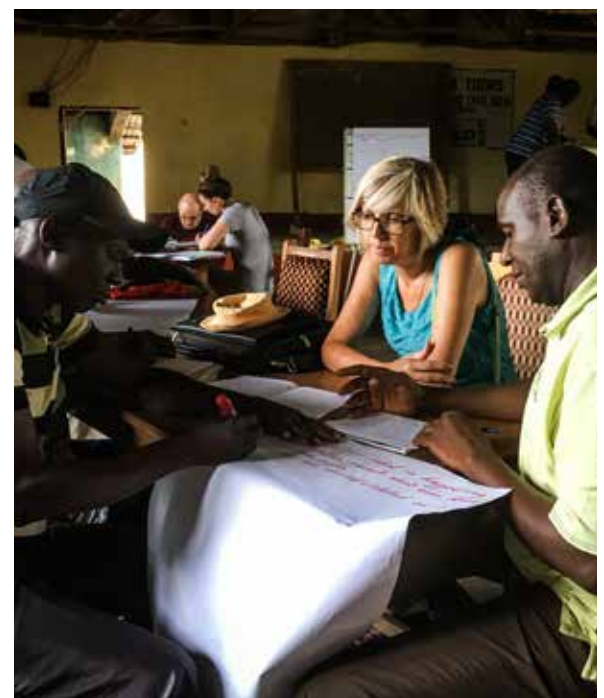
2019 participant Elin says: "I found this a really rewarding experience. As a teacher, you gain as much as you give. It is an opportunity to spend 2 weeks with a diverse group of teachers discussing pedagogy and thinking about your own teaching practices. In addition, you get to do all of this in some of the most amazing settings, travelling to areas I might not have had the opportunity to visit otherwise. It really is an inspiring and motivating trip."

Janet, a teacher and National Education Union (NEU) member, says: "The dedication of the teachers who, in face of huge adversities, inspire young people is amazing. The warmth and welcome we received was great."

Street Child believes that education is a fundamental right and achieving universal basic education is the single greatest step that can be taken towards eliminating the inequality gap and ultimately global poverty. The charity has grown from their first project in Sierra Leone to now working in 12 countries worldwide. Since 2008 Street Child has to date supported over 250,000 children into education and supported over 25,000 families to set up businesses so they can afford the cost of educating their children long-term.

Sign up for Street Child's International Teacher Training Programme for a once-in-a-lifetime experience to grow as an educator, discover new places, and make a meaningful impact.

Interested? Email intvol@street-child.co.uk or find out more at www.international-volunteering.org/teachers





Cartoon by
Polly Donnison

Primaries resist the allure of academisation



Warwick Mansell
is a freelance
education journalist
and founder/writer of
[educationuncovered.
co.uk](http://educationuncovered.co.uk)

HAS the academies policy peaked? The question jumps out from a series of statistical investigations I've conducted in recent months based on official Department for Education (DfE) data.

These seem to indicate falling enthusiasm for academisation in the primary sector. Here, despite more than 5,000 schools having academised since 2010, some two thirds remain with their local authorities.

The evidence is that the number of primaries* academising has been slowing, with schools in many local authority areas seemingly showing little interest in converting. The implications of this little-reported trend, for both the academy and non-academy sectors, appear profound.

There are several ways of coming at the

statistics. First, it is clear from the DfE's database that, while the number of primary academies continues to grow, the number of new conversions peaked in 2016-17.

Then, 961 new primary academies were created. The following year, the number fell to 811. Last year, the figure reduced again, to 685.

This downward trend may actually underplay the extent to which the rate of academisation will decline in the future.

This is because the DfE data provides not only an insight into how many academies have actually opened, but how many are in the pipeline. And this second set of data shows that the number of schools registering their intention to take on academy status – in advance of academisation itself – has also been declining rapidly: the total doing so in 2018-19 was only a third of the 2016-17 figure.

Whatever the explanations, the effects of these trends seem significant. In the non-academy sector, the argument which has often seemed to drive conversions on the ground – that resistance is pointless, as all schools will become academies in the end – seems even less potent.

In the academies sector, it is standard to read in the annual accounts of trusts that they plan to take on more schools, almost in order to make their business plans viable. If new schools are no longer to enter the sector in large numbers, inevitably trusts will look to take on schools from other trusts – or, more realistically, to take over other trusts completely.

We already seem to have entered into this 'mergers and acquisitions' world of trust takeovers. For many local authority schools which might once have contemplated academisation, this underlines how unstable the new world they would enter might be, with the prospect of the trust they join being prone to changing in future years. This might further put off prospective new entrants.

All of the above, of course, could change with a new Government. But, as things stand, we seem to be approaching a plateau for academy numbers, and an era of larger trusts swallowing up smaller ones.

* I have focused my attention on the primary sector, as in theory this is the sector with most scope for growth in academy numbers, as most secondary schools are already academies.

Independent school teachers stand up for their pensions

INDEPENDENT sector teachers are forcing their employers to drop plans to leave the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) by proposing strike action.

Teachers at St Bede's School in East Sussex have fended off the threat to their pensions following an indicative ballot.

As Educate went to press, a two-day strike was underway at St Edward's School in Oxford, and a formal ballot of members at Our Lady of Sion, in Sussex, was due to be launched.

Independent schools are considering leaving the TPS following a hike in employer contributions in September – up from 16.4 per cent to 23.6 per cent.

Sixty-two of the 1,171 independent schools in the TPS have applied to leave, saying the scheme is now unaffordable.

This affects 2,085 National Education Union (NEU) members.

While the number of independent schools that have applied to leave the TPS is relatively small, it is likely to increase, as many employers adopted “a wait and see” policy in the first year.

NEU independent sector national official John Richardson said: “The numbers consulting on leaving the TPS are increasing, but so are the number of successful push-backs by NEU members.

“While there are instances where employers simply cannot afford the increased cost, in many cases it is a choice. NEU members are collectively influencing that choice.”

Visit neu.org.uk/protecting-independent-school-teachers-pensions

A close eye on political policy

THE NEU is monitoring policy positions by the political parties that adversely affect our members' livelihoods, including those discussed by Labour at the party's annual conference in September.

Stripping independent schools of their charitable status and tax concessions would not trouble the very wealthy independent schools.

However, it would inevitably see other schools close, with the jobs and terms and conditions of our members at risk.

