

SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 13

November 29th, 2011 at 5:02 pm



The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NORTH EAST' logo on the left, with the tagline 'The future of our region is in school' below it. The main text 'WEEKLY UPDATE' is in large blue letters. On the right is the 'Sage@School' logo, which consists of a cluster of green and yellow dots of varying sizes next to the text 'Sage@School'.

Sponsored by Sage@School; a new educational training programme, designed to give 14 to 18 year olds an understanding of business and finance through practical hands on experience. To find out more click here.

In this issue

- All the latest regional and national education news
- Head to Head with Tracy Watson from Overfields Primary School in Redcar
- Details of Chancellor, George Osborne's Autumn Statement
- Information on which schools will be closing due to this week's strike

Special announcement...we are moving!

After three enjoyable years based in North Shields we are on the move. Northumbria University are very kindly providing us with a great new office in Newcastle. Our new address is Northumbria University, Room 208, Ellison Terrace, 1-5 Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST and our phone number is **0191 204 8866**. We are aiming to keep disruption to a minimum but please bear with us whilst we get settled.

Focus on...ICT teaching in need of 'reform'

The Government has said the current teaching of ICT (information and communication technology) was "insufficiently rigorous and in need of reform". The call for change came in a response to an industry report which looked at technology teaching in the UK. The Next Gen report was published in October and criticised current ICT classes which tended to focus on how to use software rather than on how to write it. Written by gaming guru Ian Livingstone and visual effects veteran Alex Hope, Next Gen called for programming skills to replace learning about business software in ICT lessons.

Ian Livingstone said he was "hopeful that there has been a realisation that it [computer science] is essential knowledge for the 21st century. Faced with a world in which they will be surrounded by computers and the opportunities they create, Britain's schoolchildren deserve the same chance to succeed."

These proposals coincide with debate harboured at the Innovation in Education conference hosted by the Guardian earlier this month. One session at the conference explored how changes to the curriculum will impact on students' skills in the 21st century. Sam Dutton, a developer advocate with Google, highlighted the fact that while children use applications with ease, "computing is not just a digital skill. It's reshaping our world in ways we don't always understand". Because of this, children, he

suggested, need to understand far more than they currently do about the nuts and bolts of computing. Only then can they influence how new technologies alter their lives as they grow up, at the same time gaining commercially attractive skills.

The comments reinforce the views expressed by Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google who, this summer said that the UK, as the country that invented the computer, was "throwing away your great computer heritage" by failing to teach programming in schools. "I was flabbergasted to learn that today computer science isn't even taught as standard in UK schools," he said. "Your IT curriculum focuses on teaching how to use software, but gives no insight into how it's made."

Joining Google in backing the call for change to ICT teaching, are Microsoft, Sony, Nintendo, Sega, Electronic Arts, Activision, Talk Talk and the Guardian Media Group.

Further Reading

- [How to foster innovation in education](#) (Guardian)
- [Computer lessons are out of date admits government](#) (Guardian)
- [Children to be taught to create software](#) (Telegraph)
- [Ian Livingstone: Computer science is an essential part of our children's education](#) (Independent)
- [Government backs call for classroom coding](#) (BBC News)

North East education news

Darlington

- [Darlington Council reviewing role of crossing patrols](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Academy facilities opened up](#) (Northern Echo)

Durham

- [Durham free school fast-tracked for success](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils enjoy interactive learning thanks to Spennymoor school's gift](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Schoolgirl impaled on bike's handlebars thanks her nurses](#) (Northern Echo)

Gateshead

- [Schoolgirl designs Gateshead's Christmas lights](#) (Chronicle Live)

Hartlepool

- [Poignant night for star student](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [Plan to reduce free faith schools bus service](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Consultation begins for free school buses](#) (Northern Echo)

Newcastle

- [Newcastle College students in revamp plan](#) (Chronicle Live)

Northumberland

- [Pupils get active outside classroom](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Academy get pupils ready for sixth form](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Blyth school receives full marks for ICT](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Governors call for closure of Cornhill First school](#) (Berwick advertiser)
- [Strike action likely to mean school closures](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Pastures lands torch gig](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Pupils say 'hola' to school award](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [School rescues performance](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Strike hits schools](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Cambo first school receive 'oustanding' praise from Ofsted](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Teacher's son spurs her to set up centre](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Children's services perform well](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Minister commends greens school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [The past comes to life](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Students serve up success](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Pedal power pupils saddle up for funds](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Rock Hall School near Alwick forced to close](#) (Journal Live)

