

19 OCTOBER 2012

ST JAMES' PARK, NEWCASTLE



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## In this Issue

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- A roundup of the latest in local and national education news
- School to School with Ian Wilkinson from George Stephenson High School in Newcastle
- North East Teaching Schools to hold CPD events on 15 and 21 June
- Details on an event on – 'Making the most of academy status'
- Information on SCHOOLS NorthEast Special Governor Events

## Focus on...the exit doors

Government figures released at the weekend reveal that the number of teachers leaving the profession before reaching retirement age has reached a record high. "Early retirements" due to ill-health and teachers opting to leave before their official retirement date increased by 1,500 from 2009/10 to a total of 9,370 last year. Interestingly, the numbers retiring early due to sickness over the period went down significantly from 2,280 to 490, whilst the figures for 'premature retirements' (teachers applying to leave early), rose from 2,370 to 8,880.

Department for Education officials suggested that the rise in early retirement could be partly explained by a "bulge" in teachers who joined the profession in the 1970s. However, teaching unions have used the figures as evidence of teachers' dissatisfaction about changes to pay and pension arrangements and government measures, including tougher targets and the possibility of regional and performance-related pay and declining morale in the sector.

NASUWT General Secretary Chris Keates said: "The evidence is clear that the schools workforce is disintegrating. We will continue to make representations to the Secretary of State, but he refuses to acknowledge our key message – that as a result of the coalition Government's policies, this is a profession in crisis.

The Union's recent survey found that nearly half of its 230,000 members had considered quitting in the last year and the National Association of Head Teachers has said that two in every five of their members reported that they had "accelerated their retirement plans".

Martin Freedman, Head of Pay, Conditions and Pensions at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said:

"When we surveyed members in the middle of the pensions dispute, 74 per cent of them said that they would consider retiring early rather than join the Government's proposed scheme. This seems to

add support to the theory that the Government's combined actions on pensions and pay freezes and rhetoric on underperforming teachers will drive teachers out of the profession.... One could take a fairly robust attitude to this, and say 'if you can't take the heat...', but good and outstanding leaders are feeling the same way, and the loss of their talent is hugely damaging."

The statistics come as the UK's two biggest teaching unions, the NUT and the NASUWT, launched an historic joint agreement committing the unions to work together to "protect teachers and defend education." They have given the Education Secretary an ultimatum to "hold joint talks with their General Secretaries or face walkouts by more than 600,000 education professionals after the summer".

With the numbers of teachers leaving the profession increasing, the number of applications for teacher training declining (down 30,000 from last year), and the numbers on teacher training courses at a five year low, school leaders have raised concerns about how we recruit and retain the best teachers for our schools.

In a speech to the Voice union, yesterday, Schools Minister Nick Gibb stressed the "exceptionally high regard in which government holds the teaching profession" and outlined reforms to give teachers "greater autonomy, flexibility and freedom".

But Shadow Education Minister Stephen Twigg accused the government of leading a "triple whammy" against schools. He said: "Fewer people are being attracted into the profession, the government is cutting teacher training places and more are leaving".

In a piece in the Guardian today, Heath Monk, chief executive of Future Leaders raised particular concerns about the ability of schools in more challenging circumstances to recruit high quality teachers and leaders as a result of increased external pressure on school. Monk argues that "classroom teachers who are ambitious will be drawn to schools that are judged "outstanding", giving a wide berth to struggling schools that need them most but are at risk of being seen as career black holes".

In recent years, schemes like Future Leaders and Teach First have been established to channel great teachers and school leaders into the schools where they are most needed. Teach First in the North East is currently placing its second cohort of secondary school teachers and has a new primary programme operating in the region from September.

Matt Hood, Regional Director of Teach First in the North East, said: "We have had a fantastic response from schools in the region, all of the Primary places are now allocated as well as all of our Maths Participants. However, we still have some placements available for English, Science and MFL and we would love to hear from any schools that meet the eligibility criteria and want to discuss how they get involved."

