

# astir

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

## Teachers valued by the public – independent survey



### Report inside

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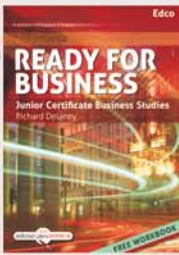
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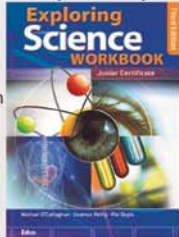


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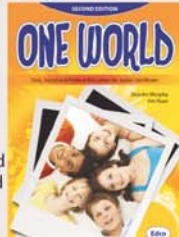


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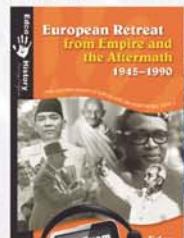
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# Appreciation is always appreciated

The key findings of a survey on public attitudes to the teaching profession conducted by an independent research company during November 2009 show the following very positive results.

These include:

- a high level of satisfaction with the way teachers do their jobs (the level of satisfaction was highest among parents);
- a high level of trust in teachers relative to other occupations and professions;
- teaching is perceived as a profession with a high level of complexity;
- teaching is perceived as a profession that requires a high level of skill;
- the majority of respondents associate teaching with positive words: when presented with a list of 12 characteristics, respondents selected "dedicated", "hardworking" and "expert (knowledgeable)" as those they most associated with teaching;
- the challenges of discipline, together with class size and insufficient resources, are perceived as the most pressing associated with the teaching role; and,
- other findings included: eight in ten agreed that teachers play an important role in society; seven in ten agreed that teachers make a valuable contribution to the community through their involvement in sporting, cultural and other activities; more than six in ten agreed that teachers do a lot of out of hours work; and, a majority agreed with the statements "teachers are committed to the highest standards of professionalism" and "teachers are committed to the rounded development of their pupils".

The results of the survey, commissioned by the Teaching Council, show a high level of trust in our teachers and an appreciation of the way they do their jobs. Overall, the positive attitudes to the teaching profession and other public sector professions listed in the survey emphatically refute the negative sentiments of the anti public sector commentariat.

## Difficulties in schools

Despite the positive survey results, we are still grappling with a myriad of difficulties in our schools. The crude moratorium on filling of posts of responsibility is impeding the orderly running of our schools as post-holders retire and are not replaced. Post-primary schools are large and complex organisations and the duties of year heads, LCA co-ordinators, exam secretaries, etc., cannot be completed on an ad hoc basis. Our most

recent directive on this issue is focused on creating an environment that will lead to the removal of the moratorium for schools before the next school year.

The public sector campaign against the pay cuts, involving work-to-rule measures, is now having an impact on the Government and public debate. Work stoppages are planned in the second phase of this campaign, which is vital for our future pay and conditions. The lobbying of your political representatives in your own constituency about your job, pay and pension is absolutely essential to bolster our campaign of resistance.

## Your co-operation is vital

Your co-operation and diligence in implementing the work-to-rule directives is greatly appreciated. On a daily basis, in an individual school situation, this type of industrial action may seem futile and ineffective but the cumulative effect is significant. Each of us contributes to our solidarity and strength in resisting the unfair budgetary measures.

We have conducted a school review of voluntary and extracurricular activities undertaken by teachers. Schools identified over 50 such activities, ranging from class tutors to school teams. While most teachers are loath to interfere with these activities, their good will should not be taken for granted. In England during the 1990s the inclusion of more duties in teacher contracts led to the virtual collapse of voluntary activities in their schools. There is a very full agenda of critical issues to be addressed at Annual Convention in Galway. Please consider involvement in the activities and structures of the ASTI for at least some of your teaching career. Through the ASTI you can make a vital contribution to serving teachers and promoting education with colleagues all over the country.



*Joe Moran*

*ASTI President*



# Unions escalate action

As this ASTIR goes to print, the ASTI is engaged in a range of work-to-rule activities as part of the public sector-wide campaign against the pay cuts and threats to pensions. In addition, the four teacher unions – the ASTI, the IFUT, the INTO and the TUI – are undertaking a nationwide lobby of politicians in order to communicate the depth of anger among teachers at the Government’s treatment of public servants.

## Posts of responsibility

In February, the ASTI and the TUI issued a new directive to their members in relation to the moratorium on posts of responsibility. The new directive states that members of the ASTI will not engage in reviews of posts or change the duties of existing post-holders to fill vacancies caused by the moratorium on posts of responsibility. The facility whereby a school could re-organise posts of responsibility has been suspended. This means that from March 8 any duties associated with a newly vacated post of responsibility will not be carried out by any ASTI or TUI member. Responding to this new directive, school management bodies called on the Government to enter talks with the unions in order to prevent schools from closing down. School managers stated that some schools could no longer be able to function as a result of vacant posts of responsibility.

*From March 8 any duties associated with a newly vacated post of responsibility will not be carried out by any ASTI or TUI member.*

A survey carried out by the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals this year found that second-level schools surveyed had lost an average of 2.5 posts of responsibility since the moratorium was introduced in Spring 2009. Applying this average loss to all second-level schools means that up to 1,800 posts have been lost. The situation will be exacerbated this September when higher than usual numbers of teachers retire, due in part to perceived threats to their pensions.

*The directive issued by the ASTI and the TUI will bring into sharp focus the fact that our second-level schools are being stripped of a whole layer of vital administrative and pastoral personnel.*

Commenting on the posts of responsibility moratorium, ASTI General Secretary John White said: “The reality is that the moratorium is having a

devastating impact on schools. To expect classroom teachers to paper over the cracks by taking on additional duties and continually rearranging remaining posts is not sustainable. The directive issued by the ASTI and the TUI will bring into sharp focus the fact that our second-level schools are being stripped of a whole layer of vital administrative and pastoral personnel”. (Read about the impact of the posts of responsibility directive on page 8.)

## Voluntary activities

A review of voluntary activities undertaken by ASTI members is currently being conducted in schools. One of the interesting facts to emerge out of this review is the extent to which second-level teachers are involved in voluntary activities. For example, one second-level school with approximately 500 pupils reported 43 separate voluntary activities, which occur outside class time. These include a Gaeltacht trip, music activities, foreign language exchanges, art competitions, football, hurling, basketball, soccer, debating, computers, Young Social Innovators, the Young Scientist competition, student council meetings, student awards, and the Green Schools project. This commitment to their school communities is one of the reasons why teachers are valued by the public, as affirmed by the recent Teaching Council survey (see page 11).

*It is vital that as many members as possible take part in the ASTI’s nationwide political lobbying campaign.*

## Lobby your TDs

As predicted by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Government’s decision to cut the public sector pay bill as a response to the economic crisis has driven the economy further into recession. The Government is under pressure. It is therefore vital that as many members as possible take part in the ASTI’s nationwide political lobbying campaign. Material has been distributed to schools.

*For more information on the campaign against the public sector pay cuts and threats to pensions visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).*

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# Moratorium is leading to compromised services

ASTI General Secretary JOHN WHITE argues that the moratorium on posts of responsibility introduced last April is having a disproportionately negative effect on second-level schools.

A system of posts of responsibility/management structure was first introduced in schools with the intention of enhancing the education offered by schools following: (a) the introduction of free education; (b) the reduction in the number of religious in schools; and, (c) the growth in societal and curricular demands.

The roles performed by middle ranking promoted teachers became vital to the running of schools. As stated in the revised teachers' PCW proposals, "the principal, deputy principal and the holders of posts of responsibility will together form the in-school management team of the school". Revised promotion procedures for appointment to assistant principal and special duties teacher were agreed in November 2008.

## Complex institutions

Second-level schools are complex institutions with up to 1,500 vibrant adolescents with diverse needs following a broad range of educational programmes. Institutions of such complexity require structures and systems within which the process of education can be facilitated. A quality education service, school discipline and student pastoral care cannot survive the implementation of this moratorium.

## Moratorium

With circular letter 0022/2009, the Department of Education and Science implemented a moratorium on appointments to promoted posts in schools other than those of principal and deputy principal. Given that the overwhelming majority of promoted posts in second-level schools are assistant principals and special duties teachers, this decision has had a disproportionate effect on second-level schools. The circular announcing the moratorium stated that it was a matter for schools to reorganise and prioritise the appropriate duties for post-holders. As long as there are no vacancies, the moratorium by definition has no effect. However, it has had a disproportionate and devastating effect on some schools.

*A quality education service, school discipline and student pastoral care cannot survive the implementation of this moratorium.*

The current accelerated rate of teacher retirements and the expected increase in this rate in 2010 because of the budget decisions, are emptying the ranks of assistant principals, special duties teachers, programme co-ordinators and adult education directors, many of whom

were recruited in the decade following the introduction of free education. The ranks of assistant principal and special duties teacher are being further depleted to replace retiring principals and deputy principals. This means that in accordance with the reorganisation and prioritisation outlined above, posts such as year head, timetabling examinations secretary, and programme co-ordinator have had to be reassigned. This process of reassignment and prioritisation resulted in severe difficulties in some schools where the extent of retirements and resignations was such that a large number of posts were unfilled. The ASTI/TUI directive effective from March 8 now prohibits such reassignment.

It is entirely unreasonable to expect unpromoted classroom teachers, already labouring under increased classroom burdens – longer hours, increased class sizes, higher and ordinary level in the same class – because of education cutbacks, to perform these duties on a voluntary basis. This will not happen.

Given that the savings on the moratorium are of the order of €11 million per year, the damage to the education of this generation of pupils is disproportionate to the savings made.

The moratorium should be removed on a phased basis before permanent damage is caused to the education of second-level pupils.

Such phasing might mean that in year one, every second assistant principal post, and every third special duties teacher post, programme co-ordinator and adult education director posts are filled. In year two, all assistant principal posts and two out of three special duties teacher posts are filled. In year three, all posts are filled.

Second-level schools are disproportionately affected by the moratorium. Complex institutions such as second-level schools cannot be run effectively with any lengthy attrition of, in particular, assistant principal posts. A removal of the moratorium is essential if irreparable damage to the education prospects of a whole generation of young people is to be avoided. Such removal could initially be on a phased basis.



**John White**

*ASTI General Secretary.*



# ASTI in the Media

The most recent media appearances by ASTI representatives and members.

## Escalated action

In late February much media attention focused on the ASTI's revised directive on posts of responsibility. On the morning of February 23 alone, the ASTI took part in over ten media interviews, including RTÉ radio and television, TV3, Today FM, Newstalk, and a range of national newspapers and regional radio stations. A taste of the coverage on the issue is below:

### *Irish Examiner* – February 24

#### **John White explains the escalation of ASTI industrial action.**

"ASTI General Secretary John White said the way of fixing this by September was to have the Government fix it. He indicated the union is willing to negotiate a phased lifting of the moratorium but that the directive will remain in place as long as the moratorium stands.

'Schools can't operate under a system where they could have 1,000 students and five fewer assistant principals next autumn,' he said."

### *Irish Times* – February 24

#### **John White on the escalation of ASTI industrial action.**

"ASTI General Secretary John White said large schools that lost four or five assistant principals may not be able to operate.

'We are very concerned that some schools might close,' he said, but added that there was still a lot of time for people to talk."

### *'The Last Word', Today FM* – February 23

#### **Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI Deputy General Secretary, discusses the enhanced POR directive with Matt Cooper.**

"In a way what this is doing is bringing things to a head slightly sooner than they were going to come to a head anyway. The Department's own figures show 900 retirements from second-level schools last year ... our conservative estimates are, due to the budget stipulations on pension, at the very least 1,000 will leave this year. In fact, whether we did this or not, there would have been a major crisis."

"If people aren't being paid to do these jobs, they're not going to do them ... We had a budget recently where ... a teacher earning €50k a year who is a single income earner and had two young children lost, in 18 months, €8k net in their take home pay. The same budget last year, if you were a banker on €500,000 the effect on you was exactly zero ... the teachers' unions, along with the other public sector unions, along with Congress, have been looking for a different approach to this issue ... This [directive] will take effect in a serious way in September ... now is the opportunity for the Government to sit down with us and with the management bodies and work out a system where schools can operate."

"Teachers deserve the pay they get, teachers have had their salaries slashed by approximately 14% and now you're saying that they have no promotional prospects at all."

### *The Right Hook, Newstalk* – February 23

#### **Sally Maguire, Standing Committee, responds to George Hook's argument that the Government cannot afford to give in to industrial action by teachers.**

"We've taken all [the pay] cuts... This [moratorium] is something that affects the management of schools, the running of schools."

"Teachers didn't cause this crisis and the economy is never going to improve if we don't have young people out there who are well educated ... the students I teach are the future of this country."

## Maths

Maths teachers' qualifications and the uptake of honours maths among students was another issue that received a lot of media coverage recently.

### *RTÉ Six One News* – February 17

#### **John White, ASTI General Secretary, explains the reasons behind unqualified maths teachers.**

"Ideally it would be wonderful if every teacher of mathematics in every school in this country had mathematics as a major part of their degree. But schools are only allocated a certain number of teachers and schools have to operate within the allocation they have."

