

SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 17

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NORTH EAST

The future of our region is in school

WEEKLY UPDATE



AURA

This week's update is sponsored by Aura Newcastle Ltd who are hosting a procurement breakfast session event on 24 January. The event is free and will include expert advice on the practicalities of procurement. Email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com to book your place today.

In this Issue

- A roundup of all the latest local and national education news
- Details of a Procurement breakfast session
- 'School to School' with Steven Williamson who introduces us to his schools Bishop Harland CE VA Primary and Hylton Red House Primary, situated in North Sunderland.

Focus on... tough talk

Frustration at the time and bureaucracy involved in tackling inadequate teachers has been a regular complaint raised by Head Teachers at SCHOOLS NorthEast MPs lunches and consultation events. Last week, Education Secretary Michael Gove announced that plans to make it easier for Head Teachers to sack underperforming staff are to go ahead from September. The procedure for dealing with underperforming teachers will be "simplified" and given a shorter minimum timeframe, meaning that the process could be completed in as little as nine weeks. Introducing the changes, Gove said that schools have been "tangled in red tape" for too long when dealing with struggling staff.

The new measures will also require teachers to be assessed every year on whether they meet new standards on teaching and 'personal and professional conduct', and the three-hour per year limit on the time a Head can observe a teacher in the classroom has been lifted.

To address the problem of poor teachers being moved on from school to school, Gove is consulting on proposals which would mean that schools would have to reveal that a previous employee had been through 'capability procedures' if another school enquired.

The announcement received a mix response from the education unions. Christine Blower of the National Union of Teachers said "The changes will rightly be seen by teachers as an attack on their professionalism and will anger and depress them"; and Chris Keates of the NASUWT argued that the changes were "draconian and based on manipulated evidence". However, the moves were broadly welcomed by Russell Hobby of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), who stated: "Everyone deserves to know how they are doing and how they can develop and this needs to be done out in the open. The revised procedures reflect a large proportion of NAHT's hopes. They are simple and flexible, firm but fair".

Adding to the tough talk on schools and teachers this week was Ofsted's new Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw, expressing his desire to change "satisfactory" rating to "requires improvement". Wilshaw said he wants to send a message that "satisfactory" is now unsatisfactory and that more schools should be pushing for the higher rating of "good".

The plans will go into consultation but if they are agreed schools will only be allowed to stay at the "requires improvement" level for three years - and will be subject to earlier re-inspections after 12 to 18 months.

Sir Michael was speaking ahead of a Downing Street summit on so-called "coasting" schools, stating "There are too many coasting schools not providing an acceptable standard of education.

Of particular concern are the 3,000 schools educating a million children that have been 'satisfactory' two inspections in a row. This is not good enough. That is why I am determined to look again at the judgements we award, not only so we are accurately reporting what we see, but so that those schools that most need help are identified and can properly begin the process of improvement. I make no apology for making even greater demands of an education system which has to respond with greater urgency to increasingly difficult and competitive economic circumstances."

Responding to the announcement, Labour's shadow education secretary Stephen Twigg said coasting schools "need more than just a new label" and criticised the removal of routine inspections of outstanding schools: "Outstanding schools can quickly slip back, so this measure could undermine confidence in the system and mean parents only get out-of-date information."

Further reading

- [Ofsted plans to scrap 'satisfactory' label for schools](#) (BBC News)
- [Ofsted 'satisfactory' rating to be scrapped](#) (Guardian)
- [Ofsted to get tougher with failing schools](#) (The Times - subscription required)
- ['Satisfactory' schools must do better](#) (Independent)

Local news story of the week...Revamped school opens its doors

Dyke House Sports and Technology College in Hartlepool opened the doors of its multi-million pound revamped school last week. The school, which has 1,050 pupils and 120 staff, is now split into five areas to create a "school within a school"

Each group of students will remain with the same set of teachers for all five years in their area of the building and each area has its own open-plan teaching spaces and traditional classrooms with the aim of building better relationships.

Despite all the positive feedback about the rebuild and refurbishment, the school could not escape criticism from the usual suspects in the national press with the Daily Mail taking issue with the school's new unisex toilets.

Dyke House Head Teacher Andrew Jordon said: "I am extremely pleased with the school, and a key part was to raise the aspirations of pupils."