As and when appropriate, the union will use all its power and influence to protect our members.

Members celebrate Diggers at Wigan festival

NEU members took part in the ninth annual Wigan Diggers' Festival in September.

The festival celebrates the life and philosophy of Wigan-born Gerrard Winstanley and the True Levellers, or Diggers, the 17th-century radicals who believed “the earth was made to be a common treasury for all”.

Karen Parkin, Wigan NEU joint division secretary, told Educate the festival was “once again a huge success”.

“Wigan NEU is always proud to support the Wigan Diggers' Festival,” she said. “It's always a great family-friendly day and this year's celebration was no exception, with live music, poetry, drama, food and drinks and the festivities going on well into the evening. The Diggers is emerging as one of the must-do national events on the socialist calendar.”

Thousands of people attended the festival, which takes place in the first two weeks of September. Folk-punk band The Men They Couldn't Hang were among the acts performing on two stages in the town centre. There were fringe events and dozens of stalls for trade unions and campaign groups.

The Diggers annual award for an outstanding contribution was presented to Pauline Town, landlady of the Station Hotel pub in Ashton-under-Lyne, who has been



Dawn Taylor, NEU executive member, and Simon Thomas of Unite, with NEU cupcakes at the festival

providing hundreds of homeless people with lunches paid for out of her own pocket since 2013.

Preparations are already underway for the festival's tenth year.

Visit wiganiggersfestival.org

‘When I look for young Black women in computing I get an Error 404: Not Found’

Paulette Watson (pictured) tells Emily Jenkins how she inspires girls and disadvantaged children to get into coding.

PAULETTE Watson has loved computers since she was a child. Sadly, however, she found the computing classes she received at school to be disenfranchising and “boring” – lacking the role models that represented her as a young Black woman.

Rather than shying away, however, she has made it her mission to change things for the next generation. And now the computer science teacher from Newham has received the prestigious WinTrade Women in Engineering Award for her work doing just that.

‘I got to the top of the mountain’

“When I heard my name I was like: ‘Wow!’” says Paulette happily. “I got a standing ovation and I was so overwhelmed. It felt like I got to the top of the mountain.”

The award, which recognises “consistent integrity and progressive thinking” within the engineering sector, was awarded to Paulette for her “trailblazing” work when it comes to women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), particularly through her organisation Academy Achievers.

The not-for-profit organisation, of which Paulette is chief executive, offers children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Newham the chance to access educational programs and, through STEM-related activities, learn and aspire to a future in science or technology.

But is it CS or is it ICT?

Paulette explains the difference between computer science (CS) and information and communications technology (ICT).

CS is about creating new applications for computers. You need an understanding of:

- Decomposition – breaking down a complex problem or system into smaller, more manageable parts;
- Pattern recognition – looking for similarities among and within problems;
- Abstraction – focusing on the important information only, ignoring irrelevant detail;
- Algorithms – developing a step-by-step solution to the problem, or the rules to follow to solve the problem.

ICT is about how to best employ the programs already out there. You need to know what application exists, how to interact with them, how they are best used and how to troubleshoot problems.

“The problem is how STEM is taught – young girls can’t relate to it.”

“There’s a gender gap in STEM,” explains Paulette. “There are not enough women and not enough Black women. I think the problem is how it’s taught – young girls can’t relate. So the way I work is to make it creative and find ways to integrate art into STEM.”

One such example is Paulette’s #BeMe project where she is working with girls to look at how a hair product is made. “They have to look at how you create the chemical solution for their hair product – it’s creative but it all links back to science and technology.”

A teacher for 12 years and now working as supply alongside her other projects, Paulette talks passionately about her work with disadvantaged, vulnerable and disaffected young people.

“The way their learning changes is mind-blowing. For example, not only does computing give them the skills for good jobs in the future, but things like learning to code and creating flow charts are about problem solving, so they end up taking that logic and apply the same process to dealing with friends or family. It builds their confidence in life.”

Paulette also wants to

encourage more teachers – especially women and Black women – to join the profession.

“We have a recruitment crisis when it comes to computer science. It’s massively dropped and there’s going to be a huge skills gap in a few years.”

So Paulette is working to nationally roll out teacher training in the subject. “But there’s a problem – there aren’t enough people to even run the training.”

Paulette isn’t a woman to give up easily though. “What I want is for teachers to feel my passion so I can ignite their passion.

“It’s so important for people to understand why computing, STEM, and technology are so important, so they can instil that in future generations.”

In January, Academy Achievers will be hosting a robotics/STEM competition with Institute of Educational Technology and Lego League.

Visit academyachievers.co.uk



MORE than 100 support staff members gathered at the NEU's HQ, Hamilton House in London, for the second NEU support staff conference on 5 October.

"A great day of discussion and continuing professional development (CPD) began with a welcome from NEU president Amanda Martin and a discussion with joint general secretary Kevin Courtney," reported Katie Harrison, Warwickshire teaching assistant and NEU executive member.

"All the sessions were well attended and many of the delegates I spoke to were positive, saying the sessions they attended gave them something to think about." The Support Staff National Council will now be looking at how to build on this at annual conference.

PHOTO: Carmen Valino



New Wales framework protects pay of exploited supply teachers

THE National Education Union (NEU) has helped secure a victory for supply teachers in Wales with the introduction of a new national procurement framework, which will guarantee them a minimum daily rate and clamp down on profiteering agencies.

The framework was introduced on 1 September, after a NEU report in 2018 showed more than a quarter of the country's 4,500 supply teachers were being paid less than £100 a day. They will now have to be paid in line with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document – a minimum of £127.72 per day – or more.

Before the change, agencies were not obliged to reveal how much they were paying teachers, allowing some to cream off as much as £160 per day while leaving teachers struggling on only £85. Meanwhile, cash-strapped schools were left in the dark about the proportion of wage budgets going into agency pockets.

Schools will now be encouraged to use

one of 27 agencies which have been awarded framework contracts, based on a geographical/local authority basis.

The new framework also removes a clause in the previous Agency Worker Regulations that allows agencies to employ teachers on a guaranteed hours contract basis; and requires all agencies to offer relevant professional learning for employees, as well as ensuring that support is given to newly qualified teachers to enable them to meet induction requirements.

