

## Subject: SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 18



The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NORTH EAST' 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 'SCHOOLS ADVISORY SERVICE' logo, which includes a stylized sunburst icon.

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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](mailto:r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com)

### In this issue...

- A round up of all the latest local and national education news
- Tribute to Joan Sjøvoll, Head Teacher of Framwellgate School, Durham
- Major changes to A Levels announced
- Details on a conference from Achievement for All
- “Raising Standards through Curriculum Innovation” event from Aim Awards
- “Being Fit and Ready for Ofsted” event from LCP
- **NEW:** SCHOOLS NorthEast Tweets of the week

### Focus on... the “deterioration” of careers education

The quality and quantity of Careers Education in schools have been criticised by a cross party group of MPs who have recommended a raft of changes to the current provision. Following the transfer of the duty to provide careers education to schools in 2011, the Education Select Committee launched an inquiry to consider the purpose, nature, quality and impartiality of careers guidance provided by schools and colleges and how well-prepared schools are to fulfil their new duty.

The report has concluded that, “Too many schools lack the skills, incentives or capacity to fulfil the duty put upon them without a number of changes being made. Young people deserve better than the service they are likely to receive under the current arrangements. Schools cannot simply be left to get on with it.”

The report describes the Government's decision to transfer responsibility for careers guidance to schools as “regrettable” adding that “the weaknesses of the school-based model have been compounded by the failure to transfer to schools any budget with which to provide the service. This has led, predictably, to a drop in the overall level of provision.”

However, the Committee does not recommend a reversal of the policy but calls on the Government to take urgent steps to improve the situation by enhancing the role of the National Careers Service and increasing the accountability on schools regarding careers education.

The MPs were particularly concerned about the capacity and expertise available in schools to deliver high quality careers education, the lack of consistency across providers and the lack of incentives or accountability in the system to drive schools to offer high quality, impartial careers education. To address this, the Committee has suggested a raft of new requirements for schools are needed.

They recommend that: "Government requires schools to achieve the Quality in Careers Standard, secure independent careers guidance from a provider with the Matrix standard and ensure that advice is provided by a level 6 qualified careers adviser. In addition, they call for the introduction of careers plans produced annually by schools. A Career Plan would comprise of information on the support and resources available to its pupils in planning their career development, arrangements the school has with local employers and how they intend to enhance them."

Other recommendations outlined in the report include:

- Encouraging local authorities to promote greater consistency in the provision of careers advice and guidance in their areas
- Stronger central guidance and the combining of the statutory guidance and practical guide in a single document.
- An emphasis on the benefits of a collaborative approach to provision with schools coming together in consortia to commission and deliver careers education.
- Improvements to destination measures to make the data more meaningful
- Expansion of the remit of the National Careers Service to enable it to perform a capacity-building and brokerage role for schools and work with individual schools in designing their annual careers plan of provision for careers guidance as well as provide schools with local labour market information.
- Provision of a minimum of one personal careers interview with an independent adviser who is not a teacher, for every young person.
- Amending the statutory guidance to schools to make it clear that the signposting of independent websites is insufficient to meet their statutory duty.
- A requirement on schools to publish details of the alternative providers they allow to meet with their pupils, including the name of the provider and the nature of the contact.
- Regular professional development for teachers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the work place.
- The extension of the National Apprenticeship Service's remit regarding schools, to improve understanding of apprenticeships.

Speaking on the launch of the report, Graham Stuart, Chair of the Education Select Committee, suggested that schools could "put their own interests ahead of their pupils" by promoting their own sixth forms above other options. He stated "Good careers guidance has never been so important and this report sets out a convincing case for government to revisit the role and remit of the National Careers Service", adding that "the evidence brought to the committee suggested that the most vulnerable youngsters were the most likely to be hurt by these deteriorating careers services".

A DfE spokesperson said "the previous system was often costly, patchy and of poor quality and the change was intended to give Head Teachers control over budgets and what sort of careers guidance suited their students. The duty has only been in place for a term – far too early to pass judgment on its success. We will consider the committee's report and respond fully in due course."

