

Subject: SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 20



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WEEKLY UPDATE



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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

In this issue...

- A round up of all the latest local and national education news
- Opportunities and funding to link your school with a Cadet Unit
- Details on an event from Aura aimed at making your academy capital grant bid more successful
- Information on University of Cambridge Teachers' Conference 2013
- Trailblazers Conference: a conference to inspire girls into STEM subjects
- Welcome to new Commercial Supporters; [Tribal Solutions](#) and [NCFE](#)
- The latest educational statistics in the SCHOOLS NorthEast Number Crunch

Focus on... EBC Debate

Over the last week, the Government's plans for reforms to Key Stage 4 qualifications have come under further criticism from a range of sources.

The Education Select Committee published the [report](#) of their short enquiry scrutinising the plans and gauging reactions from experts and educationalists.

Whilst the Committee agreed that significant improvements are required to qualifications at Key Stage 4 and welcomed the changes to GCSEs already instigated by the Government (regarding modular approaches etc.), they were unconvinced as to the case for the English Baccalaureate Certificates (EBCs).

Their message was that the reforms were rushed and lacking a compelling rationale, calling on the Department to state clearly what it sees as the essential purposes of qualifications and assessment at age 16, which underpin the proposed reforms. They also criticised the Department for the lack of coherence across the major changes happening simultaneously and recommended that both the proposed changes to the secondary National Curriculum and assessment and school accountability be published so that they can be considered alongside the proposed GCSE reforms.

The Committee dismissed the view that "GCSEs are so discredited that a new qualification is required" and asked the Government to publish the full the results of its consultation and its analysis to "justify its case that the brand is so damaged that it is beyond remedy".

Echoing concerns from the arts and culture sector and sporting bodies, the Committee expressed concerns about the impact of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate Certificates on those

subjects not included. They questioned the extent to which it is possible to "upgrade" some subjects without implicitly "downgrading" others and rejected the Secretary of State's assertion that "we are putting in place support for music, art and design, physical education and sport, which would lead me to believe that these subjects will flourish more than ever before". They called for the careful tracking of impact on take-up in subjects outside the English Baccalaureate and the resourcing of these subjects in schools if EBCs are introduced and recommended that the Government be prepared to revise its policies, should evidence emerge from universities and employers that the school system is failing to "help sufficient numbers of young people acquire the technical and creative skills needed for further learning and work in key areas".

The Committee questioned the approach to lower attaining pupils and specifically the proposals for a "Statement of Achievement". The Committee felt that this had the potential to become a "badge of failure" and be less useful than a low grade GCSE or alternative qualification.

Finally, the Committee attacked the Government for the pace of change on these reforms and expressed "serious concerns about the proposed timetable and about the risks of making fundamental changes to qualifications and the way they are administered at the same time" and the report warns that

"Changes of this magnitude are best achieved with as wide support as possible from across the education system, the wider economy, young people and their parents and, not least, the political spectrum."

Launching "From GCSEs to EBCs: the Government's proposals for reform", Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Committee, said,

"We have serious concerns about the Government's proposed timetable for change. Ministers want to introduce a new qualification, require a step-change in standards, and alter the way exams are administered, all at the same time. We believe this is trying to do too much, too quickly and we call on the Government to balance the pace of reform with the need to get it right. ...The Government should be concentrating its policies on the 40 per cent plus of young people who do not achieve 5 A*-C grades including English and Mathematics. We do not see how raising the bar will automatically help these young people."

Earlier in the week, changes to Key Stage 4 qualifications were the focus of discussion for another group – this time of Head Teachers. The first public meeting of the Heads Roundtable, a network of education reformers that began as a group of school leaders that met on Twitter, attracted over 150 Head Teachers from across the country. Following a consultation on proposed reforms, the group devised an alternative vision for qualifications based on the concept of a "real" baccalaureate.

This would be in the form of a national framework allowing students to build up point scores with credits in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and a choice of arts, humanities, languages, sciences, technical subjects and project work. Extra points would be earned for "personal development and service" in areas like citizenship, arts and sport. The qualification would allow for flexibility for a "tech bacc" route with some large single units such as engineering. A full explanation of the Ebacc alternative is outlined [here](#).