### *Today with Pat Kenny, RTÉ Radio 1* – February 22

#### **Elaine Devlin, ASTI Standing Committee, discusses maths in schools and the allocation of maths teachers.**

"I would say there's an imbalance in the curriculum. It should take them about one-sixth of the time at maths, but that's not happening ... We are going to have to spend a lot of money resourcing [Project Maths] properly. If this is supposed to be the big change in maths ... I don't know how it's going to happen if it's being done on a shoestring."

"I think [the number of unqualified maths teachers] is down to the allocation model that is used in schools. There is a very crude headcount done. The Department look and say: you have 600 pupils, you need 35 or 36 teachers or whatever it is. They don't look and say you have 600 pupils you need x number of specialist teachers."

### *The Last Word, Today FM* – February 12

#### **Ann Piggott, Standing Committee, responds to a call to re-train engineers as maths teachers.**

"The problem at Leaving Cert is that we have such large classes now, especially with the change in the pupil-teacher ratio. In my own Leaving Cert maths class, I have 29 students and within that you'd have a diverse range of ability."

"We don't even have enough jobs for teachers as it is. We have a lot of teachers in schools who are on five or six hours and will continue to be on five or six hours for the next few years. Last year, maybe 2,000 teachers lost their jobs, because of the change in pupil-teacher ratio ... I have no problem with anyone becoming qualified in any subject area, but we need to focus on finding jobs for all the teachers we have already."

# Debunking the myths

ASTIR debunks some of the common myths about Irish teachers which are often reported as fact.

## Myth: All teachers retire on a full pension

Fact: A very high number of second-level teachers do not have 40 years of service at the end of their teaching careers. This means they must:

- retire on a pension based only on the years that they were in service and contributing to the Teachers' Superannuation Scheme;
- make up for the years when they were not in service by purchasing notional service, which is self-financing; or,
- purchase AVCs, which are subject to the vagaries of the market.

A very significant number of teachers retire on pensions well below full pension.

*A very high number of second-level teachers do not have 40 years of service at the end of their teaching careers.*

## Myth: There is no change or innovation in schools

Fact: Second-level schools have been transformed in recent years. Change and innovation has included:

- pupils with special educational needs have been mainstreamed in second-level schools;
- newcomer pupils, including pupils with English language learning needs, have been integrated;
- the Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational and the Transition Year Programme have been introduced in a significant number of second-level schools;
- syllabi have been modernised in almost all subject areas;
- new syllabi levels have been introduced (for example, higher and ordinary levels for most subjects in the Junior Certificate);
- new subjects have been introduced;
- additional assessment components have been integrated to complement the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate terminal written examinations;
- active learning methodologies are increasingly being mainstreamed in classrooms in order to place the individual student at the centre of the learning;
- 'Assessment for Learning' is increasingly used by second-level teachers in the classroom in order to monitor individual students' progress in learning; and,

- wide-ranging legislation – such as the Education Welfare Act and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act – has been implemented in schools.

Much of this reform has been implemented with little or no additional resources for schools.

*A very significant number of teachers retire on pensions well below full pension.*

## Myth: You can't dismiss a teacher

Fact: Teachers are subject to the same conditions in relation to dismissals as other employees. All employers must follow disciplinary procedures that are in line with employment legislation. Recently the three teacher unions – the ASTI, the INTO and the TUI – agreed to new disciplinary procedures, which have put in place standardised procedures for dealing with all complaints against teachers, and which are in accordance with the principles of natural justice, including the right to be heard and the right to an unbiased decision.

*At 73%, the percentage of second-level teachers in permanent positions in Ireland is well below the OECD average.*

## Myth: Teachers have secure, permanent jobs

Fact: An OECD report entitled 'Teaching and Learning in Society' (TALIS), published late last year, found that at least one in every four second-level teachers in Ireland does not have a permanent job. At 73%, the percentage of second-level teachers in permanent positions in Ireland is well below the OECD average. For teachers under 30 years of age, 53.4% are employed on temporary teaching contracts of less than one year. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many teachers spend approximately eight years seeking permanent teaching posts. In addition, a significant number of teachers with CID contracts – equivalent to permanent posts – are on part-time hours and wish to transfer to full-time.



# 80% believe teachers are important to society

Teaching ranks as the profession with the second highest level of public satisfaction, according to a recent survey by the Teaching Council.



The survey of 1,000 adults showed high levels of satisfaction with the way teachers do their jobs and a high level of trust in teachers.

Of 12 professions and occupations referenced in the survey, satisfaction levels for teachers ranked second only to those for nurses. The survey, which was carried out by an independent market research company on behalf of the Teaching Council, also showed that 80% of respondents agreed that "teachers play an important role in our society".

Respondents demonstrated a good level of understanding of the complexity of the teaching role. An overwhelming majority – 96% – of respondents considered that there is a medium to high level of skill required for the role.

Four in every five respondents considered teaching to be a difficult job and almost the same number – 78% – agreed that teachers should be given regular opportunities for upskilling.

*Teachers play a vital role in society and in shaping its future.*

Responding to the survey, John White, ASTI General Secretary, said: "This is strong evidence of something we already knew – society places huge

value on teachers and the work they do. Teachers play a vital role in society and in shaping its future. I am delighted to see this recognised by the public. I only regret that the Government fails to see things in the same way as the public they represent, and continues to threaten our education service by making cuts to it and showing a disregard for the teachers who work very hard to ensure its high quality".

Other findings of the survey include:

- almost three in every four parents (73%) who responded said that teachers do their jobs either very well or well, while only 6% said that teachers do their jobs badly or very badly;
- of the 12 professions and occupations referenced in the survey, levels of trust in teachers were ranked third (after doctors and nurses);
- three in every four respondents (75%) disagreed that "teaching is an easy job";
- work-life balance and the opportunity to work with children and to make a difference are the most commonly perceived attractions that respondents associated with the teaching profession; and,
- the challenges of discipline, together with class size and insufficient resources, are perceived today as the most pressing issues associated with the teaching role.

# ASTI criticises attack on minimum wage agreements



Legislation allowing companies to undercut minimum wage agreements represents an attack on working conditions and employment rights, says John White, ASTI General Secretary.

Proposed new legislation allowing companies to renege on pay rates negotiated through registered employment agreements and employment regulation orders is currently the subject of discussion between the Government and the Attorney General, and could be implemented as early as July. The new clause would apply to a number of sectors, such as the construction and leisure industries, where a minimum wage is set by agreement between employers and employees or by joint labour committees. Such agreements apply to more than 500,000 workers, and extend beyond pay to include various minimum standards of conditions of employment.

*This move shows, once again, who the government wants to pay for the economic mess – those who can least afford it.*

Commenting on the proposals, John White, ASTI General Secretary, said: "The Government has made no secret of its aim to drive down wages in Ireland. This is a further step down this road and a hugely retrograde one for employment rights and standards in this country. Of course we need to protect jobs, but compromising employment agreements and downgrading

conditions is no way to achieve this. This move shows plainly, once again, exactly who the government wants to pay for cleaning up the economic mess in this country – ordinary workers and those who can least afford it". If implemented, the new legislation would mean that companies claiming an "inability to pay" could ask their staff to accept cuts to wages. The Labour Court would then inspect the company's accounts and make a decision on new pay rates and an exemption from wage agreements. Tánaiste Mary Coughlan has stated that the new clause is intended to save jobs and would not mean that employers could insist that workers take a reduction in salary. However, given that the Labour Court will not have the resources to deal with such referrals, employee agreement could become a mere formality, leading to possible exploitation. SIPTU has launched a lobbying campaign against the legislation amendment, stating that the Government and a number of employers are using the opportunity of a recession to reduce pay – see [www.siptu.ie](http://www.siptu.ie).

## National minimum wage

The Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan, was recently questioned in the Dáil regarding a potential cut to the national minimum wage of €8.65 per hour. She was unable to give any assurance on the issue, saying any changes to the rate would be in the context of proposals from the Labour Court. The issue of minimum wage has been with the Labour Court since 2008. The ASTI is opposed to any cut in the national minimum wage.



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**For more information on Midas and the services we offer, please call the Midas helpdesk on (01) 408 4102.**

# Special needs assistants to lose jobs

Up to one in ten special needs assistants (SNAs) will lose their jobs by next month, following a review of SNA provision.



The first round of job cuts came in February and it is estimated that a total of 1,200 SNA positions will be lost under the review carried out by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE).

The NCSE has failed to clarify the number of SNA jobs lost in February, and is refusing to release any details of job losses until the review is completed at the end of March. The estimate of 1,200 is based on figures released by the NCSE last June when almost one-quarter of schools had been reviewed. The Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe, rejects this number, but according to IMPACT trade union, which represents over 3,000 SNAs, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is an accurate estimate.

The Minister has stated that the special needs criteria to justify the appointment of an SNA have not changed under this review. However, schools are reporting that the review is taking a restrictive view of what constitutes 'special needs'. According to Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary: "This limited view makes it very difficult for schools and students to access essential resources. The integration of students with special needs in 2004 was a very positive step for Irish education, made possible in part by the provision of SNAs. These SNAs are now being taken away when measures required for successful integration of students with special needs have yet to be introduced and are, in fact, on hold. This will have a huge impact on the educational environment, not only for the students who relied on the SNAs but for all students in the classroom".

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was introduced in 2005, to be phased in with the roll out of recommended resources over a five-year period. To date, the recommendations made by the NCSE for successful implementation have not been introduced. Last year, the Minister for Education stated that the recommendations would not be implemented during 2010 but promised that they would be implemented during the lifetime of this government.

*SNAs provide vital classroom support, allowing students to reach their educational potential.*

Moira Leydon says that this is simply not good enough: "Children with special needs are in the schools now. They can't afford to wait the duration of this government for required resources; enough children have waited long enough. Their teachers know that and so do their parents. Special needs assistants provide vital classroom support, allowing students to reach their educational potential. What does taking these positions away achieve, especially half way through a school year? Students are left without support in the run up to exams and assistants are joining the dole queue, along with almost 500,000 others. It's very difficult to see the sense in that".

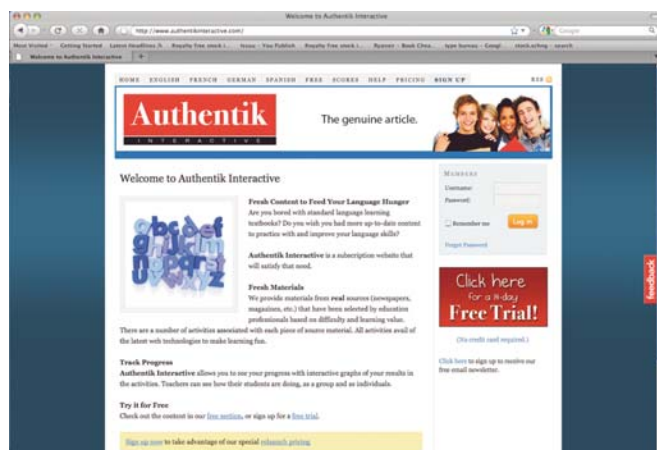


## Excessive water usage in schools

Local authority data indicates that many schools are using an excessive amount of water. Since January, schools have been subject to full metered water charges, and for schools where usage remains at excessive levels charges are expected to increase substantially. A per capita usage of 3.5 cubic metres is considered a reasonable level of usage in schools. In some local authority areas, over 50% of schools are showing rates considerably in excess of this level, in some cases above 20 cubic metres per pupil.

According to the Department of Education and Science, a school with higher than average water consumption may save up to €2,155 per annum by introducing water conservation measures and achieving best practice standards. A school with average water consumption may save €805 per annum by introducing water conservation measures and achieving best practice standards. The Summer Works Scheme 2010 allowed schools to apply for specific funding for water conservation measures. Applications for this scheme ended in November 2009. Check [www.energyeducation.ie](http://www.energyeducation.ie) for information on future grant funding for water conservation measures.

## Developments in language teaching



The Post Primary Languages Initiative is currently developing a new website to offer resources, languages upskilling and CPD for language teachers. The idea of the website is to embed the culture of shared open educational resources (OER) across the languages community in Ireland, fostering an increased awareness of the value of resource sharing. The Initiative would like to hear from language teachers who have information to share on language teaching methodology or learning resources. Contact [languagesinitiative@mie.ie](mailto:languagesinitiative@mie.ie) to find out more.

The Initiative is also looking for Spanish teachers and any other teachers who may be interested to sign up for online upskilling provided by the Instituton Cervantes. You can pre-register by expressing your interest in a mail to [languagesinitiative@mie.ie](mailto:languagesinitiative@mie.ie).

If your school is interested in using Spanish teaching resources on [www.authentikinteractive.com](http://www.authentikinteractive.com), the Initiative may pay an initial six-month subscription for the whole school. To be considered, teachers must send three short lesson plans outlining how you would use the website resources to [languagesinitiative@mie.ie](mailto:languagesinitiative@mie.ie). See [www.authentikinteractive.com](http://www.authentikinteractive.com) to access a free trial.

## Technology in Education



Pictured at a recent meeting between the ASTI and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) are (from left): ASTI President, Joe Moran; ASTI Assistant General Secretary, Moira Leydon; and, NCTE Director, Jerome Morrissey.

