

This week's update is sponsored by I am Learning, who specialise in games based homework and revision for schools. See below for details of an event they are hosting shortly or click here to find out more.

Week 22: 28.2.12

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Focus on...making the most of our assets

The North East is well known for its vibrant and varied cultural scene, including everything from cutting edge contemporary art at the Baltic Centre and MIMA, to world heritage sites such as Durham Cathedral and Hadrian's Wall. But are North East schools fully exploiting the region's cultural assets?

An independent review of cultural education commissioned by the Government and released today, aims to make England's cultural education "the envy of the world".

The review led by Darren Henley, the managing director of Global Radio's national classical music station, Classic FM, covers all areas of cultural education and suggests 24 major recommendations to ensure that all children leave school as "well-rounded individuals with a knowledge of the world, past and present, around them."

To enhance the quality, range and accessibility of cultural education, the review recommends changes to the curriculum, Ofsted guidance and teaching training. In particular, Henley expresses concerns that the introduction of the EBacc has undermined cultural education in the school curriculum. He asks Government to make it mandatory for students to study at least one cultural subject (aside from English literature and history) to GCSE level and introduce a culture subjects category as a sixth strand to the English Baccalaureate.

The report also outlines the expected cultural experiences every child should have accessed at different ages in their education. It then recommends ideas to improve current provision including the development of a cultural education passport scheme for every child and the creation of a single website to signpost schools to cultural education opportunities in their area.

The findings of the review have been welcomed by Education Secretary Michael Gove and Culture Minister Ed Vaizey, who have committed £15 million of funding over three years to make the recommendations a reality.

Responding to the review, Education Secretary Michael Gove said, "Many children, especially poorer children, do not visit museums or art galleries, or go to concerts or the theatre, with their families. That

is why we must strengthen what is offered in schools. Cultural education must not be a closed shop for poorer pupils. I want to end any suggestion that high culture is only for the privileged few.”

Yesterday, Gove announced that English Heritage would receive £2.7m over the next three years to develop a programme of ‘Heritage Schools’ involving the recruitment of local heritage experts to work with clusters of schools. Newcastle was identified as one of the “regional historic centres already being considered as part of the programme”.

Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "Outside every school there is a rich history. In the high street, the housing estate, the park, riverside and field, every town, city and village is full of places in which significant events have taken place.

"Our Heritage Schools initiative will bring history to life both in the classroom and out of it, weaving it into the life of the community and endowing present and future generations of children with a vivid understanding of the place in which they grew up."

Ways to get involved

The report specifically highlights the importance of ‘Bridge Organisations’. Their purpose is “to make a step change in improving the delivery of arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people, acting as a bridge between the arts, culture and education sectors.” SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, The Sage Gateshead, will be the Bridge organisation for the North East from April 2012 until March 2015. To help them achieve their aims The Bridge would like to consult with school leaders from across the region about how they currently engage with arts and culture. To contribute to their research please click the following link to take part in a short online survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NDTHJTV>

In addition, SCHOOLS NorthEast is currently developing a number of projects to support schools to better exploit the region’s assets. The Asset Rich North East programme includes the development of an area based curriculum for the region (the Great North Curriculum), NEtitled – an experiences entitlements scheme for children and young people and an Alumni programme linking schools with employees in North East businesses, cultural sector and beyond. If you would be interested in hearing more about these plans please email Beccy Earnshaw r.earnshaw@schoolsnortheast.com

Further Reading

- [Vision for cultural education will inspire all children and enrich lives](#) (DfE)
- [English Heritage to receive £2.7m education funding](#) (BBC News)
- [£15m to be invested in cultural education](#) (Culture.gov.uk)
- [Art or dance 'should be compulsory to 16', review says](#) (Telegraph)

Local news by area

Darlington

- [Campaign saves school crossing patrols](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Teacher starts folk club](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Pupils to run the school](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Report praises 'excellent' school](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Sixth form to compete in festival](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Olympic glory for teenagers](#) (The Northern Echo)