The group is meeting again in May to further develop the proposal and the details of how it could be implemented. North East Head Teacher Alison Shaw, Principal of Seaton Burn College, North Tyneside, attended the conference and said

"Involvement of Head Teachers in future development of policy is vital. I came to add my voice to those of a group of heads who have in common a desire to contribute constructively to the national education debate. There is considerable concern currently about the proposed changes to assessment and qualifications. In areas of critical professional importance, the voice of Heads on policy-making must be part of the debate. I hope that the Heads' Roundtable will influence policy by engaging resolutely in areas where there is a need for greater consideration of alternative models to those being proposed, and by bringing to bear proper research."

Your views

Do you agree with the Committee's concerns and recommendations? What do you think about the Heads Roundtable proposals? Do you have an alternative idea for Key Stage 4 qualifications? Let us know by emailing think@schoolsnortheast.com

Further Reading

- [Education Committee publishes From GCSEs to EBCs: the Government's Proposals for Reform Report](#) (Parliament)
- [MPs condemn plan to scrap GCSEs](#) (BBC News)
- [Ebacc condemned as MPs take issue with whole Gove reform programme](#) (Guardian)
- [Plan to abolish GCSEs 'should be shelved', claim MPs](#) (Telegraph)
- [English Baccalaureate plans from Michael Gove 'threaten to wreck' stability of entire examination system](#) (Independent)
- [Arts already being 'squeezed out' by EBacc](#) (Independent)
- [Education reform is not only necessary, it is essential'](#) (Telegraph)

Top local news

Work to start on first batch of rundown schools

North East schools are amongst the first to benefit from new and renovated school buildings as the Department for Education announced the first two successful bidders for the £2.4 billion Priority School Building Programme.

- [School buildings deals announced](#) (BBC News)
- [Over 9000 pupils to benefit from new and improved school buildings](#) (DfE)
- [Multi-million rebuild plan for crumbling Sunderland school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Work to start on first batch of rundown schools](#) (Northern Echo)

Local news by area

Darlington

- [Skerne Park in Darlington celebrates Academy status](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Independent school announces expansion plans](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Carmel RC College, in Darlington, flying high in Government league tables](#) (Northern Echo)

Durham

- [Stanley mum in row over when son should start school](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Bored youngsters invited to football training camps in Barnard Castle, Spennymoor and Meadowfield](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Newton Aycliffe school seeks to sell land to fund all-weather football pitch](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Newton Aycliffe school receives £3,500 grant for breakfast club](#) (Northern Echo)

Gateshead

- [Accused pair cleared of sex offences with underage girl](#) (Northern Echo)

Hartlepool

- [National champions bid](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Newcastle

- [Threat to scheme that takes kids into the countryside](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Newcastle's Centre for Life hosts Festival of Maths](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Axe is set to fall on Newcastle's All Saints College](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Newcastle College link-up will showcase best talent](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Parents to vent anger over Newcastle schools' merger](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Newcastle City Council warns free school plans could risk pupils' safety](#) (Journal Live)
- [Parents take legal advice over Newcastle schools merger](#) (Journal Live)
- [Technology developed in Newcastle looks at classrooms of the future](#) (Journal Live)

Middlesbrough

- [Park End Primary School staff to run marathon in memory of Tyler Pallister](#) (Gazette Live)

Northumberland

- [Arctic blizzards cause havoc, but pupils enjoy days off school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Education experts voice mixed views on academies](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Seaton Delaval student awarded academic prize in its first year](#) (Journal Live)
- [College focuses on apprentices](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Youngsters to learn of suffragette movement](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Youngsters take part in hockey tour](#) (News Post Leader)
- [A mark of success](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Chelsea player returns to his Newton Aycliffe school](#) (Northern Echo)

North Tyneside

- [North Tyneside mayor 'disgusted' at school's delay](#) (Journal Live)
- [Ex-pupil gives seminar](#) (News Guardian)

Stockton

- [Teesside High School in appeal over war shelter project](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Ingleby Barwick free school plans recommended for refusal](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Inspectors hail progress at The Oak Tree Primary School, Stockton](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Funding promise for roads if controversial free school for Ingleby Barwick is approved](#) (Northern Echo)

South Tyneside

- [Epinay Business and Enterprise School gets 'outstanding' Ofsted report](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [We won't cut staff numbers' say nurseries](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Ben shows he's a real bookworm!](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Special school is simply outstanding](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Head's pride at school's Ofsted praise](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School can be magic](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Jarrow school joins an EU culture club](#) (Shields Gazette)

Sunderland

- [Prime Minister challenged over state of Seaham school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Row over new child care plans for Sunderland families](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland schools merge into one](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Students enter the world of ballet](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [Plans for 'earn-as-you-learn' school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland schools cash boost to help struggling students](#) (Sunderland Echo)

Regional

- [Ten 'good' Teesside schools still doing well, say inspectors](#) (Gazette Live)
- [North-East MP challenges PM over cash for schools row](#) (Northern Echo)

Top national education news

Computer Science to be included in EBacc

Computer Science is going to be included as part of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) –and it will be included as one of the science options that count towards this measure.