The NEU still favours local authorities organising supply pools, and schools directly employing teachers to give full pay and pension rights, and continues to look to the Welsh Government, local authorities and education consortia to protect supply teachers fully.

Members are advised to work for agencies that have been awarded framework contracts. Any member who does not receive the minimum daily rate as a supply teacher should contact NEU Cymru for guidance.

Visit bit.ly/2PM9d0C

Pay rise of 2.75% for teachers in Wales

TEACHERS in Wales have been awarded a 2.75 per cent pay increase by the Welsh Government.

However, a 2.75 per cent increase means that teacher pay will again fall in real terms when compared to inflation, and fall further behind pay increases in the wider economy.

Kirsty Williams, the Minister for Education, also announced a five per cent increase for the minimum amount on the Main Pay Range, meaning that newly qualified teachers in Wales now have a slightly higher starting salary than their colleagues in England.

NEU Cymru policy officer Stuart Williams said: "The five per cent increase for the minimum starting salary does help, but we need urgent action to restore the pay losses since 2010 and make teacher pay competitive with that for other graduate professions."



Can my students take to the streets for the climate strike?

STUDENTS in my school are planning to join the climate strikes. My instinct is to support them, but do I have to ensure that they are in school for the day?

You're not alone; many members share your sentiments. It's not your responsibility, but that of parents and carers, to ensure that students attend school or permit them to be absent. Head teachers then decide whether to authorise the absence or not.

Students can participate in the campaign without leaving the school grounds. You could take an assembly on the climate emergency, organise a protest in the playground or at the school gates, or teach about environmental and ecological issues on climate strike days.

The Campaign against Climate Change has published a guide for adults on getting involved. Visit globalclimatestrike.net/organise

NEU policy on climate change

I BELIEVE climate change is a trade union issue. What is NEU policy?

As a union representing education workers, who care deeply about the children they educate, the NEU understands that a transition to a zero-carbon society is the most urgent problem facing humanity and that this will require an education system that plays a key role in achieving this aim.

These issues featured prominently at the first NEU annual conference in April 2019, where a motion was passed standing in full solidarity with striking students and backing curriculum reform to support the transition needed to tackle the climate crisis.

The union also backs a 'Just Transition' (see photo below), which puts the rights of workers and communities affected by climate change centre-stage in any plan to re-orient the economy in response to it.

No written contract, so can I just leave my new job?

I HAVE just started a new job but am not sure the school is right for me. I have not been given a contract yet. Can I just leave?

The absence of a written contract of employment does not preclude the existence of a contract. Your employer has a month from the start of your employment to provide you with written particulars of employment.

These set out the main terms and conditions of your employment, such as pay and leave entitlements. If you decide after starting in your role that the job is not for you, you will need to give your employer notice of your resignation. If the Burgundy Book forms part of your employment contract, you will have to give two months' notice in the autumn and spring terms, or three months' notice in the summer term. Otherwise, ask your line manager how much notice you are expected to give.

If you leave without giving the required notice you will be in breach of contract and could be sued for any costs incurred by the school. Your conduct is also likely to influence any future reference given by the head.

If your circumstances are such that you cannot give the required notice, try to reach a mutual agreement with your school/college.

For more information, visit neu.org.uk/advice/notice-periods

Please write

Send your queries to: Ask the union, Educate, NEU, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD or email educate@neu.org.uk Questions for the January/February issue should reach us no later than 30 November.



In a packed conference on the climate emergency in October, NEU attendees discussed how to talk to children about the issue, curriculum reform and what a 'Just Transition' could look like PHOTO by Rehan Jamil

Courses for next year

THE union has some exciting professional development opportunities next year. Visit neu.org.uk/national-cpd

Developing middle leaders (level two)

This innovative four-day course, run with the Institute of Education, looks at the psychology of leadership and is aimed at middle leaders with some management experience. It is also suitable for professional support staff who have been leading a team of

administrators or teaching assistants for at least two years.

Single days, between January and June - London or Manchester

Ways into Shakespeare - Macbeth

This course at the Globe Theatre looks at Macbeth and includes tickets to the evening's performance of the play. It will offer creative ways to engage with language, character, themes and performance.

5 March - London

Using drama, dilemma and tension to hook children into learning

This course aims to support teachers in looking at the pedagogy around their curriculum offer. Tutor Hywel Roberts will help you discover how storytelling and use of narratives can hook children into learning and bring a sense of adventure back into the curriculum.

5 February - Manchester

6 February - Birmingham

25 February - Bristol



Your students' wellbeing and what you can do to help

The transition to university

As you know, the support and wellbeing services offered by universities is becoming increasingly important. Not only is this one of the most significant factors your students take into consideration when choosing a university, but it is essential in helping them make the transition from sixth form or college to degree level.

Why are support services important to your students?

- Pastoral services are there to guide your students in their new journey, whether they need advice or just want to be listened to
- Students can join a supportive community which is accessible and often confidential
- Ensures that studying a degree is as stress free and rewarding as possible
- To make sure that each student makes the most of their time at university and enjoys their experience

Support and wellbeing at the University of Hertfordshire

At Hertfordshire we have experienced staff who dedicate their time to ensuring students get the best support possible. From their first day with us, students have access to:

- A range of wellbeing services, offering mental health assessments, counselling, and both mental and physical disability support
- Academic support, particularly aimed at helping them with the transition to degree level
- Our Student Centre, who help students with financial queries and other pastoral support
- An on campus medical centre and GP

Top tips on how you can help your students with the transition

You can do your part by encouraging your students to plan ahead. Advise students to do their research about the services available and inspire them to attend open days. You may also want to prompt them to look ahead at any societies they want to join and discuss the benefits of getting involved in any online groups or forums there are plenty across social media channels from applicant threads for their specific entry year, to Facebook groups for those staying on or off campus.

For more information about our support and wellbeing services, visit go.herts.ac.uk/supportwellbeing

Climate crisis fans flames of global inequality



Asad Rehman
is director of
global justice
charity **War
on Want.**
Twitter:
@WarOnWant

“WE need dreams, we cannot live without dreams. But there’s a time and place for everything. And dreams cannot stand in the way of telling it like it is.”

So said Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish climate justice activist, in a recent speech to the US Congress.

