

Autumn / Winter 2015

Professiona

UPDATE

General Teaching Council For Northern Ireland



GTCNI's new magazine for the teaching profession

The big education debates
Assessment
Inspection
Professional learning

Exclusive
#NIEdcamp
18.08.2015

BERA Conference 2015
GTCNI Lecture with
Prof Graham Donaldson

... more pages in a new compact size, on the issues that matter to you

Professional Update

your new professional magazine

... aims to stimulate discussion about some of the big educational debates in Northern Ireland and keep you informed about some of the latest educational research.

In this edition...

- ▶ **THE BIG DEBATES** about assessment, inspection and professional learning and the potential of our professional voice to transform the accountability agenda – so that teachers can reclaim greater ownership of their professionalism.
- ▶ **WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE** in forthcoming GTCNI Council Elections which will set the strategic direction of GTCNI, as your professional body, for the next 4 years.
- ▶ **NEW REGULATORY POWERS** that were transferred from the Department of Education to GTCNI on 1 April 2015.
- ▶ **WIDER GTCNI WORK** including:
 - ▶ sponsorship of #NIEdcamp and the Sentinus STEM Teacher of the Year Award;
 - ▶ the STAR Awards;
 - ▶ our development work in the Further Education sector; and
 - ▶ the GTCNI Lecture 2015 by Professor Graham Donaldson.



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**General Teaching Council
for Northern Ireland**

Promoting Teacher Professionalism

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Professional Update is the official Journal of **The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland**. GTCNI is the statutory regulatory body for the teaching profession and is dedicated to enhancing the status of teaching and promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and practise. It is produced in-house by the Communications Team.

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This edition of *Professional Update* aims to stimulate discussion about some of the big educational debates in Northern Ireland – and highlight the potential of our professional voice to shape and influence these important debates.

The overall significance of the various debates about assessment, inspection and professional development may be lost because they are currently separated.

However, these interlinked policy discussions provide us with a hugely exciting opportunity to challenge the deficit model of accountability associated with being held to account by others, and transform the accountability agenda into a more trusting, mutually constructive and responsible process that gives teachers and schools ownership of their own professionalism.



THE BIG DEBATES

This type of **uplifting accountability** requires joined-up policy approaches of the type proposed by the OECD report *Synergies for Better Learning*¹ based on their work in Northern Ireland and 27 other countries. Linked together, constructively, these policies have the potential to change the whole ethos, culture and direction of our education system.

GTCNI, echoing the comments of Professor Graham Donaldson, believes there is an opportunity to bring together many of the elements

underpinning these big debates to ensure that we have a teaching profession that is empowered and supported to be reflective and creative.

■ The Big Assessment Debate

Statutory assessment has been a huge issue for some time. GTCNI, as your professional body, has proactively sought to move the debate forward by surveying your views and developing alternative proposals.

More than 500 schools responded to our survey on the adequacy of using levels as the primary measure of pupil progress, and school and system effectiveness at KS1, 2 and 3. Over 82% of respondents said that levels were of limited or no use for these purposes and 91% found the process of external moderation burdensome.

We applaud the Minister's decision to consult with the profession this autumn on **Measuring What Matters** and intend to develop a discussion paper to help inform the debate about how and why we gather information and how we use it.

... a paradigm shift uplifting accountability

■ The Big Inspection Debate

Just as schools are under scrutiny and expected to evidence their journey towards continuous improvement, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has also been subject to similar scrutiny by the NI Assembly Education Committee. GTCNI made a substantial research-informed submission to the Assembly Inquiry into Inspection and School Improvement including 20 recommendations - many of which were reflected in the Education Committee's Report.

An amazing 1,677 teachers, including 450 principals, responded to our follow-up professional voice survey on perceptions of inspection. The impact of our input into this debate demonstrates the potential of our professional voice to shape policy and ensure a more genuine engagement with the teaching profession.

■ The Big Professional Learning Debate

GTCNI has been working closely with the Department of Education and all the main stakeholders to develop a strategy for career-long professional development which is due to be published by the Department later this year.

The review of the GTCNI competence framework is an important part of this



**YOUR chance to influence
the BIG DEBATES**

wider strategy which, we hope, will help streamline school development planning, self-evaluation, external quality assurance and professional development activities into one manageable process –our objective is to *'empower teachers and schools to empower themselves through a streamlined competence and professional learning framework'*. ■ ■ ■

References

1. OECD (2013) Synergies for Better Learning: An International perspective on evaluation and assessment.

For more information about any of the GTCNI discussion papers or surveys please visit the GTCNI website www.gtcni.org.uk ■

New GTCNI Council 2016-20 – Why vote?

The process to elect a new Council - that will govern the work of GTCNI between 2016 and 2020 - will begin soon.

So, why is it important that teachers vote in this election – and why is it important that we have a professional body?

GTCNI was established to maintain respect for and enhance the status of teaching as a profession, on behalf of teaching professionals, in Northern Ireland.

Like all other professional bodies, we keep an up-to-date register of qualified teachers and assess all new applicants to ensure they meet the qualification requirements to teach in Northern Ireland.

We also develop, consult on and keep under review, the **Code of Values and Professional Practice** that we have signed up to as professionals and, on your behalf, regulate serious breaches of the code to maintain public confidence in the profession.

In addition, we advise government and employers, on behalf of the profession, on all matters relating to teaching and also conduct surveys and respond to consultations to represent your voice on professional matters that are important to you.



It is important to realise that GTCNI fully represents the profession and that the majority of Council members are serving teachers or principals. There are 14 elected members, including: nursery teachers (1), teachers in special schools (1), primary teachers (5), post-primary teachers (5) primary principals (1), and post-primary principals (1); and a further 5 teacher representatives nominated by the teaching unions via the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC).

In addition, 10 members are nominated by other education stakeholders including the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers' (UCETNI), employing authorities and other bodies, and 4 members are appointed by the Department of Education.

This means that 19 of the 33 member Council directly represent teachers and play a vital role in setting and supporting the strategic direction of the organisation; monitoring performance and holding GTCNI to account; and ensuring that we represent your professional voice and influence policy for the good of teachers, pupils, parents and society.

We encourage all registered teachers to vote so that the Council members elected by teachers have a strong mandate from the profession and can ensure that the professional voice of teachers is not only heard, but taken seriously. You may even consider standing for election and bring your own professional knowledge and experience to bear on our registration, regulation, advisory and consultative work.

Electoral Reform Services have been selected to run the election process and full details will be sent directly to your home address in the near future. The first mailing you will receive will be a letter assigning you to an electoral constituency, based on the school phase you currently teach in. If this is not

correct you should let us know as soon as possible. This mailing will also include information on how to stand for election. At a later date you will receive voting instructions and guidelines. ■ ■ ■

... it's your profession –
make your vote count



"It is really important for practising teachers to be at the heart of GTCNI – our experiences and insight into what we want our professional body to achieve and how we want them to go about it is vital."

Ciara McKay
Post-Primary Teacher
Elected GTCNI Council member



Make YOUR VOICE heard

Sentinus 2015 Rewarding Excellence

This year GTCNI sponsored the STEM Teacher of the Year Award at the Sentinus Young Innovators (SYI) Exhibition, Northern Ireland's largest science fair, which was hosted in June at the University of Ulster campus at Jordanstown.

