

## In this issue

- All the latest regional and national education news
- Information on nominating a member of your staff for a North East School Award
- Details of how your school can win up to £5,000 through environmental projects
- Head to Head with Steve Gater, Head Teacher of Walker Technology College in Newcastle

## Focus on... *Money saving in school*

The DCSF announced last week that primary schools will have access to up to a thousand extra school business managers under a scheme launched to help schools make their money go further. The Department will provide the National College with £5m to fund 250 school business managers next year, each working with four or five schools, with a further 250 made available in each of the following three years.

The Fishburn cluster of schools in Durham was praised in the announcement for hiring one business manager to cover their five schools. As well as saving Head Teacher time, savings of around £20,000 were identified across the schools with reinvestment being made in learning. Fishburn Primary Head Teacher Danny Eason said: "The School Business Manager role has become sustainable and, working collaboratively, they continue to renegotiate service level agreements to get better value for money, cut CPD costs and develop and put out tenders for services within the project."

Sarah Monk is the School Partnerships Director for Place Group, and she offers these top tips for how schools can collaborate to save money:

### **Review Local Authority Service Level Agreements**

It is important to ensure that the Local Authority service level agreement is tailored to the needs of your individual school, that there are clear performance indicators, and that the charges are transparent and can be reduced if you require less service.

### **Use the DCSF Open online procurement service**

The DCSF Open online procurement service can save a lot of the legwork involved in getting the best price. More details can be found at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/open>

### **Launch a "switch it off" campaign in your school**

Ensure that you assess your starting point, by monitoring your current bills and usage, and then launch as whole-school sustainability (and cost-cutting!) drive to help save the environment and save costs. Establish the level of savings and publicise the impact!

### **Look at how existing school collaborations can work together and reduce costs**

The DCSF expectation that ALL schools will make 0.9% efficiency savings this year and in future years is a real challenge. No school can do it alone. That's why working in partnership to review areas of spend can provide opportunities not only for saving money, but provide other opportunities for shared working and possibly even a shared curriculum offer.

Place Group is offering a free consultation to schools in the North East who want to collaborate and save money, and a free copy of their publication which highlights the challenges of raising standards whilst securing efficiencies. They also provide a SBM service that can be accessed by schools, and are offering preferential rates for the first five SCHOOLS NorthEast members who sign-up. For more information contact Sarah Monk at [sarah.monk@place-group.com](mailto:sarah.monk@place-group.com) or visit the website at [www.place-group.com/schoolservices](http://www.place-group.com/schoolservices).

## In the news

### Regional news

#### Darlington

- [Magical experience as Gandalf visits school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils to address Darlington council's planning committee](#) (Northern Echo)
- Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson was the guest of honour at Carmel RC College for a presentation to the winners of Darlington's first Wattbike Competition (TES, not online)

#### Durham

- [Tempers boil over as Consett Academy plan approved](#) (Journal)
- [Students help to recharge Earth's batteries](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils' efforts praised](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Thieves take steel intended for school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Easter opera school for kids](#) (Northern Echo)

#### Gateshead

- [£80m to help transform Gateshead schools](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Child crime critic Maggie Atkinson wins local support](#) (Journal)
- [Balls criticises Children's Commissioner on Bulger view](#) (BBC News)

#### Hartlepool

- [Students meet child care professionals](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Show time for pupils](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils find out more about new diplomas](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Date with royalty for High Tunstall students](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Ceremony to mark excellent results](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [15p school meals price rise approved](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [MP joins schools choice row](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

#### Newcastle

- [Behaviour – Newcastle Central High School Head Teacher Hilary French gives her advice on dealing with unruly pupils](#) (TES Magazine)

#### Northumberland

- [Matthew scoops Lego prize](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Maths challenge raises money for Mencap](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Top marks for middle school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Host of activities teach pupils about Fairtrade](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Pupils are in harmony](#) (Hexham Courant)

- [School leads the green way](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Pupils design and fill charity money boxes](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Students promote fair deal](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Belsay pupils find their voice](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Pupils get food for thought](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [School mourns loss of popular teacher](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Back to school for visiting shadow minister](#) (Berwick Advertiser)

#### Sunderland

- [Kind-hearted pupils bag a lot of stock for charity](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Event's stark lessons for pupils](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Business stars of the future use their loaf](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Ofsted say new inspections are improving school standards](#) (Sunderland Echo)

#### Teesside

- [Suzannah Clarke's singing praises of new schools scheme](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Unity City Academy's high hopes of Schools Awards success](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [All Saints pupils spend day in news business](#) (Evening Gazette)

