

# A★Class Act

UNISON speaking up for TAs

## Activities to celebrate teaching assistants on Friday 29 November 2013

### CYMRU/WALES

- **Denbighshire** – UNISON will be visiting a number of schools in the area and has had a positive response from the head teachers. There will also be drop in sessions in four of the schools during break and lunch times.
- **Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan** – all schools were written to asking them if they wanted to participate in the day and if so, UNISON is sending them a 'celebration in a box'. There are currently 22 schools participating – the box contains tea, coffee, a cake, and some of the TA day materials.
- **Cardiff** - An all-Wales schools forum is taking place with a celebration (cake etc.) there too. UNISON may use the opportunity to 'call' for something – perhaps making a statement that whilst it's all well and good celebrating TAs, what we really need is recognition.

### EAST MIDLANDS

- **Derby** -teaching and classroom assistants will receive hand-delivered hampers on 29 November, to show how much UNISON appreciates their hard work. As part of the nationwide day to celebrate teaching assistants, hampers containing biscuits, workplace posters and UNISON mugs will be delivered by organisers to the school staff rooms. The branch has also written to the local paper.
- **Leicester** – UNISON Leicester City Branch will be holding an event on Tuesday 3 December with competitions for those attending. They will be celebrating their teaching assistants and all school support staff on 3-7pm in town hall square.
- **Northamptonshire** – Northamptonshire Council Branch are issuing a press release and also speaking to Bobbie Lane from the University of Northampton to include a comment from them.
- **Nottingham** - Nottingham City Branch is issuing a press release.

## EASTERN

- **Norwich** – At Hellesdon High School the Headteacher is providing cake for all staff to celebrate and putting a message on the school TV to say how wonderful they are!
- **Chelmsford** – The Essex Team, supported by Essex County UNISON branch have a gazebo in Chelmsford City Centre for the day. The gazebo will be outside Barclays Bank from 9am-5pm. The gazebo will be supported on the day by TA's, Chris Vince (recently selected as the PPC for Chelmsford to stand against Simon Burns in 2015 for Labour, Chris is a teacher in Essex so will be supporting after school hours), Essex County UNISON branch and regional staff. UNISON will be handing out leaflets, balloons, talking to people about the importance of TAs and asking people to sign our book of support for TAs. Most people will know a TA in some way so come along and tell us how great they are.
- **Suffolk** – 9 primary schools in Suffolk are using UNISON's materials to celebrate the day with special assemblies and cakes: Dell Primary School, Lowestoft, Broke Hall Primary School, Ipswich, Fen Park Primary School, Lowestoft, East Bergholt Primary School, Laureate Community Primary School & Nursery, Sprites Primary School, Ipswich, Charsfield CEVCP and Dennington CEVCP, Gt Yarmouth High School, Bildeston Primary School, Bungay High School and Kesgrave High School. At Bungay High School there will be a Photo opportunity at lunch time with TA's - "We have a great and varied team and they should be celebrated." At Kesgrave, there will be photos with TAs and quotes from teachers holding photoboards and wearing stickers.

## GREATER LONDON

- **Barnet** – In Barnet UNISON has put together packs for 35 schools and sent a tin of chocolates with vital info about UNISON's campaigns for TAs and school support Staff; they might not be having tea parties, but the intention behind this is for the TAs to come together, share the freebies and discuss about the information sent. The packs contain tailored information about how UNISON supports members in academies/community schools, and info about how the union campaigns on behalf of school staff. UNISON will be present at one of the events with at Mapledown School in Golders Green for a special assembly where the head teacher will compliment the work of TAs.
- **Haringey** – Dave Prentis meeting teaching assistants at Coldfall School 9am-9.30am on Friday 29 November
- **Bromley** – UNISON is organising tea parties at primary schools across the London Borough of Bromley. Have put together "goody bags" to deliver to contacts in the schools during the week before, including thank you cards, packets of biscuits and boxes of tea bags.
- **Tower Hamlets** – Langdon Park School is holding assemblies featuring video interviews with various teachers
- **Islington** – There will be an Open Day at Islington Town Hall. Every head teacher has had a letter from UNISON asking them to join in with the celebrations and requesting a staff member is released to attend a buffet lunch.

