

Subject: SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 7

19 OCTOBER 2012	ST JAMES' PARK, NEWCASTLE
<p>MAIN SPONSOR:</p>  <p>Don't miss out - book your place today by emailing: summit@schoolsneast.com</p>	<p>The SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit 2012 is fast approaching. With high profile keynote contributions, panel debates and workshop sessions, this year's Summit is set to be our biggest and best yet!</p> <p>Click here to view the full list of speakers, including Lord Adonis, and book your place today!</p> 

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@schoolsneast.com

In this Issue

- A round up of all the latest local and national education news
- Final chance to book a place at the SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit 2012
- Details of our Governor Event later this month
- Free resources from Newcastle University - Teachers' Toolkit
- School Business Managers needed to help with SCHOOLS NorthEast survey!

Focus on... core knowledge

As you will be aware, since January 2011, the national curriculum has been under review but so far only the drafts of what children should study in primary school Maths, English and Science have been officially released. The new primary and secondary curriculum documents now being considered, cover Art & Design, Citizenship, English, Geography, History and Physical Education and indications of likely content appeared in the media over the weekend.

According to reports, as a result of the planned changes, in History children will be required to learn a narrative of British history, how it relates to the story of other countries and key international developments. Gove is said to favour this approach, to educate children to understand the "how and why of human folly and achievement".

Drafts of the curriculum apparently contain details of the 200 specific personalities, subjects and events students will be expected to know about from the fall of the Roman Empire and the Anglo-Saxon monarchs Alfred and Athelstan, to the Acts of Union that created Britain in the 18th century and the decline of British power in the 20th. At secondary level, about 50 subjects are named for 11 to 14-year-olds, including Soviet-US relations and how they shaped the post-war world, and the influence of immigration on British society

The moves come following attacks on the current History curriculum for "emphasising politically correct themes at the expense of deeper knowledge".

Reports also suggest that the review team considered scrapping Citizenship as a separate subject altogether, but has instead decided to radically reduce the number of areas to be covered by the subject. The Citizenship curriculum for 11 to 14-year-olds will apparently be cut from 29 pages to less

than one and focus on discussion of the British monarchy and parliamentary democracy, together with an introduction to theories of liberty and rights and constitutional issues.

A move away from thematic headings such as “Understanding the physical and human characteristics of real places” and “developing ‘geographical imaginations’ of places” will be the key change to the Geography curriculum; with primary school children expected to learn about physical features, the nature of rocks, rivers and mountains, the names of countries and the characteristics of regions of Britain and the world.

Finally, the PE curriculum is expected to specify the need for physical exertion amid fears that the current syllabus does little to improve fitness.

The plans have been met with criticism by some commentators who argue that they represent a return to rote style learning, which will not meet the needs of the 21st Century. But members of the committee advising on the curriculum review have defended the changes stating: “It is not a backward-looking curriculum but very forward-looking.

Bernice McCabe, review member and Co-Director of the Prince’s Teaching Institute, said

“Teachers from the Prince’s Institute have said over the years that there has been a move towards skills without sufficient emphasis on the knowledge that you need to use them. In History, for example, we do not see how you can have a good foundation of knowledge without understanding the chronology of events.

The new curriculum is moving towards a greater balance between necessary knowledge and the skills to analyse and deepen understanding.”

Whilst Alan Kinder, Chief Executive of the Geographical Association, who is also advising on the review, stated: “No one is suggesting there should be rote learning of things such as countries, cities, oceans or climates. We want pupils to have an extensive knowledge of their world and be able to place countries or oceans so they are able to make use of that knowledge.”

It is believed that the changes to the curriculum are inspired by E D Hirsh, an American academic and proponent of the concept of ‘core knowledge’. In his seminal book, Hirsch argued that all American children needed a body of “core knowledge”, which would allow them to function as fully rounded citizens, who needed to be taught it at school as some would not learn it from home. The Government’s initial announcements on the early findings of the Curriculum Review stated “The new national curriculum will set out only the essential knowledge that all children should acquire.”

However, Professor Andrew Pollard, who stepped down from the Curriculum Review panel in protest to the direction it was taking, has argued that this approach is too prescriptive:

“Ministers have a responsibility to do no harm and there is some risk that what they’re proposing will actually reduce the quality of learning and reduce the breadth of education that’s available in primary schools. Despite the rhetoric about opportunities, it’s quite possible that what is proposed will increase inequality and the disadvantaged will become more disadvantaged.”

Coinciding with speculation on the History curriculum, this week the Government announced a new flagship scheme to commemorate the 100th anniversary of World War I and give thousands of schoolchildren the opportunity to visit the Great War battlefields.

Speaking at the Imperial War Museum, Prime Minister David Cameron explained that between spring 2014 and spring 2019, pupils and teachers from every maintained secondary school in England will have the chance to go on a tour of the great battlefields and take part in remembrance ceremonies on the western front, as part of the Centenary Education Programme.

