

SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 10

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The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NorthEast' logo on the left, the text 'WEEKLY UPDATE' in large blue letters in the center, and the 'Muckle^{LLP}' logo on the right. Below the banner, a dark blue box contains white text: 'Sign up for an Occupational Health & Absence Seminar with Muckle LLP on 1 December. Gain input from experienced practitioners and experts who address disability issues, reasonable adjustments and best practice for sickness management. Click here for more information or see below.'

In this issue

- All the latest regional and national education news
- Head to Head with Amanda Bain from Holy Trinity in Hartlepool
- News on how the region has missed out on education cash
- The chance to win a complete team football strip

Focus on... revised school admissions codes

Last week, new schools admissions and appeals codes were launched by the Government, following a twelve-week public consultation. The reforms are designed to simplify the system and will affect the allocation of places for children starting school in September 2013.

The code includes two new proposals: The introduction of a single national offer day for all parents trying to get their children into primary schools; and giving adopted children who were previously looked after (and children who leave care under a special guardianship or residence order) the same, highest priority for places as they had as looked-after children.

The move to a single offer day (set for the 16 April each year, starting from 2014) mirrors the position for secondary education. The Government regarded the current arrangements, with different admissions authorities releasing primary school offers on different dates, confusing and frustrating for parents, especially those making applications for school places in different local authorities.

As well as the new proposals, the codes confirm most of the plans set out in the consultation including:

- Allowing successful schools to increase the number of places they offer to children in their area.
- Allowing schools to give some priority to children of those staff who have been employed for at least two years or who have been recruited to meet a school's particular skills shortage.
- Allowing schools to take twins and other multiple-birth children, and children of armed forces personnel, into infant classes even if it takes the class over the 30-child legal limit.
- Allowing academies and Free Schools to prioritise pupils from the poorest backgrounds.
- Introducing a new in-year admissions process in which parents will apply direct to schools, rather than having to go through a local authority.

- Banning councils from using area-wide “lotteries” as the principal method of allocating places across a local authority area.
- Cutting bureaucracy by requiring admission authorities to consult on arrangements only every seven years, rather than every three years, if no changes are proposed.
- Allowing anyone to object to admissions arrangements.

The revised codes halve the number of mandatory requirements placed on admissions authorities and are significantly slimmer, at 61 pages long, than the current 138 pages. Schools Minister Nick Gibb said the new code would bring “clarity and consistency,” and insisted that it would protect vulnerable groups. Critics, however, have warned that the move discriminated against the majority of “average” children and could lead to a rise in the number of parents attempting to play the system to win special exemption. Chris McGovern, Chairman of the Campaign for Real Education, said: “Everyone has a right to fair admissions but once you starting putting large numbers of children in categories and saying they should have greater access to a school it becomes quite discriminatory against those who are not beneficiaries – the average child.”

The revised codes may still be amended before they are laid before Parliament on December 1 for final approval and there will be a three week consultation on the new proposals shortly.

Further Reading

- [Parents back fairer and simpler school admissions codes](#) (DfE)
- [Schools to prioritise vulnerable pupils in admissions overhaul](#) (Telegraph)
- [New admissions code for schools prioritises adoptees](#) (Independent)
- [Primary schools national ‘offer day’ for places](#) (BBC News)

North East education news

Durham

- [Parents’ fight to open new free school for Durham City](#) (Journal Live)

Hartlepool

- [Young readers pass challenge](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Students light up Blue Lamp Funds](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Teenage writers praised by police](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Praise for adoptions services](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Play gear stolen from school](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [130 jobs for young people](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Young people to have say](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Sky’s the limit for rising star](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [Teesside schools to get £8 million from scheme](#) (Gazette Live)

Newcastle

- [Local pupils design Newcastle’s Christmas lights](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Newcastle United stars open pitch at Church High](#) (Chronicle Live)