Durham

- [Durham teens set for Strasbourg](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Durham free school campaigners finalise funding bid](#) (The Northern Echo)

- [Charity launched at special school](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [School's fund raising inspired by youngster](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [Work underway on South Moor school](#) (The Northern Echo)
- [East Durham students help create mosaic](#) (The Northern Echo)

Hartlepool

- [Plant a tree for jubilee](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Business is child's play](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Teachers up against police](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [West Park pupils are working hard for final year](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [£100k drugs find at house yards from Ingleby Barwick primary school](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Pancake day fun for Great Ayton children](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Teesside School of Music opens in Thornaby](#) (Gazette Live)

Newcastle

- [Papiss Cisse meets young fan who recreated goal](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Chemical leak in Walbottle Campus classroom](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Excelsior Academy invite Jamie Oliver to try meals](#) (Chronicle Live)

North Tyneside

- [Parents' shock as Monkseaton High head quits](#) (Chronicle Live)

Northumberland

- [Traditional skills are not just a thing of the past](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Classes for kids will get to art of the matter](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Academy forms overseas link](#) (The Berwick Advertiser)
- [And then there was just one....](#) (The Berwick Advertiser)
- [D-day looms for new school bid](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Pupils climb aboard the charity bus](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [School dinners have never been so tasty](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Pupils head south, by Royal appointment](#) (Morpeth Herald)

South Tyneside

- [Children's centre gets a glowing report](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Closure-threatened school goes it alone as academy](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Tyne-Wear rivalries set aside for fundraiser](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Youngsters take part in book celebration](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- ['Slow down' say Hill View kids](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Redcar

- [Bird life provides inspiration for pupils in naming new Skelton road](#)(Gazette Live)

Regional

- [Utility savings 'can boost schools'](#) (News Guardian)
- [Kids delve deep into the North Sea](#) (News Guardian)
- ['National service' offer for teenagers in region](#) (The Northern Echo)

North East questions and congratulations in the House of Commons

Churchill Community College in North Tyneside, and North Tyneside schools in general, were congratulated by Education Secretary Michael Gove during Education Questions in the House of Commons yesterday.

In addition, North East MPs grilled Ministers on issues including:

- The effects of the reclassification of vocational qualifications (Mary Glendon MP for North Tyneside)
- The role of university technical colleges in bridging the skills gap (Ian Swales MP for Redcar)
- Reduction of early intervention grants in deprived areas (Catherine McKinnell MP for Newcastle upon Tyne North)
- Encouraging Apprenticeships (Guy Opperman MP for Hexham)

Other topics discussed were teachers working hours, academy conversions and sex and relationships education. Gove also announced that later this week he would be "saying more about how we can help children in the weakest primary schools to aspire to a stronger education" ... watch this space!!

You can read the full transcript of Education Questions [here](#)

Top national education news

Special Educational Needs children let down

MPs have expressed shock that almost a third of 18-year-olds with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are not in any form of education, employment or training.

In the report released last Friday from the Commons Public Accounts Committee, the cross-party group of MPs raised concerns that "vital" support for these youngsters has not always been given enough attention. It says that the special education system is "hard for parents to navigate, with some driven to despair when searching for appropriate support for their child". Many young people with SEN face a "life-long legacy of lost opportunities" after falling through the gap when they leave school, the report warns.

- [MPs highlight 'shocking' numbers of Neet teenagers with SEN](#) (CYPN)
- [Special educational needs: MPs shocked by teens' plight](#) (BBC News)
- [Disabled children excluded from education](#) (BBC News)

GCSEs in four key subjects to be made tougher

GCSEs in key subjects such as English Literature and Mathematics are to be toughened up amid fears that pupils are being allowed to pass with a superficial knowledge of the curriculum, it is announced today. Ofqual fears that hundreds of pupils are sitting papers after studying only a few core topics that are likely to be featured in questions, rather than the entire course, and has ordered examiners to redraft syllabuses.

