

Subject: SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 9



The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NorthEast' logo on the left with the tagline 'The future of our region is in school'. The main title 'WEEKLY UPDATE' is in large blue letters. On the right is the 'community playthings' logo, which includes a stylized figure of a person playing. Below the title, a dark blue box contains white text: 'This week's Update is sponsored by Community Playthings who create solid wood furniture and early years resources for nurseries and primary schools. Please click here to see how they worked with Tidemill Academy to create an environment where children feel secure and engage deeply in all the activities on offer.'

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

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- Details on an event regarding dealing with Underperforming Teachers delivered by Dickinson Dees LLP
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- One Minute Manifesto with Sarah Green from CBI

Focus on...over stepping the mark

News just in...an urgent hearing of a legal challenge over this summer's GCSE English marking case has been ordered by a Judge. The hearing, to be held within weeks will decide whether to grant permission for a judicial review in response to papers lodged by an alliance of pupils, schools and councils. Over 400 individual cases are involved in the mass challenge and the hearing will be heard in open court.

The announcement follows the publication last week of Ofqual's detailed report into the problems this summer. The report concludes that pressure created by performance measures "that provide incentives to ensure as many students as possible achieve a C grade, led to significant over-marking of controlled assessments by teachers in order to meet grade boundary targets". The report also criticises the "complexity and poor design of GCSE English exams and the over emphasis placed on school-based controlled assessment" as contributing factors grade variations experienced by some schools.

Ofqual analysis of the data over the last two months confirms their conclusion in their initial report back in August that grades for GCSE English were set at the right standard in June 2012.

The report acknowledges that regulators and the exam boards could have done more to avoid the situation by improving communication and more tightly managing controls, especially moderation tolerances for controlled assessment. But the report goes on to say that once the GCSE design had been implemented, "Ofqual does not believe that the problems seen this summer could have been eliminated, no matter how much more tightly these qualifications had been managed".

The report repeats the regulators opposition to changing the grade boundaries and remarking affected papers and asserts that the opportunity of the November resit as the right response to the situation.

The report also sets out the actions that Ofqual will be taking based on these finding to minimise the risk of the 2012 problems recurring in 2013 setting out that:

- To protect standards of GCSEs in 2013, all January 2013 assessments (whether examination or controlled assessment) will be marked, but **not** graded, to reduce the risk of marking to meet the expected requirement for a given grade and enable the grades for January and June to be set at the same time
- Marking moderation tolerance will be tightened, reducing it from the current 6 per cent
- Exam boards will be required to improve their communications with schools
- Ofqual will consider if any further exam design changes are needed to protect standards and continue to review controlled assessment producing a report with recommendations, in January
- Ofqual will advise on exam reform –to ensure the introduction of any new exams, such as the proposed English Baccalaureate Certificates, learn the lessons of the design failures in GCSE English
- Ofqual will use the findings to inform “real debate on accountability”

Speaking on BBC Radio Four of the report, Ofqual Chief Executive, Glenys Stacey said:

"We have been shocked by what we have found. Children have been let down - that won't do.

"It's clear that children are increasingly spending too much time jumping through hoops rather than learning the real skills they need in life - that won't do.

"Teachers feel under enormous pressure in English, more than in any other subject, and we have seen that too often, this is pushing them to the limit - that won't do either."

Ms Stacey added she believed teachers had marked the test "optimistically", rather than with a deliberate intention to inflate grades.

She said: "Teachers are not making up marks here.

"They are doing their level best to do the best for their students and they are bound, given the pressures they are under, to take the most optimistic view.

"There's an amount of tolerance... some lee-way in the marking. But if enough teachers mark up to that tolerance, mark up to that limit, then overall it has a national effect," she added.

The report's findings have been met with hostility from teacher groups and Head Teacher representatives who have condemned Ofqual for blaming teachers for the fiasco.

Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: "For Ofqual to suggest that teachers and schools are to blame is outrageous and flies in the face of the evidence.

"Ofqual is responsible for ensuring fairness and accuracy in the system. The fact remains that different standards were applied to the exams in June and January and this is blatantly wrong.