#### North Tyneside

- [Pupils hold teddy bear World Cup for charity](#) (Evening Chronicle)

#### South Tyneside

- [Shields school wins national award](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Kids raise cash with mad hair day](#) (Shields Gazette)

#### Regionwide news

- [Lord Bates accuses Labour of failing poor children](#) (Journal)
- [Youngsters get ready for school 'Olympics'](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Slumdog reveals learning treasures](#) (Guardian)

### National education news

#### Failing schools up 150% in official Ofsted figures

Official data released by Ofsted this week shows that one in seven schools have been branded as 'inadequate' since the new inspection framework was introduced. Only half of the 2,140 schools inspected so far were judged to be satisfactory or better, with just 9% judged to be outstanding – down from 19% in the last academic year. Christine Gilbert stressed that the new framework was about raising expectations, but unions have argued that Ofsted have 'moved the goalposts', making the figures misleading.

- [More schools are failing Ofsted checks](#) (BBC News)
- [New inspection regime finds one in seven secondaries 'inadequate'](#) (Guardian)
- [Number of failing schools leaps 150 per cent under new regime](#) (Times)
- [Ofsted: more schools failing inspections](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [One in seven secondary schools branded inadequate](#) (Independent)

#### Ruling on teachers who are BNP members

Ministers have this week ruled out banning members of the British National Party from teaching after an independent inquiry decided taking such action would be disproportionate. Members of organisations deemed to be racist are already banned from working as police or prison officers, but former Chief Inspector of Schools Maurice Smith said stopping teachers from being BNP members would be like “taking a very large sledgehammer to crack a miniscule nut”.

- [BNP members will not be banned from teaching](#) (BBC News)
- [Ministers rule out ban on BNP teachers](#) (Guardian)
- [BNP leader welcomes ruling on teachers](#) (Independent)
- [Nick Griffin welcomes decision not to ban BNP teachers](#) (Guardian)
- [Why we must ban BNP from schools](#) (The Sun)
- [No ban for BNP teachers](#) (TES)

### **Pupils ‘going backwards’ in English and Maths**

A DCSF report has shown that many pupils in England are performing worse in the core subjects at 16 than in comparable exams taken at the end of primary school. More than four in 10 failed to make the progress expected of them in maths, with a third failing to reach the same level in English. However the results, which charted the progress between Sats and GCSE of 558,000 pupils, are an improvement over previous years.

- [Thousands of pupils ‘going backwards’ in English and maths](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Four in 10 pupils failing to make expected progress in secondary school](#) (Daily Mail)

### **McDonalds offer qualification equivalent to GCSE to work experience students**

Teenagers who complete work experience at fast-food giant McDonald’s will now be able to gain an Edexcel BTEC certificate, equivalent to a GCSE, to recognise the skills gained on the placement. The move has been welcomed by the National Council for Work Experience, but Prof Alan Smithers from the Centre of Education at Buckingham University said although the qualification might make the work experience more worthwhile, equating it to a GCSE is ‘absurd’.

- [McDonald’s offer work experience-based GCSE](#) (BBC News)
- [McDonald’s hands out BTEC qualification in move criticised as ‘absurd’](#) (Times)
- [‘GCSEs’ in work experience at McDonald’s](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [McGCSE awarded to students on work experience](#) (Guardian)
- [Who wants a GCSE with fries on the side?](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Try out a job at McDonald’s and bag a GCSE](#) (Metro)
- [Work at McDonald’s for two weeks and get equivalent of a B grade exam pass](#) (Daily Mail)

Click [here](#) for a full round-up of all the past week’s education news.

## **Events and opportunities**

### **Journal Tokens for Schools**

The Journal, alongside Barclays Money Skills, is giving away £20,000 to North East schools in this year’s Tokens for Schools campaign, with the prize money to be spent on educational projects including school trips, improving school grounds and bringing the school library up to date.

You’ll have to be quick to be included in the scheme - your school will have to register at [www.journallive.co.uk/schools](http://www.journallive.co.uk/schools) by this Friday (19 March), then it’s up to your pupils, teachers and their friends and families to collect as many tokens as possible from The Journal for the chance to win the top prize for your school!

Tokens will be printed in The Journal from Monday to Saturday from Monday 29 March until Saturday 8 May, with additional bonus tokens appearing on certain days during the campaign, and the competition is open to all maintained schools within the circulation area of The Journal. Good Luck!

### **North East School Awards 2010**

Nominations are now open for the North East School Awards 2010, covering both community and curriculum based projects, as well as individual excellence, and honouring whole schools, classes and individuals.