For too long the dominant discourse around climate change has deliberately understated the realities of the climate violence already being inflicted on millions of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the Global South. A warming of just 1°C has been enough to unleash killer floods, droughts and famines in every corner of the world: from devastated Caribbean islands to a million people facing starvation in Mozambique, from India’s fifth city Chennai running out of fresh water to indigenous communities on the brink of being wiped out across Latin America.

The most conservative estimates are that millions of lives in the Global South are already being claimed by the violence of climate change with many more millions losing their homes and livelihoods.

The climate crisis also fans the existing flames of economic inequality and poverty, resulting in a deepening crisis of hunger, increased conflict and racial and gender inequalities – all of which determine the very ability of people to survive and adapt to the climate crisis.

Warming trajectory beyond our control?

The release of a special report by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2018 finally broke through the complacency with its emphatic warning that breaching the 1.5°C guardrail would destabilise the climate to such an extent that it could begin to trigger feedback loops beyond our control.

It set out the devastating impacts on the economies of the Global South – from collapse in food production and increase in water stress, to more frequent and violent extreme



Queuing for relief supplies after Tropical Cyclone Idai caused floods and massive destruction in Mozambique earlier this year
PHOTO by Nie Zuguo/Xinhua/Alamy Live News

weather events – that would dwarf those of the financial crisis. Despite these warnings, the UN estimates that current emission targets will put the world on a warming trajectory of at least 3.4°C and possibly up to 7°C.

Worst affected are the least able to cope

The new wave of climate protests, from the youth climate strikers to Extinction Rebellion, has forced climate change up the political agenda.

But any action must address at its core the crisis of climate inequality, where the poorest 50 per cent of the world’s population are the most affected despite being responsible for only ten per cent of global emissions. And they are the most vulnerable.

While the richest ten per cent own more than half of global wealth, the poorest 50 per cent own just eight per cent, leaving 3.5 billion people living on £4 a day, three billion of them without energy, two billion going hungry, and one billion without access to water.

These multiple crises didn’t happen by accident. They are the inevitable result of the exploitation of both the people and the natural resources of the Global South, stretching from slavery and colonialism through to neoliberalism and the climate crisis. They enabled the UK to become the fifth richest

country in the world with the third highest per capita consumption in the world.

Business as usual and tinkering around the edges is simply not an option, and nor are voluntary codes and pledges. What is needed is a global deal for people – one that not only ends our planet-wrecking addiction to fossil fuels, but refuses to recreate the same logic of unsustainable extraction of a new wave of minerals and metals in the name of the green transition.

A new internationalism needed

Our vision needs to go beyond the limited imagination of neoliberal capitalism and guarantee everyone the right to a dignified life by ensuring that energy, food and water can no longer be exploited for private profit. It must roll back decades of privatisation of public services and unfair trade rules that prevent countries from being able to guarantee universal public services such as health, education and housing.

We need a new internationalism to ensure working people neither pay the price for this crisis nor are sacrificed in its name. The only force able to champion this internationalism is the labour movement, whose very ethos is solidarity and justice. We need a green transition, but a just one.

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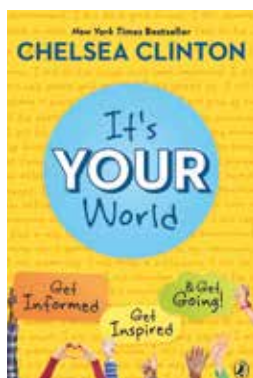
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15136 NEU Advert £500 competition 10-19

It's Your World



THE New York Times bestselling book of empowerment for young people, written by Chelsea Clinton, includes an important message on the environment.

In *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired and Get Going*, Chelsea tackles some of the biggest challenges facing our world today. Using data, charts and stories she unpacks challenges related to poverty, climate change, gender equality, health and endangered species.

The book provides readers with a deeper understanding of the Earth and how to act to protect it. She also talks about what children and teenagers are doing to make a difference.

It's Your World by Chelsea Clinton. Puffin Books. £7.99.

This is Not a Drill

THIS is Not a Drill is a selection of essays published by climate change activists Extinction Rebellion.

Authored by thinkers from scientists to psychologists, artists to indigenous activists, its aim is that “by the time you finish this book you will have become an Extinction Rebellion activist”.

A book of action, it has “facts to arm you, stories to empower you, pages to fill in and pages to rip out, alongside instructions on how to rebel – from organising a roadblock to facing arrest”.

This is Not a Drill by Extinction Rebellion. Penguin. £4.99.



Eyes Wide Open

THIS book is a call to action that advises teens and young adults on how they can evaluate the issues surrounding our environment using a combination of media, politics and history. A useful toolkit for decoding the barrage of information confronting us all.

Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines by Paul Fleischman. Candlewick Press. £8.99.



How to talk to kids about climate change

A FANTASTIC blog that takes you step by step through explaining climate change to young people “without scaring the bejeezus” out of them. Funny, clear and with useful language and tips.

bit.ly/2Q7iq1t



Learning Rebellion

THIS Facebook page for educators, part of Extinction Rebellion, urges a climate and ecological

emergency to be declared in every educational institution, a full and frank discussion of the extent of the crisis and the responses needed, and a re-evaluation of the curriculum and the purpose of education in light of this.

facebook.com/XRLearningRebellion



No One is Too Small to Make a Difference

A COLLECTION of inspiring speeches given by Greta Thunberg, the teenage Swedish climate activist.

In 2018 Greta decided not to go to school in order to protest climate change and her actions have ended up sparking a global movement for action against the climate crisis. Through many of the speeches set down in this book she has inspired millions of pupils to strike for the planet.

No One is Too Small to Make a Difference by Greta Thunberg.

Penguin. £2.99.

The Problem of the Hot World

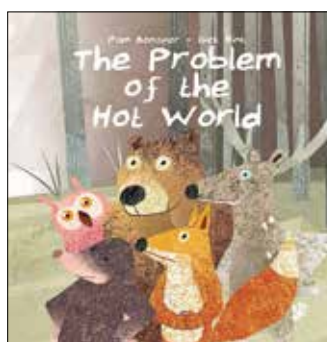
FIVE forest friends realise something is amiss: their world is too hot. Plants and bees are disappearing and their beautiful trees are dying.

The five friends – a fox, a bear, an owl, a mole, and a deer – set out on a journey to find out where the water has gone. Can they bring it back? While the solution they find helps them, is it the best way to deal with climate change?

A good book to start discussion and help younger children understand the effects of global warming.