## Professor Gearoid O'Tuathaigh to address Convention

The ASTI is delighted to announce that Professor Gearoid O'Tuathaigh will be the guest speaker at this year's ASTI Convention. Professor O'Tuathaigh lectures in modern Irish and British history at NUI Galway. He is a project leader with the Moore Institute for Research in The Humanities and Social Studies at NUI Galway. Professor O'Tuathaigh previously addressed Convention in 1995, where he discussed the language of education and education as a commodity, telling delegates: "Teaching is not an action but a transaction, not an outcome but a process, not a performance but an emotional and intellectual connection between teacher and learner".

## Stillorgan Branch function



Pictured at a recent Stillorgan Branch function are (back row, from left): Jack McGlade, retiree, Oatlands College; Laoise O'Boyle, Branch Chairperson; ASTI President, Joe Moran; ASTI General Secretary, John White; Seán Ó Laighean, retired principal, Coláiste Eoin; and, Andrea Doyle, retiree, Blackrock College. Front row (from left): retirees Pascal MacGabhann, St Benildus College; Jean Duffy, Sion Hill; Joan O'Callaghan and Anne Curran, St Raphaela's; and, Kate Canning, Blackrock College.

## ASTI retirement events



The Dungarvan Branch of the ASTI has honoured a number of recently retired colleagues. Presentations were made at a function held in Lawlor's Hotel. Back row (from left): Michael Barry, Standing Committee Representative; Pádraig Mac Craith, Branch Equality Officer; Kevin Kíely, Branch Organiser; Maire Mulcahy, Assistant General Secretary, ASTI; Joe Moran, ASTI President; Margo McGann, Branch Secretary; Pat Collins, Branch Chairman; Shiovaun O'Sullivan, Branch Treasurer; and, Tommy Collins, representing Joan Collins, retired, Ard Scoil na nDéise. Front row (from left): John Cunningham, retired, Ard Scoil; Deirdre McGrath; Paddy McGrath, retired, St Augustine's, Abbeyside; and, Liam O'Mahony, Honorary National Organiser, ASTI. Absent from photograph: Jackie Fitzgerald, retired, St Augustine's.



Pictured at a Carbery Branch retirement function are (from left): Bernard Moynihan, ASTI Executive Officer; and, John Buckley, Murt Kelleher and Gerry McCarthy, De La Salle Macroom.

## Report affirms ASTI position on migrant education

A report from the OECD has reiterated a number of concerns previously put forward by the ASTI in relation to intercultural education in Ireland. The research commends the commitment to intercultural education initiatives shown by government and schools in this country, but points out that there is scope for improvement. Measures including the strengthening of initial and ongoing training for English as an additional language (EAL) teachers are recommended in the report, which also points to the importance of investing in training for mainstream teachers in coping with linguistic and cultural challenges in the classroom. The report found that while the current provision of two years of EAL support for students is sufficient for conversational language, it does not provide adequate academic language learning for a successful transition to upper second-level education.

### AVC report

The annual report prepared by the trustees of the ASTI AVC scheme for the year ending March 31, 2009, is now available. Any member may obtain a copy by writing to the Honorary Treasurer or to Cornmarket Financial Services, who are the administrators of the scheme.

## ASTI Centenary Scholarship



The ASTI offers an annual scholarship to assist ASTI members in undertaking further third-level studies. The annual scholarship of €4,000 is awarded to an ASTI member, with preference given to members who do not hold any other scholarships or financial awards for study.

Any ASTI member who is currently in service, or who is on paid study leave, is eligible to apply.

The closing date for applications is April 30, 2010. Application forms are available on the ASTI website.

## ASTI raises concerns about Occupational Health Service

ASTI representatives recently discussed concerns about the Occupational Health Service (OHS) with the Department of Education and Medmark, the service provider.

ASTI members regularly seek ASTI advice on the operation of the OHS and some specific complaints of unsatisfactory service have been made by members. The ASTI communicated these concerns to Medmark and the Department.

Following representations, the ASTI has received a number of clarifications on the OHS. Among these is the fact that the board of management is not an appropriate body to interpret consultant's or medical reports on teachers; it is the role of Medmark to do so and then to advise the board. The ASTI also raised a concern that while there is a formal procedure for ill health retirement appeals, there is no such process for other Medmark decisions such as those on fitness to work. Medmark has agreed to review its decisions through consultation with the teachers' doctors and, in exceptional cases, through a second independent opinion.

The ASTI communicated its opposition to the €450 fee payable for appeals of decisions on ill health retirement. Of 123 ill health retirement applications made in 2009, 50 were refused. Thirty-one of these refusals were appealed and almost half of these appeals were successful. Last year 3,626 teachers engaged with Medmark.

## Teaching Council certification

The Teaching Council is in the process of issuing certificates of registration to all teachers registered without conditions.

These certificates are valuable documents and are issued on a once-off basis. Teachers are advised to retain their certificate safely.

This step in the Council's registration process brings the teaching profession into line with other professions such as engineering, medicine and nursing. Registration renewal forms for teachers with a renewal date of March 28 were issued by The Teaching Council in mid-February 2010. Registration may be renewed online at [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie).

## Well known DES official retires



*Pictured at the retirement of Martin Keane of the Department of Education are (from left): Bernard Moynihan, ASTI Executive Officer; Michael Ward, Principal of St Davids, Artane; Martin Keane; and, Maire Mulcahy and Pat King, ASTI Assistant General Secretaries.*

## Olympic honour for ASTI member



*Siobhan Hoey, Deputy Principal of Assumption Secondary School, Walkinstown, and Chef de Mission for the Irish team at the Winter Olympic Games.*

ASTI member Siobhan Hoey, who is Deputy Principal of Assumption Secondary School, Walkinstown, acted as Chef de Mission for the Irish team at the Winter Olympic Games, which took place in Vancouver in February.

Appointment as Chef is an acknowledgement of life commitment to sport. Siobhan was ten times National Senior triple jump champion and record holder. In 2000 she crossed over to winter sports and competed at European and World Championship level for seven seasons as brake athlete for the women's bobsleigh team. Siobhan and her younger sister missed qualification for the 2006 Torino games by one place. The experience will be greatly enhanced as Siobhan's younger sister Aoife secured her Olympic qualification at the end of the World Cup season and will be the first ever women's bobsleigh pilot to compete in the Winter Olympics.



# UCC

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland

## School of Education, University College, Cork M.Ed (Modular)

Applications are invited for admission to the M.Ed (Modular) programme in the School of Education UCC beginning September 2010. This is a modularised programme (120 credits) and can be attained through a credit accumulation process over a period of 5 years. Its focus is on the continuing professional development of teachers at all levels of education.

Students can design their own specialised programme from the available modules to suit their own professional specialisation and interests. Module areas of study cover a wide range of contemporary issues in education. Details are available from:

[www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/what/acsss/masters/education](http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/postgrad/what/acsss/masters/education).

Applicants should hold a primary degree and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (or equivalent), or B.Ed (Hons) (or equivalent). Certain postgraduate diplomas exempt attendance at 60 credits of the taught element of the programme. Further details are available on [www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate](http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate).

Application can be made online at [www.pac.ie](http://www.pac.ie).

**The closing date is 1 April, 2010.**

Further information available from School of Education  
Ms. Claire Dooley or Anita Cronin

School of Education, UCC

Email: [education@ucc.ie](mailto:education@ucc.ie)

Tel 021-4902467

Fax: 021-4270291

[www.ucc.ie/en/education](http://www.ucc.ie/en/education)



## TY programme tackles workplace safety

A Health and Safety Authority Transition Year programme for students has been officially launched, following formal ratification by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The transition unit provides students with safety and health awareness for work experience, part-time work and as preparation for the working world. Estimates of work-related accidents in Ireland indicate that the injury rate for 15- to 19-year-olds was higher than any other age category for 2007. Launching the new programme, Chairman of the Health and Safety Authority, Jim Lyons said: "With up to 50% of 15 to 19-year-olds in some form of work, whether during the summer or part-time, it is essential that students are prepared for the hazards that are encountered in the workplace". See <http://www.hsa.ie/education> for more information.

## Teacher Fee Refund Scheme

Did you undertake a course or modules during the period September 1, 2008, to August 31, 2009? You may be eligible for a partial refund of fees. Application forms and information are available at [www.mie.ie/refundoffees](http://www.mie.ie/refundoffees). The closing date for applications is March 31.

# NUI MAYNOOTH

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For further details on our programmes visit: Website: <http://www.nuim.ie/academic/education/Courses.shtml>

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## Teaching Council successfully defends discrimination case

A claim of discrimination against the Teaching Council was not upheld by the Equality Tribunal in February. The case was taken under the Employment Equality Act by a teacher who was unable to register his UK qualifications with the Teaching Council. The discrimination case was taken on the grounds of age, race and family status. Part of the teacher's case related to the requirement to have completed a module on the history and structure of the Irish education system in order to register with the Teaching Council. According to the claimant, this constitutes discrimination on the grounds of race. In her decision, however, the Equality Officer stated that the requirement was necessary for the Teaching Council to achieve its statutory function of maintaining and improving standards in teaching. She noted that the Teaching Council had provided an alternative avenue to attaining recognised qualifications for people from outside the State, which the teacher chose not to take.

## Snow

by Poor and Proud

Snow comes swirling from the sky,  
Looking for victims...you and I.  
Its season is joyful, for dogs and kids,  
With whooping, yelping, sliding and skids.  
The country assumes a blinding white,  
Which still can be seen through your curtains at night.  
With frost as its keeper snow settles in,  
Muting the crumpling, the traffic's din.  
Old people talk about chaos and death,  
While Paddy Power is taking a bet:  
If there is snow on Christmas Day...  
I'll hand you a bundle and take it away.  
The birds are so frantic with hunger and pain,  
Looking for vittles – some bread, crusts and grain.  
Old people hug their knees by the fire,  
Feeling the cold and the loneliness – dire!  
Christmas church bells peal out to the flock  
Who wend their way thither after feeding the stock.  
Cherry-cheeked children take over the scene  
With berets and scarves – wine, orange and green.  
Fat snowmen are looking with coal-black eyes  
In fear that the sun may take over the skies.  
Schools are closed, teenagers in bed,  
What a lovely distraction from swinging the lead.  
All eyes are peeled for the weather forecast,  
Hoping to hear some wheels slushing at last.  
A river may swell past its banks here and there,  
But burst pipes and hip joints can be prevented ... by prayer.

## Subject range and school organisation suffer due to cutbacks

A significant number of schools have dropped or are considering dropping subjects as a result of budget cutbacks, according to a recent survey.

The survey, carried out by the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, shows that one in five of the 210 second-level schools surveyed has given up or is considering dropping physics. One in seven of the schools has given up or is considering dropping chemistry, while 21 schools said the same about music, and the same number about design and engineering. Other subjects under threat include accountancy, economics, history, art, and German.

The restricted subject choice results from changes in the pupil-teacher ratio and the impact of the moratorium on posts of responsibility. Between them, the 210 schools surveyed have 245 fewer teachers than last year, resulting in larger classes in most cases.

### Loss of posts

The moratorium on posts of responsibility has left a total of 307 assistant principal and 214 special duties posts unfilled, as a result of retirements in the 210 schools surveyed. The schools expect a further 301 assistant principals and 103 special duties teachers to retire, without replacement, this year.

According to John White, ASTI General Secretary: "As this survey shows, the impact of the moratorium on posts has already been felt in many schools, but will be felt even more keenly following retirements in September. The ASTI is seeking a resolution to this issue now, before the full impact on schools manifests. To that end, we have stepped up our action in that area by issuing a further directive to members. Our action will show that school management systems cannot cope with the removal of these important posts. These posts require time and effort and are necessary to the smooth running of a school and to students' education. The government cannot simply expect to remove them from the system without any repercussion on the education service".

The ASTI is currently conducting separate research into the impact of budget measures and into science teaching in schools. Keep an eye on the website over the next month to see the results – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

## Number of school fires indicates need for emergency plans

Seventy-six school fires were reported in 2007, according to statistics recently published by the Department of the Environment. In 2006, 96 school fires were reported. It is essential that all schools have a well rehearsed fire and evacuation plan in place.

Forty-one people lost their lives in fires nationally during 2007. Over 600 fires were due to electrical faults and 4,852 were caused maliciously.

For more information on health and safety in schools and on the role of ASTI safety representatives, visit [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie) (click on pay and conditions/conditions at work).

## New Chief Inspector appointed

Dr Harold Hislop has been appointed Chief Inspector in the Department of Education and Science, replacing Eamon Stack who recently retired. Harold joined the Department's Inspectorate in 1998 and has held a number of senior positions in the organisation – most recently as Deputy Chief Inspector.

### CLASSIFIEDS

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Info: 041-983 7969 or [fkelly@intervac.ie](mailto:fkelly@intervac.ie)

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#### OBERAMMERGAU AND SWITZERLAND JULY 16-23

Visit The Passion Play of Christ; Altotting (German Marian shrine);

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and, historic sites in Frankfurt.

Price is €1,660, half-board.

Group Leaders is John Fahey, 107 Tonleegge Road, Raheny, Dublin 5.

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# Finding your way through the pensions minefield



Changes to the public service pension scheme announced in the last budget have left many considering where they and their pensions now stand. Whether you're considering retiring in the near future, or just confused about all things pension related, read on.