North Tyneside

- [Pupils keep eyes on prize to get to art of the matter](#) (News Guardian)

Redcar and Cleveland

- [Plan for future of former Saltburn school](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Overfields Primary School in books Wish](#) (Gazette Live)

South Tyneside

- [Watchdogs praise children's centre](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Dance class aims to get youngsters moving](#) (Shields Gazette)

Stockton

- [Layfield Primary School praised in Ofsted report](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Billingham pupils rent a class lizard](#) (Gazette Live)

Sunderland

- [New school head feels at home in Sunderland](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Art imitates life in school production](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Washington kids learn through movies](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Pupils make the news themselves](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland kids' protest march](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland children help old folks' bus get in gear](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland star Craig Gordon back on the pitch](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [Ofsted praises Sunderland schools, childminders and the university](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Hard work pays off for Peterlee student Jayde](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland teachers sport their Movember 'tache for cash](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland schoolkids planting for the future](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Old and young welcome international students to Sunderland](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Regional education news

Ofsted have deemed dozens of North East schools amongst the most outstanding in the country in their annual report for 2010/11.

- [North East schools are outstanding says Ofsted report](#) (Journal Live)
- [North East schools land gold stars for effort](#) (Chronicle Live)

North East schools face closure during strikes

Most schools across the region are expected to close this Wednesday as a result of the public sector strike action.

The [Journal](#) website is listing the latest information on closures for schools, nurseries and Sure Start centres in Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Durham and Northumberland. Information about Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar schools can be found on the [GazetteLive](#).

- [North East school's face closure during strikes](#) (Spark Sunderland)
- [Walk-out will shut the region's schools](#) (Northern Echo)

Other regional news

- [Councils could link-up for children's services](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Parents must police their children's diet says North schools](#) (Journal Live)

Omitted articles

We try to include all the local press coverage relating to North East schools in the Weekly News Update, but there may be occasions when articles are overlooked. If you are aware of an article which has not been included please email the details to r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com so that we can include it in a future edition.

National education news

Chancellor's Autumn Statement includes money for childcare and Free Schools

More free places in nursery or childcare are being made available to two-year-olds in England, under plans set out by Chancellor George Osborne in his Autumn Statement today.

Mr Osborne says there will be 260,000 places for children from the most deprived homes - up from the 140,000 places proposed earlier this month and he also announced an extra £600m to create a further 100 free schools. The Chancellor explained that the money would go to the areas with greatest pressure on school places and will include 12 specialist Maths Schools for 16-18 year olds.

The Chancellor praised Education Secretary Michael Gove for creating 1,200 academies in 18 months stating that supporting education reform was a "central plank" of his economic policy and that

"too many children are leaving school after 11 years of compulsory education without the basics they need for the world of work."

- [Free nursery places plan extended](#) (BBC News)
- [Osborne in £600m drive to set up elite maths schools run by businesses and charities](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Free schools in England set for extra £600m](#) (BBC News)

Government launches first National plan for music education

The North East has been cited as a region which will benefit from new reforms in music education. The Government will provide £500,000 per year, along with an additional £500,000 matched funding, to expand a new music initiative programme across the country.

From August 2012, music education hubs will be funded to bring together local authorities and local music organisations, like orchestras, choirs and other music groups. They will work in partnership to make sure every child has a high-quality music education, including the opportunity to learn to sing, to play an instrument and to play music with others. The hubs will be fully operational from September 2012.

Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, said, "All pupils should have the opportunity to enjoy and play music. However, for far too long, music education has been patchy across the country. Pupils from the poorest backgrounds have suffered most from this situation, creating a musical divide. The national plan for music will deliver a music education system that encourages everyone, whatever their background, to enjoy music and help those with real talent to flourish as brilliant musicians."

- [Government launches its first National plan for music education](#) (DfE)

Gove receives backlash from Council over Academy status

A heated battle has broken out in our neighbouring region Yorkshire, at plans for a 400-year-old school to convert to Academy status. Half the governors at the school have resigned and the town council has unanimously condemned the conversion plans. Despite the controversy the conversion of the school, currently a Leeds comprehensive, is expected to get Gove's approval on 1 December. Supporters of the change have admitted that their motives for conversion are overwhelmingly financial.