- **Brent** – Expecting Braintcroft Primary and Chalkhill Primary to be celebrating TAs.

## NORTH WEST

- Regional calling notice sent to all TV and radio contacts
- **Southport** - Meols Cop High School is closed on 29 November but has featured TAs in their school newsletter giving students tips on how to make the best of learning opportunities with TAs.
- **Lancashire** – Alder Grange High School, Constable Lee St Paul's Primary School and Crawshawbooth Primary School all holding celebration events. Press release in Lancashire Telegraph 18 November.
- **Blackpool** – Gordon Marsden MP to attend local school.
- **Neston, Cheshire** – UNISON attending special assembly at Neston High School.
- **Chester** - Mill View Primary School are holding a celebratory assembly for all the teaching assistants. Pupil views and opinions have been collated and each teaching assistant will receive a 'Thank you card' and gift from the children noting their comments e.g. 'Mrs S always helps me with my phonics she is very kind' (Year 2 child).
- **Trafford** - Teaching assistants will be celebrating with cakes at Delamere Special School.
- **Manchester, Merseyside and hopefully Cumbria** – organising local radio interviews and chair of national schools committee meeting with local MP.
- **Warrington**- Local MP Helen Jones will be joining in the celebrations by meeting with teaching assistants at Green Lane Special School (Green Lane, Padgate, Warrington WA1 4JL) at 2pm, along with other schools in the area. Local press will be there. A Head from a special school will also be meeting the press.
- **Oldham** – In one school (unknown) teachers and children have made cards. Head is having a party with staff. Hopefully going to invite the local paper in.
- A male TA from one school is doing a diary, 'a day in the life of a TA', to get out via a newsletter, and there will be a 'cake run' in the morning, delivering cakes to a few schools to encourage them to get together and celebrate!
- **Carlisle** - Burgh By Sands school is celebrating by having a special assembly and showing the short video of teaching assistants at Pakeman Primary School that has been circulated. UNISON will call in for a photo opportunity. UNISON have also contacted the Labour Party Parliamentary candidate to see if she will come. Concentrating on the cluster of rural schools in Carlisle and have contacted the local press to cover the story. Asking for news and quotes from other areas.

## NORTHERN

- **Tyne and Wear** - Stephenson Memorial Primary School are celebrating the day by giving all TAs and non-teaching staff a word cloud certificate which the children have designed with all of the words that best describe them. They are to be given out in our celebration assembly on Friday. School making sure non-teaching staff know they are valued for their fantastic contribution to the running of a fabulous school.
- **Gateshead** – Gateshead Branch has written to all head teachers in their area asking if they would like to nominate one or more of their TAs for a “Star TA Award”. The winner will be awarded a prize at by UNISON during a school visit. They will also send a certificate to everyone nominated, so everyone feels like a winner.
- **Darlington** - West Park Academy in Darlington: School has asked the children to make cards, posters or a piece of writing about how much they appreciate their TAs. Then sharing in an assembly and having small celebrations in class. Also another school had a fab idea of dressing up as super heroes. School possibly doing that too.
- **Sunderland** –City of Sunderland UNISON branch are holding an event on the 29th November in Cafe Refresh in Sunderland Civic Centre, to which they’ve invited any member in any non-teaching role to have tea/coffee and cake on the branch and to share experiences. Linking it to the 'Worth it' campaign. Have support from 2 local MPS and a head teacher.
- **Sunderland** – at Portland Academy in Sunderland, stewards have made T-shirt saying "Teaching Assistants are operational, not decorative", as well as having 'A Class Act' printed on it.
- **Sunderland** - TAs in Hill View Junior School in Sunderland and also in George Washington Primary in Washington will be sporting the stickers with pride given to them by pupils.
- **Washington** - Fatfield Primary is holding a special assembly tomorrow, and they have colour copied the A3 size double sided poster/placard, written the name of a different TA on each and put them on the walls of each classroom. They also have stickers to hand out.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

- UNISON NI will have a message on the day
- **Lisburn** - Largymore Primary School be having a coffee morning on to celebrate all the support our classroom assistants give to the whole school team effort in providing a first class education for our children.
- **Warrenpoint** - St. Mark’s High School is planning a special assembly.