Categories include Inspirational Primary Teacher, Inspirational Secondary Teacher, School Support Staff of the Year, the Sustainable School Award and the brand new Change4Life Award.

A full list of award categories as well as further information on how to nominate somebody from your school is available by clicking [here](#), or contact Jennifer Cook on 0191 204 3310 or [jennifer.cook@ncjmedia.co.uk](mailto:jennifer.cook@ncjmedia.co.uk).

### **BSF Meeting of Minds conference**

Places are still available for the Building Schools for the Future Meeting of Minds conference at Newcastle Civic Centre on 26 March.

Shadow Minister for Schools and Families, Lord Bates, has been confirmed as the keynote speaker at the event which will bring together stakeholders in the Building Schools for the Future programme, including Governors and Head Teachers. The morning will provide a forum for participants in the BSF programme to take stock of their experience, exchange good practice in the design and procurement of facilities and make recommendations to enhance the progress of the BSF scheme, while in the afternoon there will be an opportunity to visit Kenton School in Newcastle, a recently completed BSF project incorporating a biomass boiler.

Places are £60 including refreshments, lunch and transport to Kenton School. To book your place or for more information please contact Amanda McManus on (0191) 261 7441 or email [riba.northeast@inst.riba.org](mailto:riba.northeast@inst.riba.org).

## **Vacancies**

### **Marden High School – Science Curriculum Leader (TLR 1B)**

Marden High School invites applications for a highly committed, enthusiastic and experienced teacher of Science to lead a thriving and highly successful department. Applicants should have an excellent record of teaching Science across the full ability range of KS3 and KS4, and will have successfully demonstrated the ability to lead and inspire a team of teachers.

Application packs are available by sending a large SAE to the Head Teacher's PA, Marden High School, Hartington Road, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE30 3RZ, or email your name and address to [marden.high@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:marden.high@northtyneside.gov.uk). Application packs need to be requested before 1 April, and the closing date for applications is 9am/first post on Tuesday 20 April.

SCHOOLS NorthEast will be launching a new enhanced membership in the coming weeks which will incorporate a dedicated recruitment service for North East schools. Enhanced members will have access to an exclusive section of the new SCHOOLS NorthEast website where you can post new vacancies in your school, or view existing vacancies from around the region. If you would like any further information, contact the SCHOOLS NorthEast team on (0191) 280 5037.

## **Grants and funding**

## TOTAL Green School Awards 2010

There are 16 chances to win up to £5,000 for your school in the TOTAL Green School Awards, which aim to assist and encourage environmental education. The awards recognise environmental work carried out by your pupils, and are open to groups of up to 30 young people aged between 5 and 11.

Regional prizes are awarded for projects covering your school grounds, environmental research projects, environmentally themed art and projects researching any type of energy. Click [here](#) for more information on the awards and to enter your school.

### Innovation in Ecological Education Grant

The British Ecological Society offers a grant of up to £1,500 to promote good practice in teaching ecology and to support ecology teaching that is innovative and inspiring. Funding is available to enable teachers to develop innovative teaching and learning activities and can include projects based in or outside the classroom.

The next application deadline is 30 April. For full information and to download an application form, click [here](#).

## Resources and ideas

### Sport Relief assembly plan

With Sport Relief Day taking place this Friday (19 March), Teachernet have produced an assembly plan which aims to suggest ways in which students can get involved in charity sporting activities, explain how the money raised by Sport Relief will be used to help reduce poverty in the UK and abroad, and show how young people can participate in their local and global communities.

The assembly plan is suitable for Years 7 to 11, and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### National Grid School Power programme

The School Power programme has been created by the National Grid to inspire the inventors, engineers and scientists of the future. They offer interactive activities and practical experiments based around the themes of power, forces and materials.

The Teachers section of their website offers an overview of the programme and a collection of resources for primary pupils made up of stories, slide presentations and activity ideas, as well as a downloadable 'word bank' offering a straightforward guide to the terms used in the resources.

To find out more about the programme go to [www.nationalgrideducation.com](http://www.nationalgrideducation.com).

## Head to Head

This week we spoke to Steve Gater, Head Teacher of Walker Technology College in Newcastle. He told us about the importance of trying to find work/life balance, and the lengths some members of the community have gone to in supporting a Year 11 and 6<sup>th</sup> Form trip to Kenya.

**This week was** as hectic as any other, in spite of it being one of our regular 'health and well being' weeks. As with other schools and organisations we try to recognise the importance of work/life balance and the week has a focus on staff collectively and individually reflecting on what we do and how we do it. I'd like to think that we are working towards a better balance by designing better ways to carry out our business – easier said than done!

