

SCHOOLS NorthEast weekly update

The future of our region is in school

This week...

Will see Human Rights Day on 10 December focusing on non-discrimination. Every year on this Day the global community commemorates the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly.

TeacherNet have created a useful assembly plan to mark the date, which describes a strange party when nobody considers the needs of the guests, and develops the theme that everyone has rights as well as responsibilities (or school rules) to follow. The assembly aims to enable pupils to:

- know that they have rights that should be upheld
- understand that with rights come responsibilities
- understand that expectations of behaviour exist in most social groupings
- be aware that in some countries human rights abuses are much more serious

The plan can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The UK Committee for Unicef also offers an assembly focusing on Human Rights Day, which can be downloaded in PDF format by clicking [here](#).

Finally the TES have created a PowerPoint presentation looking at what human rights are, who the UN are and what it does, five scenarios to prompt group discussions, a focus on six countries in the UN and their rights then an activity to complete. It can be downloaded [here](#).

Let us know what your school is doing for Human Rights Day, or any other events your school may be doing this week, by emailing think@schoolsnortheast.com.

This week also sees the Government unveil details of a series of consultation events taking place next year surrounding its 21st Century school reform plans. The consultations will focus on issues such as home schooling agreements and the pupil and parent guarantee that were set out in the white paper 'Your Child, Your Schools, Your Future'.

The timetable for action, which can be downloaded by clicking [here](#), features 12-week public consultations early next year on parent and pupil guarantees and how best to reward high performing specialist schools.

SCHOOLS NorthEast would love to hear your views on these issues in the lead up to the consultations. Send your thoughts to think@schoolsnortheast.com.

News and events

Great North Schools engagement events

Your views, ideas and experiences are needed to shape an important proposal currently being developed by SCHOOLS NorthEast for the DCSF called Great North Schools.

Great North Schools is an ambitious proposal encouraging the region's schools, local authorities and stakeholders to develop approaches to improving outcomes for our young people based on shared aspirations achieved through collaboration, mutual respect, tailored support and a driving momentum. Great North Schools will seek to involve all secondary, primary, middle, infants, special and

independent schools, with involvement appropriate to each school's context, while bringing in significant additional resources to the North East school community.

SCHOOLS NorthEast will holding a series of engagement events across the region between 12 and 15 January 2010 which will be an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and discuss the key issues, ensuring your views and opinions are taken into account.

Look out for your invitation in your Christmas card filled post bag, and in the meantime if you would like any further information contact a.morris@schoolsnortheast.com.

Seven Stories

Sarah Brown made a surprise appearance in Newcastle's Ouseburn Valley this week to visit Seven Stories, the only museum in the country wholly dedicated to British children's books. She met young people who were visiting the centre during her only cultural visit to the North East, as well as being shown around the exhibition galleries and bookshop.

She had been invited to the region by North East Minister Nick Brown, who called Seven Stories a 'national treasure'. He said: "There is nothing like it elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The visit by Sarah Brown was a wonderful chance to show our city at its best."

The centre welcomes school groups, with sessions running from 10:00am to 12:00pm or 12:30 to 2:30pm. Teachers are welcome to visit the centre in advance to get a feel for what your group will experience on their visit, and for ideas about preparation.

If you would like to book a visit, contact the school booking team on 0845 271 0777 or email schools@sevenstories.org.uk, or visit www.sevenstories.org.uk/schoolsandgroups for more information.

School Food Trust school improvement programme

The School Food Trust are offering your school the opportunity to take part in a series of three half-day workshops, held on 20 January, 23 February and 29 April 2010, to help to invoke change and make improvements to your school.

The objective of the program is primarily to increase take up of school meals and the SFT do this by working alongside schools, using a proven improvement methodology so that schools can achieve:

- Quick effective change;
- Low cost change;
- A win-win scenario.

The program is free and includes full access to a lots of other free resources to help you achieve your own objectives. If you would like your school to take part contact a.morris@schoolsnortheast.com.

Would you like to partner a school in France?

Les Abrets school in France are looking for an English school who would be interested for an exchange of letters and emails initially, possibly including video-conferencing with a view to looking towards a pupil exchange in 2010/2011.

If you would like any further information please forward your details to a.morris@schoolsnortheast.com.

Primary league tables

The 2009 primary school league tables were published on 1 December. If you would like to view the complete tables for schools in your LA, click on the links below. For more information on how to read the league tables and what the figures mean click [here](#).