- [Revamped school opens its doors](#) (Hartlepool Mail) – includes a video tour of the building
- [You're asking for trouble: Parents' anger after secondary school builds unisex toilets for its pupils](#) (Daily Mail)

Local news by area

Durham

- [New Brandon Primary School to feature special design](#) (Journal Live)

- [Ferryhill parents upset over school heating hitch](#) (Northern Echo)

Hartlepool

- [A helping hand to the top](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Colourful way to warn of flooding](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [A bright idea to stay safe](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [Tree-planting ceremony marks school turnaround](#) (Northern Echo)

Newcastle

- [Gove slashes cash for City Learning Centre](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Kenton Bar Primary pupils make Wish appeal](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Wish bid from St Mary's RC Primary School](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Olympic hopeful pops into school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils head to Bangladesh](#) (Northern Echo)

North Tyneside

- [Deadline looms for school places](#) (News Guardian)

Northumberland

- [School traffic problems 'could cause child death'](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Cornhill First School amazed as Ofsted visits school likely to close](#)
- [Corbridge schools road petition gets positive response](#) (Journal Live)
- [Rock Hall School near Alnwick gets survival boost](#) (Journal Live)
- [Bedlingtonshire Junior High school set to be closed after poor performance](#) (Journal Live)
- [Lindisfarne Middle School fence moved after Alnwick man's council fight](#) (Journal Live)
- [School film project receives a helping hand from a duchess](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Pupils in the corridors of power](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Children have charity appeals close at heart](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [From classroom to command centre](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Young entrepreneurs take the honours](#) (Northumberland Gazette)

Stockton

- [Thornaby dinner lady retires after 32 years](#) (Gazettelive)

South Tyneside

- [Union's anger over 'longer schooldays'](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School taken off list of 'failures'](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School closes due to heating problem](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [S.Tyne school places surplus rises](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [£9.5m Hebburn school ahead of schedule](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Beauty contest aims to help Sunderland school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Saints day workshop is a glass act for pupils](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland's multimillion-pound Academy 360 on the road to improvement](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Boost for community sports facilities is welcomed](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Appeal to parents in parking row](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland kindergarten given hope for survival](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Washington school is getting better](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Have you got what it takes to be the next Steven Spielberg?](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [North teacher juggles classroom with catwalk](#) (Sunday Sun)

Regional news

Barricades spring up over school reform

Education Secretary Michael Gove is facing a new series of battles across the country in his attempt to force under-performing primary schools to become academies, with reports suggesting that local authorities in a number of areas including Durham are attempting to resist the action by the DfE. Gove accused some Local Authorities of being "obstructive" and run by "ideologues" and has warned that 10 councils with large numbers of under-performing primaries could face direct Government orders to convert schools into academies.

- [Barricades spring up over school reform](#) (The Sunday Times - subscription required)

National education news

Changes to ICT and the 'Wiki Curriculum'

From September the ICT curriculum will be radically revamped, the Education Secretary has announced. Michael Gove called the current ICT curriculum "demotivating and dull" calling for it to be replaced by a flexible curriculum in computer science and programming, designed with the help of universities and industry.

Speaking recently at the BETT education trade fair in London, Gove suggested a 'wiki approach' more commonly used in the military, is needed with this approach extended to other subjects after being piloted in the new programme of study for ICT.

- ['Harmful' ICT curriculum set to be dropped this September to make way for rigorous Computer Science](#) (DfE)
- [Michael Gove to scrap 'boring' IT lessons](#) (Guardian)
- [Gove proposes 'wiki curriculum'](#) (Guardian)
- [Royal Society offers ways to overhaul ICT teaching](#) (BBC News)
- [School ICT to be replaced by computer science programme](#) (BBC News)

Gove proposes longer days and shorter holidays

Education Secretary Michael Gove has floated new proposals to increase the time children spend in school. Under the plans for the extended day pupils could remain in school between 7.30am and 5.30pm and attend on Saturdays, with an extra two weeks potentially being added to school terms.

Asked how this would affect teachers, Gove said: "If you love your job then there is, I think, absolutely nothing to complain about in making sure you have more of a chance to do it well."

Mr Gove said the move would benefit "poorer children from poorer homes", who "lose learning over the long summer holidays".

