

SCHOOLS NorthEast weekly update

The future of our region is in school

This week...

Is **Road Safety Week**, an annual week organised by Brake, the national road safety charity who aim to prevent road crashes through education and campaigns, and support people bereaved or seriously injured in road crashes.

Every 10 minutes a child or young person is killed or injured on the UK's roads, making road crashes the biggest 'accidental' cause of death in children and young people.

Schools are being encouraged to take part in activities supporting Road Safety Week, and Brake are offering free Road Safety Week resources and information for teachers in a dedicated section of their website. Simply go to www.roadsafetyweek.org/educators to find out more.

This week also sees the start of **National Tree Week** on 25 November, the UK's largest tree celebration annually launching the start of the winter tree planting season.

Every year, up to 200 schools support the initiative by taking part in events which lead to around a million trees being planted around the country.

Schools in the North East taking part this year include St Joseph's RC Primary School in Newton Aycliffe, The Avenue Primary School in Nunthorpe and Abbeyfields First School in Morpeth,

If you would like more information on National Tree Week and for a full list of events taking place around the region, visit www.treecouncil.org.uk.

If your school is hosting any events along these or any other themes this week we'd love to know about them, tell us what you're doing by emailing think@schoolsnortheast.com.

News and events

Federation of Leaders in Special Education conference

The FLSE will be holding a conference at the Dryden Centre in Gateshead on 9 March 2010. The event is aimed at all leader in special education, including maintained and independent special schools, PRUs, school improvement partners, SEN support services and mainstream SEN units.

The day is designed to offer delegates the chance to:

- have a greater say in government policy for SEN
- share good practice in special education
- address regional priorities through collaborative initiatives
- join a supportive local network

If you would like more information contact Gill Henderson at gillhenderson5@byopenworld.com

Enterprise UK teacher training events

As part of last week's Global Entrepreneurship Week, RTC North is delivering enterprise activities to all secondary schools in the Newcastle area. Specific 'Train the Teacher' workshops can be delivered to equip teachers with the skills and resources needed to sustain enterprise activity in schools.

The sessions will be running until the end of November, and are funded entirely by Newcastle city Council and the European Regional Development fund. For more information contact Barrie Mullen at barrie.mullen@rtcnorth.co.uk or telephone (0191) 516 4400.

Nissan Schools Engineering Discovery Event

Places are still available for the Nissan Schools Engineering Discovery Event being held from 18 to 22 January 2010.

This year's event is themed around electric vehicles and will be hosted by two of Nissan's own young male and female engineers. The visit will also include a tour of the final assembly production line to see how a car is built.

This event was created with ONE North East to encourage pupils to choose engineering as a potential career. The North East has a shortage of new engineering talent, and Nissan hopes to inspire future engineers of both sexes to remain in the area and put their talents to use in the many local companies who employ engineers.

There are places for 2,500 pupils, with the event being predominantly aimed at the 11-13 year old age group - although older pupils would also be welcome. The event is free and pupils will receive a gift to take home.

There are two 2 hour sessions each day. Morning sessions begin for registration at 9.30am with a 10am start, and the event will finish around lunchtime. Morning sessions begin for registration at 9.30am with a 10am start, and the event will finish at around 3:00pm.

If you would like to take part in this event, please contact Dawn Waugh at dawn.waugh@nissan-nmuk.co.uk or (0191) 415 2764, indicating which day you would prefer, whether a morning or afternoon session would be better for your group, how many pupils you would like to bring and how many teachers will be accompanying them.

The Class Awards 2010

The CoLaS awards have been renamed as The Class Awards for 2010, and they are looking for dancers, singers, bands, soloists, comedians, acrobats... and just about any other type of performers looking for the chance to prove they are the best in the North East!

If your pupils think they have what it takes, and would like the chance to perform in front of 1,400 people during the Class Awards ceremony at the Sage in Gateshead on 23 April 2010, then they need to submit an audition tape at www.theclawards.co.uk/audition before 18 December 2009.

There is also an opportunity to nominate an individual or organisation you believe to be at the cutting edge of skills development and learning for an award, or perhaps even enter yourself! Simply visit

www.theclawards.co.uk for all the information you'll need.