- [Darlington](#)
- [Durham](#)
- [Gateshead](#)
- [Hartlepool](#)
- [Middlesbrough](#)
- [Newcastle upon Tyne](#)
- [North Tyneside](#)
- [Northumberland](#)
- [Redcar and Cleveland](#)
- [South Tyneside](#)
- [Stockton on Tees](#)
- [Sunderland](#)

News round-up

The Financial Times this week looked at a report which says that Government education policy has created a fear of failure among Head Teachers in England.

The report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development attacks Government officials for fostering a culture in which teachers are deterred from applying for leadership positions, and leads many Head Teachers in England opting to retire early.

The report adds: "Fear of their schools being deemed as failing is a powerful disincentive to teachers who are considering applying for National Professional Qualification for Headship, which is mandatory for those in principal posts."

To read the FT article in full click [here](#), then let us know what you think. Do you agree that education policy has created a fear of failure? Would you encourage your staff to apply for leadership positions? What would you like to see change in education policy? Email think@schoolsnortheast.com with your views.

Regional news

- [Ings Farm School prepare Christmas boxes for troops](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Artistic kids give friends a creative new design](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Headteacher at school in Norton hits out at Ofsted inspection rules](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Flood fear at Lockwood Primary School](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [North East schoolteacher accused of drug dealing](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [North East schools get full marks for Key Stage 2 results](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Schoolboy's Christmas card design could reach world leaders](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Chronicle's young achievers unveiled](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Prime Minister's wife Sara Brown makes secret trip to Seven Stories](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Exploring Cassop's coal past](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Town's Sats results are most improved](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Plans for new learning campus go on show](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [New city school to be built on Hunters Moor Hospital site](#) (Journal)
- [North East schools are top of the class](#) (Journal)
- [Happy headteacher hails Throckley Primary turnaround](#) (Journal)

Primary league tables

- [Primary school league tables expose shortcomings](#) (BBC News)
- [Primary school league tables expose drop in basics](#) (BBC News)
- [28 per cent of 11-year-olds miss SATs targets](#) (Independent)
- [More primaries failing to teach majority of pupils the basics, league tables reveal](#) (Guardian)
- [Should Sats be axed?](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Mores schools failing](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Heads threaten Sats boycott](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [More children in poor schools](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [School tables show another dip in top scores for English and science](#) (Times)
- [Amid the uproar, latest tables reveal quiet successes](#) (TES)

Primary school performance

- [Ministers push primary schools to raise results](#) (BBC News)
- [Ed Balls demands improvement to underperforming primary schools](#) (Guardian)
- [Failing primary schools face merger](#) (Times)
- [1,400 primary schools warned over standards](#) (Independent)

Politics – Conservatives

- [Tories bring back Baker to start new tech colleges](#) (Independent)

Politics – Labour

- [A fair verdict on Labour years?](#) (BBC News)
- [Labour's £30 billion annual spending on schools fails to boost standards](#) (Times)
- [Balls' tour of duty bangs the drum of election belief](#) (TES)

School places

- [15,000 more primary school places](#) (BBC News)
- [Balls pledges £300m to reduce shortage of school places](#) (Guardian)

Compulsory community service

- [Compulsory community service could generate £1bn](#) (CYP Daily)

Teachers becoming Head Teachers

- [Being a head teacher is 'ultimate opportunity to transfer ethos and values](#) (Times)
- [More teachers wanting to be heads should avert retirement crisis](#) (Times)
- [How to make the grade as a teacher](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Majority of teachers still have no appetite for headship, says study](#) (TES)

Science teaching and exams

- [Good grades in GCSE science to be harder to get](#) (Times)
- [Science GCSEs are to include more demanding maths](#) (BBC News)
- [Appliance of science must be fit for all](#) (TES)
- [Science minister hits out at 'deeply flawed' curriculum](#) (TES)

Other testing and exam news

- [Harrow school introduces new qualifications](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Ofsted raises the bar after college irregularities uncovered](#) (Guardian)
- [School cash worth two extra GCSEs](#) (BBC News)
- [Pupils failed by 'intellectually deficient' exams](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [State schools teach iGCSEs in secret](#) (TES)
- [Productivity in schools stalls](#) (Guardian)
- [Heads ramp up pressure and back Sats boycott](#) (TES)
- [Only 4% of young offenders study GCSEs and A-levels](#) (TES)
- [Diplomas destined for Tory shake-up](#) (TES)
- [20% exam results drop for children of the Asbo](#) (TES)
- [It's Ofsted – lets bolt the doors](#) (TES)
- [Ofsted accused of 'utter inconsistency' as it refuses to allay assessment workload fears](#) (TES)

Trainee teacher student loans

- [Tories plan to tempt science graduates into teaching](#) (BBC News)
- [New teachers to get loans paid off under the Tories](#) (Independent)
- [Tory plan to repay student loans for science and maths teachers](#) (Times)
- [Tories to pay off loans of trainee science teachers](#) (Guardian)