Brian Lightman, General Secretary of the [Association of School and College Leaders](#), said schools were happy to keep the responsibility but would welcome more help from the National Careers Service: "Proper resources and funding, would address many of the current shortcomings. School leaders are happy to retain responsibility for careers provision but need the support of government to ensure that they have the tools to do it."

Mary Bousted, leader of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, highlighted the lack of capacity in schools stating: "The reality is that schools aren't run by magicians - if they don't have the time, money or appropriately trained staff, but have a multitude of other pressures because of Ofsted inspections, it is no surprise they are struggling to offer the careers guidance pupils need."

Experts working in the field of careers education have welcomed the report.

Nick Chambers, Director of the Education and Employers Taskforce, said that the report "shines a bright light on the deeply worrying situation encountered by young people. There is a massive

information gap between the real demands of employers and what young people know and where their aspirations lie."

Labour Shadow Education Spokesperson, Stephen Twigg, called the report "a damning indictment", adding: "The deterioration of the quality and quantity of advice and guidance could be hugely damaging not just to individual young people, but to long-term economic growth. Young people need guidance so they make the right career and qualification choices."

In a speech today, Twigg is set to call for careers advice and information about work, such as visits to workplaces, to be extended to primary schools. He will also announce that Labour would get businesses to vet the quality of vocational courses as part of a new gold standard qualification at 18, a Technical Baccalaureate.

Technical Education was the focus of another influential report released this week by think tank, Policy Exchange. The report warns that many students are suffering from the lack of an alternative to traditional academic studies and calls for a distinct technical and vocational route through the education system to help reduce dropout and disengagement.

The report examines the high quality of vocational education on offer in other countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, and suggests that greater employer involvement in education at the local level plays a key role in assuring quality and aligning labour market needs. The researchers also stress the importance of Apprenticeships but only if they last for three years and the majority of learning time must be spent in work-based training.

### Your view

Do you agree with the recommendations of the Select Committee report? What do you think can and should be done to improve the quality of careers education for all ages? What do schools need to offer good careers advice? Let us know your views at [think@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com)

### Get involved

SCHOOLS NorthEast is currently working with the CBI and employers in the North East to develop a new, coherent approach to careers education, employability skills and employer relations in schools. If you are interested in being involved in shaping this agenda in the North East and piloting innovative approaches then please contact [r.earnshaw@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:r.earnshaw@schoolsnortheast.com)

### Reports

- [Full Policy Exchange report: "Building a high quality technical and vocational route through the education system"](#) (Policy Exchange)
- [Education Committee Additional Written Evidence](#) (Parliament)

### Further reading:

- [£300m wasted as third of teenagers drop out of A-levels](#) (Telegraph)
- [Careers advice reforms led to worrying deterioration in standards, say MPs](#) (Guardian)
- ['Work experience' for five-year-olds: Labour plans factory and office visits and employer talks to tackle skills shortage](#) (Mirror)
- [MPs warn over 'worrying deterioration' of careers advice](#) (Telegraph)
- [Careers services deteriorating, MPs warn](#) (BBC News)

## In Parliament...

It has been a busy week in Parliament for education. Last Wednesday, former Ministers from the Department of Education were grilled by the Education Select Committee about the workings of the

DfE; there was an opposition debate in the Commons on Gove's plans for the EBacc Certificate; yesterday MPs gathered for the regular round of [education questions](#); and this morning the Education Select Committee will hear evidence from Gove.

North East MPs were active in all proceedings.

During the debate on the Ebacc Certificate, Pat Glass, MP for North West Durham and member of the Select Committee, made an impassioned speech cautioning the Secretary of State about the “real danger in what the Government is proposing—in the timing but, most importantly of all, in the cumulative impact of these proposals”. She went on to ask the Secretary of State to “think again about them, especially about the aim to deliver everything at the same time. The risks are huge and the potential for chaos is massive”.