"The accountability measures do place tremendous pressure on teachers and schools, especially at GCSE grade C, but to say that teachers would compromise their integrity to the detriment of students is an insult."

Russell Hobby, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers stated

"We urgently need to break this dysfunctional connection between assessment and accountability. If we do not, all future reforms to exams, such as the English Baccalaureate, will encounter exactly the same problem, and Michael Gove should heed this warning as he overhauls the system."

After the report was launched ASCL and a coalition of supporting organisations restated their call for an independent investigation into what happened and for the exam papers to be regarded.

In addition number of Head Teachers are now challenging the credibility of Ofqual's version of the GCSE English exam controversy by planning to publish exam board reports confirming the reliability of teacher's marking.

Kenny Frederick a Head Teacher in East London Head is challenging the exam regulator to produce evidence to back claims schools have been too generous in marking.

Ms Frederick has released the moderation feedback from her own school, George Green's School in Tower Hamlets which stated "The centre is to be commended for the way it elicited detailed responses from students to substantial texts... Teachers' annotations had enabled the moderator to understand how and why the centre had awarded marks"

But when the results were published - it showed there were 19 pupils who missed out on a projected C grade in English.

Ms Frederick says the moderation report shows that teachers' assessments had been checked and verified by the exam board - in this case AQA - and called on Ofqual to provide evidence to show why such moderated assessments should then be downgraded.

Your view

Do you agree with the findings of the Ofqual report? Should an independent investigation be launched? Do you think that the accountability framework has encouraged over-marking? Do you think that Teachers are being unfairly blamed for the problems occurring this summer? How should accountability measures be changed to improve the fairness and integrity of the system? What can be done to avoid a repeat of these issues?

Let us know by emailing think@schoolsnortheast.com

Report

- [Poor design of GCSE English exam led to grade variations](#) (Ofqual)

Further coverage

- [Judge orders urgent hearing of GCSE English challenge](#) (BBC News)
- [Pressurised teachers 'marked GCSE too generously'](#) (BBC News)
- [Heads test Ofqual's credibility with exam board reports](#) (BBC News)
- [Schools heap blame for grading fiasco on Gove](#) (BBC News)
- [Ofqual: 'We have to cheat, nanny and fiddle', teachers say](#) (Telegraph)

Blogs on the GCSE fiasco

- [Our very own English hurricane!](#) (ASCL)
- [The teaching-cheating continuum](#) (Teacher Development Trust)
- [Complaints Department](#) (Geoff Barton)
- [GCSE scandal has damaged my students' views of education](#) (Guardian Blogs)
- [Make #GCSEgate a turning point](#) (Howard Stevenson)
- [Ofqual, and what it didn't know](#) (NAHT)

In Parliament

Inquiry into School Governance

On Monday, the Education Select Committee announced that they were conducting an inquiry into the role of school governance to explore the existing role of governing bodies, and the implications of recent Government policy developments in education for them, as well as a range of issues concerning recruitment, reward and responsibilities. Full details of the Inquiry can be found [here](#) and the deadline for responses is the 17 December 2012.

Education questions

Last week, the Education Front-Bench were back the Dispatch Box for the regular round of education questions. As always, a number of North East MPs took the opportunity to quiz Ministers.

Stephen Hepburn MP for Jarrow asked Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, Matthew Hancock "what steps he is taking to increase the quality and availability of apprenticeships for 16 to 18 year-olds."

He then challenged the Minister as to the value of many apprenticeships stating, "Is it not a fact that a lot of those apprenticeships are nothing but a scam? They allow employers to change the name on a job, call them apprenticeships and dodge paying the minimum wage. What is the value of an apprenticeship making sandwiches or packing shelves in a card shop?"

The Minister responded by highlighting the review of Apprenticeships currently being undertaken by Doug Richards which will consider how to ensure that "quality is at the heart of the offer."

Continue reading [the full summary of the latest 'in parliament' on the SCHOOLS NorthEast website.](#)

Top local news...Lord Adonis Chairs North East Economic Review

Last week, SCHOOLS NorthEast arranged an evidence session with Lord Adonis in his role as Chair of the North East Economic Review.