Northumberland

- [Ashington pupils get creative at Big Draw](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Academy ready for sixth form](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Pupils helping disaster hit areas](#) (News Post Leader)
- [High school welcomes new leadership team](#) (News Post Leader)
- ['Business as usual' at academy](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Supermac raises cash for school](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Supermac serves up a feast of fund-raising](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Students set their sights on rainforest](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [All aboard the Puffin Express](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Education grants on offer for youngsters](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Dance school is stepping out for Wish tokens](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Dilston College students to run Hexham Station refreshments stall](#) (Journal Live)
- [Alnwick homeowner winds battle over Lindisfarne Middle School security fence](#) (Journal Live)
- [Hair-raising month at school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- ['Don't neglect Prudhoe high while new school is built'](#) (Hexham Courant)

North Tyneside

- [North Shields lad hopes idea will land him £40k](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Burradon Primary School hammer attacker jailer](#) (Journal Live)
- [Whitley Bay schoolboy thanks RNLI crew for sea rescue](#) (Journal Live)

Redcar and Cleveland

- [Saltburn schoolboy's devotion to Remembrance Sunday](#) (Gazette Live)

South Tyneside

- [Jarrow primary school closed by heating fault](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Kids give wild birds a winter treat](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Boldon kids flock together to help their feathered friends](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Stockton

- [Stockton Head Teacher barred from ever running school again](#) (Gazette Live)

Sunderland

- [Sunderland Echo Degrees of Success: Kellie realises her uni dream](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland kids in the pink for Breast Cancer Campaign](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Star names support Sunderland Echo Degrees of Success campaign](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Echo campaign bids to bring a Degree of Success to Sunderland](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Peterlee players pitch in with the pros](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Bookish boys and girls are page turners in Washington](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Good things come in threes for Sunderland school](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [Sunderland legend Gary Bennett meets youngsters at anti-racism education day](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland teacher's a kidney donor](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland schoolchildren mind their language](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland kids get a taste of spooky science](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Regionwide news

Region misses out on education cash

Reports in the local press suggest that most North East schools will not benefit from the £500m of capital funding the Government has allocated for the building of extra school classrooms. The DfE figures show that only two of the region's 12 local authorities were in line to receive money, Darlington (£863,221) and Stockton-on-Tees (£217,764). Half the £500m was handed to councils in London. Education Secretary Michael Gove said the money was intended to help councils cope with a predicted leap in the number of pupils over the next few years - an increase that would primarily hit the South.

- [Most of region misses out on education cash](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Allocation of extra £500 million to address the shortage in pupil places](#) (DFE)

National education news

'Failing' schools must improve more quickly

Ofsted is trialling an approach that could make the process of being in special measures, or having a notice to improve, even more demanding. From January, primaries and secondaries will be expected to throw off their inadequate rating more quickly - and they will also have to make more rapid improvements. If a school does not improve within six months of initial inspection, it will be placed in special measures.

- ['Failing' schools must improve more quickly](#) (TES)

The importance of arts in education

Schools NorthEast patron, Lord Puttnam, has joined forces with 'big names' from the arts world including Kevin Spacey and Tate Director Sir Nicholas Serot, to sign a report highlighting the value of arts education. Lord Puttnam believes learning through culture and the arts leads to creative thinking, confidence and problem solving. He stated "If we fail to offer our young people the opportunity to participate in the arts and culture, then we fail to support them in becoming the leading thinkers, innovators, creative business and community leaders of the future."

- [Puttnam warns over arts education](#) (BBC News)
- [Arts education defended by star-studded campaign](#) (Guardian)

Thousands of primary exam papers sent back

Official figures show more than 35,000 test papers taken by 11-year-olds were sent back for review in 2011. Head teachers had complained particularly about the standard of marking in the English papers. It comes after teachers' leaders told of serious inconsistencies in the way high and lower-scoring pupils were graded this summer. But the Department for Education defended marking standards, insisting that the overall proportion of papers given a different grade after a review remained consistent year-on-year.

- [Thousands of primary school exam papers reviewed](#) (Telegraph)
- [Sats papers prompted more than 35,000 appeals](#) (BBC News)

Financial incentives for new teachers

Graduates with first-class honours degrees will be able to claim financial incentives to teach subjects seen as vital to pupils' future career prospects, such as maths, physics, chemistry, biology and foreign languages. The plans come as part of an overhaul of the teacher training system after school standards had reportedly slipped in relation to other developed nations.