School buildings

- [Tories and Labour accuse each other over building scheme future](#) (TES)
- [Many colleges will fail to get their new buildings](#) (Guardian)

Academies

- [Are academies just 'a ludicrously expensive con-trick'](#) (Guardian)
- ['Bullying' fear at new academy](#) (BBC News)
- [Boris Johnson faces tough sell on academies](#) (BBC News)

Faith schools

- [Faith schools dominate top places](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Gender equality

- [Drive for gender equality has been put in reverse, claims top adviser](#) (TES)

Teacher discipline

- [Two year ban for teacher who gave pupils porn and McDonalds](#) (TES)
- [Teacher threatened to break arm of unruly pupil](#) (Daily Telegraph)

Reform on academic subjects

- [The thinktank Reform urges schools to focus on academic subjects](#) (Guardian)
- ['Students should study more academic subjects'](#) (Independent)

Choice advisers

- [Choice advisers guru claims his scheme is failing](#) (TES)
- [What happened to the choice advisers?](#) (TES)

Other education stories

- [Number of education boards halved](#) (BBC News)
- [‘One in four people’ in education](#) (BBC News)
- [Co-ed schools experiment with separate classes for boys and girls](#) (Times)
- [Analysis: brighter pupils abandoned in rush for basics](#) (Times)
- [UK plummets in education table for teenagers](#) (Guardian)
- [A little fun can go a long way when it comes to learning](#) (Independent)
- [Co-op network set for 200 schools](#) (BBC News)
- [State won’t build schools? Do it yourself](#) (Times)
- [Ready to explode](#) (Times)
- [Alpha course is taking on England’s state schools](#) (TES)
- [Teaching leaders scheme catches eye of team Obama](#) (TES)
- [‘Tokenistic’ awards to boost uptake of sport and PE scrapped for a year](#) (TES)
- [Marxism, free sex, terrorist invites and other misunderstandings](#) (TES)
- [Reforms could be second best escape route for offenders](#) (TES)
- [Pupil protesters ready to turn up heat over Copenhagen deal](#) (TES)
- [Kids can teach us how to conduct ourselves](#) (TES)
- [Are you being served? Surprises in store as school sets up shop](#) (TES)

Head to Head

This week we spoke to Steve Collinson, Head Teacher of Wellfield Middle School in Whitley Bay. He told us about a trip to Paris with his Year 7 pupils and his pupils taking part in a world record attempt by taking part in the BBC Tree O’clock project.

This week was different but exciting and tiring – I took 42 year 7 pupils to Paris for the week

The 2 best things that happened at school last week were firstly finding out we were top of the league in our authority in the KS2 tables for the second year running and secondly our pupils’ attempt to break the world record for the most trees planted in an hour.

The biggest disappointment at school last week was that the girls’ football team didn’t quite match the boys’ performance in the same tournament – the girls came second!

The funniest thing at school (well for me who was out and about) was a comment made by a passenger at Newcastle airport as we returned with our 42 kids. I ran passed him clutching a child’s passport which had been left on the Easyjet plane and handed in by another passenger. I said to the gentleman whom I passed at speed that one of the kids had left the passport and that he would be panicking ahead at passport control. The gentleman replied –“you lot should be paid much more for doing all this” - yes please, I thought!

One thing that would have made my job easier last week was kids who get worn out by 9pm and who want to go to bed early and sleep!

Top of my to do list this week is to prepare for a visit by the British Council on Thursday in connection with our Comenius project – it’s a kind of informal inspection report they are coming to do (or so they tell me).

My hero of last week was Edna – a wonderful 80+ year old lady who goes to my local church. I saw her on Sunday taking communion. She says hardly anything but her face radiates joy, love, peace and kindness. A great example to us all.

My villain of the week was a boy who spent the equivalent of £26 on a toy gun made of metal. We knew he would never make it onto the plane for the flight home so I had to negotiate a refund with the shop who sold him it.

How do you engage parents in being proactive in their child's learning? One way that has worked really well for us is to establish a parents' forum. The parents on it are keen, motivated and extremely supportive and help a great deal with things such as consultation.

Question for next week's head: what can I do to help boys in particular come to terms with their tempers and control their emotions better?

Star pupil... *North East Young Achievers*

Last Tuesday saw the Evening Chronicle's annual Young Achievers awards ceremony held at the Hilton in Gateshead, praising the hard work and determination of the young people of the North East.