- [Gove calls for longer school days and shorter holidays... and says if teachers love their jobs they shouldn't object](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Summer holidays could be reduced, says Michael Gove](#) (Telegraph)

The importance of language and diet in early years

New research has highlighted the importance of diet and language development in children early years as an indicator of their future health and success.

Leading Educational Psychologist and Government Adviser Jean Gross has called for two-year-olds to be tested on their ability to talk to ensure they receive help at an early stage. The former teacher argues that those with poor speech at two are doomed to a lifetime of failure and that language problems are often identified too late in a child's development.

Her recommendations come as SCHOOLS North East Commercial Supporter, The School Food Trust, reveal new guidelines aimed at reducing obesity in pre-school children. The guidelines follow a report which found that more than a fifth of children were overweight or obese when they started school. The new voluntary guidelines are a nationally recognised source of information on food for young children. The Schools Food Trust intends to pilot the new guidelines with five local authorities, with more joining the scheme later in 2012.

- [Toddlers should be tested on speech, government advisor claims](#) (Telegraph)
- [Guidelines on preschool food from School Food Trust](#) (BBC News)

Events

This Month's Events:

Workshop on practical and effective ways of using multi-sensory equipment - 23 January

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter Concept Training are holding a practical 'hands on' course on getting the most out of a multi-sensory environment. The course aims to give you a greater understanding of how to apply multi-sensory principles as well as practical knowledge of the equipment and the confidence to use it.

The course will be held at the Middlesbrough Teaching and Learning Centre on 23 January between 10.00am and 3.30pm. The workshop costs £195 (+ Vat) for the 1st place and £175 (+ Vat) for subsequent places. Reserve a place online for a further £10 discount. Visit www.concept-training.co.uk to book now or call 01524 832828 for more information.

Procurement breakfast session – 24 January

Join SCHOOLS NorthEast and Aura Newcastle Ltd, supported by Muckle LLP, on **24 January** at a special information event that aims to help schools get the best from procuring goods and services. A series of issues will be explored, such as the potential of cluster buying and other procurement strategies; this will include supportive information on the legal side of procurement to help schools make informed, commercial value for money choices when buying goods and services. The event will

take place from 8.30am until 10.15am at Muckle LLP offices in Newcastle. Email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com to book a place.

Twilight session on overcoming disadvantage in primary schools – 25 January

Find out how early intervention within the school environment is helping children in Gateshead to improve attendance and achieve more. Regional charity Children North East is now rolling out their successful schools programmes across the North East. They will be hosting a free twilight learning session for primary teachers and support staff. All attendees will receive a CPD certificate and refreshments and canapés will be provided.

The event will be held at Bede Primary School on 25 January between 4.00pm and 5.30pm. To find out more or to book visit www.children-ne.org.uk/250112 or phone David Van der Velde on 0191 256 2444.

Match-funded training in Early Years and Key Stage 1 Phonics - 31 January

Looking for effective strategies to raise reading standards across Early Years and Key Stage 1? To support schools in implementing effective 'Letters and Sounds' teaching and learning strategies and to improve pupils' literacy attainment in preparation for the Year 1 phonics screening check, Cambridge Education are holding a Letters and Sounds: Synthetic Phonics training course on 31 January in Newcastle.

The course will cost £195 + VAT (match-funding available). To book a place for you and your colleagues please call Alexander Coombes on 01223 463883 or enquiries@camb-ed.com. As an approved synthetic phonics training provider under the Department for Education (DfE) match-funded scheme, half of the costs of this training can be claimed back from your local ESPO office. Click here for further details.

Future Events:

School Improvement seminars – 1 February and 2 February

In light of the announcement of no notice inspections by Ofsted, you may need to access all your up to date school statistics at the touch of a button.

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, Go 4 Schools is hosting seminars on school improvement and how you can always be prepared for inspection. Attend on either Wednesday 1 February 2012 at 4.30pm – The Education Centre Stockton or Thursday 2 February 2012 at 4.30pm – Kenton School Newcastle.

Please book early as places are limited. Visit <http://www.go4schools.com> or contact Jackie Davies on 01793 516326.

Creative Marketplace from CH-ARTED at The Customs House - 1 February

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter CH-ARTED is hosting a free event giving you the opportunity to meet artists who have worked over the last eight years in schools as part of Creative Partnerships. Chat to them in an informal setting and see examples of the work undertaken with local schools. CH-ARTED has also worked with these practitioners to collate their thoughts and experiences into an informative guide on how schools can work effectively with artists and arts organisations.