360 Degree People school to work conference

360 Degree people are holding a conference on 10 March 2010 at glaziers Hall in London, focusing on young peoples' progression from school to work, looking at the ways schools can support young people to develop transferrable 'soft skills' across the increasingly complex transition phases in their lives.

Speakers on the day include Prof Mick Waters (Chairman 360 Degree People and The Curriculum Foundation) and Sir William Atkinson (Head Teacher, Phoenix High School).

The event is aimed at leaders in early years, primary and secondary schools, sixth-form colleges and universities. If you would like more information on this event contact Rachel Dennis by emailing r.dennis@hti.org.uk or by calling 020 7669 8519.

News round-up

A North East academy made the national headlines this week, as the BBC reported on the news that Bede Academy in Blyth was threatening pupils with expulsion if their parents repeatedly broke parking regulations around the schools site.

The school wrote to all parents following what a spokesperson called 'a very long and persistent problem of breaching parking rules', warning them that if they continued to flaunt the rules then they would be asked to 'have their child educated in another school'. Principal Liz Clubbs was quick to point out that although they are taking the matter very seriously, permanently excluding pupils would be used only as a last resort.

Should pupils be excluded for their parents' misdeeds? Have you ever had to handle a similar issue in your school? And what are your thoughts on the introduction of parent guarantees as announced in the Queen's Speech? Let us know what you think at think@schoolsnortheast.com.

Regional news

- [New land available for school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [East Durham College offers course in gravedigging](#) (Journal)
- [MacMillan Academy pupils caught in Cumbrian floods](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Pupils raise £1,000 for Great North Ambulance in memory of Joe Caven-Norris](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Thornaby Community School pupil get taste of international culture](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Time starts to run out for tiny Alnwick school](#) (Journal)
- [Author Gervase Phinn officially opens new Saltburn Learning Campus](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Teacher tells seven-year-olds: imagine your dad died in 9/11 attacks](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [MP calls for school admissions shake-up](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Bede Academy pupils in Blyth face expulsion if parents park badly](#) (Journal)
- [Plans for Morpeth police HQ may hit first school](#) (Journal)
- [University students help school pupils with national scheme](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Pupils tackle footy stars about racism](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Pupils sign up to help Adrian](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Hetton pupils' PJ party raises a smile for Pudsey](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Expulsion threatened over parking](#) (BBC News)

Queen's Speech

- [School guarantee 'whingers' fear](#) (BBC News)
- [Queen's Speech 2009: education and families bill](#) (Guardian)
- [Ed Balls' plan to replace traditional subjects with 'thematic' lessons](#) (Guardian)
- [Ed balls' magic wand can't fix education](#) (Guardian)
- [Education Bill to be unveiled in the Queen's Speech is absurd](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [The Queen's Speech: education](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Children get legal right to good education](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [School 'guarantees' law suit fears](#) (BBC News)
- [School rights pledge 'will be a whingers' charter'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Poor teens to get high flying mentors](#) (Times)

- Can good schooling be guaranteed? That's the question asked by the BBC's Sarah Campbell in light of the Children, Schools and Families Bill announced in the Queen's Speech, which would give parents in England a legally-enforceable right to demand a guaranteed standard of schooling for their children. Her video report can be viewed [here](#).

Sats

- [Sats for 11-year-olds may eventually go, says Balls](#) (Independent)
- [Ed Balls says Sats could go by 2010](#) (Guardian)
- [Sats tests may be scrapped, hints Ed Balls](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Poor white boys are worst performers at 11](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Balls hints at scrapping of Sats tests](#) (Independent)
- [Teachers' scores 'added to Sats'](#) (BBC News)
- [Poor white boys do worst in tests](#) (BBC News)
- [Poor white boys 'falling further behind'](#) (Independent)
- [White boys from poor families do worst in tests](#) (Guardian)

Science GCSEs

- [Exam regulator finds board lottery in GCSE science grades](#) (Guardian)
- [GCSE science exam grades generous, watchdog says](#) (BBC News)
- [GCSEs marked 'generously', says Watchdog](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Ofqual falls short on grading consistency in GCSE science](#) (TES)