Education Secretary, Michael Gove, stated "If we want to have an education system that ranks with the best in the world, then we need to attract the best people to train to teach, and we need to give them outstanding training. We have some excellent teachers in this country, but many who could make a huge difference in the lives of children choose other professions." The reforms are expected to be introduced for new trainee teachers starting in September 2012.

- [Top students to be offered £20,000 in desperate bid to get them to train as teachers](#) (Mail Online)
- [Brightest graduate 'to receive £20k bursaries to teach'](#) (Telegraph)

Events

Are you looking for a way to manage sickness and absence in your school?

This week's newsletter sponsor, Muckle LLP, is running a seminar on managing sickness and absence with a particular focus on how best to utilise your occupational health support and to interpret the advice given. The seminar will include input from experienced practitioners and experts in this field and will address disability issues and reasonable adjustments, as well as best practice for sickness management.

The interactive session will provide a case study and opportunity for delegates to ask questions of the experts. It will conclude with a "Top Tips" summary that will be invaluable to you going forward.

The seminar will be held on Thursday 1 December 2011 between 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. at Muckle LLP's offices (Time Central, 32 Gallowgate, Newcastle, NE1 4BF)

This event is free of charge and you can register for a place by clicking [here](#).

SCHOOLS NorthEast MPs' lunches

SCHOOLS NorthEast is hosting a number of MPs' Lunches in the coming weeks. These lunches are great opportunities for Head Teachers to sit down with local MPs to discuss and debate the key challenges and opportunities facing North East schools.

This week's MPs Lunch: Iain Wright MP (Hartlepool) – 12.00pm Friday 11 November 2011 at the Staincliffe Hotel.

We have limited spaces left so please book now to avoid disappointment.

Future lunches this term available to book:

- Ian Swales MP (Redcar) – Friday 25 November 2011
- Alan Campbell MP (Tynemouth at the Grand Hotel) – Friday 2 December 2011
- David Miliband MP (South Shields) - Friday 9 December 2011

Places at the lunches are free but are very limited and exclusive to Head Teachers. If you would like to attend a lunch, or if you would like any more information, please email info@schoolsnortheast.com or give us a call on (0191) 280 5037.

Resources and Opportunities

Free football team strip competition

Looking to update your school's football strip this season? SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, Education Network, is offering primary schools a chance to win one of four complete football strips. The strips include fourteen shirts, socks and shorts (plus a goalkeeper's strip), numbered and sponsored by Education Network.

To enter the competition simply email; newcastle@ednetwork.co.uk with the subject '**Football Strip Competition**' and you will receive details on this free to enter competition.

First edition of newsletter dedicated to self-evaluation and school improvement

If you are looking to find out the latest news and ideas regarding school improvement then why not sign up to SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter Granda Learning's new newsletter. The first edition focuses on the new Ofsted framework, school self-evaluation and parental communications. You can access it by clicking [here](#).

Last chance to join London 2012 Inspire programme

Projects and events inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games have until **1 December 2011** to apply to be an official London 2012 Inspire project.

Schools that join the programme will be awarded the Inspire mark and can use a special logo to promote their project or event as well as show that they are part of London 2012. After applications close in December, London 2012 will focus on supporting and showcasing the existing projects and events.

More information on how to qualify for the Inspire mark for organisations that have a project or event that has been inspired by the London 2012 Games is available at www.london2012.com/beinspired.

DfE research

The November issue of the DfE's Schools Research News is available [here](#). This provides summaries of robust, newly published research from a variety of sources - including peer-reviewed journals, research funded by education charities, and school-led research both national and international.

Grants and funding

Full scholarships for promising students

Newcastle University is pledging support for the most able students from low-income households with the launch of its 'Newcastle University Promise Scholarship'. The scheme will provide full scholarships worth £9,000 a year to 20 young people who show the most academic potential but are least likely to attend a top UK university such as Newcastle. Newcastle University has launched the scheme in response to the Government's overhaul of Higher Education which will see the University introducing an annual £9,000 tuition fee from 2012.