The session, hosted at Churchill College, North Tyneside brought together Head Teachers and young people from the North East LEP area to discuss the education and skills interventions needed to support growth in the area's economy in the next 30 years. The participants debated a wide range of issues with particular attention focussed on the need to improve the quality and availability of work experience and careers advice and guidance in schools.

Many of the views expressed at the session are echoed in an article today by Charlie Mayfield, chairman of the John Lewis Partnership in the Telegraph in which he rebukes some employers for perpetuating "a myth...that young people are work-shy, unwilling or unable to hold down a responsible job". In reality, he says "when employers don't find young people well prepared for work, their complaints are not usually about literacy, numeracy or attitude. Their biggest concern is simply lack of experience. Most young people are ready, willing and able to dive into work. What they need, more than anything, is experience."

Last week, careers education was also in the news with Schools Minister, David Laws criticism of teachers for failing to encourage students to have high careers expectations. The Minister told the Telegraph that "Teachers, colleges, careers advisers have a role and a responsibility to aim for the stars and to encourage people to believe they can reach the top in education and employment. That's not happening as much as it should do at the moment."

A survey by Pearson Think Tank, found that Teachers themselves are worried about the quality of careers education, with two-thirds of teachers responding with concerns about the standard of careers advice on offer in their school. A report jointly written by the Think Tank and the University of Derby recommends that the new reforms to careers advice and guidance are closely monitored, and calls on schools to embed careers work into the curriculum they offer.

- [Two-thirds of teachers fear for careers advice quality](#) (TES)
- [What young people need more than anything is work experience](#) (Telegraph)
- [New 'career certificate' launched](#) (IEBE)

Local news by area

Darlington

- [Councillor warns over vehicles left dangerously outside Heighington CE Primary School](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils given insight into apprentice route to work](#) (Northern Echo)

Durham

- [Hermitage Academy teacher killed in Gateshead crash](#) (Journal)
- [Bibles all round at Durham school](#) (Northern Echo)

Hartlepool

- [Master chefs cook five-star treats](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Halloween break](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils taking big strides to fitness](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [St Peter's pupils have the X Factor!](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [Teesside schoolboy raises money in memory of classmate](#) (Gazette Live)

Newcastle

- [LA Taxis boss helps raise £85,000 for Benwell school](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Berwick language school gets cash injection](#) (Journal Live)
- [Newcastle school pupils have work exhibited at The Baltic](#) (Journal Live)

Northumberland

- [Berwick language school gets cash injection](#) (Journal Live)
- [Northumberland schools funding shortfall shared](#) (Journal Live)
- [Still no lollipop warden for Corbridge schoolchildren](#) (Journal Live)
- ["No done deal" on Allendale Middle School says schools chief](#) (Journal Live)
- [New Alnwick high school must find £1.5m](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- ['We want our school to be fully funded'](#) (Northumberland Gazette)

South Tyneside

- [Hebburn school headteacher pays tribute to Andrew Lucas](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Honour for very high achievers](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Kids get taste of the good life](#) (Shields Gazette)

- [College can make difference for charity](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Pupils test their poetic prowess](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Pupils' harvest gift to OAPs](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School's sporting gift from Team GB](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [No barrier to learning English as second language](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School hit by violent sickness outbreak](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Sunderland headteachers promise academies will continue serving pupils top tucker](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland students meet the media](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [School manages to turn around its fortunes](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Inspectors warn Barnes Primary School to do better](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Top national education news

A-level overhaul may lead to 'two-tier' system

Ministers have warned that an overhaul of A-levels could possibly lead to a two-tier system with students suffering discrimination because of their subject choice. Proposals have been listed to bring in new-style A-levels on a subject-by-subject basis over a number of years. But the university admissions service, Ucas, says subjects revamped at a later stage could lose value and suffer "lasting damage" as a result. The admissions body also warns that there is a risk that if the new courses are seen as tougher, students could be put off, leading to a fall in demand.

- [Warning over 'two-tier' A-level overhaul](#) (BBC News)

Arts leaders voice deep concerns over lack of cultural subjects in Ebacc

According to leading figures in the arts world, Britain's creative economy could be destroyed "within a generation" because of the decision to leave arts subjects out of the English baccalaureate.