Other exam and testing news

- [O-levels could be reintroduced in schools](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Children hurt by focus on exam grades](#) (Observer)
- [End in sight for school tables based on test results](#) (Times)
- [Whizz kids boot up for ICT GCSE – at age nine](#) (TES)
- [Teacher who doctored coursework escapes ban](#) (TES)
- [Can diplomas become a driving force?](#) (TES)
- [Examiner overload threatens Diploma](#) (TES)
- [Teach First high-flyers: league tables and curriculum are a big problem](#) (TES)

Primary curriculum

- [Primary schools need to make children 'media savvy'](#) (Observer)
- [Evolution to be compulsory subject in primary schools](#) (Times)
- [Evolution classes for primary pupils](#) (Independent)
- [Parental choice on primary schools 'increases social divide'](#) (Guardian)
- [Primary school curriculum shake-up attacked](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Evolution and history compulsory](#) (BBC News)
- [Sex and evolution on the curriculum](#) (Guardian)

Education spending

- [Ed Balls 'seeks £2.6bn boost for education spending'](#) (Guardian)
- [Colleges face budget shortfall after being swamped with school leavers](#) (Times)

Girls' Schools Association conference

- [Girls 'can follow fashion without compromising intelligence'](#) (Times)
- [Is it possible for an attractive, fashion conscious girl to be taken seriously?](#) (Daily Telegraph)

- [‘You can be beautiful and still be a feminist’](#) (Independent)
- [‘Maybe Jill Berry will soon have pole dancing on her curriculum too’](#) (Times)
- [Schools ‘ignoring needs of brightest pupils’](#) (Independent)
- [Schools ‘failing the brighter pupils’](#) (Times)
- [Schools ‘reluctant’ to push brightest pupils](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Fashion not a betrayal of feminist ideals, says leading headteacher](#) (Guardian)

‘NEETs’

- [One in 10 teenagers classed as ‘Neet’](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [A million young people not earning or learning](#) (Guardian)

Mixed-ability classes

- [All pupils ‘should be in mixed-ability classes’](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Setting pupils harms school performance](#) (Independent)
- [‘Sport and setting are alive and well’](#) (TES)

Faith schools and teaching

- [Muslim schools’ ‘risk of closure’](#) (BBC News)
- [The atheist philosopher who thinks faith schools are best for non-believers](#) (TES)
- [Textbooks maintain Islam was ‘evil’, says historian](#) (TES)
- [Lessons to stamp out extremism in schools](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Ofsted

- [Ofsted fails barrage of inspections](#) (Guardian)
- [Ofsted pupil safety rules are impossible, say head teachers](#) (Times)
- [Curtains for Tory plans to step up Ofsted ‘dawn raids’](#) (TES)
- [Ofsted notes ‘remarkable’ work of 12 special schools](#) (TES)
- [When satisfactory is simply fantastic](#) (TES)

School phobia

- [Is there really such a thing as school phobia?](#) (BBC Magazine)
- [School ordered to apologise to pupil with phobia over attending](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [‘Phobia’ pupil ruling](#) (TES)

Homework

- [Canadian parents win legal battle against homework](#) (Guardian)
- [Homework: is it really necessary?](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Independent school news

- [One in three independent school teachers have seen decline in student numbers](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Independents’ leader slams child protection register](#) (TES)

Grammar schools

- [Could grammar schools have a new role?](#) (Guardian)

Teacher training

- [Trainee bursaries slashed](#) (TES)
- [Trainee teacher targets exceeded](#) (BBC News)
- [Has teacher training become a victim of its own success?](#) (TES)

Other teacher news

- [Prince of Wales: teachers are being overlooked](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Minority teacher numbers unchanged in 20 years](#) (TES)
- [Time to let the teachers run the show](#) (TES)
- [Teachers to search and quangos to reign in 'hodge-podge' new bill, claim critics](#) (TES)
- [Why old Bill will always be the face of good teaching](#) (TES)

Primary schools and house prices

- [House prices 'raised by good primary schools'](#) (BBC News)
- [Top primary schools add £19,500 to house prices](#) (Guardian)