For more information about the Promise Scholarships and other financial support available through Newcastle University please contact: Kelly Deary, Newcastle University on Tel 0191 222 5906 or visit www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance.

Match-funding and resource catalogue for phonetics

Earlier this year the Government announced match-funding of up to £3,000 for phonetics resources. This funding is now available until March 2013 for all state-funded schools in England with Key Stage 1 pupils, including academies and Free Schools. The DfE will not provide funding direct to schools.

Schools can decide which items from their resources catalogue ([click here](#)) best meet their requirements, and can make as many individual purchases as they wish, but will only receive match-funding up to a maximum of £3,000, that is, for a total spend of £6,000.

The catalogue contains details of systematic synthetic phonics products and training, with instructions on ordering and on how to access the match-funding. Schools will only be able to access the match-funding by buying from the catalogue. The DfE cannot reimburse schools for purchases made elsewhere, even if they are listed in the catalogue.

Head to Head

This week we spoke to Amanda Bain from Holy Trinity in Hartlepool;

Last week was... hectic ! The first week back after the half term holiday and we were implementing a new system for organising the playgrounds and equipment for use at lunchtimes.

The two best things that happened at school last week were... our Year 6 completed their cycling proficiency training and were promised free bike lights from the training team. They also took part in a Tag Rugby Tournament and were the runners up.

The biggest disappointment at school last week was... the huge 'Connect Four' game not arriving for the beginning of the week and our relaunch of lunchtime organisation.

The funniest thing that happened at school last week was... watching our NQT try to follow and join in the actions to a song in Worship.

One thing that would have made my job easier last week was... a helicopter to get me to meetings quickly!

Top of my to-do list for this week is... revisit my SEF and update it.

My hero of last week was... my son for being so concerned about me when I scratched the car!

My villain of last week was... myself, for being unable to reverse my car out of the garage! I managed to cause quite a lot of damage to the driver's side wing!

Question from last week's Head Teacher: "Did you have a nice holiday?" Yes I did, thank you. I went to Blackpool with my family for a couple of nights. We explored The Tower, walked The Golden Mile, rode on a tram and relived my childhood memories!

My question for next week's Head Teacher is... what would be your perfect weekend?

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 schools. We now have around 70 Commercial Supporters and this week we are delighted to welcome **Education Network** to our every expanding tribe. Education Network specialises in recruiting for all education jobs, as well as offering schools payroll and consultancy services. Watch out for an email coming shortly outlining an exclusive completion.

Star pupil... hard-working teachers

New Ofsted chief, Sir Michael Wilshaw, suggested that teachers work too hard. He laughed at the suggestion teachers' work just '50-hour weeks' and claims as a Deputy Head of a comprehensive he 'never worked less than 60- or 70-hour weeks.' Sir Michael acknowledged teaching is often 'stressful, too demanding and exhausting,' and he believes the issue needs to be dealt with urgently.

- [A gold star for the new Ofsted chief](#) (Telegraph)
- **[Sir Michael Wilshaw takes over at Ofsted: How the hero of Hackney aims to save our schools](#)** (Telegraph)

Could try harder...hungry students

Thousands of young people are skipping breakfast leaving them tired and irritable. According to a survey of 10,000 parents across the UK, around one in six secondary school pupils aged 11 to 16 don't have a morning meal. The findings, published in a report by the Local Authority Caterers Association (LACA), could account for low concentration levels in the classroom. It concludes: 'Students going without breakfast cannot be at their best for learning during morning lessons and so can be less attentive and a disruption in class.'

- [One in six school pupils are skipping breakfast 'leaving them tired and disruptive in class'](#) (Daily Mail)

And finally...pride and prejudice?

State schools are being urged to teach English classics such as Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. This advice comes after a survey by the Department for Education shows that two thirds of the books studied in a sample of more than 100 state secondary schools had been written in the last twenty years. In contrast, the list of the most popular books from 20 independent schools included Pride and Prejudice, The Lord of the Flies, and To Kill a Mockingbird.

Have a great week!

Have you signed up as a SCHOOLS NorthEast Enhanced Member yet? For full details on the great range of benefits available to Enhanced Members, click [here](#).

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.