Her views were echoed by her colleague on the Select Committee and MP for Gateshead, Ian Mearns, who issued scathing criticism of the Education Secretary's approach and attitude towards teachers, stating “During an Education Select Committee session, the Secretary of State suggested that it would be possible for more children to succeed in a more difficult exam because they would be “taught better”. I found that response almost delusional. I believe that such comments devalue the hard work of our teachers, who work in difficult, emotionally draining environments, and many of whom already give far more than what is expected of them. It is all very well constructing an education system and a menu of examinations that may or may not fulfil the needs and aspirations of thousands of clones modelled in the image of the Secretary of State for Education, but the vast majority of children, I am glad to say, are not like that.”

In Parliamentary questions, North East MPs asked DfE Ministers about a wide range of issues from childcare to job losses.

Bridget Phillipson, MP for Houghton and Sunderland South, questioned the Secretary of State on the plight of Hetton School, which has been told that its' rebuild will be delayed by another year due to “financing issues.”

Gove agreed to investigate the case of the school and write to her with a response.

Jenny Chapman, MP for Darlington, also spoke on an issue affecting her constituency, quizzing Gove on proposals to close the DfE office in Darlington, threatening 450 jobs, and move operations to Newcastle. She accused the department of insulting those affected by playing party games on which areas should be cut.

The Secretary of State commended her on the case she had made for the continuation of Department for Education provision at Mowden hall in Darlington and said that he was “looking forward to working with her to ensure that we examine the case for either Darlington or another location in the north-east providing an even better service for all children in the future.”

In addition, Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Sunderland West and a shadow Children's Minister, raised concerns about the Government's plans to increase the allowable ratio of children to staff in child care settings.

## Tribute to Joan Sjøvoll

The North East school community has been deeply saddened to hear of the untimely death of Joan Sjøvoll, Head Teacher at Framwellgate School, Durham. Joan was a well-known and highly-regarded school leader in the region who was recognised and respected locally and nationally for her vision, determination and success. As a school leader, Joan accomplished a remarkable list of achievements both within and beyond Framwellgate. She was highly influential in the field of science education, shaping regional and national policy and practice and her passion and dedication ensured that Framwellgate became one of the leading science colleges in the country. In the last year, she steered the school through Academy status with the formation of the Excel Academy Partnership.

Our thoughts and condolences are with her family, colleagues and the Framwellgate School Community. Please [click here](#) to read more about Joan's life and achievements.

- [Tributes to 'incredible' headteacher of Framwellgate School, Durham](#) (Northern Echo)
- ['Joan will be remembered as a strong, thoughtful and caring' – tributes to 'incredible' headteacher](#) (Sunderland Echo)

## Local news by area

### Darlington

- [Olympian visits school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [ICT Awards launched in Darlington](#) (Northern Echo)

### Durham

- [Durham School hits the right note with new Steinway pianos](#) (Journal Live)
- [Durham free school sets up base, ahead of site announcement](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Blackhall Primary School rewarded for battery recycling efforts](#) (Northern Echo)

### Gateshead

- [Birtley teacher's sex text shame heard in court](#) (Journal Live)

### Hartlepool

- [Snow closes schools but roads open](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

### Newcastle

- [Multinational support for Percy Hedley](#) (Percy Hedley)
- [Newcastle High School enters Guinness World Record books](#) (Journal Live)
- [West Denton pupils design their own chocolate factory](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Different kind of lessons for Westfield School trio](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Gosforth Junior High Academy pupils help out blind friends](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Lord Adonis experiences severe delays on Metro](#) (Chronicle Live)

### Middlesbrough

- [Middlesbrough schools to be targeted to improve under-performance](#) (Gazette Live)

### Northumberland

- [School closes due to boiler breakdown](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Shearer's support for middle school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Councillors left to decide on Allendale Middle School closure](#) (Journal Live)
- [Tributes for Ashington school teacher who died suddenly](#) (Journal Live)
- [Haltwhistle Community Campus seeking views on academy bid](#) (Journal Live)
- [Concerns growing on rural Northumberland education](#) (Journal Live)
- [Allendale Middle School faces "inevitable" budget deficit](#) (Journal Live)
- [Magpies legend Shearer goes back to the classroom](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [School gets almost £10k grant from lottery fund](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Rural school beats the weather as snow and ice cause problems around the region](#) (Northern Echo)

- [Pupils at Cockton Hill Junior School dress as Peter Pan for walk](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Age-range changes for special schools](#) (Northumberland Echo)