Sir Nicholas Hytner, Sir Nicholas Serota, Julian Lloyd Webber, Richard Rogers, Sir David Hare and Grayson Perry are among the cultural figureheads who have told the Guardian they are deeply worried about the impact of excluding creative subjects from the core qualification at 16. There are fears that many schools, particularly state schools, will marginalise arts subjects if they do not count towards the Ebacc, the new GCSE performance measure.

- [Arts leaders voice deep concerns over lack of cultural subjects in Ebacc](#) (Guardian)
- [Leaving arts subjects out of the Ebacc will deprive poor children of culture](#) (Guardian)

What else we learnt over the half term...

- [School meal rules should apply to academies says parents](#)
- [State school teachers employed by tax-avoiding firm](#)
- [Child benefit cuts may cost some families £50,000](#)
- [Teachers increasingly bear the burden of supporting vulnerable children](#)
- [What skills do academy governors need to manage million-pound budgets?](#)

Resources and Opportunities

Calling all School Business Managers...tell us what you want!

Changing school structures, pressure to do more with less, new partnerships, reforms to regulations, procurement challenges and much, much more – the role and responsibilities of School Business Managers are becoming increasingly complex and demanding.

To help you access the support and advice you need and to create opportunities for you to collaborate with colleagues and share best practise, SCHOOLS NorthEast is arranging a conference and programme of events especially for you! Like all SCHOOLS NorthEast events these will be offered at no or low cost to schools, at venues across the region. To make sure we know exactly what you would like and need we would be very grateful if you would please take part in this short survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2ZTNRQ6> and to register your interest for these events email info@schoolsnortheast.com

Free Educational Psychologist support from One Education

One Education Educational Psychology Connect is an expert confidential telephone and e-mail advice service and online resource. It aims to connect you with an educational psychologist who can provide practical support and psychological advice regarding good practice.

One Education is offering all SCHOOLS NorthEast members free access to this service until Christmas. To find out more visit the website www.epconnect.co.uk, call 0844 967 1115 email emailepconnect@oneeducation.co.uk.

A True Legacy from London 2012: The Translation of Inspiration into Action

Many of you may remember Olympian Dr David Hemery CBE, for recently speaking at the SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit regarding his “Be the Best you can Be! Programme.” At the Summit David shared how the Programme works, cost options and how the Programme is a framework and not extra work. He also shared how **Be the Best you can Be!** is advocated by OFSTED to help Schools achieve Outstanding in the new inspection framework.

The Be the Best you can Be! Programme is not limited to sport, or to 2012, it aims to inspire, engage and empower young people to ‘Be the Best they can Be’ in whatever area of life that they choose. More details can be found on the 21st Century Legacy website and in particular the ‘For Teachers’ section.

GL Performance is strategic partner for new National College licences in the North East

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Partner, GL Performance, will be a strategic partner for schools in the North East for the delivery of leadership training programmes from the National College. Under the group banner ‘L4NE’ (Leaders Leading Leadership Learning for the North East), GL Performance will be working with a number of schools in the region, Durham Education Development Services, Gateshead Local Authority and Northumberland LA in the delivery of training for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership (NPQML).

L4NE lead schools are Lingey House Primary School in Gateshead and St Bede’s Catholic School & Sixth Form College in Lanchester, both ranked to be outstanding schools. NPQSL and NPQML training will begin in January 2013, following by the NPQH programme in the autumn. To book a place or find out more, please contact their Professional Development Services team on telephone: 0845 602 1937 (option 3) or email pds@gl-performance.co.uk.

Social research opportunity for 15 – 18 year olds

As part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science, 15 to 18 year olds are being offered the opportunity to learn about social science, photography and inequalities: challenging young people’s perceptions of the disadvantaged through social research and photography. The event is free and there will be the chance to win some great prizes!

There are only 30 places so please encourage your students to register now. The event will be held on 2 consecutive Saturdays in early November at The Holy Biscuit Art Gallery, in Newcastle. For more information [please click here](#).