This award recognises the role of teachers in promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in our schools.

This year's winner was Kathryn Wylie, a physics teacher from Ballymena Academy, who worked with pupils Rachel Browne, Suzanna Crabbe and Ellen McAuley in developing an innovative 'onesie' for eczema sufferers.

Speaking after the award, Kathryn said: *'Everyone who takes part in this event is a winner because the young people take home so many life skills, such as teamwork, presentation expertise, report writing and budget planning.'*



(L-R) Kathryn Wylie, Ballymena Academy and Gerry Devlin, GTCNI

The SYI Exhibition also incorporated the regional Big Bang Northern Ireland Fair, which is part of the fantastic programme of work by Sentinus to encourage more young people to get excited about STEM subjects. Some 3000 visitors saw over 150 innovative STEM projects exhibited by local primary and secondary schools and colleges.

The projects competing for over 80 SYI awards included:

- the use of rainwater as a renewable energy source;
- a farm safety app;
- a cellular analysis on the effects of garlic extract on cancer cell growth;

- an investigation of how social media can affect user moods;
- a self-build electric car; and
- a mathematical analysis of winning number patterns in the National Lottery draws.

The pupils who won awards have an opportunity to represent Northern Ireland in a number of international science and engineering competitions in the UK and USA.

Alongside the exhibition and competition there were over 20 interactive science shows. During the event the BBC's resident scientist on the One Show, Dr Marty Jopson, presented his 'Record Breaking Science' show.

Employers, universities and industry bodies were also in attendance providing advice on pursuing a career in the STEM sectors. ■ ■ ■



For more information on Big Bang @
School events visit:
www.sentinus.co.uk ■

Launch of the new STAR Awards

TALENT / OPPORTUNITY / RECOGNITION

GTCNI proudly launched the STAR Award for student teachers in April in the Botanic Gardens to celebrate the hard work, dedication and talent of local student teachers and to reaffirm our valued relationships with partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The award, which was first introduced in 2007 to recognise students who have consistently achieved at a high level, has now been rebranded as the STAR Award to enhance its recognition and impact.

Each participating HEI selects two final year BEd or PGCE students based on an academic and practical assessment carried out as part of their course of study and placement.

Each winner is awarded a framed GTCNI certificate and £400 to spend on their continuing professional development.

First Winners

The first winners of the rebranded STAR Award were Lee Caron and Emma Murray, both BEd Primary graduates from Stranmillis University.

Lee is now teaching at Linn Primary School and is interested in developing her expertise in the area of outdoor play and teaching through technology. The award will enable her to complete the Forest Schools Practitioner course in England.

Emma is now teaching in Ballynure Primary School and she is passionate about the teaching of PE in primary schools. She is concerned about

the research which suggests that 83% of teachers in primary school lack confidence in providing the recommended 2 hours per week of PE.

Emma believes a major effort is needed to enhance teacher confidence in teaching PE in order to help address the alarming trend towards childhood obesity and the lack of physical activity.

The award will enable her to undertake research into effective programmes for enhancing primary teacher confidence in this area. ■■■



(L-R) Michael Pollock (Stranmillis), Cassie Cadden (SMUCB), Dr Carmel Gallagher (GTCNI), Chloe Patton (UU) and James Lennon (QUB) launching the new STAR Awards.

The BIG DEBATE

Measuring what Matters



The world is now awash with data. Gathering and analysing data is a fundamental part of the modern research-based approach to decision making in all walks of life.

Over the last two decades there has been an ever increasing emphasis on data collection and analysis in education to inform insights into the progress and achievement of pupils, schools and even countries. This trend has been powerfully reinforced by international analysis such as the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which evaluates education systems worldwide by testing a representative sample of 15-year-olds in key subjects. A dip in performance in PISA can send shockwaves through a country's education system.

As a result, what gets measured appears to be what matters most. As Albert

Einstein observed, *'Not everything that is valuable can be counted and not everything that is counted counts.'*

Up to now policy makers in Northern Ireland have used broad levels in literacy and numeracy and GCSEs as a proxy for pupil and school success.

As the world changes at seemingly breakneck speed and we become more interconnected, employers, business leaders, politicians, educators and international organisations around the globe, including the OECD, are questioning whether the narrow emphasis on literacy, numeracy and performance in academic exams provides the right skill-sets for success in this rapidly changing world.

There is now consensus that what are called *21st century skills* should be taught more intentionally and effectively.

The good news is that more than a decade ago, the curriculum in Northern Ireland was reviewed to place an emphasis on 21st century thinking skills and personal capabilities and a range of other important aspects of education such as personal development. However, the assessment of these skills was left to individual schools with insufficient emphasis on formally assessing these skills to ensure they are explicitly taught, recongised and valued.

We welcome Education Minister John O'Dowd's intention to engage with all stakeholders later this year in a discussion about *Measuring What Matters*¹. It is very positive that officials acknowledge the need for a *'broader range of measures to give us a more holistic picture of how our system, schools and pupils are performing'*.

The agreement to develop *'a dashboard of measures'* suggests that the time is now right for 21st century skills and capabilities to be explicitly assessed.

We are being invited to participate in a very exciting debate about measuring what really matters. This debate has the potential to transform our education system but we must ask the right questions.

We hope that the profession will participate actively in the debate, which also needs to include parents and wider society.





We suggested that value-added measures of this kind would provide fairer judgement of school efforts.

If we are going to value the contribution of teachers more, it is essential to free them from unnecessary bureaucracy.

We highlighted that there already exist a wide range of tools which schools are using effectively - many of which are computer-based and non-bureaucratic and provide baseline, cohort and individual

pupil progress indicators, as well as indicators of value-added.

GTCNI's *Rising to the Challenge* paper proposed that individual pupil snapshots provided by such tools, alongside on-going teacher assessment, could form the basis of constructive feedback to pupils and parents about progress against each pupil's own baseline.

Cohort data could also be shared with the Education Authority and ETI to benchmark and assess school progress and identify support and development needs (see diagram on page 13 for detail).

Alongside these informative snapshots, we emphasised the continued centrality of on-going teacher assessment, to inform constructive feedback to pupils (and parents) about progress and next steps in learning.

However, we argued that teacher assessment and moderation should not be used as the sole measure of school accountability, as this distorts its primary purpose.

The GTCNI discussion paper *Rising to the Challenge* is available on the GTCNI website ■

The right questions

To inform the range of measures to be included in the dashboard, the Minister is seeking clarity about the users and uses of school and system level data and about how we can ensure that the system of measuring performance is fair, focuses on progress as well as achievement, takes account of context, intake and outcomes, and gives credit for work with all pupils.

In addition, we need to ask fundamental questions such as - how can we ensure assessment and the way data is collected and used, liberates teachers and schools to develop rounded, confident, autonomous 21st century learners?

GTCNI has been working for some time to influence the direction of this debate.

Following the OECD visit and the publication of the *International Review of Assessment and Evaluation Frameworks*² in 2013 and in response to the level of concern about statutory assessment, GTCNI conducted a teachers' voice survey into the value of levels as the primary measure of progress at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Over 500 schools responded. The clear message was that levels alone were regarded by teachers as

an insufficient measure of pupil or school progress.