Early this year a survey by the Association of School and College Leaders earlier this year found that 46% of schools were planning academy conversion and 72% of those saw conversion as a way of avoiding budget cuts.

- [Council condemns academy move in backlash against Michael Gove plans](#) (Guardian)

Events

Occupational Health & Absence Management Seminar

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

This Thursday, 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 this Thursday, 1 December, between 8.30 and 10.30 a.m at Muckle LLP's offices (Time Central, 32 Gallowgate, Newcastle)

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: Alan Campbell MP (Tynemouth) – 12.00pm Friday 2 December 2011 at the Grand Hotel.

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

Upcoming lunches this term;

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

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

This Friday, 2 December, is the International Day for The Abolition of Slavery. Educate your pupils on the history of the British slave trade and celebrate its abolishment. For resources and ideas please click [here](#).

Free football team strip competition

Congratulations to Canning Street Primary School in Newcastle who are the first winners to receive the football strip. If you are also looking to update your school's football strip this season then 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.

Grants and funding

Grants for Teaching Physics

If you're planning any physics projects then The Science and Technology Facilities Council and the Institute of Physics have set up a small grants scheme designed specifically for schools. The aim of the scheme is to provide schools with grants of up to £500 for projects or events linked to the teaching or promotion of physics.

The scheme is open to all UK educational institutions (schools and colleges) catering for pupils/students in the age range 5-18. The first deadline is **1 February 2012** for projects taking place in the summer term 2012. For more information and to apply, please click [here](#).

Britannia Community Fund

The Britannia Community fund offers a quick and simple application process to schools that require donations of up to £1,000. Britannia, part of the Co-operative Bank, state their priority will be in areas where they believe they can make the biggest difference in, supporting education and wherever possible promoting an improvement in numeracy and financial literacy.

They aim to support any school working within their key priorities, that operate within a local community. Whilst the Britannia Community Fund focuses on buying specific items or equipment, eg educational toys, books, it will also support small projects in support of our key priorities. For more information and to apply please click [here](#).

Head to Head

This week we spoke to Tracy Watson from Overfields Primary School in Redcar.

Last week was over too quickly. I can't believe how fast this half term is going.

The best two things that happened at school last week were showing the School Governors, through the wonders of Parliament TV, the moment when Ian Swales MP presented a petition to the House of Commons for the Send My Sister to School campaign on behalf of Overfields Primary. Also, watching the confidence of Year 6 pupils selling their goods at a local Enterprise Fayre and realising they could be young business people.

The biggest disappointment at school last week was finding out something which had been agreed to wasn't happening consistently and therefore the whole system breaks down.

The funniest thing that happened at school last week when a nursery child asked me who I was and another child piped up 'She's the boss!'

One thing that would have made my job easier would be not having to attend so many meetings.

Top of my to-do-list for this week is dealing with the breakdown in agreed systems mentioned above.

My hero of last week is our local MP who listened to my concerns, during a Schools North East lunch, regarding the council budget cuts on preschool transport to assessment units. We have a Speech & language unit and the cuts will greatly affect our Nursery aged pupils.

My villain of last week is a local reporter who mentioned our school in his article about coasting schools in leafy suburbs. Yes we are judged as satisfactory by Ofsted (with many good features and an outstanding Foundation Stage) but we are also in the 3-10% band of most deprived areas of England, not a leafy suburb.

Question from last week's Head Teacher: "What made you become a Head?" As a young teacher I was lucky to be inspired by two great Head Teacher role models who saw the potential in me and gave me the opportunities to further my career.

My question for next week's Head Teacher is...What has been the most rewarding aspect of your headship so far?

Star pupil...David Pearmain and Bernard Trafford

We would like to congratulate both David Pearmain, SCHOOLS NorthEast Chair and Head Teacher of Kenton High School, and Bernard Trafford, Head Teacher of Royal Grammar School and SCHOOLS NorthEast Board Member, for making it into The Journal's 250 'Most Influential People in the North East' for 2011.

Could try harder...Academy school dinners

TV Chef, Jamie Oliver, has accused the Education Secretary, Michael Gove, of eroding healthy school food standards. A campaign by the Chef led to tough new legal standards for meals in England's schools. But now caterers are saying that some of England's new academy schools, which do not have to abide by the regulations, are asking for "unhealthy food".

- [Jamie Oliver says healthy school food standards 'eroded'](#) (BBC News)
- [Jamie Oliver attacks Michael Gove over school meals](#) (Telegraph)

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.