

## Whitefield School – Challenging News!

Ever heard of schools operating under the status of “National Challenge Trust”? I had not until just after the start of this academic year. This was about the time this concept was brought to the attention of staff at Whitefield School.

What is it? A School qualifies for National Challenge if at least 30% of its pupils are NOT achieving five good GCSE’s including English and Maths. So whilst OFFSTED reported Whitefield school as “outstanding” this year, it was not sufficient to take it out of the qualification bar for National Challenge. No one will object to the desire to raise standards. The question is why this can only be achieved by giving the school Trust status? What is objectionable is the way this outstanding school with the hard work put in by staff and students is so crassly labelled as “National Challenge” with all the negative implications that go with that.

**What does it mean?** The school will be managed and controlled by a non-elected Trust and not school governors. Crucially the employees at the school will no longer be employees of the Local Authority but employees of the Trust. The teaching staff’s terms and conditions are covered by National agreements. This is not the case for the school support staff and so we are very concerned about the future for their terms and conditions. Currently we are seeking a written agreement staff terms and conditions will not be undermined. It also means the school will be paired with a “leading” school as a means of giving a good example for the “Challenge” school to follow. The favoured school in this case seems to be “The Compton”.

We have entered a period of formal consultation about the question of the status of the school. Our members are telling us they are most concerned about their terms and conditions and what this will all mean for working relationships within the school.

The Director of Children’s Services had been discussing the change of status for Whitefield School several months prior to staff being informed. He only discussed it some 2 months ago with the unions after the unions had called an emergency negotiating meeting. Since then we have been promised full participation in the consultation.

We will keep our members informed with the progress but would urge all colleagues to voice, via the UNISON, your messages of support to colleagues at Whitefield School. Do not forget we have a Government determined to promote every which way of providing schools except by direct provision through the Local Authority and the Local Authority should only have a role as a commissioner of services, not a provider. **We do not believe Whitefield School should have to be subjected to this, nor should any other school.**

### Barnet UNISON Contact details

If you have a work problem or query, get in touch with your UNISON workplace representative. Alternatively, you can ring: UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 If you have a membership or

any other query, please contact the Barnet UNISON office at:

Building 4, NLBP, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP  
Email: [contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)  
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Fax: (020) 8368 5985

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*Barnet UNISON Your Friend at Work*

2010

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## Barnet UNISON Voice

**Barnet UNISON Schools Conference**  
**2010 Monday 15th February see inside for details**



## Breaking News !

### No Pay Award for council workers working in Schools!

Barnet council are consulting over their Budget proposals for 2010/11. One of their proposals is not to budget for a Pay Award this year. This is the first time in my experience the Council has done this. I am informed that teachers will be getting their 2.3% Pay Award this year as it was part of a multi year deal. But YOUR school would not be able to function without YOU!

Last year the Council saved money on the National Pay Award. The Council had budgeted for 2%, as the agreement was for 1%, so the Council saved 1% which is a sizeable income.

**UNISON’s national pay Award claim for 2010/11 is for a £500 flat-rate increase or 2.5% – whichever is the greater.**

**We are clearly going to be balloted for this offer. ALL members need to start talking to your work colleagues. Who is in the union? If there are some not in a union see if you can sign them up. If you want to fight for FAIR pay for the excellent work you do you need to have everyone in your school in the union fighting together.**



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## Barnet UNISON School Conference

15th February 2010

Conference Room 1, Building 2, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, N11

### Programme (subject to change)

9.15 – 10 am	<b>Registration</b>
10.00 am	INTRODUCTION Chair
	<b>Speakers</b>
10.05	Pay and Conditions— speaker to be confirmed. Update on National position.
10.25	Discussion—what does this mean for us. Include discussion on Whitefield School
10.45	Break for Refreshments
11.00	Health and Safety
11.20	Open discussion
11.45	Susan Timthong, Lifelong Learning Coordinator
12.00	Small groups to look at the issues support staff face in schools e.g. pay and grading, training, bullying, health and safety, term time pay, rarely cover.
12.45	Feedback from groups
1pm	Finish meeting
1 – 2 pm	Lunch provided



Prize winner  
at last years conference



One of working groups at last years conference

## Calling on all Caretakers!

At the schools conference a caretaker raised the point that he belonged to a group of colleagues (caretakers) who felt left out by Workforce Remodelling. This work seems to have stopped at Teaching Assistants and Nursery Nurses. Also there are issues relating to caretakers specifically and it would be good to meet as a group to sort out what's what.



We are keen to do that. However, we need to work out when the best time would be to meet. It would be appreciated if any caretaker reading this could contact the UNISON office and give us advice about the kind of time would be the best for caretakers, **better still** come along to the conference and get your **voice** heard!

## Teaching Assistant Levels 1 and then?...

Since the Schools Conference we have begun scrutinising the job descriptions against the work teaching assistants are doing. It will be no surprise to most of you there are more anomalies than not. Keep your queries coming in. Now we have a new Assistant Branch Secretary (see below) we should be able to progress these at a quicker pace than has been possible in the last few months.



**“Call me number 1” – but not level 1!**

We are hearing of people remaining on Level 1 for more than 1 year. Our understanding of the Workforce Remodelling is that this would not happen. We need to know if this is an issue for just a couple of schools or is it common practice in many schools? This information will influence how we tackle the question. We want to know how far this practice is spread. Please contact us if you have Teaching Assistants at your school who have been on Level 1 for over 1 year.

## New Assistant Branch Secretary!

Maria Christodoulou has been a UNISON steward for a few years at Finchley Catholic School, where she has maintained a high level of membership amongst support staff. She was involved in the Workforce Remodelling of Teaching Assistants and is a teaching assistant herself. She is very clear about the terms and conditions associated with that role.

Recently Maria was key to campaigning to keep the canteen staff on their in-house terms and conditions. So, in spite of the canteen now being run by a private company the canteen staff are seconded to that employer and the school remains their employer.

Maria will be visiting schools and if you would like to meet her, please ring the UNISON office to make an appointment. This role is challenging. I hope you will support Maria in what she does and I am sure she will be a great support to you.