Following this survey, GTCNI developed a research-informed discussion paper, *Rising to the Challenge*, which called for a 'dashboard of measures to be used by schools to diagnose pupil strengths and areas for development. This would allow teachers and schools to use the wide-ranging variety of data at their disposal to report on progress to parents and assess value-added'.

Our discussion paper suggested that system level data could be gathered by means of a non-intrusive sampling of 10% of the school population which would provide a sufficiently independent research informed measure to reassure the Minister and the Assembly about how the system is doing. This could remove bureaucratic pressure from schools.

Based on international research, we also argued that there is a pressing need to take greater account of school context and intake and to devise robust baseline measures to assess individual school and pupil progress and ensure access to the support and resources they require.

THE BIG DEBATE

An Assessment and Examinations Revolution

Measuring 21st Century Skills ...

In addition to getting the mechanics of assessment right, it is vital that the focus of assessment responds to the call from employers, parents, politicians and international bodies, for 21st century skills and capabilities to be taught more intentionally and effectively and to be more explicitly assessed.

Society is calling for the development of well-rounded confident and creative young people who accept responsibility, are flexible, show initiative, think for themselves and work well with others; who can proactively access, manage, analyse and evaluate information to solve problems and can use this information to make well-informed decisions and take calculated risks when necessary.

These attributes describe young people who have been exposed to a type of learning and assessment which engages and challenges them to learn for themselves and which develops their confidence and skills as an explicit part of the process.

Many teachers know this is the kind of learning and assessment that our highly IT-literate generation want and need.

However, we cannot expect teachers to focus on this type of learning when they and their pupils are being measured against very different yardsticks. The incentive to engage in this type of learning requires a different type of

assessment and examination system than the one we are currently have.

Clearly, an assessment and examinations revolution that will place an explicit emphasis on these skills is required.

A new report, *Measuring 21st Century Skills: Guidance for Educators*³ from the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN), provides an in-depth review of twenty different approaches and tools for measuring 21st century skills.

- In Australia, the new national curriculum includes disciplinary and cross-disciplinary areas and general capabilities. Melbourne is developing an online assessment platform that will include indices of creativity and critical thinking skills and is experimenting with self-assessment and peer assessment tools as part of this approach.
- Toronto and Seattle are developing ways to assess the global competence of students.
- In Houston, a laptop initiative is designed to engage students in more self-directed learning.
- In Singapore, the national examination system is being revised to incorporate higher-level thinking skills through different modes of assessment including open-ended and source-based questions.

■ Shanghai is using PISA-type tests of problem-solving as a way to shift schools in the direction of modern skills and pedagogy.

The good news for Northern Ireland, as we have said is that these skills are already at the heart of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC) and have been for nearly a decade. We were one of the first countries in the world to make the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities central to the curriculum and we are still one of the very few countries in the world to provide a progressive framework for these skills.

Why have we not capitalised on this progress? The answer is very simple - these skills are more challenging to assess and measure so we have left the challenge of reporting on them to schools without placing any real value on them.

We have also experimented at one time or another with nearly all of the forms of assessment being developed by the global cities network but we have not systematically learned from our own innovations and capitalised on them.

We have focused instead on what is easily measurable because it gives us data that appears to tell us what we think we want to know. This approach only gives a narrow picture of pupil potential while also constraining teachers and pupils from doing what they know is needed.

The way forward

International research⁴ suggests that three complementary elements have to be put in place concurrently to enable progress.

• **Better curriculum** that is relevant and flexible, with 21st century skills at its core. The revised NI Curriculum

introduced in 2007 is a foundation for this.

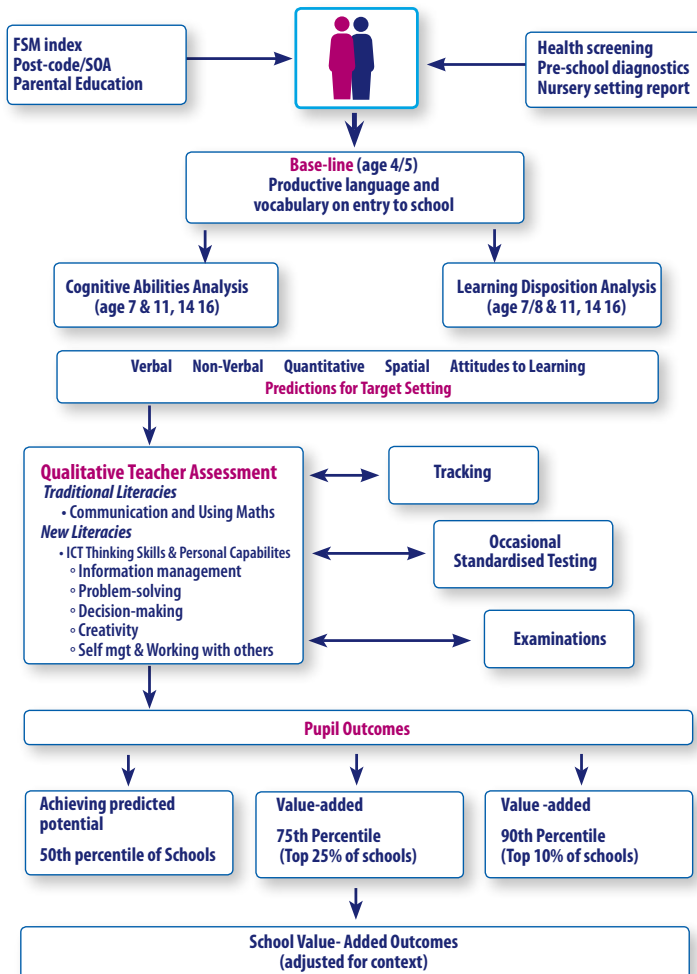
• **Better assessment and examinations** that can accurately measure richer learning and more complex tasks. The leading cities of the world are forging ahead with this, many of these approaches have already been tried out in Northern Ireland

but need to be introduced more systematically.

• **Better teacher education and development** so that teachers can design, plan, teach and assess the curriculum as intended.

Consistent with the OECD research, GTCNI agrees on the need to explicitly link our curriculum, assessment, examinations, teacher learning and accountability policies together in a coherent policy framework to support a model of **uplifting accountability** to focus on broader system goals, measure what matters and allow professionals to self-evaluate and be responsible and accountable for the value they add to 21st century learners. ■ ■ ■

Tools to enhance Teaching Learning and Assessment (including informed target-setting and the assessment of value-added)



References

1. Letter from Education Minister John O'Dowd to school Principals (2 June 2015) outlining the approach to developing a 'dashboard' of measures and forthcoming consultation.
2. OECD (2013) Review of Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks in Education. Country-specific Report.
3. GCEN (2013) Measuring 21st Century Skills.
4. Rotherham and Willingham (2009) 21st Century Skills: The Challenges Ahead. Teaching for the 21st Century, Vol 67 (1).



Inspecting the Inspectors

Self-evaluation, internal audit and external quality assurance have become embedded processes across the world as organisations strive for continuous improvement.