## Pension changes

No definite changes to the pension scheme for existing public service employees have yet been announced. In the last budget, however, the Minister for Finance announced his intention to introduce a new pension scheme for all new entrants to the public service.

Budget 2010 did not impose any cuts in the rates of pension paid to current recipients and public servants retiring this year (2010) will have their benefit calculated on their 2009 salary rather than the new reduced pay rates. The Minister did indicate, however, that as part of public service pension reform he will consider linking future pension benefits to increases in the cost of living for both existing and future pensioners.

As envisioned by the Minister, the new pension scheme proposed in Budget 2010 would calculate benefits based on career average earnings rather than final salary, as is currently the case. In operation, a specific pension accrual rate would be applied to pensionable pay so that each year public servants would accrue a certain amount of pension payable on retirement.

The ASTI is opposed to any deterioration in the conditions of the public service pension and is currently developing a strategy of opposition to the Government's proposals, in conjunction with the other teacher unions. See page 6 for more information.

In light of these announced and other speculated changes to the pension scheme and its benefits, many members are now wondering whether to retire sooner rather than later. Each person's circumstances are different and in considering whether to retire, you should carefully weigh up your options and make sure you understand how your pension operates and will be calculated. Comprehensive information will be given by experts at two-day ASTI retirement seminars being held around the country (see page 22 for details).

## As it stands

As a member of the Teacher's Superannuation Scheme, you pay a regular contribution based on a percentage of your overall public service income, including allowances and supervision and substitution payments. In return you receive a lump sum on retirement and a defined benefit pension, both based on years of service and final pensionable remuneration.

The contribution you make to your pension depends on what rate of PRSI you pay. Teachers who joined the Scheme on or after April 1, 1995, pay

Class A PRSI. Teachers who joined before that date pay D rate PRSI. The D rate of PRSI is less than the A rate and has fewer entitlements. For example, the D rate does not entitle you to the Contributory State Pension. The A rate would normally entitle contributors to the Contributory State Pension and so A-rate teachers' pensions are integrated with the State Social Insurance System in terms of both contribution and pension benefit. Because of this, teachers who pay D rate PRSI pay 5% of remuneration towards their public service pension, while those paying the A rate pay 3.5% of net remuneration plus 1.5% of gross remuneration.

All teachers who are members of the Spouses and Children's Scheme also pay 1.5% of remuneration towards this Scheme, which provides pensions for the spouse and/or dependent children of a member who dies in service, or after qualifying for pension.

Since last year, all public service employees pay an additional public service pension levy based on a percentage of earnings, averaging 7.5%. This is levied on all earnings received from state sources, both pensionable and non-pensionable.

## Pension benefit

On retirement you will receive a lump sum worth 3/80ths of your pensionable remuneration per year of service up to a maximum of 1½ times pensionable remuneration.

You will also receive a fortnightly pension payment. In the case of a teacher paying D rate PRSI, pension is worth 1/80th of their pensionable remuneration for each year of service up to a maximum of half remuneration.

In the case of a teacher paying A rate PRSI, pension is 1/200th of the pensionable remuneration below 3.3 times the State Contributory Pension and 1/80th thereafter.

Pension benefit for part-time employees is based on notional full-time salary and actual service, pro-rata.

Public sector employees who have also worked in the private sector and have, thereby, made enough full PRSI rate contributions, may also qualify for the Contributory State Pension. This depends on the exact circumstances of each case. See [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) for more information.

Currently, the lump sum is not subject to income tax. Pensions are subject to income tax in the normal way.





Noreen Corbett, Loreto Fermoy, winner of the ASTI retirement seminars 2009 draw, is pictured with Pat King, ASTI (centre) and Justin McCarthy, Cornmarket (right).

### Retiring

Teachers may retire at any age, but pension benefit is only payable under certain conditions and age restrictions.

If you intend to retire, you should formally inform your school of your intention at least three months in advance. You should then apply for pension benefit to the Department of Education and Science – the relevant forms are available on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

### Compulsory retirement

Current compulsory retirement age for most teachers who began teaching before April 1, 2004, is 65. This means that you have to retire at the end of the school year after you reach 65. Teachers who entered the system after April 2004 can remain in work after the age of 65, if they are fit to do so. The proposed new pension scheme would see retirement age increase to 66 for new members.

### Retirement on the grounds of ill health

If you have more than five years' pensionable service and find yourself unfit to work, and your disability is likely to be permanent, you can apply to retire and receive a pension based on the number of years you were in the pension scheme plus a number of added years. The Occupational Health Service provider for teachers, Medmark, will have to sign off on your fitness to work. Comprehensive medical evidence is required.

### Optional retirement

Teachers who commenced work before April 1, 2004, may opt to retire at age 60 or thereafter and receive a pension based on the number of years they were a member of the Superannuation Scheme. If you are 55 and have 33 years' pensionable service you may also retire on pension under similar arrangements.

### Cost neutral retirement

Since 2005 teachers have been allowed to retire with pension at age 50 or older if in service before April 2005, or at age 55 if in service on or after April 2004. An adjustment is applied to the pension and lump sum based on the age of the retiring teacher, making it 'cost neutral'. For example, a teacher aged 50 would get 62% of their pension and 82% of their lump sum.

An early retirement scheme for public servants introduced in Budget 2009 does not apply to teachers. This scheme was introduced to encourage retirement in posts that would not be replaced due to the moratorium on public service appointments. There is no such moratorium on teaching appointments.

### Enhancing your pension

Technically, you would have to work for 40 years to make enough pension contributions to retire on full pension. Many teachers enter full-time employment in the public service late or take periods of absence, so there are a number of options to make up for pension contributions not made during that time.

*Back dating* allows you to purchase up to 15 months of pension credit, essentially backdating your entry to the scheme by 15 months. This is the cheapest method.

*The Buy Back Scheme* allows teachers to purchase pension credit for years when they were teaching but were not a member of the Superannuation Scheme. Teachers can either pay for this credit by lump sum or by deduction from eventual retirement lump sum.

*The Notional Purchase Scheme* allows teachers to secure additional service by paying specified amounts of ongoing contributions or by lump sum. Notional service is more expensive than the Buy Back Scheme.

*Additional Voluntary Contributions* can be made through Cornmarket Financial Services as brokers.

For more information visit the pay and conditions section of the ASTI website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

In order to assist members in finding out about their pensions and retirement, the ASTI is currently running a series of information seminars around the country. See overleaf for details.

# EXTRA RETIREMENT SEMINARS FOR ASTI MEMBERS

## RETIRING IN 2010 OR 2011

In order to facilitate members who are considering retirement during 2010 or in 2011 the ASTI is providing repeat seminars for those who have **not** yet attended an ASTI retirement seminar.

This is a two evening programme and members must attend on **both** evenings from 4.30pm to 7pm.

You must pre-register with Eileen O'Rourke on 01-6040170 or [asti.library@asti.ie](mailto:asti.library@asti.ie)

**Content:** Retirement options, pension calculations, retirement procedures, taxation/budgeting, investment and social welfare matters, pension enhancement etc.

### Have all your Retirement & Pension questions answered

VENUE	SESSION 1	SESSION 2
<b>RADISSON HOTEL Sligo</b>	<b>Monday 15th March</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Monday 22nd March</b>
<b>STILLORGAN PARK HOTEL Stillorgan, Co. Dublin</b>	<b>Tuesday 16th March</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Tuesday 23rd March</b>
<b>CRYSTAL HOTEL Co. Cavan</b>	<b>Thursday 18th March</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Thursday 25th March</b>
<b>TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL Tullamore, Co. Offaly</b>	<b>Monday 12th April</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Monday 19th April</b>
<b>DAYS HOTEL Kilkenny City</b>	<b>Tuesday 13th April</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Tuesday 20th April</b>
<b>CLARION HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT Dublin</b>	<b>Wednesday 14th April</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Wednesday 21st April</b>
<b>CARLTON HOTEL Galway</b>	<b>Thursday 15th April</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Thursday 22nd April</b>
<b>LIMERICK STRAND HOTEL Limerick</b>	<b>Tuesday 4th May</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Tuesday 11th May</b>
<b>SILVERSPRINGS MORAN HOTEL Cork (on the Dublin Road)</b>	<b>Wednesday 5th May</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Wednesday 12th May</b>
<b>McWILLIAMS HOTEL Claremorris Co. Mayo</b>	<b>Friday 7th May</b> You must attend <b>both</b> days	<b>Friday 14th May</b>

**TEA/COFFEE AND SANDWICHES WILL BE AVAILABLE EACH EVENING**

You can only attend if you have pre-registered with Eileen O'Rourke on 01-6040170 or [asti.library@asti.ie](mailto:asti.library@asti.ie)

# ASTI RETIREMENT SEMINARS

**ASTI100**  
A century of service

# The work of the school steward

ASTIR talks to school stewards about how budget cuts have impacted on their schools and colleagues, and the challenges school stewards face as the ASTI continues down a road of opposition to the cuts.



Aidan O'Leary is school steward in Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry, Tipperary.

## How has the role of school steward changed since the education cuts and pay cuts were introduced?

Members are much more tuned in to the union these days. I get asked for a lot more information now. And of course there is more information there – more circulars, posters, *Nuachts*, and *ASTIRs* to distribute. As school steward, you really feel people's concerns. It's more than just delivering the message or the union's party line. Until the cutbacks, there wasn't that much pressure. Now there is a real sense of panic. We've had a huge turnover in staff recently; there are a lot more young teachers who face having mortgages and other demands to pay with a cut in salary and no prospect of promotion. There are teachers out there who don't have jobs at all. The question I get asked most often now is 'What is the union doing?' I don't always have the answer. But it's easy to get a stick and beat the union or to ask 'Why am I paying my sub?' You pay your sub for a service, so get involved – demand more meetings, engage in the campaign!

## What are the greatest challenges for school stewards during this period and what can the union do to make your role easier?

Teachers really have to engage and make themselves knowledgeable about both the cuts and union policy. But the union can help by sending clear and basic information without 'spin'. The ASTI needs to be far more aggressive and assertive in the media and get their message of opposition out there bluntly and directly. It needs to be out there articulating the concerns of teachers too.

You get the feeling the Government knows it's not popular and it doesn't care. That's not easy to work against. But teachers need to be motivated and realise that they can't take this attack lying down. With the threat to pensions at the moment, for example, it's the older teachers who are exercised about this – so exercised that there are thousands of them retiring this year. It should be the younger teachers, who will find their pensions cut asunder in a few years if they do nothing now. If you want a good pension, you have got to engage with your union – that's the message the union and school stewards need to get out there. Social partnership softened us up. We had 20 years where we didn't have to fight. Teachers are flexible; if they are treated fairly they are more than rational and reasonable. Teachers should be utterly shocked by how they have been treated in the last 12 months. There should be so much more anger directed at the employer. Because you're not beaten until you surrender.



Niamh Carrol is school steward in St Patrick's Classical School, Navan.

## How has the role of school steward changed since the education cuts and pay cuts were introduced?

Undoubtedly, the role of the school steward has changed over the last academic year. I always believed my role to be that of a facilitator but that certainly has been magnified over the last while. I'm certainly far busier – I could give Postman Pat a run for his money as my post box is constantly overflowing these days! People have far more issues and concerns than ever before. These can be both positive and negative, which is completely understandable in the current climate! I am extremely lucky as the staff in my school are very supportive and respectful regardless of whether they agree or disagree with matters



arising. I also find ASTI Head Office to be a huge pillar of support and the ASTI website is very helpful. It is always interesting to observe how we are being portrayed in the various national newspapers!

**Would you encourage younger teachers to get more involved in the union?**

I would still regard myself as an 'apprentice' as I am still learning so much about unions and how they function. It really is truly interesting to go to Convention or to a CEC meeting and to just sit there and watch, listen and learn and see how it all works. I would urge younger union members with all my heart to go to a local branch meeting. The future of the union is in our hands and we need to learn as much as possible from the present leaders to ensure that we can uphold and continue the legacy that presently exists. My experience has been so positive that I would say you really don't know what you are missing out on if you're not involved!

**Have you had any positive experiences in your union involvement over the past year?**

Every single person that I have encountered on my journey thus far has been friendly, kind, supportive and positive. At the end of the day, we are all on the same team, older, younger, everybody! As a union, we really could 'rock' the country if we all indulged a little more in the human condition and just simply started talking to each other more. I

suppose we have so much technology and are completely absorbed in the rat race nowadays that sometimes, perhaps, we forget to chat among ourselves and remind younger more vulnerable teachers that the union is there for them. In my own 'school of life' the ASTI plays a huge role and I would hope that other younger members might be a little inspired by my story.

Niamh has recently been elected to the Non-Permanent Teachers' Committee.

**Fiona Ní Chorcarain and Clodagh Cosgrove work together in the role of school steward in St Raphaela's Secondary School, Stillorgan, Dublin.**

**How has the role of school steward changed since the education cuts and pay cuts were introduced?**

The role is busier; more meetings are being held, chaired and organised. The role is more demanding as levels of interaction with staff about negative issues are increasing in the current climate.

