

Subject: SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 10



The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NorthEast' logo on the left, with the tagline 'The future of our region is in school' below it. The main text 'WEEKLY UPDATE' is in large, bold, blue letters. On the right is the 'community playthings' logo, which includes a stylized graphic of three people playing. Below the main text is a dark blue box with white text: 'This week's Update is sponsored by Community Playthings who create solid wood furniture and early years resources for nurseries and primary schools. Please click here to see how they worked with Tidemill Academy to create an environment where children feel secure and engage deeply in all the activities on offer.'

Our update goes out to every Head Teacher in the North East weekly, but if anybody else in your school or LA would like to receive the Update, please send their name and email address to r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com

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- One Minute Manifesto with Anne Timothy from AT Consultants for change

Focus on...struggling schools

Yesterday, Prime Minister David Cameron announced that a further four hundred primary schools in England deemed to be the weakest are to be turned into academies.

The Government plans for the schools to be paired with a sponsor or be in the process of being reopened as an academy by the end of next year.

Speaking ahead of a special Cabinet meeting at one of England's leading academies, Cameron said that the driving mission for this Government was to build an "aspiration nation" and that a first-class education system was central to that vision.

"We have seen some excellent progress with our reforms, including turning 200 of the worst performing primary schools into sponsored academies, and opening more academies in the last two years than the previous Government opened in a decade.

Time and time again we have seen how academies, with their freedom to innovate, inspire and raise standards, are fuelling aspirations and helping to spread success....

It is simply not good enough that some children are left to struggle in failing schools, when they could be given the chance to shine."

According to Government figures there are 1,310 primary schools nationally below the "minimum acceptable level of performance". In June 2011, the Government announced their intention to convert the 200 primary schools that had not reached national targets for at least five years into sponsored academies – this will be achieved by January 2013.

In addition, the Prime Minister announced that £10m is available to encourage the creation of more chains of academy schools. The funding follows concerns raised by existing groups about the lack of organisations with the capacity to improve educational institutions currently acting as sponsors. The fund will be available to new academy sponsors such as schools, colleges, charities and faith organisations to help them build their capacity and infrastructure.

At the event at John Cabot Academy in Bristol, the Prime Minister also revealed for the first time that he wants to send his children to a state secondary school.

Answering questions from students, Cameron said:

'I would like them to go to state schools, that is my intention. What's happening in the state school system I think is really exciting. I think there's a revolution taking place.'

- [Worst primaries to be turned into academies](#) (BBC News)
- [400 primary schools to become academies, says prime minister](#) (Guardian)
- [400 primary schools to get academy status](#) (Independent)
- [Focus on struggling schools](#) (Number 10)

In Parliament... North East Economy

A debate secured by South Shields MP David Milliband attracted many of the region's representatives in Westminster to give their views on the North East economy.

Milliband opened the debate by outlining [his five point plan](#) to revive the region's economic fortunes. He stated that it was imperative that we "see the North East as asset for the UK not a problem" and said that the region was not looking for handouts but needed the "help of government not hindrance". Milliband stressed the importance of local flexibility in tackling issues and highlighted the high levels of young people experiencing long-term unemployment as a priority area for action.

Improving educational outcomes and skill levels emerged as a repeating theme. Ian Swales, Liberal Democrat MP for Redcar criticised the North East's education system, stating that too many young people have left without basic skills or aspiration.

Whilst Pat Glass, Labour MP for North West Durham, praised the quality of the region's schools and Universities, saying "We are the smallest region in the country, and yet, according to Ofsted records, we have proportionately the smallest number of failing schools in the country and the largest number of good and outstanding schools. Our universities are world beaters.....I have worked closely with the school of education at Durham on initial teacher training, which is recognised as a world-beating programme, yet the Government are cutting places in such schools locally".

Helen Goodman, Labour Member for Bishop Auckland, pointed out that the number of young people who have been unemployed for more than 12 months in her constituency had risen by 750% in the past year and Alan Campbell, MP for Tynemouth, highlighted that North Tyneside had seen the country's biggest decline in University applications since the introduction of the £9k tuition fees.

Newcastle North MP, Catherine McKinnell, raised the need for the North East to have a strong voice comparing the region's influence with that of Scotland.

Responding to the debate on behalf of the Government, Jo Swinson MP, Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs, talked about the actions the Coalition were taking to help young people get into work through the youth contract, the role of apprenticeships, better links between business and schools and encouraging take up of STEM subjects, especially among girls.

[Click here to view the full debate.](#)

Top regional news

New figures show that all but one parliamentary constituency in the North East saw a fall in students applying to go to university since the introduction of increased tuition fees. North Tyneside suffered the biggest drop in the country of 23% and South Shields, Washington and Sunderland West, Newcastle North and Blyth Valley were also in the 20 constituencies with the highest drop-off.