The same challenges apply to school inspection, which continues to be refined and is becoming more transparent in response to both ETI's own self-evaluation processes and the recommendations of the recent Assembly Education Committee Inquiry into Inspection and School Improvement.

The inquiry was initiated in response to concerns about the perceived high stakes nature of inspection and absence of consistency in measuring the value-added by schools.

GTCNI, on behalf of the teaching profession, submitted a 50-page research-informed paper, entitled *Striking the Right Balance*, which made 20 recommendations, several of which were taken up by the Education Committee.

We followed up on our submission by conducting a survey of teachers' perceptions of inspection which received a significant 1,677 responses. While acknowledging the potential for survey bias (*since those with negative perceptions are more likely to respond than those with positive views*), the significant size and spread of responses - compared to the low response rate to most consultations - and the consistency of views expressed in 829 lengthy comments, indicated that the survey represented the authentic voice of the profession.

Education Committee Report and DE response – a summary

- ▶ **Improvement Services:** all schools should be adequately supported - not just those in, or near, formal intervention; and support services and inspection should be aligned, as in Scotland.

DE accepted this but highlighted resource constraints and that responsibility for improvement rests with schools themselves. DE will seek further evidence before considering the Scottish model.

- ▶ **Inspection methodology:** ETI methodology and external moderation processes should be more transparent with explicit procedures to allow challenge. The ETI complaints procedure should include external investigation.

DE/ETI accepted this, in part, and highlighted new procedures being developed for paired observations and moderation. A further review of the ETI complaints process is to be published in September 2015.

- ▶ **Post-inspection surveys:** re-designed in co-operation with GTCNI to ensure independent and robust assessment of the service.

DE/ETI agreed to ask NISRA to engage with stakeholders as part of this process. GTCNI has already engaged constructively with NISRA and ETI.

- ▶ **Inspection Reports:** a detailed report should be available to the school only. A shorter plain English report should be published with less pejorative descriptors.

DE/ETI agreed to review the descriptors and the language used in reports and to supplement the written report with a 'running record' containing more detailed information for schools.

- ▶ **District Inspectors:** should have a role in the inspection of schools in their district with sufficient 'district time' to provide pastoral support.

DE/ETI agreed that District Inspectors should, where possible, be a member of the inspection team and should lead follow-up inspections, make 'pastoral visits' and engage outside the formal inspection programme.

Principals' perceptions

To strengthen the representativeness of the survey findings we conducted a detailed secondary analysis of the 450 responses received from school principals.

Analysis of this sub-sample revealed that a majority considered that the

inspection process takes appropriate or partial account of context and intake, self-evaluation and the range of practice within schools - and provides appropriate or partial insight into inspection criteria and how to access appropriate support.

However, a majority felt that inspection would be more valuable if it focused

on all important learning goals and particularly on areas for improvement identified through self-evaluation. Less than half of the principals who responded (48%) considered that schools were given sufficient opportunity to challenge judgements with supporting evidence.

The vast majority of the extensive comments received expressed concerns about the level of stress engendered by the inspection process; the perception that there was an over-emphasis on data (*with context and value-added insufficiently recognised*); inconsistency of outcomes; and lack of follow-up support.

There was strong support for a shorter published report for parents, with a more detailed unpublished report being provided for schools, particularly focusing on areas for improvement. The majority also favoured a strong alignment of inspection with support services, as in Scotland, and the opportunity to challenge judgements with evidence.

Professional Voice

The research-informed GTCNI submission to the inquiry, and the strength and detail of your response to our survey was welcomed by the Education Committee and had a significant impact on their report. The Committee has written to GTCNI again asking if we wish to undertake a further survey.

ETI has listened to the views of the profession and there is evidence it is replying constructively. This demonstrates the potential of our professional voice to impact on policy makers and the opportunity to shape a more uplifting approach to inspection - and other key areas of policy development through positive engagement. ■ ■ ■

THE BIG DEBATE

The Big Professional Development Debate

Across the world, it is widely acknowledged that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teaching and teachers and that access to career-long professional development should be a universal right.

What distinguishes us as professionals is that, not only do we need to meet a certain threshold of academic qualifications and demonstrate an agreed set of competences but we also have a professional responsibility to keep

up to date with relevant professional learning throughout our careers.

What does good CPD involve?

One of the major challenges is in knowing what powerful research-informed teacher development actually looks like and developing the capacity to provide it in a sustainable way.

The most recent international research¹ confirms that: the most effective CPD takes place in schools; focuses

strategically and meaningfully on particular aspects of teaching, learning and assessment over a significant period of time; is informed by approaches and practices which have been proven, through research, to impact on pupil learning; and involves teachers working collaboratively in challenging their own practices and assumptions with a view to seeing what works best for pupil learning.

A Northern Ireland CPD Strategy

Along with a range of other education stakeholders GTCNI has contributed significantly this year to help DE develop a research-informed professional development framework for Northern Ireland. We anticipate that the Department will release this for discussion and feedback later this year.

The main message within the strategy, reinforced by the international research literature, is that CPD is something that happens as part of the day-to-day development work of schools and that didactic, one-off, out of school models, where facilitators simply tell teachers what to do, or provide materials without giving participants opportunities to develop skills and reflect on their impact on pupil learning, simply do not work.

The key element of more effective CPD

■ **Leadership:** to develop a vision; define an overall strategy and approach; establish priorities for development; provide frequent structured, opportunities to engage in reflective professional learning; identify and source internal and external expertise; manage and organise time and opportunities for collaborative engagement; lead professional learning and develop the leadership of others.

■ **Focus:** a focus on research-informed content and approaches that address the identified needs of pupils and teachers in their day-to-day work and have been proven to impact on pupil outcomes and a variety of activities that align with the overall aims and objectives of participants and the school and wider community.

■ **Approach:** developing a shared sense of purpose in a supportive environment that allows teachers to understand the rationale underpinning the approach, test ideas from different perspectives, reflect on and share their understanding and beliefs and challenge their own and others' assumptions.

■ **Duration:** extended development work on chosen themes over at least 2 or 3 terms, or longer if necessary, so that teachers have quality time not only to engage with the initial input but also to experiment in class with different approaches, gather evidence of impact and evaluate what works and why in subsequent discussion with colleagues.

■ **Content:** both subject specific content and generic pedagogical approaches with activities that help teachers to critically engage with and understand how pupils learn, what their



various starting points are, how they make progress and how to identify and address next steps in learning.

■ **Consolidation:** a range of opportunities to discuss ideas with follow-up activities to translate approaches into practice and gather evidence and data to support on-going refinement.

■ **Expertise:** external expertise as necessary to work in tandem with internal specialists; building supportive relationships and acting as coaches, mentors and critical friends to build internal capacity.

To find out more about any of the big educational debates visit our website www.gtcni.org.uk

Or follow us on twitter @GTCNI ■

A Revised Teacher Competence Framework

As part of this wider strategic approach to CPD, we have been working with groups of teachers across Northern Ireland to revise the GTCNI teacher competence framework and create a more meaningful and concise working document.

Later in the year, we will be consulting widely with all education stakeholders on a revised framework, which distils the previous 27 competence statements down to 7-10 core competences, that we hope will be a more effective tool to underpin Initial Teacher Education (ITE), Induction and Early Professional Development (EPD) and assist school development planning, self-evaluation and career-long learning and development.