Events

The Great Debate: Whatever Happened to Equality? – 10 November

Newcastle University are holding a day of active debate and documentary-making this Saturday and are inviting young people to join them either for the whole day to take part in the film-workshops or to come along to the debates on 'Equality, Equity and the dispossessed' (11am) and/or 'Equality versus Difference' (1pm).

The day is free but **booking is essential**. Lunch will be provided for whole-day attendees. [Click here](#) for full details of the day and to book please [click here](#).

Procurement: A legal and financial headache or an exciting opportunity? – 13 November

Clive Owen and Co LLP has teamed up with the Department for Education and Blackett Hart and Pratt Solicitors, to give you the opportunity to find out what you need to know to ensure you implement an effective procurement strategy to avoid any headaches.

This free event will take place on Tuesday 13 November between 4pm and 6pm at Teesside University, Darlington Campus on Vicarage Road (DL1 1JW).

To reserve your place contact Margaret or Sarah on 01325 349700 or email info@cliveowen.com

Outstanding Teaching and Learning – 15 November

Walkergate Primary School invites you to send colleagues to join in with their own staff training sessions. They will be hosting a number of sessions throughout the year.

This first session will be focused on **Outstanding Teaching and Learning including**; the Ofsted Framework, pupil engagement and motivation, assessment and behaviours for learning, evidence of impact of targeted interventions, personalised learning, using your TA effectively, motivating hard to reach pupils and families, improving attendance and reducing exclusion.

The event will take place between **1pm and 4pm** at Walkergate Primary School in Newcastle and cost £75 per delegate. To book your place or to find more about the full programme of events from Walkergate please contact info@bloomandgrow.org.uk or call 0775 172 3806.

Creativity Conference - What can schools do to improve their creative vision in times of austerity? – 16 November

If you want ideas and inspiration on how to boost creativity in your school despite Government changes and funding cuts head to Creativity, Culture and Education's one day conference on 16 November in Sunderland. The event aims to stimulate debate around the creativity agenda and provide participants with practical ideas for using creative techniques in schools. .

Aimed at teachers, creative practitioners and other professionals involved in creative learning, as well as anyone with an interest in creativity, the event will build upon CCE's experience in running the Creative Partnerships programme in the UK.

The conference will take place at the Media Centre, University of Sunderland and National Glass Centre in Sunderland and SCHOOLS NorthEast Members can get a special discount. Simply quote SNE2012 when you book to secure your place for the reduced rate of £140 plus VAT.

To book email bookings@cceengland.org

Dealing with Underperforming Teachers Seminar by Dickinson Dees LLP – 21 November

The new Teachers' Standards came into effect on 1 September 2012. This seminar, presented by James Wilders, partner and Laura Daniels, associate in Dickinson Dees' employment team, will address the new regulations along with giving practical advice and explaining legal considerations. The seminar will be relevant to academies and maintained schools alike, with a strong focus on the routes available to improving performance and the pitfalls for the unwary.

This event is for Head Teachers, members of SLT and Governors and will take place on Wednesday 21 November between 6pm (6.30pm start) and 8pm at Dickinson Dees office in Newcastle.

To book your free place today email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com

National Space Academy Showcase event - 3 December

The National Space Academy is a network of outstanding teachers and space scientists that use the inspirational context of space to teach STEM subjects. Led by the National Space Centre the Academy delivers student master-classes, teacher CPD and holds careers events, its purpose being to materially enhance the size and quality of the UK science and engineering skills pool.

They are holding a **free showcase** event on **3 December at The Kings Academy** in Middlesbrough between **4.30pm and 6.30pm**. The event includes a 1 hour free teacher training session. For more information about the event, [please click here](#).

One Minute Manifesto...Sarah Green, CBI

SCHOOLS NorthEast is asking Head Teachers and influential figures across the region to give us their one minute manifestos for North East education. If you were in power what would be your priority for change, what one thing would make the most difference to your school and who should make the decisions for education?

Speaking recently at the SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit Sarah Green, Director of the CBI North East, sets out her Manifesto for change in education in the North East.

"We need kids to walk out of school, look down the road and not see the sea but an ocean of opportunity!"

[Please click here to view her manifesto.](#)