

SAVE THE DATE

SCHOOLS NorthEast 2012 Summit - 19 October
St James' Park, Newcastle

Week 32 -15 May 2012

In this Issue

- A roundup of the latest in local and national education news
- School to School with Nicola Nelson-Taylor from Beech Hill Primary School in Newcastle.
- Details of event by Muckle LLP regarding community use agreements
- Win a £15,000 grant to help your pupils

Focus on... “using the Pupil Premium to change lives”

A 10k ‘Pupil Premium’ prize, enhanced CPD, funding for literacy ‘catch up’ pilots, increased pay for teachers in challenging schools and Ofsted judgements on how schools are closing the attainment gap were among the ideas in Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg’s “vision for schools” announced yesterday.

In a speech at New North Academy in Islington, Clegg stated that he wanted to “strike a deal between the Coalition Government and our schools and teachers,” saying, “We’ll give you the cash; we’ll give you the freedom; we’ll reward and celebrate your success. But in return, we want you to redouble your efforts to close the gap between your poorer pupils and everyone else. We won’t be telling you what to do, but we will be watching what you achieve.”

The Pupil Premium, one of the Liberal Democrat’s flagship policies in the Coalition agreement, was described by Clegg as the “most important lever we have” in closing the attainment gap and improving social mobility.

In addition to restating the increase in the Pupil Premium from 1.25bn now to 2.5bn by 2015, Clegg announced a series of new initiatives:

- From next year, the top 50 schools judged as most successful in boosting the performance of poorer pupils, will be recognised with a new award and cash prizes of up to £10k.
- Teachers are to be encouraged to work more closely with Universities to collect evidence on what works and research successful interventions so that the evidence can be shared between schools.
- A new module devoted to ‘closing the gap’ will be introduced in the revised professional qualification for Headship.

- Expanding the role of National Leaders of Education and Teaching Schools in narrowing attainment gaps.
- The School Teachers Review Body will be asked to look into providing all schools with the flexibility to use pay to hold on to their best teachers and incentivise teachers to work in challenging schools.

Clegg also used the speech to emphasise the particular need to improve support for disadvantaged pupils at the transition from primary to secondary. Highlighting research from America that suggests that middle income pupils improve at reading over the summer period while poorer pupils get worse, he drew attention to the Pupil Premium summer schools starting this year and announced extra funds for Year 7s from deprived homes to catch up with reading and writing. This funding will come from the Education Endowment fund and will initially support pilot projects in London.

Finally, the Deputy Prime Minister talked about accountability saying “schools cannot just absorb this money (the Pupil Premium) and spend it on other things... we are putting a lot of Government muscle behind making sure this investment gets results”

The ‘muscle’ includes tougher standards for Primary Schools and new Ofsted measures to assess schools performance in closing the gap. Clegg stated that Ofsted will look “forensically at how well Pupil Premium Pupils do” and that a survey of how schools are spending the money will be produced early next year.

“The message should be clear” said Clegg, “If a school’s Pupil Premium population are failing – more likely than not – the whole school will be judged to be failing. At that point, the inspections will become more frequent... and Ofsted will take a much closer interest in how that school’s Pupil Premium is spent”.

He went on to state: “There’s only one freedom we’re not giving schools: the freedom to fail. This is a major change. We are saying, unlike ever before, that school excellence is not simply about great overall results. The best schools must be engines of social mobility too”.

Clegg’s speech coincides with the launch of a publication of a series of case studies regarding the Pupil Premium compiled by the National Education Trust in which Oakdene Primary School in Billingham, Stockton on Tees is one of the featured schools.

How is your school using the Pupil Premium? What do you think of the initiatives announced by the Deputy Prime Minister? How can schools best tackle the problem of transition? Let us know your views: email think@schoolsnortheast.com

- [Nick Clegg: 'pupil premium offers once in a generation chance'](#) (Telegraph)
- [Nick Clegg to propose £10,000 prize to boost schools' performance](#) (Guardian)
- [Schools compete for cash](#) (The Voice)
- [Schools 'should compete' for £10,000 pupil premium award](#) (BBC News)

Top local news

‘Granny cloud’ coming to Gateshead!

Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University, Sugata Mitra, has developed a novel concept to help disadvantaged children thousands of miles away in India. The ‘granny cloud’ is an initiative which connects teachers, many of whom are retired, to children in India via Skype, to help improve the children’s English and IT skills. Mitra believes this form of teaching can also be valuable in Britain and plans to test the ‘granny cloud’ with pupils at St Aidan’s primary school in Gateshead in the coming months.