**What are the greatest challenges for school stewards during this period and what can the union do to make your role easier?**


Dealing with staff members can be a challenge, in particular those against the industrial action. Trying to find a balance can be difficult. We would appreciate suggestions on how to deal with and address staff who, though they are members, did not vote for industrial action. It's busy keeping on top of correspondence and ensuring that staff members are informed of any new developments. A number of our staff members are branch officers and we also have a member of staff on the CEC so updates are regular. This role needs two people in the current climate and we can't imagine the challenges facing school stewards who work alone in schools.

**Have you had any positive experiences in your role as school steward over the past year?**

We have experienced a lot of support from the majority of staff. A lot of staff express sympathy for us having chosen to take on the role of school steward during such a difficult time.

**A message from Joe Moran, ASTI President:**

I am very grateful for the hard work carried out by school stewards around the country. This is a particularly challenging time for teachers and for the ASTI. And because of this, the role of the school steward is more important than ever, but can also be more difficult. School stewards are a vital voice for the union on the ground in schools. They are also there to represent and support members. I know that the job can be difficult in both respects. I thank all school stewards very much for taking on and rising to the challenge. Your help is vital to the success of the ASTI and to the success of our current campaign.




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It is expected that this course will continue to be funded under the National Development Plan (Postgraduate Skills Conversion programme) and attract a reduced fee for EU students in 2010. Fees for EU students in 2009 were €2,000.



# How the ASTI helped secure a CID for a member

A recent case highlights the importance of consulting your ASTI industrial relations official.



An ASTI member working in the Dublin area first contacted ASTI Head Office in 2008 and spoke to the industrial relations official responsible for her area. She explained that she had been employed on a series of fixed-term contracts between 2003 and 2008. In August 2008 she wrote to her school's board of management to request a contract of indefinite duration (CID). The board refused on the grounds that she was covering for a job-sharing teacher's hours, and therefore was not eligible for a CID.

On hearing the details of the case, the official supported the teacher in making an appeal to the Adjudicator. The Adjudicator found that under the terms of Department of Education Circular 55/2008, which advises on the granting of CIDs, the teacher was not eligible as she was covering for an approved scheme of absence.

Following this decision, the ASTI official advised the teacher to appeal the denial of a CID to the Rights Commissioner under the terms of the Fixed Term Work Act, 2003. At the Rights Commissioner hearing the school's board of management outlined the background to their assertion that the teacher was covering for job-sharing hours.

The case prepared by the ASTI official on behalf of the claimant argued that she could not be covering for a job-sharing teacher's hours as under such an arrangement, on the return of the job-sharing teacher to full time, the claimant would be displaced from her teaching post. This would not be possible, however, as the job-sharing teacher did not teach the same subject. The submission further argued that as the school was over quota, the 22-hour timetable held by the claimant could not come from hours allocated to replace job-sharing teachers. The submission argued that, in

fact, the teacher's salary stemmed from allocation under the heading 'additions to quota'.

The Rights Commissioner, noting that the teacher was "caught in a bureaucratic mess", stated that the only issue of contention was that of objective grounds, i.e., whether or not the teacher was covering for an approved leave of absence. On that point, the Rights Commissioner stated in his decision that: "The grounds put forward to justify continuing to employ [the teacher] on fixed-term contracts are imprecise and, in my view, do not fulfil the requirement of objectivity needed to remove her from the legislation". He therefore ruled that the teacher qualified for a CID from September 2007.

## A CID is good for you

A CID offers the same entitlements as a permanent contract. The only difference is that a CID holder's salary is based on the number of hours taught per week. A CID holder on 18 hours or more per week is paid a full-time salary.

*Cases like this show the value of consulting your ASTI industrial relations official should you have a query or concern. The ASTI industrial relations team has a wide range of experience and expertise. Your official will offer advice on your situation, can talk to your principal or the Department on your behalf, and will support your case throughout the industrial relations process.*

# The other side of the story

ASTIR spoke to two teachers with very different experiences of teaching in the UK about their impressions of the educational system and what it was like to teach there.



## Elaine Reen taught for a year in London

Without a teaching position and with substitution work diminishing in Ireland, I decided to look into teaching in the UK. Within two days of submitting my CV to an agency, I had two interviews lined up in London. One was at a secondary school that had over 2,000 students of all races, ethnicities and religions. There were fewer people living in my home village in Kerry so I was a bit worried about what I was getting myself into! After teaching a supervised lesson to a group of 30 students and attending an interview, I was offered the position.

I earned between £450 and £500, working from 8.00am to 3.05pm. As I was not educated in the UK I was regarded as a newly qualified teacher and had to be supervised by the Head of Department and the Head Teacher six times a year. A fully qualified teacher is inspected three times a year for their entire career. Although this is a good strategy for identifying stronger and weaker teachers, in reality very little was done about poor teaching standards. Teaching in London was a completely different experience. The Geography Department organised what homework should be assigned each week, as well as the scheme of work for the year, so all that was left for me to do was motivate and teach.

But to say that I was 'teaching' is a stretch of the imagination. In the majority of classes, my job was classroom management. If I could keep students in their seats, I was doing my job. It was a bonus if I actually taught them something.

My Year Seven students, aged 11-12, were a pleasure to teach. My Year Eight and Nine students, aged 12-14, were a different story. They had little interest in school, little respect for me and no matter what activity I introduced they

were not interested. Noise levels in my classroom were a lot higher than I had ever experienced but I was assured that this was something that every teacher encountered.

The discipline structure in the school was impressive, at least in theory. There were over 100 CCTV cameras in the school and five teachers patrolled the school at all times to locate missing students and calm any fights. There were a number of rules for dealing with classroom indiscipline. A verbal warning was followed by a change in seating arrangement, followed by three minutes outside the door. If a student continued to misbehave, I was to contact the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP), which would remove the student from the class. I only ever sent two students to the BIP – the first punched another student, the other slapped me. The student who slapped me received just two days in the BIP centre and then rejoined my class. Punishment was often inadequate as students did not learn anything about unacceptable behaviour.

Because the school was located in a socially deprived area, school books, copy books and even pens were supplied to students. While this system aided students financially, it meant that they couldn't take the books home to revise or attempt homework. I was told that to chase after homework was a waste of time. Essentially, students were not given much of a chance and I soon realised that I would not play an important role in their achieving good grades. Instead my role was to listen, advise and encourage.

As I discovered more about the students' lives, I developed a great deal of respect for them. Stories of drugs, abuse, prison and gangs were a common and accepted norm in their society. I learned to appreciate that they showed



up to school at all and developed a good rapport with them. I was offered a permanent position in the school but declined. I will always be thankful for my time in London, although there were days when I wondered what I was doing as paper aeroplanes flew past my head. I learned many lessons that I will carry on to future schools.

#### **Martin McGovern taught on the Shetland Islands in Scotland**

After completing my PGCE in Edgehill University, Liverpool, I returned to Ireland but found it very difficult to find a job. Though I sent out numerous applications, I only secured one interview. By mid-September I began to panic and decided to apply to a UK-based teaching recruitment agency. The recruitment agency had a maternity cover contract to teach history and geography in Shetland. Even though I was trained to teach religion, I was offered the job within the hour. I was a little concerned that I did not have an interview and that I was to teach subjects I was not trained in, but the principal explained that I could work on trial until Christmas.

The teaching agency found accommodation and Shetland Council paid most of the cost. I was paid a substitute wage of £100 a day from the agency. After two months I had the choice to leave the agency and receive a government salary. However, as I would be starting on the lower scale of £22,000 it worked out better to stay on the substitute wage.

There are only 22,000 people living on Shetland and the school I worked in was off the mainland on the island of Whalsay. It had only 64 students and 11 teachers. My classes were quite small – the largest had 15 pupils, the smallest only three. Discipline was not an issue generally. In fact, the pupils were very competitive and wanted to do well for themselves and their teachers. The school used an excellent system where students were broken into teams and each team earned points through individual achievements, such as sport or class work. The scores were on display in the canteen and at the end of the year the winning team received a reward.

I was struck by how modern the school was. Each room had an interactive whiteboard, computer, telephone, television and DVD player. There were small rooms off the main room for storage and everything you needed was provided – textbooks, pupils' folders, pens, paper, etc. Not only was there a computer room with 20 computers but also a portable trolley of laptops, and the school's interactive whiteboards are currently being replaced with updated versions.

Each teacher posted their plans of work on the school database, which meant that resources were built up quickly and each department was always ready for an inspection. When I arrived all I had to do was look at the social subject's scheme of work to find exactly where the students were. It's an excellent idea, especially for teachers new to a school.

Working in Shetland was a great experience and one I am very thankful for. With all the doom and gloom in Ireland at the moment, with pay cuts and recession, if ever a full-time job were to become available, I would strongly consider moving there.

*Martin and Elaine teach in St Ciaran's Community School in Kells, Co. Meath.*

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# Talking attendance

ASTIR sits down with Eddie Ward, CEO of the National Educational Welfare Board, to find out how the Board is working with schools to improve attendance.



In 2000 the Education (Welfare) Act overhauled the approach to dealing with school attendance nationally. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), a single entity with responsibility for attendance throughout the country, was established in 2002, with Chief Executive Officer Eddie Ward at the helm. "The legislation is a progressive piece that addresses the educational welfare needs in a holistic way from the perspective of the child, parent and the school, and provides for a coherent policy and service response to children experiencing difficulty around attendance," says Eddie. "Unlike the previous legislation, which dated from the 1920s, this response does not locate the fault with the child. It's about the system trying to address matters in a child-centred way."

So what does that mean in terms of an actual working response? Well, there are two sides to the NEWB's work – policy and practice – each feeding into each other. Eddie explains: "The Board's role is to ensure that every child receives an education. If a child is at risk of not getting an education – not attending school regularly, out of school or without a school place – we have a responsibility to intervene directly with the child and the family. The other side of our work revolves around supporting schools in relation to attendance and participation. We undertake and disseminate research. We develop guidelines for schools that are evidence based, for example the recent guidelines on the development of codes of behaviour in schools. It's very important that the lessons we learn from working with schools and families on the ground are carried through to inform policy at national and departmental level".

## On the ground work

The Board is appointed by the Minister for Education and Science and comprises 13 members from a variety of relevant backgrounds, including a teacher union representative. Ninety educational welfare officers (EWOs) work directly with schools and students in 30 locations across the country. When the Board was established, there was no national infrastructure in place in either organisational or practice terms for dealing with attendance. The first priority of the new Board was, therefore, to create a national service using the resources provided. "The Act provides a legal framework, but is not an educational welfare practice manual. This must be developed having regard to the needs of children and families and identified good practice. Involving other players in education, including teachers, is a key element in developing an effective service," says Eddie.

Under the Act, schools are required to maintain their own attendance register and to report to the NEWB four times a year about any student who misses 20 days or more of school. A student who is to be expelled or removed from the register, or is considered to be at risk of not getting an education, must also be reported. Where a child is reported to the NEWB, an EWO is required by law to intervene to resolve the matter. Resources are stretched, however, and with over 100,000 students missing over 20 days a year, this is not always possible. Priority is given to certain categories of referral, for example, children who are out of school or have no school place, children who are expelled, younger children and children in areas of disadvantage.

EWOs engage with up to 8,000 children each year. When a child is referred they will go to the school to check on circumstances before beginning to work with the child and family. The focus is always on the child and determining the reasons why they are not in school, whether it is to do with aspects of the school experience, family circumstances, or issues personal to themselves. The response has to be unique to each child and can involve the EWO conferencing with other relevant agencies such as the HSE and local voluntary services. Close collaboration with the school is important throughout the engagement. Work continues over a period of time until the EWO is satisfied that concerns have been resolved, and attendance is monitored thereafter. In certain situations, where the EWO is satisfied that a parent is not doing their best about getting their child to school, the parents will be taken to court. This is the single biggest power the NEWB holds, according to Eddie, but one that is exercised in only a small number of cases.

## Supporting schools

The research and policy aspect of the NEWB's work is about supporting schools and creating an education system that encourages attendance and participation. The body provides guidance for school attendance strategies and codes of behaviour, as well as making submissions to government departments on a range of issues relating to attendance. Eddie takes a pragmatic view of how guidelines can help schools: "Guidelines provide a template around which a school can work with assurance that they are following the right steps, steps that have a solid evidence base informed by the experience of skilled education practitioners and other professionals. With the best will in the world, no national body can develop a standard



policy capable of being implemented in every school. School policies must be developed locally to suit local circumstances but guidelines give schools real support and guidance".

Each school is required to develop a school attendance strategy and submit it to the NEWB. One of the more important things to consider in any such strategy, according to Eddie, is the quality of relationships and engagement within a school: "If relationships are positive, if the approach of the school is child-centred, if there's good engagement between the school and home, if there is a curriculum that meets the needs of the children, then you are already a long way on to keeping children in school". Identifying a problem early is another crucial area. Of course, schools and teachers are already aware of that but, says Eddie: "One of the things that has happened since the legislation was brought in, is that there is now more emphasis on attendance by schools, both in their planning and in communications with families. Reporting to the NEWB is just one aspect of the response. Schools need to measure and monitor attendance and ask what is the data telling them, what trends are emerging and what can they do about it. The availability of national attendance data can help schools set their own benchmarks". The guidance to schools on the reporting of student absences will be reviewed to take account of experience since 2005, the development of educational welfare service practice over the period and the views of schools.