The way forward

Many schools and area learning communities have developed their own self-sustaining models of effective CPD. Their confidence has grown out of a realisation that, just like their vision for pupil learning, each school must assess its own strengths and identify and prioritise its own areas for development. This means identifying the required internal and external expertise, skill-sets and tools to sustain and embed continuous professional learning.

It is hoped that the anticipated DE strategy will provide support for this research-informed approach and that the revised GTCNI competence framework will provide a helpful and practical tool to assist school development planning, self-evaluation, quality assurance and effective CPD across the system.

References

1. The Teacher Development Trust (2015) Developing Great Teaching: Lessons from the international reviews into effective professional development

Registration FAQs

There are almost 27,000 registered teachers in Northern Ireland and every year GTCNI deal with over 900 new applications. Our Registration Team provide friendly advice about registration by telephone and there is also information about registration on our website – visit www.gtcni.org.uk or telephone 02890 333390

■ Why do I have to register with the GTCNI?

Registration with GTCNI is a statutory requirement if you want to teach in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland. This power is provided for in the Education (*Northern Ireland*) Order 1998 and subsequent regulations.

■ If I have just qualified, do I have to register before applying for a teaching post?

No, you do not need to be registered when applying for a teaching post but you do need to be eligible for registration, and then you must register if you are offered a teaching post in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland.

■ I have only qualified this year. How do I ensure that I complete my induction?

The school that employs you and the new Education Authority has responsibility for the induction of beginning teachers. If and when you are appointed to a school, the principal will make arrangements for your induction and an officer of the Education Authority will make contact with you to discuss the induction process and the support available.

■ If I am on a temporary or part time contract or doing substitution work, do I have to register with the GTCNI?

Yes, anyone teaching in any capacity in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland must be registered with GTCNI. You also need to be registered with GTCNI before

you apply for inclusion on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (*NISTR*) – www.nistr.org.uk

■ Do I need to register if I am on a career break?

If, during your career break, you have a contract of employment with a grant-

aided school in Northern Ireland you are required to maintain your registration and pay the annual registration fee.

■ How much does registration cost?

Registration costs £44 per year and, as a professional fee, it is an income tax deductible expense. The registration year runs from 1 April to the 31 March of the succeeding year.

Click
to log-in



■ What is MyGTCNI?

MyGTCNI is our online facility which allows you to review some of your details as held on the register, request any necessary amendments and pay your registration fee.

To access MyGTCNI click on the icon from the GTCNI home page.

■ How do I register with GTCNI?

This depends on your circumstances, including when and where you qualified. For a definitive answer you should visit the GTCNI website – <http://www.gtcni.org.uk/index.cfm/area/information/page/registration> or contact the Registration Team – 028 9033 3390.

■ How do I renew my registration?

The GTCNI fee collection process commences in April with a deduction from the teacher's salary. This deduction from salary applies to teachers who are in employment in the month of April and will include some supply teachers. It is important teachers check their pay statement in April/May to ensure the fee has been deducted. Your payslip will also show that this is a tax deductible expense. This deduction process may also cover some teachers in schools who do not have permanent contracts.

If you are teaching in a temporary or substitute capacity, you will be invoiced by GTCNI in June. You have a number of payment options including cheque, telephone or online via MyGTCNI

■ There is going to be an election for teacher representatives to the new GTCNI Council this autumn, do I have to be registered in order to vote?

Yes, only teachers who are registered by the qualifying date are included on the electoral register and have a vote.



REGULATION Changes in the regulation of the teaching profession

One of the central tenets of a profession is that all of its members sign up to an agreed code of ethics to maintain public confidence in the profession. Professions also require their members to be appropriately qualified and registered as fit to practice. Any professional found guilty of a serious breach of their ethical code may be removed from the profession.

GTCNI was established as the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland to put in place the codes and processes to enable the profession here to regulate itself and maintain professional standards and public confidence.

As part of its early work the Council developed, consulted upon and published *Teaching: The Reflective Profession (2007)* and *The Code of Professional Values and Practice (2007)* which set out the behaviours and competences which the profession expects of registered teachers. These are currently under review and we will be consulting the profession and other key educational stakeholders on a refined and more manageable version of them in the near future.

In the current Assembly legislative timetable, DE and DEL had planned to introduce a new GTCNI Bill. This would have strengthened our independence as a professional body, extended our remit to the Further Education sector and given

us full regulatory powers. This legislation has been delayed, but we hope it will be introduced later next year.

However, in April 2015, the Department of Education transferred limited regulatory powers to GTCNI to remove from the Register any teacher who, upon further investigation, and subject to an independent Conduct Committee Hearing, is found guilty of serious misconduct that could bring the profession into disrepute. These

limited regulatory powers only relate to conduct and do not relate to professional competence.

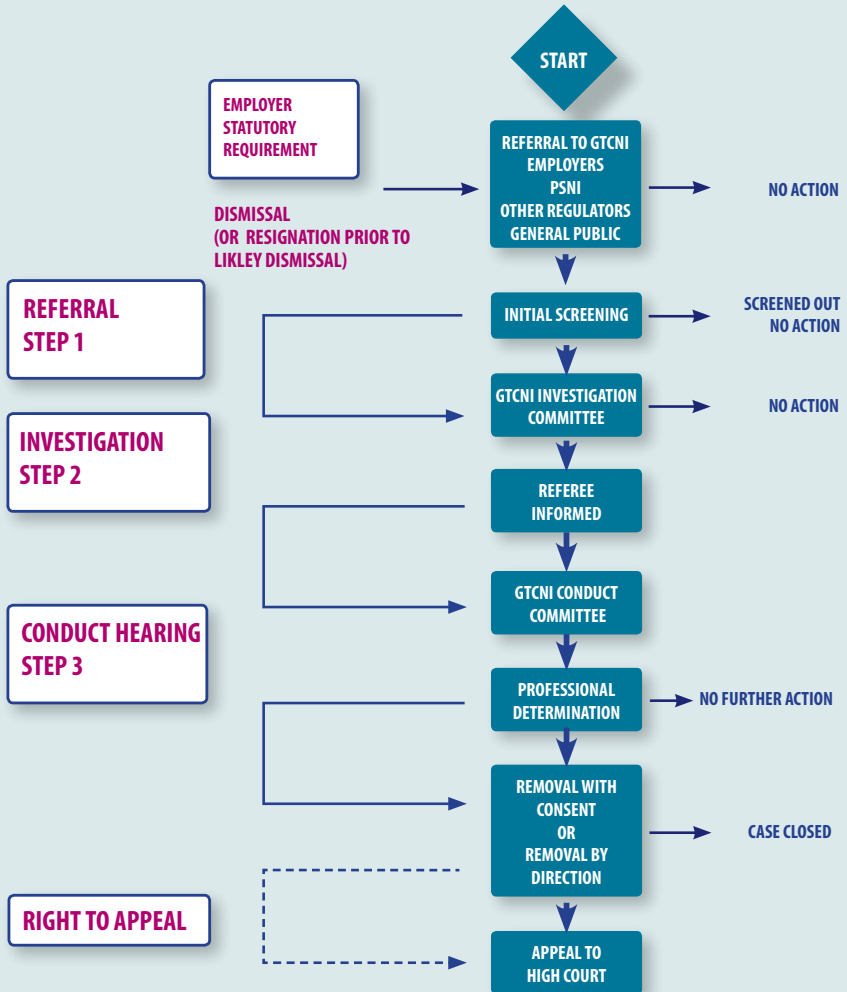
GTCNI has developed clear rules, the **GTCNI Conduct Rules**, to govern how we will carry out this new responsibility. The process involves 3 stages.