Time Machine at Tyneside Cinema

Last week, the TES reported how Hotspur Primary School pupils from Newcastle helped save the world on a recent school trip to the Tyneside Cinema labelled the 'Time Machine.' To see the full article [please click here](#).

Time Machine is a fun learning experience that harnesses the power of film, theatre and cutting-edge online and interactive technologies to enable Key Stage 2 children to engage with English, History and ICT via the fascinating heritage of the Tyneside Cinema. For more information please contact 0845 217 9909 or visit <http://www.tynesidecinema.co.uk>.

Local news by area

Darlington

- [Darlington students nominated for award](#) (Gazette Live)

Durham

- [Girls to play at Twickenham](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [Teesside children wait longest for adoption](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Acklam couple up for Caretaker of Year in Gazette School Awards](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Beverley School Choir wins Sing Up platinum award](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Berwick Hills schoolgirl in bid for European rollerskating glory](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Egglescliffe School pupils get out of the classroom for fun revision](#) (Gazette Live)

Newcastle

- [Record turn out for Greggs Children's Cancer Run - GALLERY](#) (Chronicle Live)

North Tyneside

- [Benton girl Ellen Macdonald to join Diamond Jubilee choir](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Tyneside schoolboy aims to be Top Trump champ](#) (Chronicle Live)

Northumberland

- [Academy action plan is unveiled by head teacher](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Call for cash for urgent Tynedale school repairs](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [VIDEO: Student's design to be on Festival medals](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Student Jack could be up for national award](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Students treated to performance from deaf pianist](#) (News Post Leader)

South Tyneside

- [Miliband launches pedal power project](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Minister sees top school for himself](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Searching for George Orwell's South Shields connection](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Pupils leave their mark on new bus](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Primary school becomes academy](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [Sunderland pupils urged to get to school the green way](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Young people write for Sunderland fanzine](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Leading Sunderland school shows others the way](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Schools dubbed "outstanding"](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Pupils get a lesson in European politics](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland workers take to the picket lines in anger at Government](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Redcar

- [Redcar marshland makeover as pupils create educational space](#) (Gazette Live)

Regional

- [North East schools crumble as cash decision delayed](#) (Journal Live)

Top national education news

Teaching isn't "too stressful", says Ofsted head

Head of Ofsted Sir Michael Wilshaw has challenged teachers who complain about stress. Speaking at the Brighton College education conference last week, he claimed teachers needed to be reminded what real stress was, and that Head Teachers had more power and were better paid than ever before. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers has challenged the comments as being unhelpful, and said official figures demonstrate how stressful a job teaching can be.

- [Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw: Teachers not stressed](#) (BBC Online)
- [We work harder than ever before, so don't tell us we don't know what stress is... a teacher responds to the Ofsted chief](#) (Guardian Blog)
- [Ofsted chief: 'teachers don't know what stress is'](#) (Telegraph)

Academy Heads paid too much, say MPs

A report by MPs published last Friday claims that the Department for Education is not delivering value for money with its £56.4 billion budget. The Commons Public Accounts Committee criticised the Department for not keeping a closer eye on academy spending in particular. They were concerned that academies, which are free of local authority control and funded directly from Whitehall, were making "very high" payments to Head Teachers and leaders of academy chains. A Department for Education spokesman said: "A crucial freedom for academies is the ability to set the pay and conditions for their staff. They need to be able to justify these to parents."

- [Academy heads paid too much, say MPs](#) (Telegraph)
- [MPs demand more robust school spending checks](#) (BBC News)

Limit GCSE entries to avoid 'exam overload'

One of country's biggest examination boards has proposed new limits should be introduced to stop teenagers taking tests in up to 17 different subjects in the final two years of compulsory education. Pearson, which owns the Edexcel board, suggested that access to a well-rounded education had been undermined by the "nuclear arms race to take as many GCSEs as possible".

In many cases, this was driven by the need to climb school league tables and hit national targets, it was claimed. Rod Bristow, Pearson president, suggested that new rules should be introduced to ensure pupils sit no more than eight to 10 GCSEs.

- [Examiners: limit GCSE entries to avoid 'exam overload'](#) (Telegraph)

- [Number of GCSEs sat by students should be capped to improve education, exam board chief claims](#) (Mail Online)

Events

Community use agreements breakfast seminar - 17 May

Schools and academies are uniquely placed to provide access to opportunities and facilities which may help the local community. The benefits of such engagement are not only financial but can engender a greater commitment to the school or academy and to education generally. Regrettably, often the arrangements around community use are ad hoc and not fit for purpose.

This free breakfast seminar for schools, led by education and charity law specialists, addresses the dos and don'ts of community use and what a community use agreement should cover.