- [Exam boards ordered to tighten up four GCSEs](#) (Guardian)
- [Key GCSE subjects to be made tougher](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Free schools won't be inspected for at least two years

The standards of the Government's new flagship free schools will not be inspected for around two years after opening, with Ofsted adding that the schools will be visited earlier only if concerns are raised about their performance. The National Union of Teachers said the move was "odd", and that it would make sense for Ofsted to check newly established schools.

- [Gove's new free schools won't be inspected for at least two years](#) (Independent)

Events

Decision Time: Free Academy Conversion event - 1 March

To help the schools and governing bodies across the region currently debating whether or not to convert to an academy, SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter Samuel Phillips LLP is hosting a free workshop in Durham for School Leaders, Governors and Business Managers. At the event, John Edmunds from the Academy Conversion Division, Department for Education, will be presenting and will be joined by a school that has first-hand experience of academy conversion. The event will be chaired by Beccy Earnshaw (Director of SCHOOLS NorthEast).

The event will take place on 1 March 2012 between 3.00pm and 5.30pm at Lumley Castle, (Garter suite). To find out more or book a place please contact Sarah Thackray on 0191 289 4805 or email sarah@beaconhouse-events.co.uk

Sing Up North East Learning Network Day – 3 March

The free "Singing in Transition and Youth Leadership" day is a chance to learn valuable techniques, sample brand new resources, play around with fresh material and share ideas with other teachers and singing leaders, all within the glorious setting of The Sage Gateshead. It is a great opportunity for teachers, support staff and music educators to network, learn and explore singing together and is suitable for anyone regardless of experience.

This free event will take place on 3 March from 10am to 3.30pm at The Sage Gateshead, Gateshead Quays. Please register online at <http://fs2.formsite.com/singup/form63/index.html> to book your place or please contact Sam Clark on 0191 443 4617.

Improving results through online play, seminar – 13 March

SCHOOL NorthEast new Commercial Supporter, I am Learning, is hosting a seminar to demonstrate how their innovative online learning tool can help improve results and how Darlington School of Mathematics and Science (DSMS) utilised I am Learning to achieve their best ever GCSE results.

Used by hundreds of secondary and primary schools across the globe, I am Learning is a UK leader in engaging and motivating pupils in games-based revision learning with more than 100,000 questions, supporting all subjects across GCSE and Key Stage 3.

The free seminar will be held at Darlington College of Maths and Science (formerly Branksome Science College) on Tuesday March 13. There are three alternative sessions, starting at 10.30am, 1.30pm or 3.30pm.

To book a place, please email david@iamlearning.co.uk, stating which session you would like to attend. To find out more about I am Learning please visit their [website](#) or click the following link to see a recent article in the Northern Echo: [Learning from generation Xbox](#).

Creative Enquiry Based Learning CPD - 22 March and 23 March

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, Cap-a-Pie Associates, is hosting professional development to inspire more curious and independent learners, move teaching and learning from good to outstanding, and develop an innovative curriculum that raises attainment.

These courses will take place on Thursday 22 and Friday 23 March from 9.30am - 4.30am at the Toffee Factory Newcastle. There is a 15% discount for SCHOOLS NorthEast members (£136 + VAT per day). For more information click here www.cap-a-pie.co.uk/courses or contact Sally Fixter on 0191 3759046 to book a place.

Developing Scientists of the Future conference with £200 CPD impact award - 23 March

Join the Science Learning Centre in a conference for leaders, teachers and lecturers of 'Post 16 Science'. All staff from maintained schools and colleges will be eligible for a £200 Impact Award which will be paid directly to school approximately 8 weeks after attending the course.