Stage 1: Referral

A complaint or referral will only be investigated if the allegation(s) relate to an identifiable registered teacher.



GTCNI REGULATORY PROCESS



> *continued from page 20-21*

Referrals can come from employers, the PSNI or a professional body similar to GTCNI in England, Scotland and Wales, or a member of the public.

Generally, a referral will come from an employing authority or school. There is a duty on employers to report any teacher to GTCNI who has been dismissed for misconduct, whether or not they are convicted of a criminal offence, or who may have been dismissed, had it not been for their resignation.

GTCNI will only investigate referrals from the public that relate to conduct, and only if the same issue has already been dealt with by an employer.

Members of the public will therefore be advised that they should raise any conduct issue with the employing school or employing authority first.

When a referral is made, GTCNI will first ensure it is valid. This will include an initial screening and preliminary investigation. GTCNI will also establish if action has been taken by an employer and/or the legal system.

The screening and preliminary investigation will be carried out by a GTCNI officer to establish whether or not there is a case to answer. Referrals which do not meet a specified threshold will be screened out.

If it is found that a referral should be investigated after this preliminary process, GTCNI will carry out a formal investigation and gather evidence relating to the case.

The teacher concerned will be notified if a formal investigation is initiated. Once an investigation is completed a case report will be submitted to an Investigation Committee.

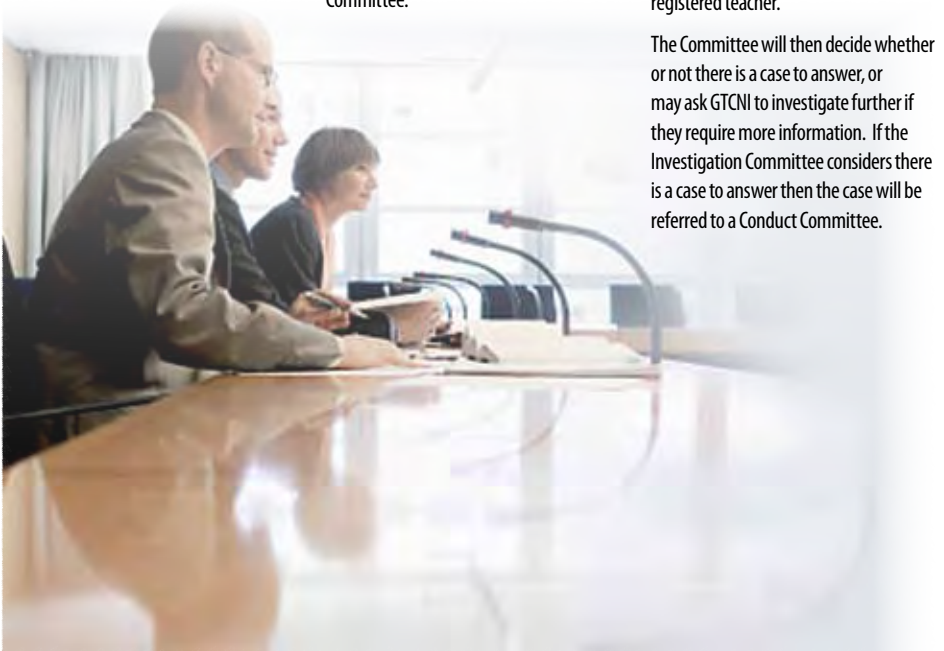
Stage 2: Investigation

Only referrals which are considered to meet a threshold of serious misconduct will be referred on to an Investigation Committee composed of 3 GTCNI Council members for consideration. GTCNI will also write to the teacher concerned to inform them that a report has been submitted to an Investigation Committee and they will be provided with copies of all evidence gathered and invited to make a submission, in writing, within 28 days.

At least 7 days before the Investigation Committee meets, GTCNI will notify the teacher concerned of the date when their written case will be considered.

The Investigation Committee will conduct its scrutiny of the written evidence in private, and will not hear oral submissions from either GTCNI or the registered teacher.

The Committee will then decide whether or not there is a case to answer, or may ask GTCNI to investigate further if they require more information. If the Investigation Committee considers there is a case to answer then the case will be referred to a Conduct Committee.





The Investigation Committee will only refer a case forward to a Conduct Committee if it is satisfied that it has met a specified threshold in relation to serious misconduct, such as could lead to the removal of the registered teacher from the Register on the grounds of bringing the profession into disrepute.

GTCNI will send the Investigation Committee report to the registered teacher concerned within 14 days of an Investigation Committee decision, outlining the decision and the reasons for it.

Stage 3: Conduct Hearing

A Conduct Committee of three people, at least one of whom is a teacher and one a lay member, will conduct a formal hearing of the case. The hearing will be held in public unless there is a good reason for it to be private, for example to protect a vulnerable witness.

GTCNI will write to the teacher concerned at least 28 days before a hearing of the Conduct Committee, giving notice of the date, time and location of the hearing and the allegation(s) that the Conduct Committee will make a determination on. At the same time the teacher concerned will be provided with all of the

evidence that GTCNI will be presenting to the hearing as well as any other evidence GTCNI holds but is not proposing to use.

The teacher concerned will be entitled to attend and give evidence and to make both written and oral submissions to the hearing, and can be represented by a trade union representative, solicitor or barrister.

The Conduct Committee will make a decision about the case by finding that either no further action will be taken or that the teacher should be removed from the Register.

If the teacher concerned is found guilty of serious misconduct, such that would bring the profession into disrepute, the

teacher will be removed from the GTCNI Register. The Conduct Committee may also advise how long a teacher has to wait before they can reapply to join the Register.

Any teacher who is removed from the GTCNI Register will not be entitled to be employed in a grant-aided school in Northern Ireland and GTCNI will also inform professional bodies similar to GTCNI in England, Scotland and Wales of the decision.

A teacher who has been removed from the GTCNI Register can appeal to the High Court within 28 days of being informed of the Conduct Committee's decision.



#niedcamp

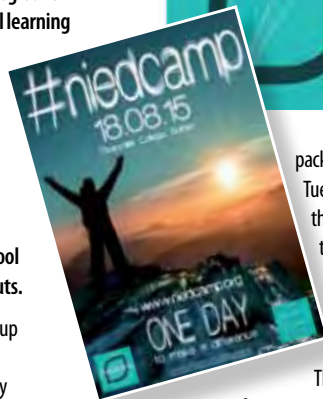
As the need for the continuous professional development of teachers is increasingly recognised worldwide, and the Department of Education here is working closely with stakeholders on developing a strategic and coherent professional learning strategy for the future, many teachers were dismayed at the late cancellation of the annual Regional Training Unit (RTU) Teacher Summer School because of funding cuts.