The event will take place on Thursday 17 May between 8.30 am and 10.30 am at Muckle LLP's offices in Newcastle Upon Tyne. [Click here](#) to register your place.

Academy Conversion event – 22 May

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, Samuel Phillips, is hosting a free event for schools to discuss academy conversion. Speakers include the Department for Education's Academy Conversion Division and a Head Teacher who has been through the conversion process. There will also be a debate when the audience will have a chance to put their questions to a panel.

The event is taking place on Tuesday 22 May 3.00pm until 5.30pm at Middlesbrough Football Club, Riverside Stadium. For more information and to book [click here](#) or email sarah@beaconhouse-events.co.uk or phone 0191 289 4805.

Free financial seminar for independent schools - 23 May

Calling all financial decision makers at independent schools! Join Barclays, Saffrey Champness and Hempsons, in a free seminar that has been specially developed to help you tackle difficult group decision making and focus on tax and legal issues.

The event will take place on Wednesday 23 May from 9.30am until 11.00am at Ridding Park Hotel in Harrogate. To confirm your attendance please contact Wendy O'Callaghan on 07766 364250 or email wendy.ocallaghan1@barclays.com

Resources and Opportunities

Free CPD for secondary school teachers of Art and Design

If you are a teacher of art, craft and design within the secondary phase then you can apply to join the Thinking, Expression and Action (TEA) programme launched by The Campaign for Drawing, National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD). This one year blended learning programme aims to develop an enhanced understanding of drawing for secondary teachers to offer their students greater support and inspiration.

The TEA programme is free to successful applicants. Selection is by a letter of application explaining why you wish to be involved and how you would like you benefit from the programme. The deadline for application is Monday 28 May 2012. [To find out more and to apply please click here.](#)

STEM Enhancement and Enrichment Grants

The STEM Directories help you find enhancement & enrichment opportunities to support your science, engineering, design and mathematics teaching. A limited number of grants of up to £500 are available for you to have a STEM Enhancement and Enrichment (E&E) activity take place at your school in 2012, to be chosen from those listed in the online STEM Directories.

All state-funded schools in England are eligible to apply. For more information, please look at the Grant Terms. For more information or to apply [please click here](#). The deadline for this round is **5pm on Thursday 31 May 2012**.

Win a £15,000 grant to help your pupils

Teachers with an innovative idea to improve the literacy or numeracy of disadvantaged pupils can apply for £15,000 to help set up a project in their school. The proposals can be entirely new, or build on innovative work a teacher has already begun testing in the classroom.

The competition is being run by the education charity SHINE and TES. A panel of judges from SHINE and TES will choose the winners, who will then receive their funding to start their project from September 2012. For more information and to apply please visit www.shinetrust.org.uk or call 020 8393 1880. The deadline for entries is **10 June 2012**.

School to School

This week we spoke to Nicola Nelson-Taylor from Beech Hill Primary School in Newcastle.

Our school is... evolving rapidly and likes to be cutting edge...on a budget!

Our school motto/mission/vision is... to provide each child with the skills, drive and self believe to reach high in life. For our school to be outstanding in all it provides and for Beech Hill to be the heart and soul of the community.

Our school is good at... developing leaders at all stages of their careers and helping children find their potential and feel special.

Our school is working on... finding a path through the political turmoil, we want to make the right choices for the long term benefit of our children but the decisions seem so big and far reaching.

The biggest challenges for our school are... fighting the effects of poverty; we never allow it to impact on standards but it is a constant battle when children have difficult home lives. It is a moral driver to improve their life chances though.

We think other schools would be interested in our... approach to CPD and coaching methods. We open our doors to each other as teaching colleagues and also to any schools wanting to see outstanding teaching. Teaching and learning is at the heart of all we do and we try not to get distracted by initiatives which pile in weekly.

We would be interested in hearing from other schools about... how they engage the hard to reach families who have left their children to bring themselves up- how do we get them back involved in older children's education? How have other schools improved attendance?

Question from last week's school is: *What role would you give Michael Gove in your school and why?* Hmmm- parent support advisor as he can tackle my attendance problem with his no nonsense approach and does seem to have a genuine interest in family life and improving the chances for all children.

Our question to next week's school is: Does a class need a classroom?

In the last 7 days we learnt...

- [A Head Teacher was banned from handling exams after re-writing pupil's A-level papers](#)
- [Multiple-choice questions 'could make comeback in A-levels'](#)
- [School spending on exams doubles to £328m in a decade](#)
- [UK Higher Education is ranked 10th best in the world](#)
- [Pupils face classroom mobile phone ban](#)
- [Parents are 'failing to get children ready for school'](#)

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.