18-year-old Abbey Johnson from Benfield School in Newcastle won both the Community Achievement and the Arts Achievement awards for her work with dance while 18-year-old Celso Anjos, also of Benfield School, won the Sports Achievement award. Heaton Manor School pupils Frances Larke and Melissa Hair won the GCSE and A Level Achievement awards respectively.

For more information on the young achievement awards click [here](#).

Could try harder... *Parents' evenings*

The BBC this week reported on a survey of 2,000 primary school parents in the UK which found that 55% felt that parents' evenings did not really tell them how their child was progressing.

The survey of parents of children aged 10 and under, carried out for the educational toy company Leapfrog, suggests a majority of parents would like to have more detailed information about their child's performance at school.

But more than three quarters arrive at parents' evenings without having made any preparations or thought about what information they want. The survey also found that two thirds of parents have been unable to attend a meeting because of work commitments - and one in three fathers think that going to a parents' evening is a job for their partner.

Opportunities and resources

New BT Better World resources

BT Better World have introduced three new educational resources aimed at children at Upper KS2/Lower KS3 who have had difficulty with social interaction.

'Making Friends with Bo Solo' is a comic following Bo's attempts to build friendships with his new classmates. Bo eventually learns that one of the secrets of friendship is good, two-way communication.

The 'Communication Skills for Young Citizens' DVD compares the frustration of poor communication with the satisfaction of successful conversation. See how basic skills can motivate people to listen, develop relationships and prevent conflict.

Finally, a collection of 'Be What It Says' badges helps students live up to the fundamental rules of clear communication.

To access these and other free resources visit www.btbetterworld.com.

Dear Zoo literacy activities

The most popular download this week on the TES website is Dear Zoo literacy activities, a collection of literacy resources for individual and whole-class activities based on zoo and animal themes.

These colourful and innovative resources can be printed out in large formats for display or made into workbooks for each child, as part of English, science or art and design lessons. They could also form the basis of preparation before a visit to the zoo to encourage children to think about the animals they will see there.

This resource saves time sources visual material, enabling teachers to focus on exciting and varied ways to engage the class. To find Dear Zoo, go to www.tes.co.uk/dear-zoo.

IET Farraday – Engaged. Enthused. Energised.

The award winning IET Farraday is a free online resource for teachers of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) which will ensure your students share your passion for the subject.

The engaging programme will inspire your class and provide you with the flexible and practical resources you need. For more information visit www.theiet.org/discoverfarraday.

Free Jeans for Genes resources

Jeans for Genes have launched a brand new website where you can find great free resources to use in science, citizenship and PSHE for key stages 1 to 4.

Resources include short films and animations, interactive whiteboard activities, discussion ideas and assemblies for all.

For more information and to access the resources visit www.genesareus.org.

Grants and funding opportunities

Community sustainable energy programme

Schools and colleges are being invited to apply for funding to install renewable energy technologies (such as wind turbines and solar panels) and energy saving measures (such as roof and cavity wall insulation). Under the new Community Sustainable Energy programme £8 million will be available for the installation of microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures (Capital grants) and £1 million for project development grants. The maximum Capital grant available is £50,000 or 50% of the project costs. The maximum project development grant is £5,000 or 75 per cent of the study cost - whichever is lower. The funding programme is being managed by the Building Research Establishment on behalf of the Big Lottery Fund's "Changing Spaces" Programme. Project development grants (for studies investigating the feasibility of installing any combination of the technologies) will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis until all funds are spent. Capital grants will be awarded on a competitive basis at quarterly selection panel meetings. The next application deadline is the 29th January 2010. For more information go to www.communitysustainable.org.uk.

UK schools China competition

This competition, supported by the HSBC Global Education Programme and run by the British Council, is open to UK primary schools and SEN schools with an existing partnership with a school in China. The theme of this year's competition is "Comparing Traditional Stories, Myths and Legends". The competition provides an opportunity for participating linked schools to further develop their work together by collaborating on the research and production of a performance in English by the UK

school of a traditional Chinese story, myth or legend. The winning school in each of the three categories will receive £3,000 to support their school partnership with China.

The deadline for registration is 8 January 2010. For further information visit http://www.britishcouncil.org/chinacomp_09.pdf

And finally...

According to this week's TES, Ebay has become the arena for entrepreneurial teachers who have taken to selling their Ofsted outstanding forms to the highest bidder. Such is the competition between these mini-businesses that a Head Teacher can buy a completed self-evaluation form (SEF) for as little as £1.99. One seller from Birmingham, going by the username of JGW347, gives the hard sell saying they have more than 10 years' experience in early years education and that their SEF has been praised by Ofsted inspectors. But the proprietor does warn that the completed form cannot 'guarantee' a good Ofsted report!

Have a great week!