A highly motivated group of teachers - who have already organised many **TeachMeet** events around Northern Ireland, as well as the weekly **#NIEDchat** conversations on Twitter every Wednesday evening from 8-9 pm, decided they would literally seize the day.

The group approached GTCNI, as an established supporter and sponsor of **TeachMeet**, along with Stranmillis College and Kainos Technology for sponsorship. They also received the support of a wide range of organisations to create an engaging exhibition space.

The response to their call to action, primarily organised through the power of social media, was rapid and impressive. Over 350 teachers and 30 exhibitors,

Professional Learning for teachers... by teachers



packed Stranmillis on Tuesday 18 August, the warmest day of the summer, for the first ever **#NIEDcamp** event.

The atmosphere was fantastic as 48 presenters – mainly teachers from across Northern Ireland and beyond – shared their expertise and experience through a wide range of workshops. The day ended with a 90 minute **TeachMeet** session with its thought provoking mix of presentations and prizes.

What is the key message from the #NIEDcamp group?

Their message is simple. Pupils are the ultimate losers if the professional learning of teachers is not properly supported, resourced and valued. They

also acknowledge research which shows that one-off, in-service events do not represent an effective model of delivery.

However, voluntary networking events, like **#NIEDcamp** or **Féilte** in the Republic, represent a different type of opportunity for teachers to network with fellow professionals – to find out what's happening beyond the school gates and bring innovative ideas back into the classroom.

It is clear that **#NIEDcamp** has already made a difference to the Big Debate about the nature, shape and control of professional learning here in the future.

#NIEDcamp is evidence that teachers are passionate about professional learning and want their professional development to be taken seriously.

It shows that teachers want to be part of the conversation and direct their energies into a sustainable model of professional learning which is both ground-up and relevant. ■ ■ ■



We are the people we have been waiting for.

Heather Watson,
Principal, Phoenix Integrated
Primary School



It started with a single tweet!

CurriculumNI
@CurriculumNI
Very sad about
summer school !!
May have to run our
own mini one!
Who is in??
@niedchat

ACQUIRE • DESIRE • ASPIRE • INSPIRE



(L-R) Heather Watson with Keynote Speaker Dr Aileen Kennedy (University Edinburgh), Dr Carmel Gallagher (GTCNI), and John Anderson (ETI).



FE *Engaging with the* sector

Northern Ireland's statutory Further Education (FE) sector provides vital education and training pathways for almost 100,000 learners every year that are accessible to a wide variety of students, from those with no or few qualifications, to those studying Higher Education courses.

This includes 13,000 school children – where the retention and achievements rates are 97.8% and 93.5%¹ respectively. This highlights the significant contribution of the FE sector and those professionals delivering teaching and learning within it.

Our FE sector includes six regional colleges – Belfast Met, Northern Regional College, North West Regional College, South Eastern Regional College, Southern Regional College and South West College – and over 3,500 full and part-time lecturers.

Over the past 18 months GTCNI has been working with FE stakeholders – including the teaching unions (*NASUWT* and *UCU*), employers and Department for Employment and Learning (*DEL*) – to support the extension of the GTCNI remit to the FE sector, in line with the policy direction set out in the joint DE and DEL



consultation on the remit of GTCNI².

The GTCNI FE project has been fully funded by DEL and aims to open up registration with the professional body to FE lecturers, while recognising the differences that exist between the schools and college sector. For example, FE lecturers generally achieve their teaching qualifications through in-service development, although there are also significant

opportunities for qualified teachers within the FE sector.

While one strand of the project has focused on issues relating to professional registration and regulation – including minimum standards for registration – and enhancing the professional status of FE lecturers, a central objective is to promote professional development and high quality teaching and learning, as the key determining factor in the improvement of learner outcomes.



Recognising the **BEST** in FE



The **BEST Awards** were developed by the FE umbrella body, Colleges NI, to showcase the creativity and innovation across Northern Ireland's six regional FE colleges and offer students an annual competition linked to their studies in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).



(Above L-R) Ned Cohen (GTCNI) and Grainne McGowan (Belfast Met).



The awards were created to support college learners in their project-based learning across the FE sector.

The GTCNI Award specifically recognises the vital contribution of FE lecturers in helping their students participate in the **BEST Awards**.

At this year's **BEST Awards** GTCNI was proud to recognise the contribution of Belfast Met lecturer Grainne McGowan,

the course co-ordinator for the Belfast Met Fashion Management Degree. Grainne has actively involved her students in the **BEST Awards** and to help build their confidence and business skills by showcasing their work

and meeting contacts from industry. Grainne, currently has two BTEC students competing in the in the next heat of the World Skills Visual Merchandising Competition in Birmingham in November 2015. ■ ■ ■

¹ DEL (2015) *New Further Education Strategy for Northern Ireland*.

² DE and DEL (2014) *Joint Consultation Response – Proposals to Widen the Powers of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland and Extend its Remit to Include the Further Education Sector*.

The GTCNI Lecture 2015

BEYOND IMPROVEMENT ...
an agenda for policymakers and the teaching profession

GTCNI is delighted that Professor Graham Donaldson, an influential educational adviser to governments and NGOs around the world, delivered the 2015 GTCNI Lecture on 17 September in the Whitla Hall at Queen's University Belfast.

The event was open to all interested educators and also formed part of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference held at Queen's this year.

Prof Donaldson began his career as a teacher in Scotland before becoming a curriculum developer and evaluator at a national level. He joined Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in 1983 and later became head of the Scottish Inspectorate and chief professional advisor on education to the Scottish Government (2002-10). He has recently led major educational reviews in Scotland (*Teaching Scotland's Future, 2010*) and in Wales (*Successful Futures, 2015*).



Prof Donaldson highlighted the tendency for education policy to focus on incremental performance improvement, often against short-term targets, which can divert attention from the fundamental purposes of education.

He believes that, while the significance of what young people learn during their relatively short school lives has never been greater, the nature and purpose of school education remains highly contested and agreement on the characteristics of an excellent education system remain elusive.

The major challenge is for educational improvement policy to be set within a longer-term vision that can help equip young people to live ethical and fulfilled lives and to be lifelong learners in a world of challenge and uncertainty.

Central to the success of this longer-term vision, he argued, is the quality of teachers who need to be, not only excellent practitioners but also, rounded educational professionals, who are not simply reacting to external pressures but who are willing to become the catalysts of change and the guardians of excellence.



GTCNI Lecture Presented by
Prof Graham HC Donaldson
CB MA Med FRSA

'The specific challenge for policy makers is to create the conditions within which a reflective, creative and agile teaching profession can play its full part in ensuring a rich and relevant educational experience for each and every young person.'

BERA Conference 2015

Prof Donaldson also chaired a GTCNI sponsored seminar, as part of the Annual BERA Conference, examining the role

of teaching councils, as professional and regulatory bodies, in developing frameworks and mechanisms for supporting career-long professional development.