**The two best things that happened at school last week were** firstly receiving the results of 600 students sitting GCSE Maths exams in very challenging conditions this January. The logistics of this mammoth exercise, involving all students in years 9, 10 and 11, were worthy of a military exercise familiar to our Combined Cadet Force contingent. The snow was an extra ingredient that we had not anticipated before Christmas when arrangements were discussed with staff and students but the optimism of all ensured that the exams went ahead to order and delivered. A record high of 39% of Y11 students achieved their key goal of a 'C' grade and a highly encouraging 30% of Y10 hit that target as well. It puts us in a very strong position to outreach our National Challenge floor target for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

Secondly our Football Academy team bounced back from the disappointment of defeat in one semi-final match to beat Hexham in another cup semi-final. We now look forward to them crowning the inaugural year of this initiative with some silverware.

**The biggest disappointment at school last week was** the outstanding amount of effort, talent and commitment of staff to support a bid for Artsmark that couldn't be rewarded with a result on the day. The assessment of this quality mark was very rigorous, demanding and needed standardising, as it should be. It's always helpful to be able to say to staff 'well done and...' We'll have to be patient.

**The funniest thing that happened at school last week** was the conversation with staff on the experience here of Cheryl Cole (nee Tweedy) with the classic teacher quote "we'll have to sort out this problem Cheryl because we cannot guarantee you will be famous". Well, that's right, nothing is certain in life.

**One thing that would have made my job easier last week would have been** if the Metro had arrived one minute later so I hadn't to wait 20 minutes for the next one

**Top of my to-do list for this week is** our full Governing Body meeting, usually a well attended and active two hours, sometimes unpredictable and always helpful.

**My heroes of last week were** the group of Year 11 and 6<sup>th</sup> Form students who continue to amaze staff and visitors alike with their commitment to raising funds to support their enterprise visit to Kenya this summer, and the selfless OAP who has kindly given the full cost of one student 'because I never had that opportunity when I was young'.

**My villain of last week was** the cold weather, still nippy on my bike in the morning.

**Question from last week's Head Teacher: "What is the current rate of increase of accountabilities for Head Teachers?"** I suppose it's as big as we let it be. I am a firm advocate of the art of Zen – keep it as simple as possible. So if we take on a responsibility, we ditch one. Of course that's easier than it sounds! Perhaps though, it is an invitation for us to keep up the pressure on those who want to keep on piling up the demands.

**My question for next week's Head:** With the proposed push to reduce the national deficit, where would you start with public funding savings?

### Star pupil... *Outstanding North East schools*

With Ofsted figures released this week revealing that it is harder than ever to be awarded the top grades under the new inspection regime, it is great Richard Coates Church of England Middle School in Ponteland and Greenside Primary School in Ryton both having been judged as outstanding in their recent Ofsted inspections.

Congratulations also to South Shields Community School, who were named as Educational Establishment of the Year at the BESA Education Resource Awards 2010 in light of their innovation in

education. Head Teacher Dr John Frain accepted the award on behalf of the staff, students and Governors of the school at a gala dinner held at the Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham.

### Could try harder... *school leavers*

A main board director of Tesco, the UK's biggest private sector employer, has hit out at the standards achieved by school leavers, saying they have basic problems with literacy and numeracy, and that many also have "what you might call an attitude problem". In a speech to the Institute of Grocery Distributors conference, Lucy Neville-Rolfe said that education is set to be an important part of debate in the forthcoming General Election, and that the supermarket industry should "come up with a manifesto for education and skills and give it to whoever wins". In the speech, she also said that Tesco store managers were the "equivalent of a Head Teacher in a school" and that senior supermarket staff would make good school Governors.

Do you agree with Lucy Neville-Rolfe? Has she misjudged the roles of Head Teachers? Do you see your role as being akin to a supermarket manager? Or are there fundamental differences between running a school and running a business? If you have a view on this or any other story we would love to hear from you. Send your thoughts to [think@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com).

### And finally...

To the moon and beyond...? A study carried out as part of National Science and Engineering Week has revealed that one in 10 pupils thinks Buzz Lightyear was the first man on the moon, and not Neil Armstrong. At least Buzz is a spaceman though; other children who were asked believed Sir Richard Branson, Lance Armstrong or Luke Skywalker were the first people to walk on the lunar surface. The tests, which were carried out by Birmingham Science City with over 1,000 primary and secondary children, also found that although three-quarters knew the telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell, others thought it was the brainchild of Charles Darwin, Noel Edmonds or even The Queen!

Have a great week!