Technology firms have been calling for a bigger role for studying computing, including Microsoft's Education Director, Steve Beswick, who welcomed the announcement as the "start of a journey" in changing how computer science is taught. He wants the subject to be taught to even younger children, including in primary school.

- [Computer science part of English Baccalaureate](#) (BBC News)
- [Primary pupils 'should learn computing', says Microsoft](#) (BBC News)
- [Ministers are waking up to computer science](#) (Telegraph)
- [Computer science to be included in the EBacc](#) (DfE)

Catch-up premium

The Government announced last week that Secondary state schools in England will receive £500 per pupil to help every year 7 pupil who did not reach the expected level in literacy and maths when they finished primary school. This new funding, so-called the 'catch-up premium', will provide intensive tuition for almost 110,000 pupils who have failed to reach the expected level of literacy and maths skills by the time they move to secondary school.

- [£54m for intensive classes for pupils who have fallen behind in literacy and maths](#) (DfE)
- [1 in 5 children to get catch-up classes in three-Rs](#) (Telegraph)

Overhaul of Special Educational Needs

The Children and Families Bill, published today, includes an overhaul of Special Educational Needs. The Government is radically reforming the system so that it extends from birth to 25, giving children, young people and their parents greater control and choice over decisions and ensuring needs are properly met.

- [Major reforms to support children and families](#) (DfE)

What else we learnt this week...

- [Government accused of 'turning its back' on school sport](#)
- [Olympic legacy damaged by cuts, warn Tania and Mo Farah](#)
- [Ofsted director calls for 'radical changes' to the role of school governors](#)
- [Warning over world schools rankings](#)
- [Summer born children at bottom of the class, warn experts and parents](#)
- [Poor parenting 'linked to underachievement at school'](#)
- [Age of Hitler and the Henrys may soon have had its day](#)

- [Sex education is in crisis](#)
- [Fears over school meal standards as children's food charity loses funding](#)
- [Gove 'talked up' league table slide](#)
- [More privately-educated pupils win university offers](#)

Resources and Opportunities

Link your school with a Cadet Unit

If you want your pupils to learn resilience, self-discipline and initiative, and develop their understanding of community and service to others, then why not link your school with a Cadet Unit?

Cadet Forces are not recruiting grounds; they are simply youth organisations that can deliver a wide range of experiences and skills to young people from all backgrounds and abilities. From flying and sailing, to leadership skills and campcraft, Cadets can experience many opportunities.

Further information, including Case Studies, and a Study into the Benefits of Cadets, can be found on the [DfE website](#). Contact the School Cadet Expansion Officer for the North of England, Liz Green at ne-sceo@ne.rfca.mod.uk or 0191 383 6257 to find out more and to get involved.

Year 11 Discover Days from Newcastle University

Newcastle University are offering a wide range of 'Discover Days', which aim to give Year 11 pupils an insight into some of the fascinating subjects that they can study. The sessions will not only be relevant to future study but also tie in with some of the wider themes your pupils encounter in your current studies.

If you would like to publicise this event to your students Newcastle University has flyers and posters available. For promotional material or if you would like to book a group of your students onto a Discover Day please e-mail emma.peak@ncl.ac.uk For further information please [click here](#).

Events

27 February: Computers @ School Tyneside Hub meeting TynCan Learning and Newcastle University (Newcastle)

Calling all ICT and Maths teachers! Come along to a free event focusing on the implications of the new ICT curriculum for Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 4, which will be part of the National Curriculum from 2014. In particular, exploring how local Universities can work with schools to help prepare for and deliver the new curriculum....[Read more](#)

February Half Term: Holiday Camps from ACG Sports

ACG Sports provides action-packed school holiday courses for children between the ages of 5 and 11, which keep kids busy whilst providing busy parents with affordable childcare. The cost of the camps is no more than £5 per child per day and the camps will be taking place at various locations across the North East. For more information contact 0191 5194322 or [click here](#)

27 February or 13 March: How can you make your capital grant bid more successful? (Sunderland/Durham)

If you're looking for guidance on the preparation of capital grant bids, join [Aura](#) at this free breakfast event. A range of areas will be explored including identifying the preparation you may need to complete, suggested examples of project proposals and lessons learned from recent Academies Capital Maintenance Funding (ACMF) rounds.