Bullying

- [Teen bullying victims get two grades below norm](#) (TES)

Discipline

- [Top school expels pupils over drugs](#) (Independent)

TES Myths – rising standards

- [Myth: 'Competitive sports and setting are frowned on in state schools as elitist'](#) (TES)
- [Boxing is a dangerous sport and doesn't deserve state funding](#) (Guardian)

Other education news

- ['Tough decisions' on weak schools](#) (BBC News)
- [Child mental health fears prompt rise of 'quick fix' drugs](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Children turned into 'mini adults'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [English education is just too narrow](#) (BBC News)
- [Four-poster beds, spa, golf course... the £30,000 break for headteachers in cash-strapped country](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Don't judge a school by its prospectus](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Adults 'abdicating responsibility' for children](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Focus on underperforming pupils damages the most able, say MPs](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Blinkered parents fuel childhood obesity, says report](#) (Guardian)
- [Don't treat pupils as consumers](#) (TES)
- [A special 'betrayal' brought to life](#) (TES)
- [ULT backlash gathers pace as ministers allow planned academies to go ahead](#) (TES)
- [Rosen shows that rhyme does pay](#) (TES)
- [Lightman shines as favourite for ASCL general secretary](#) (TES)

Head to Head

This week we have double bill of Head to Heads, starting with Patricia Gibb, Head Teacher of The Village Primary School in Thornaby.

This week was an ordinary week in as ordinary as it gets in a school!

The two best things that happened at school last week were firstly Chris Tarrant and the Tonight Programme visiting the school to film our Nurture Class and look at our Early Intervention for our children with social and emotional problems, interviewing myself and my Deputy who runs the Nurture class. It was exciting for children, staff and parents. The programme is to be aired on ITV 30th November 8pm. Secondly, our girls table tennis team winning the regional finals they will now go on to the northern finals

The biggest disappointment at school last week was all the staff sickness - one third off at the peak making the provision for quality learning a little challenging.

The funniest thing that happened at school last week was our Sex and Relationships Education programme taking a new turn last week, when a teacher and her class were designing masks for the donkeys for the Christmas show. The nose part had to be modified owing to its resemblance to a male part of the anatomy. The teacher had been so involved in getting the template right she could not understand or see why staff became wide eyed and fell about laughing. Luckily the children were too young to see it!

One thing that would have made my job easier last week was a notebook. I had to lug my laptop to London for a NAHT meeting. A notebook would have been so much lighter and I would not have had to vie for space on the table on the train! One is coming this week!

Top of my to-do list for this week is to ensure anti bullying week runs smoothly and is a fun week

My hero of last week was Coby, a reception child who has cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy. He comes into school when he is well enough and attended for a couple of days last week. He wears a fabulous bandana which is decorated with dinosaurs, his passion! His courage makes me feel very humble.

My villain of last week was Ed Balls - when is he going to realise SATs do not enhance children's learning?

How can we get administrators, LAs and Governments that preach early intervention to actually "DO" early intervention? As mentioned previously we have a nurture class linked to the Nurture Group Network, which we set up nearly 5 years ago. We funded this ourselves originally but we are now starting to be recognised by the LA. I know that Nurture Group Network is working with Government to promote the positive aspects. Currently we have an 85% success rate for these vulnerable children reintegrating into mainstream without additional support. I believe strongly that sometimes we have to take the risks and demonstrate that early intervention works. Watch the programme!

My question for next week's head is... How do you engage parents in being proactive in their child's learning, helping with homework, reading with them etc?

My final thought for the week is I love my job, it can be hectic, stressful and the workload frightening but every day is worthwhile, rewarding and never boring!

Phil Keay is Head Teacher of Greencroft Business and Enterprise Community School, and he also told us about his week.

This week was better than last week and is letting me refocus on our core purpose, especially raising achievement.

The two best things that happened at school last week were achieving the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation DCSF Award and being part of a very positive Governors meeting.

The biggest disappointment at school last week was not being able to be in school more than I was.

The funniest thing that happened at school last week was personally demonstrating to the boy who was selling cigarettes to his friends that he was making a 10p loss on every one he sold which was unacceptable in a Business and Enterprise School.