The Problem of the Hot World by Pam Bonsper.

CreateSpace. £5.99.



WWF

THE conservation organisation has produced a wide range of materials for use in the classroom, and offers tools for school ‘green ambassadors’ and a teacher network.

bit.ly/21NJL6t



Teach climate change

A GREAT website that explains the complex science behind climate change and gives tips and tricks on how to reduce your carbon impact on the environment.

teachclimatechange.org

Heavy workload and humiliating scrutiny

I WANTED to make my view known regarding the recruitment and retention of teachers.

The Government needs to stop throwing around the promise of amazing starting wages for newly qualified teachers, and instead focus on what is ultimately driving teachers away, which is the workload. Less marking and scrutiny, giving teachers back their self-respect and being left to do the job they have trained for should be the focus.

Teachers I have spoken to over the years say it's humiliating to have been teaching for 20 years to then be observed and monitored every half term and asked, "how do you think that lesson went?" It's insulting and patronising, quite frankly.

No matter how much you increase pay, or promise to increase it, the pressures and unfeasible demands of the job are going to drive good teachers away.

Thank you for all you do in the National Education Union.
Harriet Tehan, Birmingham

Menopause and more

YOUR article about improving menopause awareness in the workplace (Educate, Sep/Oct, page 26) was interesting and timely.

I am a supply teacher and spend a lot of my time opening and closing windows and blinds (when they work!), and removing and replacing my cardigan.

Another issue, with implications for all teachers, is access to a toilet. After many years of teaching, and partly as a result of several pregnancies, I now suffer from a prolapsed rectum and various associated complications. This is mostly due to the need to "hold everything in" until a suitable break, which doesn't usually occur until the end of the day.

Teachers who are stuck in a classroom in charge of a class of children cannot just walk out to the toilet whenever they need to, and my bowel nurse says that a huge percentage of her patients are teachers.

I am not sure what the answer is, but I am sure that there are many teachers out there who would welcome acknowledgement of the issues.

Name withheld, Exeter

Uke versus recorder

I AM interested in the ongoing issue of whether decision-makers are taking into account the input of teachers, in this case the relative merits and demerits of

teaching ukulele and recorder in the primary school.

Education leaders in Scotland decided, a few years ago, that the ukulele is the ideal instrument for primary school

music lessons. Thousands of treble recorders were thrown out and school staff were given a half-day's training.

I have nothing against the ukulele. It's a perfectly nice musical instrument in the right hands. But in the hands of eight-year-olds with underdeveloped motor skills and poor anger management, the ukulele won't last long.

"Why?" I asked, like the little boy asking about the Emperor, only to be told that "someone did a study and found out ukuleles are the easiest instrument to learn".

I'm sure that some teacher, somewhere, has demonstrated amazing results with eight-year-olds and ukuleles, but it doesn't follow that every teacher, everywhere, can replicate this. Especially not on a half-day's training.

I've got a revolutionary innovation that would change the face of teaching. It goes like this: teachers should use their experience and expertise to do what works.

Oh, and bring back the recorders.

Fiona Jones, Dunfermline



Teacher's pet Drummer

Drummer is the Irish Sport Horse of English and psychology teacher Linsey Wark from Hampshire.

"Drummer is 14 and I've owned him for ten years. Together we've enjoyed hacking in the Hampshire countryside, training, competing and even going on holiday to Dorset.

"He's sensitive and can be tricky, so working with him has given me skills I regularly bring into my classroom practice."

If you have a treasured pet you'd like to show off, email a high-resolution photo with 50 words about what makes them so special to educate@neu.org.uk

Please write The editor welcomes your letters but reserves the right to edit them.

Write to: Letters, Educate, NEU, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD or email educate@neu.org.uk

Letters for the January/February issue should reach us no later than 30 November. Please note we cannot print letters sent in without a name and postal address (or NEU membership number), although we can withhold details from publication if you wish.



Star letter

Our role in preparing young people to deal with the climate emergency

ON Saturday 12 October I was lucky enough to attend the brilliantly inspiring, NEU-supported conference Climate Emergency: Education for the Future (pictured above), which presented the launch of the Teach the Future campaign. At its core, the campaign aims to achieve educational reform, shaping the system around the current ecological and climate crisis.

The recent surge of action surrounding climate change has, largely, been spearheaded by the brave and collective efforts of over a million students and their actions as part of the Youth Strike for Climate movement.

Although some people have been aware of and have campaigned for the need for action on climate change for many years, recent activity has changed the social landscape, meaning that this issue is now, rightly, talked about as an emergency. Teach the Future is demanding that the scientific basis for this emergency is treated seriously by taking urgent action on facilitating its dissemination through education.

There is no getting away from the fact that the climate and ecological emergency is the biggest problem facing the global population today, with citizens of various locations around the world already being seriously affected. Now is the time for education to stand up and fulfil its role in preparing young people to deal with the issues they face. This is about social justice, and children and young adults need to be given the opportunity to become active agents in shaping their world and their societies.

William Crossley, Hartley Primary School, East Ham

Update your details – visit my.neu.org.uk

IT'S vital that the NEU has up-to-date details for all its members.

You may be eligible for reduced subscriptions – for example, if you work part-time, are about to retire or take maternity leave. Have you moved? Tell us your new home or workplace address. It is also important you update your equalities information.

Thousands of members have already signed up for **myNEU**, the new online portal to manage your membership and access the many benefits which come with being



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screen, or go to my.neu.org.uk

myNEU is also a portal to accessing hundreds of exclusive discounts available to members through NEU Rewards.

From savings on your weekly shop to holidays and special treats, you could save up to £1,000 a year.

Visit neu.org.uk/neu-rewards

Pension discrimination

I AM a retired member who started teaching in 1966. Like most female teachers at that time, I believed pension arrangements were the same for both male and female teachers, as both made equal pension contributions. Years later, I discovered that whereas widows received half their husbands' pensions, widowers received nothing.

This blatant sexual discrimination caused an outcry at the time and I was given to understand that this had been changed. However, I have just discovered that this change did not take place until 1988 and was not backdated. Therefore, any female teacher's service before 1988 does not count towards her husband's entitlement as a widower.

I am sure that many retired teachers are unaware of this and would be surprised that such discrimination still exists. I feel this is a matter for the NEU to consider and, hopefully, rectify.

