

more than a job

The Times Educational Supplement
Cymru, Friday November 30, 2007
No 179 Price £1.40
www.tes.co.uk/cymru



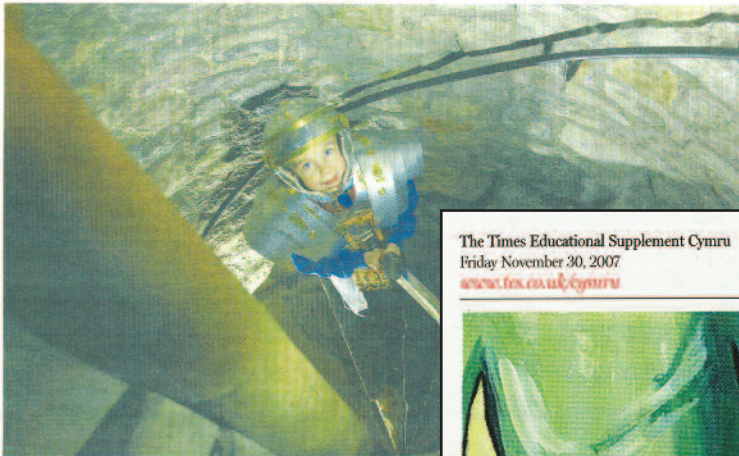
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Teacher draws on
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Closer look at progress:
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Joseph Forbes, six, from Archbishop Kosmin Williams Church in Wales Primary School in Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff, which has just won the prestigious Stanfield Award for excellence in heritage education.

Strikes threaten

Unions lose patience as new year of initiatives looks set to

By Gareth Davies

THE MOST critical school year for educational reform this decade could be hijacked by teacher strikes and the boycott of major initiatives, we can reveal this week.

As *TES Cymru* went to press, teaching unions and the Welsh Local Government Association issued an unprecedented joint statement warning of falling education standards and job losses in 2008-9.

The statement said that if the Assembly government did not come up with more funding for its ambitious raft of reforms next year, including the national roll-out of the foundation phase for three to five-year-olds, a lack of money and resources would have "a major impact on the ability of schools and local education authorities to continue to raise standards".

The explosive words came after unions and WLEGA representatives held crisis talks with education minister Jane Hutt.

The minister, who is facing the biggest test since she took over the portfolio in August, has spent the week trying to pacify unions and avoid strike action.

But her press office this week maintained that extra money provided by the government over the next three years was enough to finance the huge curriculum change about to be unleashed on schools.

The NASUWT Cymru is the only education union on the brink of balloting members over industrial action if more cash is not made available. However, the depth of feeling is so high generally that an all-out strike cannot be ruled out.

The union's Vale of Glamorgan secretary and national executive

member Tim

rest capital as

for local authorities

and budget cuts.

Announced government cuts last week have external authorities a per cent cut. But an as this is a real teachers will schools will "Schools are 3.6 per cent spending on local authorities get a rise of 2. "This is a we will have the service a national future tion across V

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Supply teacher who is quick on the draw

For the past eight years, supply teacher Emma Brown has spent her spare time sketching pupils at work and play.

Her illustrations, inspired by the classroom and playground, are drawn from memory after a hard day's teaching and most of them have one thing in common - adult figures appear only from the waist-down.

The idea, says Ms Brown, is to make them as child-led as possible.

"I have tried to show the world from their perspective," says the trained illustrator. "In the playground, there's so much going on every day."

After completing a degree in illustration, Ms Brown, 34, took a PGCE and began work as a primary teacher at Nantyllyon School in Bridgend. She describes her experiences there, and at St David's Church-in-Wales Primary in Colwynston, as inspirational.

"I hope to get something published. The illustrations are labour-intensive, but now I've decided to go for it."

Ms Brown now works at HM Prison Parc in Bridgend three days a week, leading art classes with 16 to 18-year-olds. Her ultimate ambition is to write and illustrate her own children's books.

Isabella Kaminski
Illustration: Emma Brown