- **Foyle** - Schools committee member Gabrielle may be on Foyle radio on Friday morning highlighting work done by classroom assistants.
- **Derry** - Mayor and city councillors going out on Friday and thank classroom assistants and nursery nurses for the great job they do
- **Co.Tyrone** - At Aughnacloy Primary School the children are making cards for all their classroom assistants and giving them special gift bags. The classroom assistants are having a special breaktime - with tea and scones!

## **SOUTH EAST**

- **Isle of Wight** - Ryde Academy are awarding TAs certificates on the day to highlight how valued they are by the school.
- **Isle of Wight** - On the IoW, UNISON has been organising doing pledges. These have been ongoing so that schools reps have a chance to talk to their members. In schools where there was no rep, we sent it to the head teacher with a covering letter. Plan is to make a flyer and newsletter article advertising the number of schools/pledges that took part.
- **Isle of Wight** – At Carisbrooke and St George’s, reps are looking to get the day advertised in the school staff newsletters.
- **Reading** - UNISON are doing a schools roadshow, visiting the following schools: George Palmer Highdown School, Newtown, Norcot, Battle, St Anne’s, The Avenue, Coley Primary
- **Wokingham** - UNISON are doing a schools roadshow visiting the following schools: The Piggott School, Addington School, Grazeley Primary, Keep Hatch, The Forest School, The Bulmershe School, The Hawthorns. In addition, the Branch Administrator of Wokingham Branch is doing similar visits to the following Wokingham Schools: St Sebastians, Nine Mile Ride, Gorse Ride Infant, Gorse Ride Junior.
- **Surrey** - All the schools with UNISON reps and/or contacts have received a package through the post of leaflets both types, posters and stickers.

## **SOUTH WEST**

- **Bournemouth** – Pokesdown Primary are having cakes and goodies at breaktime. All TAs are having their playground duties covered. Having a competition for the children about why they love their TA and a quiz just for fun. Waiting on a reporter from the local paper.
- **Dorset** – Schools across Dorset will be holding celebration events. UNISON South West are organising competitions and special awards.

- **Swindon** – activities focus around a ‘TA question card’ which has been sent to all 82 schools in Swindon. All school staff are asked to fill in the card where they detail the biggest benefit that TAs bring to their school. All entries will go into a prize draw where the winner will receive £25 ‘Love to Shop’ vouchers. UNISON will be undertaking workplace visits throughout the week to the 7 schools under the White Horse Federation (a federation of primary schools across Swindon). Here they will engage staff about the TA celebration and encourage them to complete the question cards with UNISON branded cupcakes as extra encouragement for anyone entering the competition.
- **Swindon** - Also convened a meeting of school stewards last week, and they will be replicating the cake/prize card staff engagement in their own schools on the Teaching Assistant Day.
- **Swindon** - Arranged a photo opportunity for the local paper- the Swindon Advertiser- to run in an article about the TA day on 29 November.
- **St Austell** - Bishop Bronescombe C of E (VA) School will celebrate achievement in a special assembly, which the children will run; the TA will be special VIP for the day in the classroom; a circle time highlighting their strengths and the difference they have made will be recorded (written) and given to the TA to keep; children will be given the opportunity to write thank you cards to their TA to thank them for all that they have helped them with.