### **What's your view?**

Is former Chief Inspector of Schools Christine Gilbert right in suggesting that morale in state schools is at "rock bottom"?

Are you worried about teacher supply and quality?

Do you think that changes to teachers' pay and conditions, such as proposals for performance related and regional pay, will have an impact on the quality of people choosing to join the profession?

Have you thought about leaving the profession earlier than you planned – if so why?

How can we best ensure that schools in challenging circumstances can recruit and retain good teachers and school leaders?

Tell us your views by emailing: [think@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com)

- [Teacher exodus as thousands go for early exit](#) (Independent)
- [Schools 'face talent drain' as morale of teachers dives](#) (Guardian)
- ['Give us a little more respect,' demand stressed-out teachers](#) (Guardian)
- [Teacher-bashing governments cannot expect high-status professionals to take it on the chin](#) (Guardian)

## Top local news story

### North East schools receive funds for buildings

Last week the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, announced which schools will have their "condition needs addressed" through the Priority School Building Programme. In the North East 28 schools have been successful in their application. To view the list of schools [please click here](#).

- [Funds for North East schools warmly welcomed](#) (Journal Live)
- [Dilapidated North East schools given funding for revamp](#) (Journal Live)
- [Crumbling Sunderland and Durham schools get revamp funding lifeline](#) (Journal Live)
- [Schools celebrate as rebuild cash given](#) (The Northern Echo)

## Local news by area

### Darlington

- [Students dig up some ideas for careers in visit to mine](#) (The Northern Echo)

### Hartlepool

- [Schools awarded repair cash](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Torch sparks pupils' Olympic excitement](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Sporting pupils carry the torch](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Checkmate for talented youngsters](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

### Newcastle

- [West Denton Primary School kids unveil song for Royal British Legion - VIDEO](#) (Chronicle)
- [Pupil makes 'space cakes' in Newcastle classroom](#) (Journal Live)
- [All Saints College pupils in hospital after cakes spiked with cannabis](#) (Chronicle)
- [Youngsters take a step back in time for film debut](#) (Chronicle)

### North Tyneside

- [Four schools to be rebuilt or refurbished thanks to government cash](#) (News guardian)
- [Protection of children praised by inspectors](#) (News guardian)

### Northumberland

- [Northumberland Special Needs Education service to change after review](#) (Journal Live)
- [Jubilee party at Berwick Middle School](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Olympic spirit set to music for choirs](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Artwork fit for a queen](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [More reaction to Alnwick high school funding success](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Reaction to Alnwick high school funding success](#) (Northumberland Gazette)

- [Rebuild cash success for Alwick high school](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Hexham students put dancing shoes on for world record attempt at bandstand](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [How to sign up to charter](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [School shortlisted for national award](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Grant leaves pupils climbing the walls](#) (Hexham Courant)

#### South Tyneside

- [School's tribute to mum and daughter](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Maths challenge adds to school's success](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Pupils take to street for charity week](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Mum's fears over school's academy bid](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Estate agent offers pupils some home help](#) (Shields Gazette)

#### Sunderland

- [Pupils learning special lesson](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland pupils watch chicks hatching in science lesson](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [American football team's school touchdown](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland pupils go green and get healthy with walking challenge](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Unions fight academy plans](#) (Sunderland Echo)

#### Redcar

- [Redcar pupils knit blankets for needy African children](#) (Gazette Live)

## Top national education news

### **CBI says GCSEs damage job prospects**

John Cridland, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), has said the current GCSE exams system is causing long-term damage to pupils' work prospects as schools prioritise exam preparation over developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. Mr Cridland's comments came as the CBI launches a new steering group, which will look into problems facing education, due to culminate in a report later this year.

- [Business leaders express doubt over the value of GCSEs](#) (BBC News)
- [CBI: children being failed by GCSE exams system](#) (Telegraph)

### **Head Teachers angered by Sats test scoring**

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has criticised the interim methods being used to assess this year's Sats tests for 11-year-olds. Head Teachers are unhappy with the changes to the assessment processes which have been put in place this year while the tests are under wider review. The NAHT says this year's primary school league tables will be based on "a flawed statistical model".