### Integration of services

In September of last year it was announced that the Home School Community Liaison Programme (HSCL), the School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Visiting Teachers Service for Travellers (VTST) are to be integrated within the NEWB. This step may, according to Eddie, give the body the chance to address some areas of criticism and provide some new opportunities. Schools have voiced concerns that the agency does not engage widely with schools and that its work could benefit from a more holistic approach to working with schools and liaising directly with in-school structures. "We are a small staff trying to give nationwide coverage," explains Eddie. "However, the recent announcement of service integration probably gives us an opportunity for a more holistic engagement with schools, supporting them at both local and national levels and providing a joined up response to children who experience difficulty."

The integration will involve two stages. The first is complete – the NEWB has taken responsibility for the services and there is an integrated national

management team over the services. You won't notice any immediate change at school level: "Our approach is to first allow a settling in period and to make sure the services continue to do their everyday work. The second part is to develop a single model of service to address attendance, retention and participation. That is where the greatest potential lies. We must ensure that from the school or family perspective, there should be a continuum of support so that a parent or a school principal knows who to call and when – there is a safety net for everybody. The challenge lies in making this a reality, and this will require leadership at different levels. Each of the four services has skilled expert practitioners and comes to the integration task with different understandings and concepts about what works for children. We need to spell those out and craft a vision for the future, and develop an integrated organisation that can provide a coherent response. It's a significant challenge but one of the more innovative things that has happened in this area".

If you had not heard much about the work of the NEWB before now, maybe that's because, as Eddie points out: "The overwhelming majority of children have a very good experience of school. They don't experience any attendance issues or if they do they are managed well at school level. For the vast majority of young people, school is a good place, where they are happy, learn well and come out with good qualifications. Our concern is to try to make that experience available to every young person".

### Eddie Ward is the CEO of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

A Chartered Accountant by profession, he is a graduate of NUI Galway and a native of Dunmore, Co. Galway. He is married to Patricia, a secondary teacher, and has two sons, Emmet and Gavin. Eddie joined the Civil Service in 1986 and served in the Departments of Social and Family Affairs and Finance, respectively, before joining the Department of Education and Science in 1995. He was appointed Chief Executive of the Board in 2002.



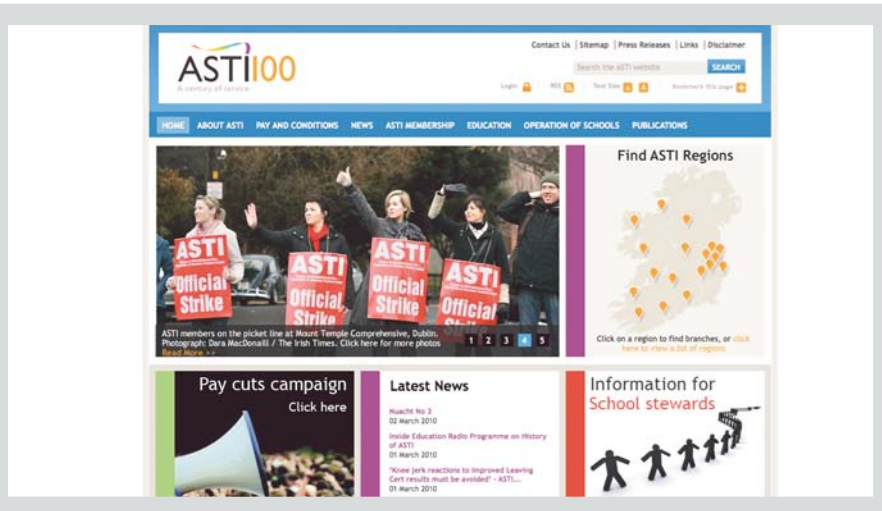


The ASTI website is always available to answer your questions about:

Your job

Your school

Your union



## Education

Keep up with curriculum development, your subject area, education issues, professional matters and all aspects of second-level teaching in Ireland in the ASTI website education section.

Here you also have the opportunity to give feedback on developments

## Your job

The website contains over 50 pages of information on teaching contracts, teachers' pay, conditions of work, leave options, health and safety, and industrial relations issues.

A section on the operation of schools allows you to find out about school management, school policies, legislation, outside agencies, etc.

## Latest news

The ASTI website offers you up-to-the minute news on education and trade union issues.

You can find out the latest on ASTI campaigns and directives, view recent ASTI press releases, and read ASTI publications.

The ASTI is working to bring its campaigns online to empower all members to participate

## Branch pages

Keep up to date with what's happening in the ASTI and your branch and to find contact details for your local representatives.

You can find out about ASTI committees and how to get more involved in your union.

You can see pictures and videos from ASTI events in our online gallery.

Details of who to contact if you have a specific query are available on the site

The ASTI is Ireland's main second level teachers union and represents 18,500 teachers in community schools, community colleges, comprehensive schools and voluntary secondary schools attended by 80% of all second-level students. The ASTI acts as a professional association voicing the concerns and interests of the teaching profession at second-level and as a registered trade union which represents teachers and fights for improvements in their pay and conditions of employment.

ASTI, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, Dublin 8.

LoCall: 1850-418400, Tel: 01-6040160, Fax: 01-8972760, Email: [info@asti.ie](mailto:info@asti.ie)

# Junior cycle review – have your say

Tell the ASTI your views on the new junior cycle discussion paper on [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).



A National Council for Curriculum and Assessment discussion paper on the junior cycle was published in February. This paper, 'Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a New Junior Cycle' was produced in line with the decision of the Minister for Education and Science in June 2009 that a review of the entire junior cycle curriculum be carried out.

The discussion paper is precisely that: a paper to encourage discussion. Decisions on a revised Junior Certificate programme – curriculum, assessment and examination – will be taken after this public consultation.

*All teachers are encouraged to read the paper and submit their views.*

All teachers are urged to read the paper and to submit their views directly to the ASTI. The paper is available on the education section of

our website – [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie). This page also allows you to fill in your comments and feedback and send it directly to the ASTI. You will also be able to read the comments of other teachers from all over the country by going online.

## Background

Points of concern within the junior cycle include:

- the dominating effect of the Junior Certificate examination on teaching and learning practice and on school organisation and structures;
- the perception of an inflexible overcrowded curriculum, and the disengagement of many students at an early stage in the cycle; and,
- the inadequate time for engagement with deeper learning, the narrow range of assessment activity and the limited access to a single qualification.

Some of these issues have been discussed in previous reviews of the junior

## Pathway 1: From curriculum conformity to schools having freedom to be different.

### Small move

The curriculum is based on subjects, but perhaps on fewer than is currently the case, with a good deal of time given to key skills, or learning tutorials or some investigation-based work. Schools would also have the option of devoting some time to courses developed locally.

### Moving further

The curriculum devotes at least 20% of its time to school-developed courses that would cross traditional subject boundaries and promote engaged learning. Schools would design and plan for the remainder of the curriculum in accordance with the Framework for Junior Cycle. Key skills are embedded in all teaching and learning activity.

### Moving further still

The curriculum that is completely different from the subject structure in use today. It contains very little centralised prescription and schools have extensive freedom to design learning within the Framework for Junior Cycle. They would organise junior cycle learning around concepts that draw on a range of disciplines.

## Pathway 2: From Junior Certificate to qualifications designed for all.

### Small move

The existing Junior Certificate is scaled back as a national, centralised examination of a number of core subjects such as Irish, English and Mathematics and the number of other subjects that can be included on the Certificate is capped. These other subjects could be examined through off-the-shelf examination papers developed at the national level but administered locally by the school. The scale-back version also involves revised syllabuses addressing a wider spectrum of knowledge, skill and learning in line with the Level 3 learning indicators in the NFO, e.g., more emphasis placed on key skills and learning outcomes.

### Moving further

A new junior cycle qualification is developed. It recognises multiple forms of evidence of learning that have been gathered in both formative and summative contexts and has the flexibility to include some local, school-specific dimension. Tests used to gather evidence in summative contexts could be nationally devised or locally devised. A similar second school qualification at Level 2 of the Framework is also available.

### Moving further still

Schools are given even greater flexibility to combine the new junior cycle qualifications with open access for junior cycle learners to external qualifications (national and international) not only at Level 3 of the Framework but at adjacent Levels 2 and 4. The new qualification might be augmented by the introduction of national standardised tests in core areas such as those of English, Irish and Mathematics and perhaps occasionally in other curriculum areas too. The purpose of these tests would be to provide information on learning in these areas for teachers, schools and parents that enables comparisons to be made with the achievement of learners at the national and international levels.

cycle, and this new work lays a foundation and provides a useful reference point for debate and review. Earlier reviews suggest that the junior cycle curriculum should be viewed as having a wider perspective than the mere choice and range of subjects and their examination. The outcomes were seen as informing a curricular framework at junior cycle that was intended to provide a wide educational context for the various subjects on offer, and to ensure a smoother transition from primary to second level and from junior to senior cycle.

### Outcomes of the junior cycle

The outcomes of the junior cycle are set out on the basis that, on completion of the junior cycle, all students, in accordance with their abilities and aptitudes, will have achieved or experienced:

- competence in literacy, numeracy and spoken language skills that will allow them to participate as young adults in society;
- experience in various domains of activity – artistic, intellectual, scientific, physical and practical;
- formative experiences in moral, religious and spiritual education;
- knowledge and supportive guidance in matters of personal health, sexual awareness and relationships;
- competence and understanding in practical skills, including computer literacy and information technology;
- knowledge and appreciation of their social, cultural and physical heritage and environment;
- understanding and appreciation of the central concepts of citizenship; and,



## Pathway 3: From three years in junior cycle to three years of junior cycle.

### Small move

Three-year model remains with greater cognisance of transition issues in curriculum planning. More use of bridging frameworks in subject areas thus improving continuity. There is improved communication and information flow (with primary schools and parents) and increased flexibility in patterns of organisation of junior cycle.

### Moving further

Options might include:  
Option 1+2: learners afforded the opportunity to experience a range of subject areas in their first year of post-primary school. They then progress to a second and third year where curriculum choices are made and ongoing preparation for a junior cycle qualification, and senior cycle, is undertaken.  
Option: 2+1: Learners involve themselves in a variety of subject areas and learning experiences in their first two years. The third year focuses more on preparing for a junior cycle qualification.

### Moving further still

There is a focus on junior cycle experience incorporating sixth class and the first year of senior cycle. Teaching and planning responsibilities are shared with primary school. The four-year junior cycle takes the student to the end of compulsory education and their learning achievements are recognised in the certification marking the end of compulsory education.

## Pathway 4: Towards a renewal of teaching and learning.

### Small move

Schools use a range of activity-based learning approaches in all aspects of the curriculum. A strong emphasis is placed on students reflecting on their learning, using assessment for learning (AFL) and key skills as vehicles for this. There is a direct connection between the learning and teaching approaches used and the methods used to gather evidence of learning.

### Moving further

Schools place a stronger focus on learning and teaching approaches that encourage students to work as part of a group, such as co-operative learning and project work. Across the curriculum areas, approaches are used that encourage students to engage in their learning, such as peer-assessment and self-assessment.

### Moving further still

Schools predominantly use approaches that emphasise the student voice in the learning process and encourage students to learn independently. Opportunities are given for students to learn from each other using approaches such as peer tutoring and learning communities.

## Pathway 5: From generating an examination grade towards generating evidence of learning.

### Small move

A greater variety of tools is used to gather evidence of learning, with less emphasis on centrally administered examinations.

### Moving further

Within the approaches used to gather evidence of learning, there is a strong element of student reflection and a balance between locally and centrally developed tools.

### Moving further still

All evidence of learning is gathered in school in accordance with the parameters of the Framework for Junior Cycle and reflected in a statement of learning. Standardised testing occurs at least once in a junior cycle context.

- understanding and appreciation of the value of thinking and learning, and a positive attitude towards schooling and the opportunities it offers.

*This stage of education should focus more on the experience and quality of learning and be less concerned with subjects and examinations.*

According to the discussion document: "This stage of education should focus more on the experience and quality of learning and be less

concerned with subjects and examinations. Of course, there are related and more specific purposes of the junior cycle in the areas of inclusion, the promotion of skills, and the encouragement of creativity and innovation in learners. But the junior cycle should essentially be about ensuring that learners have experiences that build on the advances they have made in primary education and, in the process of passing from childhood towards adulthood, develop a strong disposition towards and enjoyment of learning. This is the learning point of junior cycle education". Following consultation, an agreed "Framework for Junior Cycle" will emerge, which will be a working template for schools to structure their own changes based on five 'Pathways for Change' (see panels).

Submit your views on these proposals at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie).

# New book recounts ASTI's 'noble and turbulent' history

*Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909-2009* by Dr John Cunningham, was officially launched by Kieran Mulvey, Chief Executive of the Labour Relations Commission, in January.



Former presidents of the ASTI pictured at the launch of *Unlikely Radicals*. Standing: Michael Corley; John Hurley; PJ Sheehy; Mary Dowling Maher; Pat Cahill; John Mulcahy; Tommy Francis; Henry Collins; Louis O'Flaherty; Pierce Purcell; Sheila Parsons; Michael Freeley; Joe Whyte; John White; Éamon Ó hAllmhuráin; and, Pat Hurley. Seated: Kevin Meehan; Bernadine O'Sullivan; Susie Hall; Dermot Quish; Margaret Walsh; and, Kathleen O'Sullivan.