See below to find out which session will be most relevant to your school. RSVP to r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com or call 0191 204 8866

Secondary Academies

- **Venue:** The Industry Centre, 1 Colima Ave, Sunderland Enterprise Park, Sunderland SR5 3XB
- **Date:** 27 February, 8.30am - 10.00am

Primary Academies

- **Venue:** The Work Place, Heighington Lane, Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe DL5 6AH
- **Date:** 13 March, 8.30am - 10.00am

2 March: North East Regional Conference for Governors

The National Governors Association will be holding a free regional conference in Durham between **10am and 2.30pm** on Saturday 2 March.

Speakers include Tom Grieveson, Ofsted, Sam Ellis, ASCL's Funding Specialist, and Les Walton, Chair of The Northern Education Trust. View a [draft agenda](#) here. To register your interest [please click here](#).

7 March: Park View School Teachmeet 2013 (Durham)

Take part in an informal gathering of like-minded teachers. Join your colleagues to learn from and share classroom practice, including practical innovations and personal insights in teaching. This will be the first TeachMeet held at Parkview School. The goal is to have some excellent practice shared as well as to create some fantastic networking links with practitioners in the area as well as further afield. The TeachMeet will be broadcast live online.

Park View would love to hear from speakers who have any innovative classroom practice that they can share. Any speakers who cannot attend but would be interested in presenting online would also be extremely welcome...[Read more](#)

8 March: Trailblazers Conference – (Newcastle)

Trailblazers is an inspiring and exciting conference for 16 to 19 year olds, being delivered to open a major exhibition and engagement programme at Discovery Museum.

The conference will focus on current career opportunities and professions in the science, engineering and technology industries in the North East and beyond. There will be an emphasis on increasing the female work force in these industries but the conference is relevant for both male and female students...[Read more](#)

12 March: Using cognitive and attitudinal assessments to raise attainment - (Newcastle)

Find out how hundreds of schools have effectively used attitudinal and ability assessments for school improvement and raising attainment at this free seminar presented by GL Assessment. The Seminar will focus on the effective use of data to identify groups and individual pupils for support and intervention...[Read more](#)

19 March: Providing a Whole Education at Cramlington Learning Village (Northumberland)

Looking to be inspired? Whole Education will be hosting an event with Cramlington Learning Village; a school with a reputation for innovation in teaching and learning that has been recognised as

“Outstanding” by Ofsted three times in succession. This one-day event gives you the opportunity to get closer to understanding Cramlington Learning Village’s approach to providing a whole education. You will also learn about what the Whole Education Network can offer you...[Read more](#)

17 April: University of Cambridge Teachers’ Conference 2013

If you would like to know more about the University of Cambridge’s admission’s process, then attend their conference for sixth form teachers and advisors from state-maintained schools. The conference will provide up-to-date information about the Cambridge admissions process for those advising applicants. You will have the chance to meet admissions tutors, receive general and subject-specific information and to discuss any issues relating to university admissions; this is a really great chance to quiz the people at the heart of the university admissions process...[Read more](#)

Welcome new Commercial Supporters...

SCHOOLS NorthEast would like to warmly welcome two of our latest Commercial Supporters, who by supporting us are demonstrating their commitment to the region’s schools. View the full list of our Commercial Supporters and the services they can offer your school on the [SCHOOLS NorthEast Marketplace](#).

- [Tribal](#)’s evidence-based improvement solutions offer a range of practical products and services designed to support comparative evidence based improvement. These include self-evaluation, benchmarking, governor training, and a comprehensive range of school improvement services including finance, HR and project management support.
- [NCFE](#) is a national Awarding Organisation and registered charity, with the charitable purpose to promote and advance the education and training of young people and adults.

Number crunch

In this feature SCHOOLS NorthEast will give you some thought provoking statistic from the latest educational research.

- [Record £2.4bn sitting unspent in school bank accounts](#)
- [1 in 5 children to get catch-up classes in three-Rs](#)
- [University applications up by 2.8%](#)

Have a great week!

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 think@schoolsnortheast.com