The project will cost £5.3 million, with half the money coming from the Department for Education and half from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

What's your view? Do you think these changes are a good move? Do you believe there is a core of knowledge that every child should know and if so what should be included? Is a move away from a thematic approach a positive or negative development? And how much of the knowledge mentioned do you already teach in your schools? Will you take students to the World War 1 battlefields or is this something you have already done? What has been the impact of the visits? Let us know by emailing think@schoolsnortheast.com

Further information

BBC Radio 4's Analysis programme at 8.30pm on Monday 22 October will discuss the influence of ED Hirsch.

- Gove brings back 1066 and all that: Pupils to learn about key events as education secretary scraps 'politically correct' national curriculum ([Daily Mail](#))
- US idea of 'cultural literacy' and key facts a child should know arrives in UK ([Guardian](#))
- Government announces scheme to commemorate WW1 ([DfE](#))

Local news by area

At SCHOOLS NorthEast we scour the local press to find out the latest news from our schools however some stories inevitably slip past our beady eyes! Please keep us in the loop and share your news stories by emailing editor@schoolsnortheast.com.

Darlington

- Darlington MP takes part in World School Milk celebrations ([Northern Echo](#))

Gateshead

- Hurworth School presentation night ([Northern Echo](#))

Hartlepool

- Award puts school on map ([Hartlepool Mail](#))
- Students poised to resit GCSEs ([Hartlepool Mail](#))
- Netting an education at college ([Hartlepool Mail](#))
- School to make academy bid ([Hartlepool Mail](#))

Middlesbrough

- Ormesby School becomes an academy but retains identity ([Gazette Live](#))
- Teesside secondary school converts to academy ([Gazette Live](#))

Northumberland

- Education grants available for ex-Glendale pupils ([Berwick Advertiser](#))
- Cinema, curriculum and culture for pupils ([Berwick Advertiser](#))
- Blyth boy on his hug from the Duchess of Cambridge ([Chronicle Live](#))
- Concern over school proposals ([Hexham Courant](#))
- Magazine is passport to success for pupils ([Hexham Courant](#))
- School governors resist council pressure to quit ([Hexham Courant](#))
- GCSE downgrades hit few Tynedale students ([Hexham Courant](#))

- Allendale Middle School report a 'lazy' bit of work ([Journal Live](#))
- Special schools comments invited ([Morpeth Herald](#))
- Winning formula ([Morpeth Herald](#))
- Schools urged to be top of the class ([Morpeth Herald](#))
- Drug misuse discussions at schools ([News Guardian](#))
- Kind-hearted pupils show charity begins at school ([Northumberland Gazette](#))

South Tyneside

- Students' trolley good start to poverty challenge ([Shields Gazette](#))

Sunderland

- Cram's flying start to lectures ([Shields Gazette](#))
- Campaign to get more children walking to school ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Sunderland pupils' better record on key subjects ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- More Sunderland teenagers choosing to continue studies ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Sunderland schoolchildren drink to World Milk Day ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Apprentice star gives Sunderland College students a lesson in boardroom life ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Chinese children join Sunderland pupils in the classroom ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Sunderland school swimming pool finally open ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Sunderland Harry Potter actress fundraising for special school ([Sunderland Echo](#))
- Praise for two teachers ([Sunderland Echo](#))

Regional News

- Action for Children warns of 'timebomb' for North East families ([Journal](#))
- Are free schools just research labs? ([Northern Echo](#))
- 'Our young people will be part of a lost generation' ([Northern Echo](#))

Top national education news

Parents fail to give children breakfast

A survey of 500 UK teachers has found that a sixth of teachers are spending up to £25 a month buying bread, fruit and snacks to feed pupils who turn up to school without having eaten breakfast. The study by Kelloggs discovered that almost four out of five teachers reported an increase in the prevalence of pupils arriving at school hungry over the last 12 months, with two thirds of those teachers blaming "parental apathy".

- Parents 'failing to give children breakfast' ([BBC](#))
- School breakfast: more children go to school hungry ([The Telegraph](#))

GCSE results saga

The GCSE English story continues with news that 45,000 students will retake their exams in the free re-sit in November, representing about 1 in 14 of those who took the exam in the summer. The alliance of organisations challenging the results has now also confirmed that they will put in a legal challenge to the results, with a spokesperson for the alliance stating:

"We have now thoroughly examined the case that we have and we are convinced of the merits of our case, and the expectation that we will get the outcome we want – which is a re-grade for students... we will be putting our claim together and submitting it over the next week."

In addition, ASCL General Secretary Brian Lightman has told the BBC that the situation has provoked "a profound crisis of confidence amongst school and college leaders, teachers, parents and students in our current examinations system" and that the issue "renders invalid this year's performance league tables and the data that's used for the basis of the whole accountability system because they are not results that reflect trends within schools".