Rosina Matthews, retired, Loughborough

The vital role of TAs

I WOULD like to share my experiences of National Teaching Assistants' (TA) Day.

I line manage 26 teaching assistants in a large primary school in Manchester. Three years ago, our new head surprised us by celebrating National TA Day and we have continued to celebrate it every year since. Our celebrations have included extended lunch breaks, a special breakfast and thoughtful cards, gifts and random acts of kindness. Each year has been a total surprise, starting with all the staff and children involved in a special assembly.

Thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity of the senior leadership team and teachers, the TAs feel appreciated and an important part of the team.

Teresa Wilburn, Manchester

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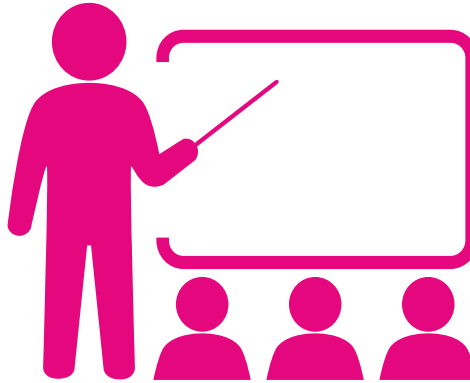
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Retirement on the cards or just need a change? Volunteer to teach in Sri Lanka

Senehasa Association is a small charitable organisation based in Sri Lanka which has been working with children, families and schools in the South west of Sri Lanka since the Tsunami devastated the area in December 2004. What started as immediate disaster relief has over the course of 15 years transformed into an educational project which is embedded in schools in the Galle region.

We are looking for experienced teachers to lead the English Development Programme, able to commit to two years of teaching Spoken English to classes of non English speaking pupils between the ages of 5 and 19 in 5 local Government schools and leading a team of GAP year volunteers who join the project for one year.

If this sounds like something that you might be interested in, have a look at our website: www.senehasa-assoc.com and e mail joan.hare16@gmail.com for a chat and further details. We are also on Facebook.

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info@theredcard.org

RNIB tackles ‘book famine’

THE Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has a growing library of more than 320,000 books to help tackle the “accessible book famine” in the education sector.

The charity hosts a free service, helping print-disabled people in the UK to access texts.

Less than ten per cent of books are available in braille, large print or audio – alienating over 40,000 children living with sight loss in the UK.

David Clarke, director of services at the RNIB, said: “Learners with a print disability are typically denied access to key curriculum and educational resources because they’re not able to access the text of a printed book.

“Despite their ability, knowledge or



Charlie Beeston, 16: “It would have been almost impossible to do my GCSEs without Bookshare”

skill, this lack of resources can restrict their potential within the educational system.”

Visit rnibbookshare.org

Plant a million trees for Big Climate Fightback



Pupils from Griffin Primary School planting trees with the Woodland Trust

PHOTO by Philip Formby

THE Woodland Trust is holding the UK’s largest mass tree-planting event on 30 November and schools can apply for a free tree-planting pack.

The Big Climate Fightback campaign is aiming for over a million people to pledge to plant a tree because the Government is failing to meet its annual tree-planting commitments.

“Simply go to our website and pledge to plant a tree, whether it’s in your back garden, school or at a nearby planting event,” the Trust says.

Visit woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities

From pot to planet with the RHS

THE Royal Horticultural Society’s (RHS) Campaign for School Gardening is aiming to empower young people in the fight against climate change.

The charity says school gardens provide an opportunity to learn about the importance of plants, wildlife and issues around sustainability.

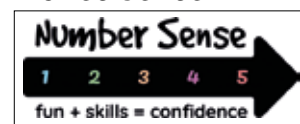
Alana Cama, RHS schools and groups programme manager, said: “By providing a plot, or even just a couple of pots, schools can help sow an appreciation for the environment.

“If a young person can feel they are making a positive impact it may help them feel a little more in control of our planet’s future.”

Visit schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk

You know it makes Sense

NUMBER Sense is a new charity putting



volunteers into primary schools to provide pupils with extra maths support through games and other fun activities.

The charity is seeking retired teachers to mentor their volunteers on a limited, flexible time commitment.

Number Sense chair Bernard Manson says: “Our current mentors very much enjoy their role, but as we grow rapidly we will need more mentors to support a growing number of volunteers.”

The role would cover giving training, providing telephone, email and face-to-face support as needed, and carrying out occasional monitoring of in-school sessions and giving feedback to volunteers.

Visit numbersense.org.uk

What’s your carbon footprint?

THE World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has a calculator so you can take a short survey to measure your environmental footprint and compare it alongside Government reduction targets.

A footprint is a way of showing your impact – greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – compared to other people and other countries.

Visit footprint.wwf.org.uk

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12 December 2019



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Challenging the Privatisation of Education

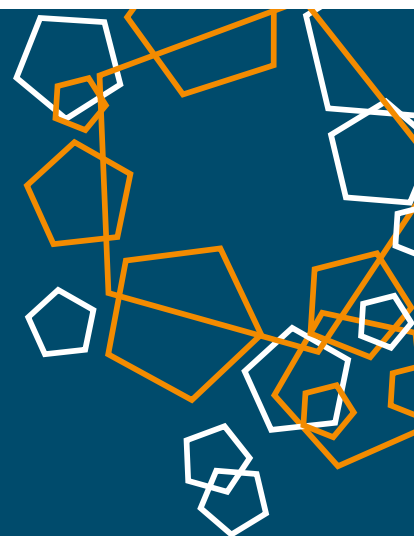
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To register: [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DFT2KQ7](https://surveyMonkey.co.uk/r/DFT2KQ7)



What's in your lunchbox?

Rouna's chickpea curry
serves 12-14

Geography teacher Rouna Ali, from Uxbridge, says her chickpea curry "goes well with the usual suspects of rice, naan and poppadoms".