- [Sats test scoring angers school head teachers](#) (BBC News)

### **Cross-party consensus on future curriculum**

The TES reports that Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg will meet with Michael Gove to attempt to forge a cross-party consensus on future curriculum changes to avoid "chopping and changing when there is a change of Government".

The press also covered Labour's ideas for education including Twigg's call for all state school pupils to be given lessons in public speaking and interview techniques and plans to explore locating more youth clubs in schools.

- [Stability if ministers can shake on new curriculum](#) (TES)
- [Labour to explore putting youth clubs in schools](#) (CYPN)
- [Twigg calls for public speaking lessons in state schools](#) (BBC News)

## Resources and Opportunities

### Visit the SCHOOLS NorthEast Marketplace

If you're looking for goods and services for your school then why not visit the SCHOOLS NorthEast Marketplace? The Marketplace contains the profiles of our Commercial Supporters assisting you in finding goods and services for your school. Browse by category from School Improvement to Extra Curricula, you'll find something to suit your needs. Go to [www.schoolsnortheast.com/marketplace](http://www.schoolsnortheast.com/marketplace)

### Make Phonics Fun – free book

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter LCP is offering all SCHOOLS NorthEast members a free copy of their book, 'Reading Pictures, Writing Stories,' (worth £19.95) when you purchase from their new 'Make Phonics Fun' summer series.

For more details on this series go to [www.LCP.co.uk/Make-Phonics-Fun](http://www.LCP.co.uk/Make-Phonics-Fun) and to get your free copy of 'Reading Pictures, Writing Stories,' go to [www.LCP.co.uk](http://www.LCP.co.uk) and put both items in your basket, then enter discount code RPWS49 before you checkout. Offer ends 30 June 2012.

### Get the most from IT - free taster subscription for two lucky schools!

If your school would like to know more about how to optimise classroom technologies to improve teaching and learning, or are interested in how to create dynamic learning resources, please put your school forward to win a free taster subscription to [JISC Advance](#). In partnership with JISC RSC Northern, the free taster subscription will run from June 2012 to October 2012 and will include 10 hours of individualised support.

To apply simply send your contact details to [cam.swift@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:cam.swift@sunderland.ac.uk) by **Friday 15 June** and winners will be randomly selected and announced shortly after.

### How are you celebrating the Olympic Torch Relay?

As you are all aware the torch relay through the region is fast approaching. LOCOG are looking for stories to inform the media in the advance briefing a couple of days before the start of each day of the relay. If you are planning on lining the streets or having a celebration please email [PippaWare@Gateshead.Gov.UK](mailto:PippaWare@Gateshead.Gov.UK) about it so she can ensure that the media are aware of your projects and any potential showcasing opportunities. Please include exact locations and any details about what you are doing.

## Events

### Making the most of academy status – 13 June

Ward Hadaway is hosting a free seminar in conjunction with RSM Tenon on making the most of academy status.

Legal and financial education experts will look at the key principles and know-how needed to ensure that your school is making the most of its academy status and they will also be joined by the Head Teacher of an established academy to share their experiences so far. Experts will look at the on-going issues that you and your governing body will be facing. For further information [please click here](#) or contact Michelle McBride on 0191 204 4029 or email [michelle.mcbride@wardhadaway.com](mailto:michelle.mcbride@wardhadaway.com) to book a place.

### **Teaching School Education conference -15 June**

North East Teaching School Sacred Heart is working with Leading Learning to help organise a conference based at St. James' Park on 15 June. Learn how to create a culture to enrich, extend and accelerate achievement for all.