- GCSE resits: what students need to know (The Guardian)
- GCSE row: Head Teachers claim 'gross injustice' as 45,000 pupils opt to resit (The Guardian)

Many free schools 'significantly under subscribed'

Figures obtained by the BBC show that a quarter of the free schools which opened in England this year are significantly under subscribed. Fifty five new schools opened this September, bringing the total number of Free Schools to 79. The BBC contacted all of the 55 free schools which opened this September and asked for the total number of places they were seeking to fill and how many pupils they had recruited; of the 41 that replied with their figures, 14 had significant spare capacity and many had either a half or a third of their places unfilled.

A spokesman for the Department for Education said: "Most new free schools are starting with one year group. That means numbers will grow quickly in years to come. The first free schools, which opened in September 2011, were all over-subscribed this year. We expect pupil recruitment for free schools opened in 2012 to increase steadily."

The findings were discussed on BBC Radio 4's The Report on Thursday 11 October 2012 at 20:00hrs. You can listen again via the Radio 4 website.

- Many free schools 'significantly under subscribed' (BBC)

Resources and Opportunities

Free resources from Newcastle University - Teachers' Toolkit

Teachers' Toolkit is a new website for teachers, bringing together all of the resources available from Newcastle University. There are hundreds of resources available, including university taster events, subject-specific workshops, research-informed learning materials, CPD opportunities and access to events...to name but a few! The toolkit includes resources for both primary and secondary and covers a wide range of subjects and topics from dental hygiene to archaeology!

To find out how your school could benefit from all that's on offer click here: <http://toolkit.ncl.ac.uk/>

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

Development programme for Chairs of Governors

Are you a Chair of Governors? Are you looking to develop your skills and leadership capacity?

A new National College development programme for Chairs of Governors will be launching in the region soon. Over the next four years the programme aims to train 250 Chairs of Governors in the region per annum and is targeted at all Chairs of Governors whether new or experienced and those aspiring to become Chair. Participants will be able to choose modules based on their development needs and will each be assigned a mentor who will be able to support and guide them as they study their units.

GL Education Group in partnership with Durham Education Development Services (EDS) has been awarded the sole license for the programme in the region and will provide a dedicated team of accredited facilitators from across the North East, all of whom are educational professionals with extensive experience in governor and adult facilitation, whilst lead facilitators and subject experts will be assigned by Durham LA.

To book a place or find out more, please contact Professional Development Services at GL Education Group: Telephone: 0845 602 1937 (option 3) or email pds@gl-performance.co.uk.

Events

SCHOOLS NorthEast Events:

SCHOOLS NorthEast Summit – 19 October at St James' Park

The Summit is only a matter of days away now! Delegate places cost just **£80 for Primaries** and **£100 for Secondaries** with discounts for SCHOOLS NorthEast Enhanced Members and group bookings. We have very limited places left so this is your last chance to book a place on what is set to be one of the biggest events in education!

To find out more and to book your place now [please click here](#) or email summit@schoolsnortheast.com

Rescheduled Governor Event: Collaboration, conversion, coercion and confusion – 25 October

We have rescheduled our Governors' event after being forced to cancel it last June due to the floods!

Join us, along with leading law firm Dickinson Dees, for the first in a series of free twilight sessions for school governors. The event will be an opportunity to find out more about the changing education landscape and explore the questions and issues facing governing bodies over the coming months.

The free event will now take place at **Stockton Education Centre (TS20 1PR)** on **25 October** between 6pm and 8pm and is free (multiple delegates from each school are welcome.) To book a place please email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com or call 0191 204 8866

Other Events:

Subject Inset day for teachers – 19 October

South Tyneside Association of Secondary Heads would like to invite teachers from across the region to join them for their highly-regarded Subject Inset Day. Different subjects will be hosted by different secondary schools in South Tyneside and the programme will feature high quality guest speakers.

The inset day will take place on **19 October 2012, from 9am to 12.30pm** and cost just £50 (plus VAT). To find out more please email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com .

Free training day: Improving extra-curricular activities - 26 October

UFA, in partnership with Continyou, with support from the Department for Education, is offering a free training day to help schools improve the extra-curricular activities they offer children. The training consists of a morning focusing on raising the quality of your extra-curricular activities and an afternoon on monitoring and evaluating the outcomes.

The event will take place at the Langdale Centre in Wallsend, between 9.00am and 3.30pm. To book your place contact Lynne Shilton at lynne.shilton@northtyneside.gov.uk or call 0191 6438537 or book directly at: www.Continyounorthtynesideoct12.eventbrite.com

‘Closing the Achievement Gap’ seminar – 6 November

Do you want to hear about successful approaches to closing the achievement gap? Would you like to visit a school that is producing excellent outcomes for all children? Do you want to consider what research and evidence about approaches to narrowing the gap tells us? If so then the National Education Trust will be hosting a seminar on ‘Closing the Achievement Gap.’

The event will take place on Tuesday 6 November at Oakdene Primary School in Stockton-on-Tees, between 9.30am and 1.00pm. Please [click here](#) for more information and [click here](#) for online booking. The cost of attending is £10 per delegate. If you have any queries please email: events@nationaleducationtrust.net

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

Wise words...

“On important issues, micro-manage constantly....Strategy is too often an excuse for higher waffle!” – **Lord Andrew Adonis**

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