One thing that would have made my job easier last week was being in school rather than in off-site meetings and avoiding the inevitable catch-up when you return.

Top of my to-do list for this week is preparing for our CPD day followed by planning our next internal whole school monitoring week.

My hero of last week was a member of my staff (they know who they are) who performed brilliantly in a meeting with the Local Authority.

My villain of last week was Thierry Henry – outrageous!

How can we get administrators, LAs and Governments that preach early intervention to actually "DO" early intervention? Getting this on the agendas of ASCL/NAHT as a national issue and strengthening the influence of the School Improvement Partner would be my suggestions.

My question for next week's head is... How do you respond to the possibility that your improving school might go down a grade due to the new Ofsted framework?

Star pupil... *community cohesion*

Pupils from Sunderland schools got a chance to quiz their football heroes on Thursday at an education event held by Show Racism the Red Card at the Stadium of Light. More than 100 young people from Whitburn Village Primary and Ryhope Junior School had their questions about racism answered by Sunderland stars past and present, including Craig Gordon and Kieran Richardson.

Earlier in the week Hotspur Primary School in Newcastle hosted a discussion to consider the challenge of transforming the important theoretical and policy concept of Community Cohesion into practical action. Speakers included Adrian Gray (HMI, Divisional Manager, Frameworks, Policy and Guidance for Ofsted with responsibility for community cohesion) and Miles Wallis-Clarke (Head Teacher, Hotspur Primary School).

Could try harder... *poor white boys*

A DCSF report published this week shows that white boys from poorer backgrounds now do worse in primary school tests than any other main group. Only 48% of white British boys from a background making them eligible for free school meals achieved the expected level in English and Maths, down 4.8% from last year when their achievement matched white British girls. The average for all pupils was 71.8%.

Opportunities and resources

BT Better World resources

The BT Better World campaign, which aims to improve communication skills in young people, have produced two new free DVD resources.

Communication Skills for Young Citizens, aimed at KS 2 and 3, compares the frustration with the satisfaction of successful conversation, showing how basic skills can motivate people to listen, develop relationships and prevent conflict.

Moving On, aimed at KS4 and 5, looks at the issue that, however good a person's skills or qualifications, communicating these achievements is key to moving on to a successful future. In the DVD, students can discover the recipe for expressing themselves clearly and maximise their chances of getting the job they want.

For full information and to order your free resources visit www.btbetterworld.com.

OCR English Toolkit 2010

OCR are offering free 'Get Ready' and 'Get Started' INSET training days to prepare teachers for the introduction of the new GCSE English specifications in 2010.

The new specifications are designed to be 'dynamic and easy to deliver', and include what OCR describe as an exciting approach to poetry. To find out more and to book a place on one of the days visit www.ocr.org.uk/eventbooker.

Learning together through technology at BETT

BETT is the world's biggest educational technology event, bringing together educators from around the world, offering an unrivalled opportunity to discover the best technologies for creative teaching and learning.

The 2010 event takes place at London Olympia from 13 to 16 January, and you can register for a free ticket by going to www.bettshow.com/tes and using the priority code E128.

Grants and funding opportunities

North Tyneside cooking club funding

North Tyneside and Middlesbrough schools have until the end of November to apply for a grant of £2,500 to set up a healthy cooking club. There are a limited number of places for local schools to join Let's Get Cooking, a national network of healthy cooking clubs for children and parents, backed by £20 million from the Big Lottery Fund.

Each school has been given a special invitation code so that they can apply online. Schools that would like to apply to join Let's Get Cooking should call 0114 259 1323 for their invitation code and a link to the website invitation page.

For more information about Let's Get Cooking visit www.letsgetcooking.org.uk

And finally...

The London Chess Classic is running from 8 to 15 December at the Olympia Conference Centre, and to mark the event this week the Daily Telegraph looked at the way the internet has sparked a renaissance in interest in the game among young people. Max Davison met some grandmasters of the future, who include pupils taking full advantage of their schools' chess clubs to practice for future events! To read the full article click [here](#).

Have a great week!