David Pearmain, Chair of SCHOOLS North East, said that the drop in applications was worrying:

“For the poorest families, the problem is one of perception,” he said. “What the Government didn’t do at all well was explain the rises to families, and how they do not need to pay up front.”

“It’s the most important contribution you can make to your future,” he advised prospective students.

[North East teenagers snub university after fees increase](#) (Journal)

Local news by area

At SCHOOLS NorthEast we scour the local press to find out the latest news from our schools however some stories inevitably slip past our beady eyes! Please keep us in the loop and share your news stories by emailing editor@schoolsnortheast.com.

Darlington

- [Creative teaching takes over Darlington school](#) (Northern Echo)

Durham

- [New £9,000 outdoor learning area opened at Ferryhill school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Boxer Amanda is a knock-out at Durham school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Chair of governors celebrates 35 years at a County Durham primary school](#) (Northern Echo)

Hartlepool

- [Organic growth for college partnership](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Olympic star inspires pupils](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Newcastle

- [Alan Shearer visits Newcastle school for ChildLine](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Students stranded in New York got extra homework](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Help make Hadrian School childrens' dream come true](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Newcastle children face bleak Christmas warns Action for Children charity](#) (Journal)

Northumberland

- [Northumberland school pals meet in Camp Bastion](#) (Journal)
- [Olympic triathlete Helen Jenkins visits Blyth school](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Anger over £1.5m loan 'offer' for new school](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Stepping out on Wednesday walks](#) (Morpeth Herald)

North Tyneside

- [Bailey Green Primary School earn 'outstanding' Ofsted](#) (Chronicle Live)

- [Youngsters offered experience of lifetime](#) (News Guardian)
- [Cementing a training deal](#) (News Guardian)

South Tyneside

- [North East teachers strike on pay and pensions](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Hebburn school headteacher pays tribute to Andrew Lucas](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Primary school makes the grade](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Striker scores for healthy heart campaign](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Teachers strike over dispute at school](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Sunderland travel firm's training programme is flying high](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Law students get a guiding hand](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Redcar

- [Grangetown's Pathways School celebrates 'good' Ofsted report](#) (Gazette Live)

Regional

- [Sixth-form pupils from the North East visit Auschwitz](#) (Chronicle Live)

Top national education news

Ofqual kills off January resits in bid to stop grade inflation

A-levels face further changes with exams watchdog Ofqual announcing a shift to summer-only exams as well as a cap on resits. This means that pupils starting A-level and AS-level courses from September will only be able to sit exams in June. Additionally, from 2015 pupils will be allowed just one resit per paper in a bid to curb grade inflation.

The changes to the qualification come after the end of a three-month consultation conducted by Ofqual. This is the first part of a wider proposed change to the system of pre-university qualifications.

- [Cap on resits and shift to summer-only exams](#) (BBC News)
- [Sitting A-levels in January to end in attempt to curb 'resit culture'](#) (Guardian)
- [Ofqual kills off January resits in bid to stop grade inflation](#) (Independent)

Leaked TES curriculum draft panned by experts

A draft copy of the new secondary curriculum, leaked to the Times Educational Supplement (TES), has drawn criticism from subject experts. The draft document is just 30 pages long and appears to confirm ministers' plans to give teachers more freedom over what they teach, providing them with only short lists of topics.

Ian McNeilly of the National Association for the Teaching of English called it "depressingly predictable". He described the new curriculum as being overly focused on a "relentless diet of canonical works."

"It is fantastic that Mr Gove has acknowledged that English as a subject needs to move into a different century. Unfortunately for all concerned, he has chosen the 19th rather than the 21st," he said.

The Department for Education said its policy was not to comment on leaks.

- [Leaked TES curriculum draft panned by experts](#) (BBC News)

11-year-olds to be barred from using calculators in tests

Schools Minister Elizabeth Truss has announced that children are to be barred from using calculators in the Maths national curriculum tests for 11-year-olds. The move is in a bid to encourage pupils to master mental arithmetic skills whilst in primary school.

- [11-year-olds to be barred from using calculators in tests](#) (Independent)
- [Calculators banned in primary school maths exams](#) (Telegraph)

What else we learnt this week...

- [Robots in the classroom help autistic children learn](#)
- [More parents 'would opt for an independent school'](#)
- [Schools accused of blacklisting disruptive pupils](#)
- [Teachers caught at wedding after sending children home for 'staff development'](#)
- [School textbooks 'too focused on exam preparation rather than broadening children's learning'](#)
- [Selection by religion 'should be banned in state schools'](#)
- [Warning over secret database featuring 8m children](#)

Resources and Opportunities

Calling all School Business Managers...tell us what you want!