The new book provides a social and historical account of the ASTI's role in the development of second-level education and the teaching profession in Ireland. Mr Mulvey is well acquainted with many of the events and personalities discussed in the book, having served as General Secretary of the ASTI from 1983 to 1991. Speaking at the launch, he said: "The ASTI over its history has had to fight on many fronts and this history chronicles the singular achievements of its leadership and members over the years to bring reform and change to the curriculum, and respect for the professional teacher, and for the Irish system of education and independent examinations. The milieu in which modern Irish society developed from its radical beginnings in nation building, and

as exemplified in the crossover of its founders and the early leaders in the ASTI, to the conservative middle years of the last century and then to new found liberalism and occasional radicalisation in our nation, is both a history of the ASTI and of Ireland itself".

Also speaking at the launch, ASTI President Joe Moran commended the ASTI's historical contribution to education and society: "The work and achievements of ASTI members over the past 100 years have benefited pupils, teachers, the education system, and society as a whole. As this book recounts, these achievements were won by thousands of ordinary men and women teaching in classrooms all over the country, who understood the importance of education and who believed in the rights



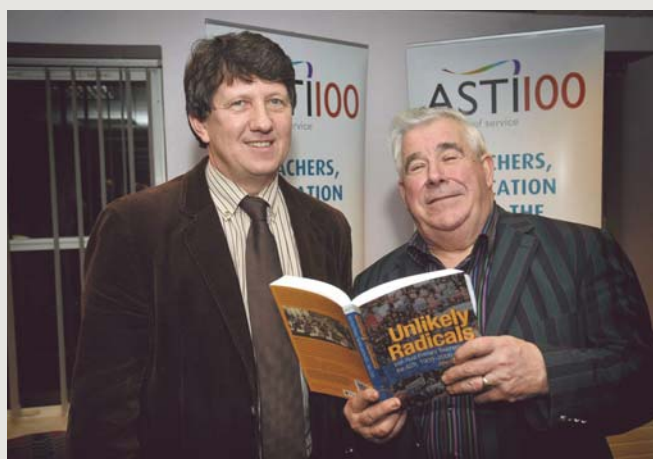
From left: Elaine Devlin, Dundalk Branch; Mary Lysaght, Tipperary Branch; Michael Ward, Dublin North Central Branch; and, Sally Maguire, Stillorgan Branch, pictured at the launch.



Pictured at the launch of the ASTI history are three former ASTI presidents (from left): John White, President 1986/87; Pat Hurley, President 2008/09; and, Joe Whyte, President 1992/93. Pat Hurley and Joe Whyte both attended St Colman's College, where the first ideas for the foundation of the ASTI were born in 1909. Joe taught Pat when he was a student at St Colman's.



From left: John Cunningham, author of *Unlikely Radicals*; Kieran Mulvey, Chief Executive of the LRC; Joe Moran, ASTI President; John White, ASTI General Secretary; and, Clive Byrne, Director, NAPD.



John Cunningham, author of *Unlikely Radicals* (left) pictured with Professor John Coolahan, author of the previous history of the ASTI, *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland, 1909-1984*.

of workers to decent salaries and fair treatment. This book is a timely reminder of what trade union solidarity can achieve, not only for workers but for all of society".

Continuing this theme, ASTI General Secretary John White spoke about the link between the ASTI's history and Ireland's history: "Because education is so intimately linked with human and, indeed, social development, the ASTI's history is interwoven with the major movements in Ireland's broader social history. Thus, in this book we find the ASTI featuring not only in the great struggle for improvement in the terms and conditions of employment of trade union members, but also in the contestation between Church and state for control of education,

in the great move for economic expansion assisted by the introduction of free second-level education in 1968, in the debate on cultural identity and the Irish language, and in the development of Ireland as a modern European state. In this time of recession, we have good reason to be concerned about the well-being of our education system, but I have no doubt that the ASTI will face the challenge and continue to work for education".

A copy of *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909-2009* has been sent to each school. Further copies are available from Cork University Press – [www.corkuniversitypress.com](http://www.corkuniversitypress.com).



# How your leave is recorded

ASTIR clarifies the situation with regard to accessing information about your leave.

Schools are required to send staffing reports to the Department of Education and Science Payroll section. These reports allow the school to claim payment for teachers and to report details of staff absences. Since November 2006, this reporting is done via an online claims system (OLCS). All staff members, including substitute and part-time teachers, should be set up in the OLCS when they begin work in the school. All leave, both substitutable and non-substitutable, is recorded on the OLCS. Leave reports should be made daily. The principal is required to record all staff absences, noting the teachers who are absent and the reason for the absence. There are a number of categories of leave available on the online form, and the principal must assign a category to account for each staff member's absence.

Leave categories cover a range of absences, including certified and uncertified sick leave, maternity leave, *force majeure* leave, jury service, in-service or secondment, etc.

All previous claims and leave records are accessible by school authorities so if you have a query about your recorded leave, you can ask your principal for the information. You can also obtain this information under the Data Protection Act. If necessary, you can request this by writing to your principal stating that you wish to view this information and that you are making this request under the Data Protection Act.

Alternatively, under the Freedom of Information Act, you are entitled to access any information held concerning you by the Department of Education.

Requests under the Freedom of Information Act must be made in writing to the Department's FOI Unit, and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee (if applicable). Requests should be as specific as possible to enable the information sought to be identified. You can access an application form and further information on the Department of Education website – [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

## Easy to Use 1st Year and 2nd Year SPHE Resources

The North Western Health Board Lifeskills series has been revised, redeveloped and revamped. The series features comprehensive Teacher Lesson Plan Books and Student Workbooks for use in the classroom, as well as additional resources to support the delivery of SPHE.

Each Teachers Pack includes:

- An easy to use Teachers Lesson Plan Book which:
  - Cuts down on planning and preparation
  - Uses active methodologies as recommended for SPHE
  - Is based on the aims and outcomes of the 10 Junior Cycle SPHE Modules
- An accompanying Teachers Methodology Booklet and DVD containing classroom footage and additional resources such as lesson logs for record keeping, a certificate of participation for students, relevant web-links, and much more!

The Student Workbook:

- Is based on the activities in the Teachers Lesson Plan Book
- Is portfolio-based with perforated inserts for assembly in a binder if desired
- Includes a personal reflection section
- Is in full colour with modern graphics



To join the mailing list or for more information contact:  
HSE, Health Promotion Department,  
Saimer Court,  
Main Street,  
Ballyshannon,  
Co. Donegal  
Telephone: 071 9852000  
Email: [Frances.Hersey@hse.ie](mailto:Frances.Hersey@hse.ie)

# Chinese – the language of the future?

In December the UCD Confucius Institute for Ireland called for the development of Mandarin Chinese as a full-time second-level subject. ASTIR looks at one school currently offering the language as an extracurricular subject.



*Catherine Donagh, Principal of Loreto Secondary School, Bray.*

Forty students at Loreto Secondary School, Bray, are among 40 million worldwide currently learning Chinese. Loreto is one of only six schools to have ever offered Mandarin Chinese as an option in Ireland. In contrast, 13% of secondary schools in the UK offer the option, while in Australia Chinese is on the curriculum from primary school.

Loreto Bray began offering Chinese as an extracurricular subject to first-year students three years ago, adding a class group each subsequent year. The students learn a mix of language and culture, including Chinese songs, poetry, cooking, and even martial arts. The combination aims to keep students engaged and, according to principal Catherine Donagh, it's working: "Students come to class faithfully even though it's outside school time. It's proving very popular with students and parents who see it as a wonderful opportunity for their kids".

## Expanding extracurricular activities

The Mandarin Chinese programme began in Loreto when the school was looking to expand its range of extracurricular activities and Catherine contacted the Chinese Embassy in Ireland to ask advice on starting Chinese lessons. The embassy put her in contact with the UCD Confucius Institute for Ireland, whose brief includes the development of educational links between Ireland and China. The Institute provides the school with three teachers, which allows for three class levels to be taught each Wednesday afternoon. The different class levels are necessary, says Catherine, as the students who began Chinese three years ago have made excellent progress in that time.

## Chinese on the curriculum?

The Confucius Institute, together with The Irish Institute for Chinese Studies, recently published a report into the demand for Mandarin Chinese teaching in Irish post-primary schools. The report found that Irish education lacks a coherent language policy – the languages included in the Irish curriculum depend largely on tradition and accident. In 2001, Japanese was added to the Leaving Certificate curriculum because at the time Japan was Ireland's number one trading partner. China has since moved to that position and the study claims that having Chinese language and culture on the curriculum would enable Ireland to be at the cutting edge of economic developments. This is backed up by another study by the Confucius Institute, 'Irish Business in China – Meeting the Inter-Cultural Challenges', which found that over 78% of Irish companies questioned had a demand for university level graduates who combine business and Chinese. Catherine Donagh says she would welcome the introduction of Chinese to the second-level curriculum and would be happy to implement it in Loreto Bray. In fact, the school is currently looking at the possibility of students taking GCSE exams in Chinese in fourth or fifth year in order to allow them to achieve some qualification in return for their work. "I would encourage other schools to consider taking up the subject," says Catherine. "I am very pleasantly surprised with how it has worked out. It's different but the students are challenged by it, not daunted. With the strength of the Chinese economy, many more businesses will be looking to China to do business. Having Chinese can only be an advantage for students. It is the language of the future."

## RSTA Annual General Meeting 2010

The RSTA AGM will be held in ASTI Head Office, Thomas MacDonagh House, Winetavern Street, on May 6, 2009. Registration will commence at 10.30am. Light refreshments will be available before the meeting. Nominations for officers and members of the National Committee must be submitted not later than three weeks before the AGM to Eileen Kelly, RSTA National Secretary, 17 Acorn Road, Ballinteer, Dublin 16. Any motions from the branches should be submitted at the same time. Branches are advised to encourage members to attend.

### North-South link

The following are the proposed events:

1. RSTA members will travel to Belfast to attend a performance of *Beauty and the Beast* at the Opera House on March 25, 2010. This may necessitate an overnight stay. Members of the NASUWT (retired) are involved with the production.
2. The return visit is planned for April 14, 2010, and will include a guided tour of the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, and lunch there.
3. RSTA members will travel by morning train to Belfast and have a guided tour of the refurbished Ulster Hall and the Linen Hall Library.
4. It is hoped to visit Kilkenny for a mid-week break with members of the NASUWT (retired) and stay in the Kilkenny Court Hotel.

For further details, contact Nuala O'Connor, Tel: 01-298 0819/086-876 8950. The above events are open to all members of the RSTA.

### A May outing

A day out organised by members of the North Eastern Branch is planned for May 19. The day will begin with lunch at 12 noon in the Slieve Russell Hotel, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan (leave the N3 at Belturbet and take the N87 for five miles).

A coach tour through Glangevlin to visit Shannon Pot, Moneygashel Megalithic Tomb and the Marble Arch Caves will follow. The scenery through Glangevlin is strikingly beautiful. Finally, we will return to the Slieve Russell Hotel via Swanlinbar and Derrynagrieve for tea and finger food. The tour will include a large section of the new cross border Geo Park of Counties Cavan and Fermanagh.

The cost of the trip will depend on numbers, and is estimated at around €10. Booking is essential. For more information or to book, contact Michael McMahon: 042-966 1097/087-753 5280, or Email: michaelimc@hotmail.com.

### Trips abroad

#### Oberammergau 2010

This tour includes Vienna, Salzburg and Munich, and is from September 14 to 21, departing from Cork Airport. Cost: €1,650. Single room supplement: €200. For further details contact Pat Browne, Tel: 021-429 4783, or Email: pat.browne@email.com.

### A historic venue

#### Sean O'Grady, a member of the Limerick Branch of the RSTA, gives an account of a recent Branch trip to Thomond Park.

On October 7 members of the Limerick Branch visited Thomond Park, the home of Munster rugby. The word 'iconic' tends to be over-utilised these days but it can justifiably be applied to this magnificent stadium. The two new stands are not merely masterpieces of engineering, but are a welcome and distinctive addition to the Limerick skyline.

Following an excellent lunch in the East Stand, we had a guided tour of the complex. This included visits to the home dressing room, the museum, the dug out and pitch side, and a film that attempted to explain what some people say defies explanation – what makes Munster rugby so special. Where else on this planet would a play be written about a rugby match? Of course it was not just any old match but the famous 1978 victory by Munster over the New Zealand All Blacks at this venue, a feat not achieved by any Irish national or provincial team before or since.

*Alone it Stands* has been performed in theatres all over the world. The museum visit was particularly interesting, especially for those of us who had a hand in educating many of the 'heroes' on view. The positive role of sport in the holistic education of students has perhaps not been emphasised enough, but has always been an integral part of the process in this area. Long may it continue and may we continue to appreciate the voluntary efforts of trainers and coaches in our schools who contribute so much of their time and energy to keep the tradition alive.

Standing on the famous pitch, memories came back of the agony and ecstasy associated with many school matches over the years, as did some (no doubt rose-tinted) memories of one's own performances over half a century ago. Our hard working branch officers who organised this marvellous event deserve our sincere thanks.