These workshops will focus on aspects of AS and A2 topics in the Physics, Chemistry and Biology A level specifications, and are designed to support curriculum delivery for experienced post 16 teachers or lecturers. Participants will have the opportunity to explore ideas for practical work and problem-solving activities as well as exploring ideas for improving students' learning skills. There will be opportunities to carry out practical activities that are applicable to student investigations and explore teaching and learning approaches, including the use of relevant technology.

The event will take place on 23 March from 9.30am at Science Learning Centre North East in Durham. For further details or to book your place please contact Nicola Hall on 0191 3706200 or email n.l.hall@durham.ac.uk.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Conference - 25 April

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, SENtral Consultants Ltd, is hosting a one day conference with national keynote speakers and seminars to keep schools up to date with the latest developments in SEND.

The event will take place at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield on 25 April 2012. For more information please [click here](#) or contact Kath Alley (07773287275) or email info@sentralconsultants.co.uk

An unforgettable week in Westminster

Teachers and education professionals are invited to apply for a week-long CPD opportunity. Teachers of citizenship and related subjects and education professionals can apply to experience this intensive, informative and unforgettable week, based at the Houses of Parliament.

This year's Teachers' Institute will take place **2-6 July 2012**. Those attending will live in Westminster, and immerse themselves in the politics of Parliament. The programme covers travel costs (for UK delegates), residential accommodation and most meals. All resources, workshops and events are free of charge.

To apply please [click here](#) and fill in the appropriate form by 23 March to be considered for a place.

Welcome to new Commercial Supporters

SCHOOLS NorthEast has a growing network of Commercial Supporters who help us to be able to continue to work on behalf of North East schools. The network offers opportunities for schools to interact with organisations that provide a range of products and services to education many of whom offer special discounts and unique provisions for SCHOOLS NorthEast member school.

This week we are delighted to welcome [I am Learning](#), [Ward Hadaway](#) and [Principled Learning](#). Visit the [SCHOOLS NorthEast Marketplace](#) to keep up to date with the latest offers, case studies and events.

School to School

In this feature, we ask a local Head Teacher to give us a brief insight into their school. This week we spoke to Iain Veitch from Park View School in Chester-le-Street.

Our school is... a place where both children and staff can learn and perform to their maximum potential, knowing that they are cared for.

Our school motto is... 'Passionate about Learning.' It captures the fact that the sole focus of the school is in delivering quality learning experiences both in and outside the classroom.

Our school is good at... treating and understanding children as individuals

Our school is working on: (1) strategies to develop children's literacy; (2) ways in which to address this government's achievement and accountability agendas; (3) preserving quality and variety in the Sixth Form in the face of the drastic cuts made to our post-16 budget.

The biggest challenges for our school are... all of the above as well as maintaining young people's aspirations in the face of a Secretary of State who has openly declared that he will drive down success rates at GCSE and A-level.

We think other schools would be interested in... our learning model.

We would be interested in hearing from other schools about... how they have developed whole school literacy programmes which have veracity and impact.

Question from last week's school is: What do you do to keep some fun alive in your school?

We have refused to sacrifice a more liberal view of education for the mad pursuit of national thresholds and have deliberately safeguarded enrichment activities. For that reason, our children and staff undertake residentials, go on foreign visits, including a ski trip, learn to surf, visit places of interest, play sports for both participation and excellence, perform concerts, are part of orchestras, choirs and bands, dance, sing, paint, draw, work collaboratively on community projects etc. Our motto should really be Sebastien Chamfort's belief that 'The most wasted day of all is that on which we have not laughed.'

Our question to next week's school is 'How will you continue to build student aspiration in the face of a more difficult examination regime and record youth unemployment?'

What we learnt last week...

- [Children will be able to learn computer coding BEFORE they can read](#)
- [Boys are now reading as well as girls](#)
- [Lack of parental discipline is blamed for aggressive and anti-social children](#)
- [Academy schools attain fewer good GCSEs](#)
- [More teachers are quitting the classroom over indiscipline](#)
- [A school with 700 pupils has only 26 native English speakers](#)

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.