Changing school structures, pressure to do more with less, new partnerships, reforms to regulations, procurement challenges and much, much more – the role and responsibilities of School Business Managers are becoming increasingly complex and demanding.

To help you access the support and advice you need and to create opportunities for you to collaborate with colleagues and share best practise, SCHOOLS NorthEast is arranging a conference and programme of events especially for you! Like all SCHOOLS NorthEast events these will be offered at no or low cost to schools, at venues across the region. To make sure we know exactly what you would like and need we would be very grateful if you would please take part in this short survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2ZTNRQ6> and to register your interest for these events email info@schoolsnortheast.com

Free Educational Psychologist support from One Education

One Education Educational Psychology Connect is an expert confidential telephone and e-mail advice service and online resource. It aims to connect you with an educational psychologist who can provide practical support and psychological advice regarding good practice.

One Education is offering all SCHOOLS NorthEast members free access to this service until Christmas. To find out more visit the website www.epconnect.co.uk, call 0844 967 1115 email epconnect@oneeducation.co.uk.

North East Careers Forum from Vision for education

Vision for Education has recently held a careers forum for schools in the North East. The aim of the forum was to set out the potential benefits of careers education and guidance, clarify the statutory requirements, expectations of government and accountability measures and provide an opportunity for schools to discuss the issues which they are facing.

[Please click here to see the results of the Forum.](#)

Events

Special Lecture from Newcastle University 'The Future of Learning' – 15 November

Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University, will be giving a special lecture this Thursday titled 'The Future of Learning.' In this talk, Sugata takes us through the origins of schooling as we know it, to the dematerialisation of institutions as we know them. Thirteen years of experiments in children's education show us a series of startling results which will be discussed at the lecture.

The event is **free of charge** and will take place on 15 November between **5.30pm and 6.40pm** at the Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building, Newcastle University. No pre-booking is required. To find out more [please click here](#).

Outstanding Teaching and Learning – 15 November

Walkergate Primary School invites you to send colleagues to join in with their own staff training sessions. They will be hosting a number of sessions throughout the year.

This first session will be focused on **Outstanding Teaching and Learning including:** the Ofsted Framework, pupil engagement and motivation, assessment and behaviours for learning, evidence of impact of targeted interventions, personalised learning, using your TA effectively, motivating hard to reach pupils and families, improving attendance and reducing exclusion.

The event will take place between **1pm and 4pm** at Walkergate Primary School in Newcastle and costs £75 per delegate. To book your place or to find more about the full programme of events from Walkergate please contact info@bloomandgrow.org.uk or call 0775 172 3806.

Creativity Conference - What can schools do to improve their creative vision in times of austerity? – 16 November

If you want ideas and inspiration on how to boost creativity in your school despite Government changes and funding cuts head to Creativity, Culture and Education's one day conference on 16 November in Sunderland. The event aims to stimulate debate around the creativity agenda and provide participants with practical ideas for using creative techniques in schools. .

Aimed at teachers, creative practitioners and other professionals involved in creative learning, as well as anyone with an interest in creativity, the event will build upon CCE's experience in running the Creative Partnerships programme in the UK.

The conference will take place at the Media Centre, University of Sunderland and National Glass Centre in Sunderland and SCHOOLS NorthEast Members can get a special discount. Simply quote SNE2012 when you book to secure your place for the reduced rate of £140 plus VAT.

To book email bookings@cceengland.org

Dealing with Underperforming Teachers Seminar with Dickinson Dees LLP – 21 November

The new Teachers' Standards came into effect on 1 September 2012. This seminar, presented by James Wilders, Partner, and Laura Daniels, Associate, of Dickinson Dees' employment team, will address the new regulations along with giving practical advice and explaining legal considerations. The seminar will be relevant to academies and maintained schools alike, with a strong focus on the routes available to improving performance and the pitfalls for the unwary.

This event is for Head Teachers, members of SLT and Governors and will take place on Wednesday 21 November between 6pm (6.30pm start) and 8pm at Dickinson Dees office in Newcastle.

To book your free place today email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com

One Minute Manifesto...Anne Timothy, Managing Director of AT Consultants for Change

SCHOOLS NorthEast is asking Head Teachers and influential figures across the region to give us their one minute manifestos for North East education. If you were in power what would be your priority for change, what one thing would make the most difference to your school and who should make the decisions for education?

Speaking recently at the SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit, Anne Timothy, Managing Director for AT Consultants for Change, sets out her manifesto for change in education in the North East.

[Please click here to view her manifesto.](#)

Have a great week!

If you have any issues you would like to see covered in the Update, or any other comments, I would love to hear from you at think@schoolsnortheast.com