### Deductions on your payslip

#### Health levy

Anyone who is earning over €1,000 every two weeks and is under 70 years of age is liable to pay 4% of their gross pension towards the health levy, shown as employee's PRSI. Exemptions apply for those holding:

- a full Medical Card/HAA Card;
- a social welfare widow's pension;
- deserted wife's benefit;
- a social welfare survivors pension;
- a lone parents allowance; or,
- a widows pension acquired under the social security legislation of another EU state.

#### Income levy

The income levy is paid by all.

#### Killarney Padre Pio Group pilgrimage

This trip will travel to Cassino, San Giovanni Rotondo, Assisi and Rome, from July 23, 2010, for eight nights, departing from Dublin Airport. Cost: €1,069 pp including taxes and charges.

For further details, contact Michael and Sheila Clifford, Tel: 045-861 410/064-663 3712, or Email: michaelclifford@gmail.com.





School of Education UCD

## GRADUATE STUDIES IN EDUCATION

On-line applications are now invited for the following courses

### **Master of Education**

*(2 year part-time)*

### **Master of Education in Special Educational Needs**

*(2 year part-time)*

### **Master of Arts in Education**

*(1 year full-time)*

### **Graduate Certificate in Education Studies**

*(1 year part-time)*

### **MLitt in Education**

*(1 year full time or 2 year part-time)*

### **Graduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs \***

### **PhD in Educational Psychology\***

### **Structured PhD in Education**

*(full-time and part-time options available)*

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Closing date for applications for most programmes is Friday May 7<sup>th</sup> 2010. For further information on course requirements or module options please visit our website

**[www.ucd.ie/education](http://www.ucd.ie/education)**



Contact the School Office at:  
School of Education Roebuck Castle  
University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.  
Tel: +353 1 716-7965/78967/7968

*\*Please see website for closing date for applications for this course*

## Resources for business teachers

### Business game

A new online business simulation game is encouraging and inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs. Through [www.businessgame.ie](http://www.businessgame.ie) students set up and run a business and gain an insight into the real world of business. Teachers' notes, exercises and activity sheets are included on the website. Log on to find out more.



### Consumer rights education

DOLCETA is an online consumer education project that aims to raise the level of awareness and understanding of European consumer rights. The project has developed web-based modules to be used in the classroom on subjects such as consumer rights, financial services, and product safety. Log on to [www.dolceta.eu/ireland](http://www.dolceta.eu/ireland) to find out more.

## Doctoral conference on education

A conference jointly hosted by UCD and Queens University Belfast will be held on May 21 and 22. The conference, entitled 'Doing your Doctoral Research: Forging Links in Education' will be held in Queens University Belfast and addressed by keynote speaker Professor Gill Crozier. Further information and application forms are available at [www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation](http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation) (news and events section).

## A Question of Aid

Trócaire has developed a CSPE resource for teachers to explore the issue of overseas aid with students in the post-primary classroom. The resource, entitled 'A Question of Aid: Aid in an Unequal World', contains a booklet and accompanying DVD. The booklet contains ideas for classroom activities that can be used in conjunction with the DVD, both of which are available to download from Trócaire ([www.trocaire.org/schoolresources](http://www.trocaire.org/schoolresources)). The resource focuses on the concepts of Rights and Responsibilities, Interdependence and Development.

## New from SLSS

The Second Level Support Service (SLSS) has published some new publications for teachers. Included are 'Teaching and Learning: Insights from Irish Schools', 'Physical Science Journal', 'Religious Education Journal' and 'Teaching English Journal'. See [www.slss.ie](http://www.slss.ie) for more.

## The Alternative Turner Prize

Why Violence? The campaign for violence reduction, is again organising a cartoon competition for second-level students.

Entrants are asked to create a cartoon conveying the idea that 'Violent behaviour is always unacceptable'.

The winning entry will receive a prize of €500.

Each school or youth group is encouraged to run its own internal competition, from which the top three entries will be selected locally and then submitted by email for display on [www.whyviolence.com](http://www.whyviolence.com) in the national contest.

Final adjudication will be by *Irish Times* cartoonist Martyn Turner.

The winning cartoon will be circulated to the media for publication, and may also be used in Why Violence? promotional material.

The teacher or leader who organises the contest that produces the winning entry will receive a framed original Martyn Turner cartoon.

Entries in black and white, preferably in pen, and not exceeding A4 size, should be emailed to [competition@whyviolence.com](mailto:competition@whyviolence.com). The name(s) of the student, teacher, leader, school or group should be stated on the covering email.

Closing dates for submission of artworks is July 1, 2010.

## Capture the power of photography

A competition for student photographers is running until March 26. For details on how to enter please log onto the website – [www.capturethepower.ie](http://www.capturethepower.ie) – or call the competition hotline, Tel: 01-522 4800.



## My Father's Lands

ASTI member Ger Burke has recently published her first novel, *My Father's Lands*. Set in the sixteenth century the book tells the epic story of Rory Maguire who, having left Ireland for the court of Queen Elizabeth as a boy, returns as heir to his uncle's lands. The book draws on Ger's background as a history teacher, incorporating events from plantation period history. See [www.myfatherslands.net](http://www.myfatherslands.net) for more information.

## Writers' week

The Listowel Writers' Week runs from June 2-6, offering a programme of literary workshops from short fiction to advanced poetry. For more information see [www.writersweek.ie](http://www.writersweek.ie).

## Talking History

From March, history teachers and students can download a series of 'Talking History' podcasts based on the Leaving Cert syllabus from



[www.newstalk.ie](http://www.newstalk.ie) or iTunes. Newstalk will also air a special Leaving Cert programme on Sunday, April 11, in which Patrick Geoghegan and a team of historians, teachers and students will discuss key topics related to the history syllabus and discuss key questions, examination approaches and themes. Visit [www.newstalk.ie/talkinghistory](http://www.newstalk.ie/talkinghistory) for more.

Vincentian Lay Missionaries

## Volunteer Teachers Required

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## From Ochón to Abú

A review of *My Father's Lands* by ASTI member Ger Burke, by Caitríona McGrath, Cork South Branch.

I never liked history at school. To me it was just a list of dates and dreary facts.

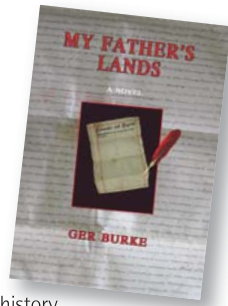
Particularly confusing were the travails of sixteenth-century Ireland with its tribal warfare at home and its ambiguous relationship with England. A new novel, *My Father's Lands*, by Ger Burke, formerly of St Brigid's School, Tuam, brings to life that period leading up to the Ulster Plantation of 1609/10. It is an important period in our history,

forming the basis of the whole Northern Ireland conflict up to the Good Friday Agreement.

From the opening chapter we are plunged straight into the Gaelic world, which was dealt its death blow at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601. The novel accurately portrays the oppressed Ireland of the late 1500s and events leading to the Ulster plantation, but never bores with just the facts. Rather, Ger Burke illustrates the realities of life in Ireland and England at the time through the lives of likeable and realistic characters.

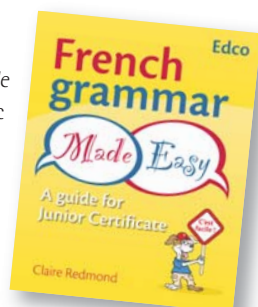
*My Father's Lands* follows the turbulent life of Rory Maguire, heir apparent to the lands of Glenone. At the age of ten his life is turned upside down and the reader follows his struggle to find his true identity. His love for his childhood friend Finola is especially heart wrenching. One thing that impressed me about *My Father's Lands* was that, though the story is set in a society far removed from us, Ger Burke makes her characters so real that we almost think they're in the same room as us. This book would be a great help to any students who, like me, have difficulty understanding the period. The historical facts are absorbed almost imperceptibly as we live with the characters in their growth from young adulthood to middle age. And indeed they live on with us long after we have finished reading about them.

An intriguing aspect of this novel is that the publisher has set up a website at [www.myfatherslands.net](http://www.myfatherslands.net), where the reader can interact with the main characters by email – a useful teaching tool for both English and history teachers.



## Making French grammar fun

ASTI member Claire Redmond is on a mission to improve students' linguistic abilities, having just published her latest book – *French Grammar Made Easy*. One of the youngest authors of an academic textbook in Ireland, Claire engages with students through familiar illustrations and scenarios, and popular references such as the X Factor, premiership footballers and French culture. "I wrote it based on my own notes and hope it will be a positive aid to learning a wonderful language. The CD should be a really helpful revision aid for teachers to use in class," says Claire. The textbook is available in bookshops nationwide.





# A New Resource for Teachers

## Integrate ICT into your teaching

Join the eTeach Community of Practice  
[www.eteachnetwork.eu](http://www.eteachnetwork.eu)



The eTQF project has been funded with support from the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



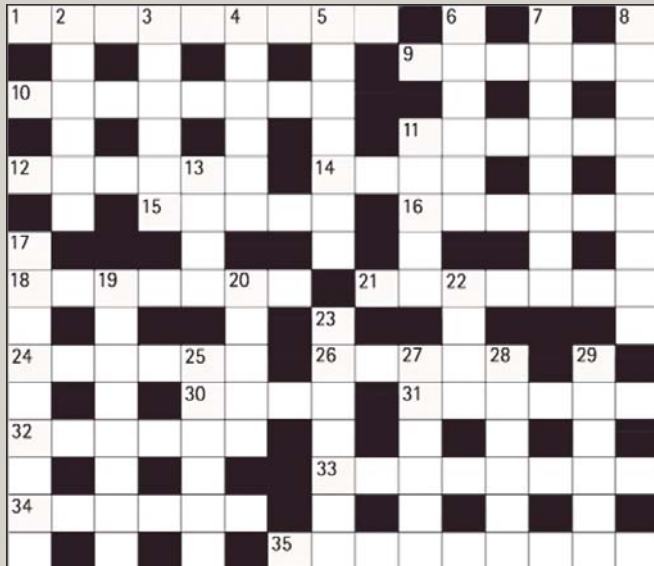




# ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 1002

€200 prize for the first fully correct answer drawn from the entries.

Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union



## The winner will receive €200

courtesy of the ASTI Credit Union.

If you wish to keep your copy of *ASTIR* intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.

Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: **Astir Crossword No. 1002, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.**

To arrive by: **Friday, April 16, 2010.**

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 No poor devil to be this fond of your music player (4,5)
- 9 Venue for ASTI Conference 2010 (6)
- 10 across & 19 down: Are ASTI members this in 2010? (8,8)
- 11 At with a hybrid to ward off evil (6)
- 12 There's one for summer works in schools (6)
- 14 An aide to a thought! (4)
- 15 The well-known aria, Casta Diva, is from this opera (5)
- 16 See 26 across
- 18 No raids or hostile incursions (7)
- 21 Loss of ability to understand or articulate words (7)
- 24 Approximately 57 degrees (6)
- 26 & 16 across: Would your pupil be, oh, so ethical to say this? (1,4,6)
- 30 Unit of 500 sheets of paper (4)
- 31 "The river glideth at its own sweet will" (Wordsworth) Which river? (6)
- 32 Morally bad in principle or in practice (6)
- 33 This Irish Authority was set up in 1994 to provide services in Irish-controlled airspace (8)
- 34 Roman god of fire (6)

- 35 Does he admirably assist Trapattoni? (4,5)

### CLUES DOWN

- 2 Caps in hand when he/she experiences sudden overpowering fright (6)
- 3 Rend 1V to have a compulsive or urgent quality (6)
- 4 Could be a start or a beginner (6)
- 5 I am dead: dead, but in the ... fields. (Benjamin Disraeli) (7)
- 6 A car mat is definitely not made with this! (6)
- 7 Gulps down the birds (8)
- 8 Religious leader (9)
- 11 Greek author of fables strikes a pose (5)
- 13 With Lisa she could be La Gioconda! (4)
- 17 A warm voice might help with the cooking! (9)
- 19 See 10 across
- 20 Ned and I'd had a meal (5)
- 22 Archaic present 3rd singular of have (4)
- 23 Italian kettledrums (7)
- 25 As near as you'll get to amphitheatres (6)
- 27 Open area in centre of ancient Roman house (6)
- 28 4th April 2010 (6)
- 29 With a dove I'd be completely lacking (6)

### Solution to ASTIR crossword No. 1001

#### Across

- 1. William Butler
- 10. Pacific
- 11. Grifter
- 12. Rome
- 13. Yeats
- 15. Aunt
- 17. DNA
- 19. Porous
- 21. Auntie
- 22. Ravioli
- 23. In a day
- 25. Blacks
- 27. Hue
- 29. Team
- 30. Wasn't
- 31. Duce
- 34. Oration
- 35. Moniker
- 36. It with flowers

#### Down

- 2. Incomer
- 3. Life
- 4. Arched
- 5. Bogota
- 6. Trim
- 7. Entrust
- 8. Appropriation
- 9. Britney Spears
- 14. Anxious
- 16. Aural
- 18. Built
- 20. Say
- 21. AIB
- 24. Adamant
- 26. Chukker
- 27. Haunch
- 28. Enamel
- 32. Kiwi
- 33. Snow

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 1001:

**Brian Nolan, St Mary's CBS, Millpark Road, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Enniscorthy Branch member.**

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