Ingredients

- 3-4 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2-3 medium red onions, finely chopped
- 7-8 cardamom pods
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 8-9 cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 bulb of garlic, grated
- 2 tbsp rock salt
- Small handful of small green chillies, finely chopped
- Small piece of fresh ginger ground to a paste (optional)
- 1.5 tbsp haldi (turmeric) powder
- 1.5 heaped tbsp of jeera (cumin) powder
- 500g of chickpeas, soaked in cold water overnight
- Small bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped
- Few tsp of concentrated tamarind paste, to taste



Method

1. Put the onions, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, bay leaf, garlic, rock salt, chillies and ginger in a deep-sided saucepan with the vegetable oil and cook on a high heat until the onions are soft (add boiling water to prevent burning).
2. Add the haldi and jeera, plus boiling water as and when necessary, until the spices and onions have cooked together for around 10-15 minutes.
3. Rinse the chickpeas and add to the pan with a bit more hot water. When it starts boiling, reduce the heat and simmer for around 20-25 minutes. Add or take away water depending on how dry you like your curry to be, and stir to prevent the chickpeas from burning. Take the pan off the heat and add half of the finely chopped coriander.
4. In a separate small bowl, mix the tamarind paste with some cold water. Stir until there are no lumps then add in the fresh coriander. Pour a few teaspoons of sauce on to each serving of the curry.

■ Email your recipe to educate@neu.org.uk with your name, address and membership number by 30 November and you could win a copy of Zaitoun: Recipes and Stories from the Palestinian Kitchen.



THIS stunning photo of a puffin was sent in by teacher Amy Cowan.

Amy says: "I'm a teacher in rural Northumberland. One of my favourite things to do when I'm not at school is to be by the sea - it gives me such a feeling of calm and wonder.

"This photo was taken on one of the Farne Islands - where Grace Darling, famed for her role in the rescue of survivors from the shipwrecked Forfarshire in 1838, grew up - just off the village of Seahouses, near Alnwick.

"I just love how I was able to capture this puffin having his mid-morning snack."

If you are a keen photographer, why not send your pictures to us at educate@neu.org.uk

They should be large and high resolution, accompanied by 50 words telling readers about the subject. We send a £20 book token to each featured so don't forget to pop your address on the email too.

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Quick crossword

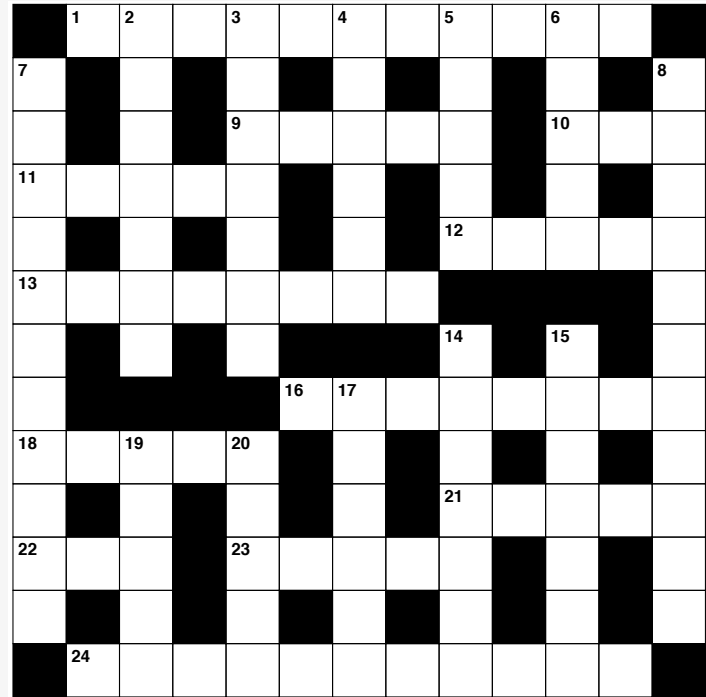
Answers at bottom
of page 49

Across

- 1 Extremely accurate timekeeping device (6,5)
- 9 The currency of India (5)
- 10 Much ___ About Nothing: Shakespeare play (3)
- 11 Order of classical Greek architecture (5)
- 12 Heron with white plumage (5)
- 13 County of SW England (8)
- 16 Japan's second-largest city (8)
- 18 Bulbous spring-flowering plant (5)
- 21 ___ Maradona: Argentinian retired footballer (5)
- 22 Joan of ___ : The Maid of Orleans (3)
- 23 Landlocked country in West Africa (5)
- 24 Scientist who discovered gravity (5,6)

Down

- 2 Seismic sea wave (7)
- 3 Planet closest to the sun (7)
- 4 Truman ___ : Breakfast at Tiffany's author (6)
- 5 A feudal superior (5)
- 6 Eg an ottoman (5)
- 7 Mexican shrubs popular at Christmas as houseplants (11)
- 8 US state with capital Bismarck (5,6)
- 14 ___ Wilson: 28th US President (7)
- 15 Battle of 1800 where Napoleon defeated Austrian forces (7)
- 17 Gas needed for life (6)



- 19 George ___ : Star Wars creator (5)
- 20 Kung Fu ___ : animated film (5)

Sudoku

Sudoku solutions will feature
on this page next issue.

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

Easy

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

Medium

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

Difficult

Last issue's (Sept/Oct 2019)
sudoku solution

(from left: Easy, Medium
and Difficult)