#### North Tyneside

- [Monkseaton High teacher sacked over exam cover-up](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Plans to press ahead on dual-belief school in Longbenton](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Principal appointed to lead Kings Priory academy](#) (Journal Live)
- [Youngster launches new 'app'](#) (News Guardian)
- [School gets top award for its safety](#) (Journal Live)

#### Stockton

- [Stockton's Ian Ramsey school to be rebuilt](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Stockton Council rejects Yarm School playing fields and footbridge scheme](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Yarm School's planning application thrown out](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Secondary school in Stockton to be given a new building](#) (Northern Echo)

#### South Tyneside

- [Heating problems close South Tyneside schools](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Lego-lovers pursue an American dream](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School praised by autism charity](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Pupils' posters spread health message](#) (Shields Gazette)

#### Sunderland

- [Sunderland schools among UK's top improvers](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland students get world-class performance](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Bullied schoolgirl's hopes dashed](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Turnaround school celebrates massive success](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland teacher chosen for delegation](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland teachers miss average of seven days due to illness](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Help for Sunderland school-leavers facing uncertain future](#) (Sunderland Echo)

#### Redcar

- [Sacred Heart School to repeat life-changing Ghana trip](#) (Gazette Live)

#### Regional

- [Fresh crisis for North-East's crumbling schools after finance deal collapses](#) (Northern Echo)

## Top national education news

### Major changes to A-levels planned

Education Secretary Michael Gove has announced changes to A-levels to make them more rigorous and reduce the number of exams taken.

Under the new plan:

- AS-levels will become a standalone qualification with results no longer counting towards final A-level marks;

- Pupils will be able to take new-style AS-levels over one or two years, with qualifications covering exactly half the content of the full version;
- Full A-levels will be completely separate from AS and turned into “linear” qualifications, with all exams sat at the end of the two-year course.

In a letter to exam regulator Ofqual, Gove said there was “clear dissatisfaction among leading university academics about the preparation of A-level pupils for advanced studies”.

It was also revealed that the Russell Group of elite universities will set up a new academic board to advise the exams watchdog on the design of A-levels, which will be introduced from September 2015.

Commenting on the changes, Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL, said:

"This is a classic case of 'fixing' something that isn't broken. The argument that A levels are not preparing students adequately for university is contradicted by the fact that one in six achieve first class honours."

- [Major changes to A-levels planned](#) (BBC News)
- [A-level overhaul: return of end-of-course exams](#) (Telegraph)
- [Michael Gove's A-level reforms will narrow pupil choice, say critics](#) (Guardian)

### **'Schools should be open' despite snow**

One in six primary and secondary schools is believed to have shut this week due to the snow. Education Secretary Michael Gove has urged schools to stay open if possible and stated on Monday that "No school which ensures that it is open will be penalised if individual students cannot make it to school on that day."

He went on: "I hope as a result that more and more schools will recognise that while the decision on whether or not to remain open or closed is a matter for the Head Teacher, everything can and should be done in order to ensure that all children get access to a good education."

Graham Stuart, Chair of the Education Select Committee, also stated his view that schools should not be closing "unnecessarily" and has called on Head Teachers to be better prepared for bad weather.

- [Gove: 'Schools should be open' despite snow](#) (BBC News)
- [Schools must resist closing in face of snow, Tory MP says](#) (Guardian)
- [Schools must prepare better for snow, says education chairman](#) (Telegraph)
- [Parents hit out as snow shuts more than 5,000 schools](#) (Telegraph)

### **Universities told to reach out to primary school pupils**

The Office for Fair Access (Ofa) has called on universities to reach out to primary school children and begin the work of a widening participation with a younger age group. They suggest initiatives including campus trips and workshops to pupils as young as seven, to encourage young people from poor backgrounds to consider staying on in education once they've finished school.

- [Universities told to reach out to primary school pupils](#) (BBC News)
- [Universities to reach out to seven-year-olds](#) (Guardian)
- [Universities told to woo primary school children](#) (Independent)

### **Ofsted announces inspections blitz in underperforming areas**

At a recent education conference, Ofsted Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw announced that schools in underperforming areas that were due to be inspected during the next six months would be checked within a single seven-day period.