## WEST MIDLANDS

- **Coventry** – UNISON branch is producing a press release and planning interviews in local press and radio
- **Shrewsbury** – Staff at Harlescott Junior School will come in fancy dress – dressed as their favourite super heroes in order to celebrate TAs as *unsung heroes* in our education system! A celebration assembly will be held (where UNISON hopes to take a photo of members/TAs in their outfits). The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Shrewsbury** – At Sundorne Infant School UNISON members will be bringing cakes in to share with each other and will be sporting ‘UNISON colours’, purple and green.
- **Ludlow** - Bishop Hooper Primary School: Headteacher is holding a celebration assembly, thanking TAs for their contribution. School has been given UNISON stickers for staff and pupils to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Pontesbury** - Pontesbury Primary School: Holding a tea party where parents are invited on Monday 2nd December. (Not all TAs are at work on Friday 29th) The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Myddle** - Mydle Primary School is holding a coffee and cake morning at 11:30. Parents and governors are invited. Kids will have UNISON stickers and leaflets will be made available for parents and governors. UNISON Leaflets will also be displayed at the school table top sale the following day.
- **Oswestry** - Marches Secondary School has put out their own press statement, apparently in support of TAs. This school is an academy that employs a full time PR officer. Lydia (local workplace rep) will be bringing in cakes to share with TAs/members/staff.

- **Bridgnorth** - Bridgnorth Endowed School has shown an interest in taking part but have not yet confirmed exactly how they will be celebrating. The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Barrow** - Barrow Free School: Headteacher is doing a 'thank you' assembly for TAs. Teachers have got children to write poems thanking their TAs that will be read out. The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Cleobury Mortimer** – At Cleobury Mortimer Primary School Julia (local workplace steward) is bringing in cakes to share. The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear. School has been given UNISON leaflets also.
- **Bewdley** - Kinlet Primary School: Headteacher has agreed to send each child home with a UNISON leaflet about the importance of TAs for their parents to read. The school has been given UNISON stickers for pupils and staff to wear.
- **Shropshire** - Onny C of E School Will be holding a celebratory assembly (Stickers and leaflets are on their way). There will be a write-up of the events in Shropshire in the Shropshire Schools and Colleges Newsletter.

## YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

- **North Yorkshire** - The Woodlands Academy in Scarborough are holding a special parents' assembly and have other plans for the day.
- **Wakefield** - The main event in Wakefield is taking place at one of our largest schools in the district, Castleford Academy (Ferrybridge Rd, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 4JQ). UNISON staff will be running a 'coffee and cake' event 9.30am-2pm in the school staffroom to celebrate the vital role of teaching assistants. They'll be handing out free cake, along with UNISON literature about teaching assistants during morning break and lunchtime. In addition, a large 'thank you' card has been prepared which staff will sign for the teaching assistants. The school principal should be officially presenting the card to a number of the TAs as a photo opportunity. The branch intend to use the photo as part of a press release, providing some good coverage for the school on TA day.
- **Wakefield** - Reps in Carleton Community College and Badsworth School have contacted the branch to say that they will be actively promoting the day using UNISON's materials.
- **Leeds** – a celebration event is being held in the Sullivan Room of Leeds Town Hall commencing at 11.15 finishing at 2. There will be speakers from 11.30 until 12.15 with the rest of the time being set aside for networking and the opportunity to meet TAs. People attending are Chris Jenkinson, Regional Head of Local Govt, Jon Richards UNISON National Secretary Education and Children's Services, Cllr Judith Blake Exec member for Children's Services Leeds CC, possibly Hilary Benn MP, Alice Chicken from the Department for Education, Patrick Murphy from the NUT, head teachers, 40 TAs, council staff members working in staff development, Trinity College staff and Park Lane College staff.

- **Scunthorpe** - the local paper is running a 'favourite teaching assistant' competition. A number of schools have expressed an interest in holding a special assembly for TA Day are using UNISON's stickers and posters. UNISON invited to attend a Special Assembly at Enderby Road Infant School and working with local press to also attend. Article in Scunthorpe Telegraph on 21 November.
- **Bradford, Kirklees, Rotherham and Doncaster** - Special assemblies will be held in schools with cakes to share with staff. Many schoolchildren will be writing poems, designing cards and drawing portraits for their teaching assistants
- **Calderdale** – UNISON will be holding a street stall
- **Sheffield**- Prince Edward School is holding a 'special mentions assembly' with each #TA getting an award chosen by the children. The children are also writing to MPs.