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

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

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

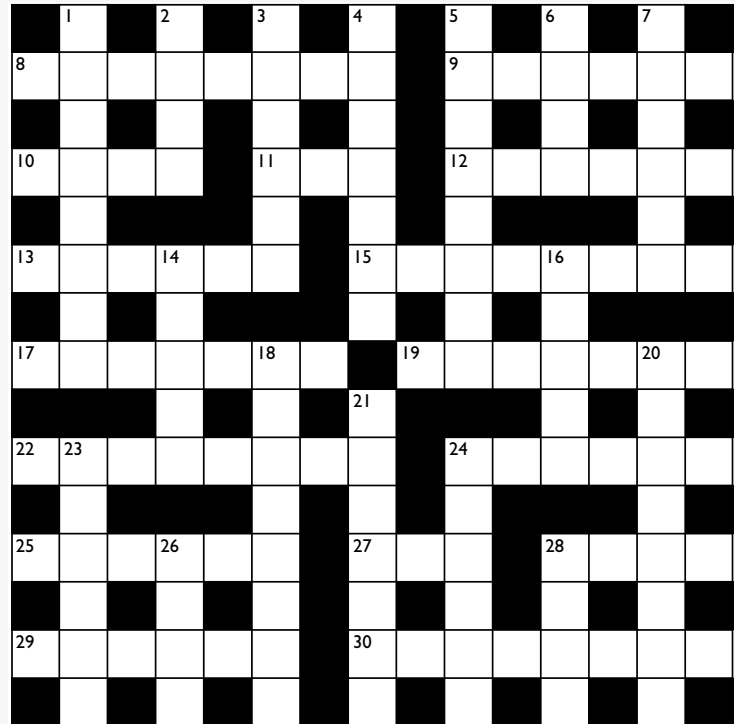
WIN!
A £50 Marks & Spencer voucher

Across

- 8** New art elite able to read and write (8)
- 9** Fierce fire burns middle of school jacket (6)
- 10 and 11** He has a new body to become senior pupil (4,3)
- 12** He sits about, writing this long essay? (6)
- 13** College employee is back in a more tropical environment (6)
- 15** A cold clergyman? Correct (8)
- 17** Chaps get round me to get a souvenir (7)
- 19** Sheets and blankets being spread round Doctor of Divinity (7)
- 22** Dreadful ego, Peter and girl being supported by a more experienced person (8)
- 24** Starting serious character research in professional theatre, actors will need this (6)
- 25** Strode around English county (6)
- 27** Partly believe, but it's not true (3)
- 28** See 7 down
- 29** End life swallowing French wine – heavenly! (6)
- 30** Put whisky before a drunken sister – she works in a restaurant (8)

Down

- 1** Tories confused with me, annoyingly boring! (8)
- 2** Some are advised to study a subject at university (4)
- 3** Cambridge alterations – dig out to form slope of road surface (6)
- 4** Were any changes made for 2020? (3,4)
- 5** Innovative constable cutting end of truncheon – it gets in the way (8)
- 6** Yankee beer for American university (4)
- 7 and 28 across** I wrote that novel for a Scottish university (6-4)
- 14** Robbery of article with small feet (5)



The winner and solution of this prize crossword will feature on this page next issue.

- 16** Cyclist has proviso (5)
- 18** With other people, or get the new combination (8)
- 20** Promoting one's own family, but awkward simpleton left out! (8)
- 21** Moves fluidly around the Spanish college members (7)
- 23** New recruit – with chess piece, that is (6)
- 24** Wonder, maybe, at set I've re-organised (6)
- 26** Jacket and trousers with diamonds, perhaps (8)
- 28** Child under your care is drawback (4)

Send your completed crossword, with your contact details, to: Nov/Dec crossword, Educate, NEU, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD, or email a photographed copy to educate@neu.org.uk. Closing date: 30 November.

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Last issue's (Sept/Oct 2019) prize crossword solution

Across 1 MATCHLESS 6 LLAMA 9 TO LET 10 STAFFROOM 11 HOAX 12 GAUDY 13 FAIR 16 PRIMARY 17 LATERAL 19 ROEDEAN 21 PARSLEY 22 LEAD 24 ITALY 25 SCAM 29 TEMPORARY 30 SATIN 31 CADET 32 LLANDUDNO **Down** 1 MATCH 2 TALKATIVE 3 HATE 4 ECSTASY 5 SCANDAL 6 LIFE 7 AROMA 8 ADMIRALTY 14 LAGER 15 STORY 16 PARALYTIC 18 RELOCATED 20 NETBALL 21 PALMYRA 23 AIMED 26 MUNRO 27 LOU 28 USED

Congratulations to last issue's winner – Steve Lane from Kettering

This issue's quick crossword solution (p48)

Across 1 ATOMIC CLOCK 9 RUPEE 10 ADO 11 IONIC 12 EGRET 13 SOMERSET 16 YOKOHAMA 18 TULIP 21 DIEGO 22 ARC 23 WOODROW 15 MARENCO 17 OXYGEN 19 LUCAS 20 PANDA

Down 2 ISAAC NEWTON 3 MURCURI 4 CAPOTE 5 LIEGE 6 CHAIR 7 POINSETTIA 8 NORTH DAKOTA 14 NIGER 24 ISAAC NEWTON

'We call on trade unions to join us'



IN July this year, the BBC reported on a growing consensus that if there was not significant policy change by 2020, the damage done to the climate would be irreversible.

It quoted German climatologist Hans Schellnhuber as saying: "The climate maths is brutally clear: while the world can't be healed within the next few years, it may be fatally wounded by negligence until 2020."

The window of opportunity is shrinking. Where earlier reports suggested we have 12 years to act, this one urged action in under 18 months. In 18 months, I won't have completed my first year at university and some of my fellow strikers won't have finished their GCSEs. This sense of urgency is one reason young people are taking to the streets.



Fact file

Annapurna Marley is one of the co-ordinators of Youth Strike for Climate Brighton. The group has been campaigning against Government inaction on climate change and for global climate justice since February.

Government merely pays us lip service

Our actions were inspired by Greta Thunberg, who started a 'school strike' in August last year. Her reasoning is that there is no point us having an education if we have no planet to use it on. This sentiment rang true for many young people.

Through continued pressure we were able to get the Government to call a national climate emergency. But it was not coupled with any action. The Government has declared that it will work towards the UK being carbon-neutral by 2050, but that is simply too late.

As young people, most of us aren't able to vote and are not part of the labour force, so what we do has very little effect on the Government. The sheer number of us striking has caused a stir, but for the Government to feel

pressured into taking real action we need the support of workers – the ones who keep this economy running, enabling the Government to meet its targets for economic growth and inflation.

And who better to ask for support than the trade union movement? A movement with a history of protest and civil unrest. A movement that pioneered workers' rights and stood up for the under-represented.

Time for workers worldwide to take action

We call on trade unions to take to the streets and support the under-represented – us, the youth, and the communities who are already facing the consequences of climate change, not only in the UK, but internationally.

The Global North has had the largest role in the pollution of the planet. Yet it is those in the Global South who are on the frontline of sea level rises, extreme weather, forest fires, droughts and mass migration. We have a responsibility to make the first moves towards correcting this. This movement is about everyday people who believe that they have a right to live on a healthy planet.

The youth strikes support the Green New Deal, which lays out five principles to enable a just and fundamental transition to a green economy. For us, this is a beacon of hope. The work has been done, the science is there, the policy is there, the will from the youth is there.

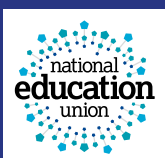
Now we need to show that the workers are with us, and that we will not back down until we see tangible action from the Government towards securing our future.

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