The event will be held at Bede's World in Jarrow. Refreshments and nibbles will be served from 3pm, and there is no need to RSVP, you can drop in any time between 3.00pm and 6.00pm. Contact Fiona Kelly fiona@customshouse.co.uk if you would like any further information.

Resources and Opportunities

SCHOOLS NorthEast New Website

Our [website](#) has undergone a major makeover for 2012. As well as giving the site a fresh look we have responded to feedback from our schools and supporters to incorporate time-saving features. Our online [Clash Diary](#) allows you to view all the upcoming events in the North East educational calendar and we will regularly be updating our [news and events](#) section.

Stay posted as we will shortly be adding many useful resources to our 'resource section' and our Commercial Supporters will be uploading interesting case studies and exclusive discounts to the [Marketplace](#). Visit now at www.schoolsnortheast.com.

Need to know 2012 - information for Heads, Principals and Governors

The DfE has created a useful timeline which sets out important information to help you plan ahead, prepare for and implement changes that will take place during 2012, including mandatory legal requirements. Please click [here](#) to access it.

Opportunity to give your opinions of CPD opportunities in the North East

Staying Ahead is a North East schools' company "run by school leaders for school leaders." They are looking to develop leadership CPD opportunities and want to know what you think. If you have a spare two minutes please fill in their [short survey](#) regarding your opinion of the training needs of North East schools.

School to School

In this new feature, we ask a local Head give us a brief insight into their school. Thanks to **Head Teacher Steven Williamson**, who introduces us to his schools Bishop Harland CE VA Primary and Hylton Red House Primary, situated in North Sunderland. He describes the schools as "*servng a challenging catchment in the Redhill Ward of North Sunderland. We successfully meet the needs of our community by working in a soft federation.*"

Our school motto/mission/vision is "Two schools, aiming high together". We aim to enable our children to acquire the skills to give them a head start in the workplace and therefore work closely with our secondary providers to increase the opportunities on offer to our pupils throughout their school lives.

Our schools are good at tackling underachievement and ensuring that all our children make at least the expected progress. We are especially good at improving reading at Key Stage 2 and developing the Key Stage 2 curriculum. Behaviour in our schools is excellent because we identify needs early and have easily understandable procedures. We are a CLLD lead school in the Early Years.

Our school is working on improving our Key Stage 1 curriculum. For the last 3 years the Key Stage 1 results for both schools have been below Sunderland averages. We are finding it difficult to establish an effective Key Stage 1 curriculum which allows creativity but ensures the basics are rigorously taught. We believe that CPD for all levels of staff is a fundamental activity which effects rapid school improvement. All of our staff receive £1500 additional training funding a year which they pool together to address specific issues in a bespoke training plan, which leads to outstanding teaching. We are working with the University of Sunderland to ensure our training meets MA standards of enquiry.

The biggest challenge for our school is finding a pathway for the future as we have a falling roll with over a quarter of spaces vacant in both schools. We are working closely with the Diocese of Durham and the Local Authority to plan a way forward.

We think other schools would be interested in our creative curriculum using the TASC Wheel thinking process which has had a remarkable effect on improving pupil motivation and meta-cognition.

We would be interested in hearing from other schools about ways that we might establish a secure and effective Key Stage 1 curriculum.

Question from last week's school is: What have been your most successful intervention strategies and what made them so successful?

One successful strategy has been to include pupils in the planning of the intervention strategies. In this way the intervention is not 'done to them'. We evaluate intervention impact every fortnight which keeps them focussed. We tend to find 1:1 tuition with a teacher to be the best intervention strategy.

Our question to next week's school is? What funding / support have you been able to access to support ICT development in school?

Tweet of the week

We are seeing an increasing number of North East schools using social networks such as Twitter. If you are a Tweeter then make sure you follow @SCHOOLSNE for the latest regional school news. Every week we will pick the 140 characters on Twitter that have inspired/challenged or informed us the most... please forward us your suggestions for next week.

TimeEducation: *"Floods of 2007 cause baby boom school crisis"*

Have a great week!

The SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update goes out to every Head Teacher in the North East every Tuesday, 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.

Plus 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 the above address.