The delegate rate is £149 (+ VAT) and SCHOOLS NorthEast Enhanced Members receive a 15% discount. To find out more and to book a place on the Leading Learning Conference go to [www.outstandinglearnersoutstandingteaching.com](http://www.outstandinglearnersoutstandingteaching.com)

### **Teaching School Careers Conference – 21 June**

If you are looking for an opportunity to reflect on your current role in school and think about the next steps in your career then attend the Shiremoor Teaching School Alliance's 'Careers Conference'. There will be a chance to hear from practising leaders about the challenges and rewards at various levels of leadership along with workshops and access to individual support, advice and guidance.

The free conference will take place at the Vermont Hotel on the 21 June between 9.30am and 2.30pm. To book a place email [shiremoorteachingschlalliance@gmail.com](mailto:shiremoorteachingschlalliance@gmail.com)

### **\*\*\*SCHOOLS NorthEast Special Governor Events - 26 and 28 June\*\*\***

The first in a new series of informative and innovative events. Details will be sent out direct shortly so keep an eye on your inbox! If you would like to register your interest please email [emailevent@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:emailevent@schoolsnortheast.com)

### **STEM Teacher Network Meeting – 5 July**

The STEM Teacher Network Meeting will be hosted by Newcastle University and take place at Moorbank Botanic Garden between 16.30 and 18.30 on Thursday 5 July 2012.

The meeting will provide a good opportunity to meet University staff and discuss accessing University resources and facilities, transition to HE and CPD for teachers. There will also be the opportunity for guided tours of Moorbank Botanic Garden and the chance to meet their education officer. The team at Moorbank is currently revising their education programme and are keen to hear your views on what schools and colleges would like to see made available.

The event is open to all teachers and advisors in the STEM discipline. If you wish to attend, please complete the [online registration](#) form by Friday 22 June or email [simon.laing@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:simon.laing@newcastle.ac.uk).

## **School to School**

This week we spoke to Ian Wilkinson from George Stephenson High School in North Tyneside. SCHOOLS NorthEast would like to congratulate all the staff and pupils at George Stephenson as they have recently been graded Outstanding (in every category) by Ofsted. They are the first secondary school in the whole of the North East to be graded Outstanding under the new OFSTED Framework.

**Our school is...** always a happy place – even more so now having been graded Outstanding across the board earlier this month! The staff and students are understandably very proud.

**Our school motto/mission/vision is...**we value the individual differences of our students, encourage them to succeed in everything they do and help them to become caring, confident and responsible young people. Wordy I know, but well-meaning...!

**Our school is good at...**raising aspirations and going the extra mile for all of our young people.

**Our school is working on...**embedding our Learning Habits, that we have introduced in KS3 this year, across the whole school next year

**The biggest challenges for our school are...**embracing the fast moving pace of technology and trying to make the right decisions without having very much money to invest!

**We think other schools would be interested in our...**guidance System. The level of care, guidance and support for students here is something we take very seriously and has for many years been judged to be outstanding by both Ofsted and by the Local Authority. This, and a key focus on raising aspirations, has certainly underpinned our most recent successes.

**We would be interested in hearing from other schools about...**again, your approach to technology in this current climate of speed of technological change and innovation and invariably little money.

**Question from last week's school is:** *If your school was chosen to open the Olympic ceremony with a song, what song would you choose and why?*

A very appropriate song for the Olympics would be "Win" by Brian McKnight – not particularly because of the title but more because it is about overcoming all obstacles and never giving up in life. As long as we keep on trying and persisting, we will achieve whatever we set out to achieve.

**Our question to next week's school is?** *What have you done with your King James Bible from Michael Gove?*

## In the last 7 days we learnt...

- [Richard Dawkins supports school Bible plan](#)
- [Teacher called primary pupils idiots and fools](#)
- [Parents to win right to opt for private special schools](#)
- [Teachers given 'overly generous' severance payoffs of up to £200,000](#)
- [Google funds computer teachers and Raspberry Pis in England](#)
- [Starting school at seven 'can boost pupils' reading skills'](#)
- [88,000 'racist incidents' reported in schools, study finds](#)

## 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](mailto: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.