Wilshaw has stated that Ofsted intends to target the six lowest performing areas and said that the performance gap between some areas is "completely unacceptable". Inspections will be brought forward in those areas where, he says, standards are too low. Derby is the first area to be targeted. The other areas have yet to be revealed.

- [Ofsted announces inspections blitz in underperforming areas](#) (BBC News)
- [Ofsted inspectors target failing council areas with city-wide school swoops](#) (Guardian)

## What else we learnt this week...

- [Outstanding 'sin bin' school for troubled teenagers becomes pioneering academy](#)
- [Where you come from matters after all, says Gove](#)
- [Free school bids ordered to be disclosed](#)
- [Schools to be ranked by number of academic A-levels](#)
- [Children brought up 'in captivity' by risk averse parents, says leading child psychologist](#)

## Resources and Opportunities

### Year 11 Discover Days from Newcastle University

Newcastle University are offering a wide range of 'Discover Days', which aim to give Year 11 pupils an insight into some of the fascinating subjects that they can study. The sessions will not only be relevant to future study but also tie in with some of the wider themes your pupils encounter in your current studies.

If you would like to publicise this event to your students Newcastle University has flyers and posters available. For promotional material or if you would like to book a group of your students onto a Discover Day please e-mail [emma.peak@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:emma.peak@ncl.ac.uk) For further information please [click here](#).

### Your help needed: Education Funding Agency Survey

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) provides revenue and capital funding for education for learners between the ages of 3 and 19, or the ages of 3 and 25 for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are seeking feedback from schools and need your help. The information gained is invaluable to them and will help them provide the best possible service. [Click here](#) to take part now.

## Events

### 24 January: Being Fit and Ready for Ofsted – Newcastle

Stay ahead and ensure your school is ready for the new Ofsted Inspection Framework with this training course from LCP. [Read more](#)

### 30 January: Improve your Quality of Teaching – Manchester

Keep up to date with how Ofsted are now judging the Quality of Teaching and find out how you can improve the Quality of Teaching in your school with this LCP training course. [Read more](#)

### 5, 6 & 7 February: 'Improving the aspirations, access and achievement of children and young people' - Achievement for All half-day conferences (Middlesbrough/ Newcastle/ Durham)

Attend one of three free half-day conferences by Achievement for All, the award winning national programme now working in over 1,200 schools nationwide, to improve the aspirations, access and



achievement of children and young people. Achievement for All is an evidence-based programme, backed by...[Read more](#)

### **7 February: Raising Standards through Curriculum Innovation – Aim Awards (Darlington)**

This event will demonstrate personalised tracking that can be used to show progress through FL qualifications in a world without SCAAT points give practical examples of how qualifications can be used to innovate within the curriculum...[Read more](#)

### **February Half Term: Holiday Camps from ACG Sports**

ACG Sports provides action-packed school holiday courses for children between the ages of 5 and 11, which keep kids busy whilst providing busy parents with affordable childcare. The cost of the camps is no more than £5 per child per day and the camps will be taking place at various locations across the North East. For more information contact 0191 5194322 or [click here](#)

### **2 March: North East Regional Conference for Governors**

The National Governors Association will be holding a free regional conference in Durham. To register your interest [please click here](#). More information to follow shortly.

### **SAVE THE DATE: 3 May: School Business Manager Conference – SCHOOLS NorthEast**

SCHOOLS NorthEast is arranging a conference to help School Business Managers access the support and advice they need and to create opportunities for collaboration with colleagues and share best practice. Please email [r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com) to register your interest.

## SCHOOLS NorthEast Tweets of the week

Follow us on Twitter [@SCHOOLSNE](#)

**Social media milestone reached!** Excitement in the SNE office today...we have reached 1,000 followers! Thank you to all our followers!

**SCHOOLS NorthEast board meeting:** Great energy @ the SNE Board meeting this morning - buckets of ideas, passion & commitment to making a collective impact for NE children &yp

**Resources from DfE:** Useful 'education myth buster' from [@educationgovuk](#) looking at some common misconceptions. [Click here](#).

## 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](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com)