The discussion, involving the current Chief Executives of the Teaching Councils in these islands examined the range of initiatives currently being undertaken in

Northern Ireland, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to promote and enhance teacher professional learning. ■ ■ ■

BERA promote research-informed educational practise.
To find out more visit the BERA website: www.bera.ac.uk ■

2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
15-17 SEP 2015, BELFAST

APPROVED BY
visit Belfast
BERA



Digest 2015

... a Snapshot

Every year a snapshot is taken of the GTCNI Register of teachers to provide an annual *Digest of Statistics*. The Digest provides information about the teaching profession in Northern Ireland, particularly in relation to gender and age.

This publication has been produced every year since 2006 and is available on the GTCNI website.

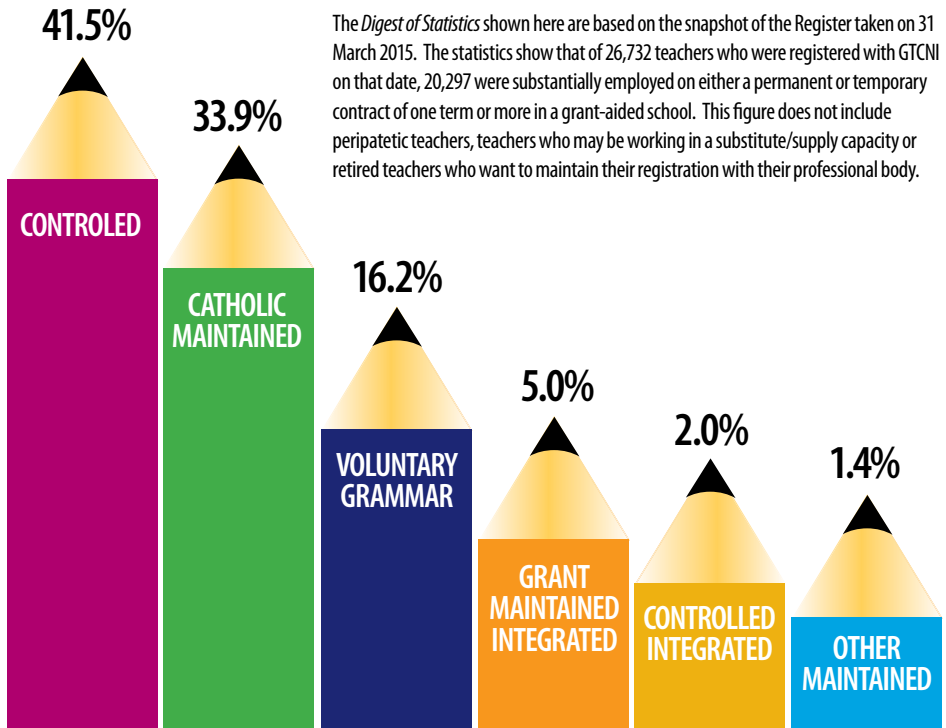
Males 502
42.76%

Females 672
57.24%



NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS BY GENDER 2015

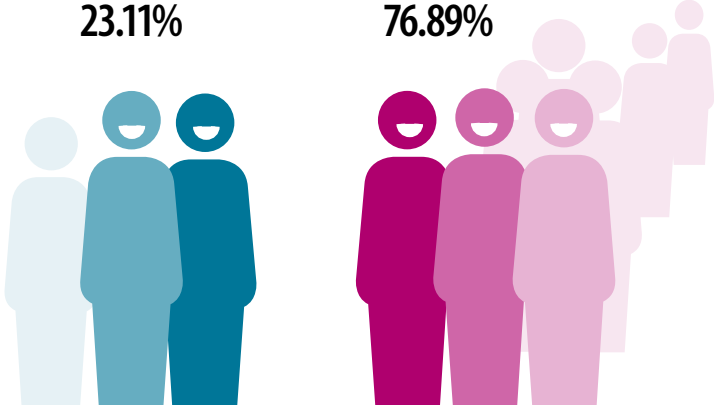
The *Digest of Statistics* shown here are based on the snapshot of the Register taken on 31 March 2015. The statistics show that of 26,732 teachers who were registered with GTCNI on that date, 20,297 were substantially employed on either a permanent or temporary contract of one term or more in a grant-aided school. This figure does not include peripatetic teachers, teachers who may be working in a substitute/supply capacity or retired teachers who want to maintain their registration with their professional body.



NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TYPE 2015

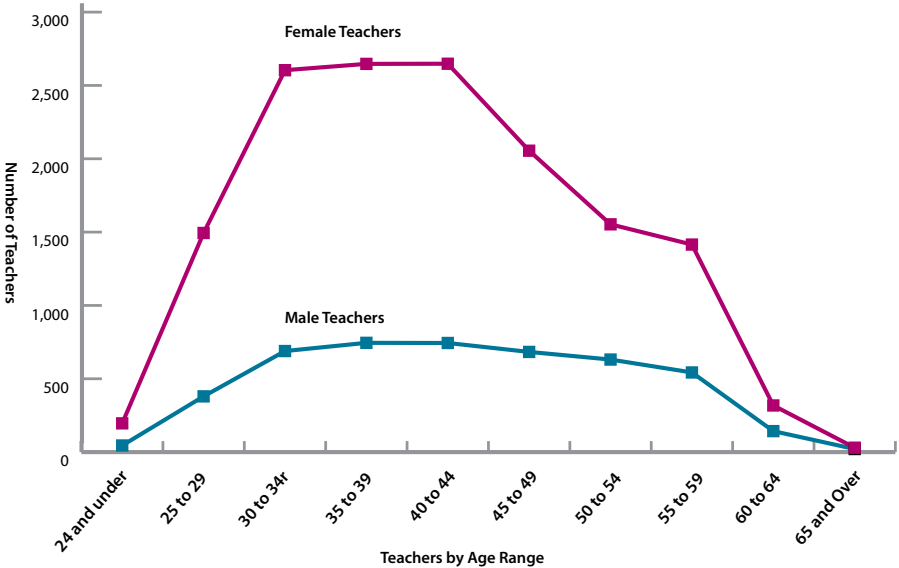
Males 6,177
23.11%

Females 20,555
76.89%



NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY GENDER 2015

The statistics generated from the GTCNI Register of teachers are widely used by employing bodies, the Department of Education and the teaching unions to inform policy development and planning.



NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY AGE AND GENDER 2015

Communications

On-Message

As the professional body for teachers in Northern Ireland, we recognise it is essential that we constantly try to improve how we communicate with both registered teachers and those preparing to enter the profession.

Our Registration Team provides friendly advice about registration by telephone and there are comprehensive sections about registration and regulation on our website.

Registered teachers can also check and update their records via the MyGTCNI portal and we have a secure on-line payment facility for teachers whose registration fee is not deducted from their salary.

Over the past year, we have also been building up the database of people who are registered to receive information by email and we will be launching our new e-zine soon. If you haven't already signed up please visit our homepage to register.

We are working towards updating our website and adding new features that will provide teachers with lots more information about GTCNI and resources to support career-long professional development.

We have a busy year ahead, ensuring the new regulatory powers introduced in April 2015 are operated fairly and

effectively to protect the integrity and status of the profession in the eyes of the public, consulting on the revised competence framework, promoting professional learning and consulting with you to influence the big educational debates.

With so much activity planned it is important that we connect with you to ensure that your professional voice is heard. ■ ■ ■ ■

To receive the new e-zine please register on-line or update your email address on MyGTCNI ■

