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- All the latest regional and national education news
- Information on how your school could win a canteen makeover worth £12,000
- Details of grants from Children in Need and The Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Head to Head with Kirsten Dinsdale, Head Teacher of Tollesby School in Middlesbrough

Focus on... *pupil projections*

Figures published by the DCSF have this week shown that there are currently 3,992,000 pupils under the age of 11 in state primary schools across the country, and that the number is expected to grow year on year to 4,541,000 by 2018. This would be the largest number of pupils in the education system since the late 1970s.

The Daily Telegraph has suggested that this rise of 549,000 over the next eight years could lead to an 'admissions crisis', saying the number is "equivalent to around 2,300 average sized primary schools, or an additional 18,000 classes of 30 pupils".

We know that falling roll is a problem that is affecting both primary and secondary schools across the North East, but separate figures obtained by the Daily Mail showed that Darlington has in fact had the second highest increase on primary admissions of any local authority in England in 2010, up by 15.3% from 2008. During this period there have been five planning applications made within the LA for new primary classroom blocks across four different schools.

Despite the predicted rise in the number of primary school places, the figures also said that the number of secondary school places is expected to drop from 2,694,000 to 2,467,000 over the same period, although this should rise in the following years as the increase in the primary school population feeds through.

Responding to the figures, Schools Minister Vernon Coaker said "The school population always will and always has fluctuated. Birthrates have been rising since 2001 so it's no surprise that projected nursery and primary numbers are now going up, while secondary numbers are actually now going down – reversing the trend of the last decade. By law it is for local authorities to assess future population growth robustly to fully meet parental demand."

But he added: "The bottom line is there is no nationwide shortage of places in primary schools, with half a million surplus across the country."

The DCSF figures can be viewed in full by clicking [here](#).

What impacts are demographic changes having in your area? Send your views on this or any story to think@schoolsnortheast.com.

In the news

Regional news

Darlington

- [Green fair at Darlington school](#) (Northern Echo)
- [‘Schools could lose £57m investment’ – Darlington councillors](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Views proposed on school speed restriction zone](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Darlington primary school applications up 15 per cent](#) (Northern Echo)

Durham

- [Gifted youngsters try winter sports](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Young athletes under starters orders](#) (Durham County Council)
- [School consultation event](#) (Durham County Council)
- [Spennymoor 100 Days of Learning](#) (Durham County Council)
- [County Durham pupils to benefit from cycle safety grant](#) (Durham County Council)

Gateshead

- [Pupils get to dance at The Sage Gateshead](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [‘Relay’ great start to games](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Maggie Atkinson apologises over James Bulger comments](#) (Journal)
- [Greenside Primary School rated outstanding](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [From special measures to outstanding in three years](#) (Gateshead Council)

Hartlepool

- [St Hild’s wartime project](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils perform traditional play](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Early success in GCSE exams](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [MP helps pupils debate right to play](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils stride out for Sport Relief](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Newcastle

- [Youngsters get to sing at mass choral event](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Young people to spend the day as Prime Minister of Jamaica](#) (Newcastle City Council)
- [Children learn about physics with jelly babies](#) (Evening Chronicle)

Northumberland

- [Green school holding training events to encourage others](#) (Journal)
- [Wark pupils dig in](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Pupils enjoy Chinese cooking master class](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Allendale pupils go to the polls](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [History comes to life at school](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [School builds on its skills](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Academy pupils’ donations helping school in Africa](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Snakes alive! Students swap reading for reptiles](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Concerns over parking at planned Scremerston school development](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Youngsters take part in magical event at Keilder](#) (Journal)
- [Duchess High School pupils travel to China](#) (Journal)
- [Don’t put a phone mast so close to our school](#) (Journal)
- [Signs look good for pupils’ helping hands](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Berwick High School pupils switched on to IT success](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Author’s visit turns spotlight on global warming](#) (Berwick Advertiser)

Sunderland

- [Pupils bewitched by horror story re-enactment](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Chemistry pupils compete to solve food poisoning mystery](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Glass vision helps pupils](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Owner's plea to demolish school](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [John F Kennedy School pupils get fruity on a big scale](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Have your say over Easington Colliery revamp](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Officer flies in for former school celebrations](#) (Evening Chronicle)

Teesside

- [Teesside's shocking childhood obesity figures](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Standards fall short but schools' chiefs happy with progress](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Teesside pupils not meeting standards, report finds](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Adjudicator rules three Greater Eston schools should close](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [David Bellamy helps ideas take root for kids](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Stockton teacher was a heroin addict](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Guisborough pupils take on marathon challenge](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Youngsters help to save the elm](#) (Northern Echo)
- [Pupils make their mark on new building](#) (Evening Gazette)

North Tyneside

- [North Tyneside 'Learning Trust' plans unveiled](#) (Journal)
- [Sleep your way to exam success](#) (Sunday Times)

South Tyneside

- [Westoe school transformed by painter Jacky Payton](#) (Journal)
- [Ex-miner paints Westoe school corridor in memorial of pit](#) (Evening Chronicle)
- [Pupils create pit mural tribute](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Youngsters good sports for charity](#) (Shields Gazette)

Regionwide

- [Becta reveals homework confuses parents](#) (Journal)

National education news

A-level results analyses

Figures released by Cambridge Assessment have this week revealed that the proportion of pupils achieving three A grades at A-level has almost doubled since Labour came to power in 1997. The analysis shows that among pupils taking three or more A-levels in 2009, 17.5% were awarded three As, up from 8.8% in 1996. In separate figures gathered from 24 leading independent schools by the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, two-thirds of students taking maths at A-level last year achieved the new A* grade, despite a national estimate that 6% of candidates would. This has led to concerns that schools are 'teaching to the test' in order to raise pass rates.

- [Straight As at A-level 'doubled'](#) (BBC News)
- [Pupils scoring three As at A-level double under labour](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- ['More teachers' concerned by quality of A-level marking](#) (BBC News)
- [Glut of A* supergrades for pupils at private schools](#) (Sunday Times)

- [State schools accused of turning pupils into 'well-drilled automatons'](#) (Guardian)
- [Schools 'being turned into exam factories'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [More than half of A-level exams sat at private schools are graded A](#) (Times)

Criticism of careers advice in schools

An Ofsted report released this week has said that many teenagers are being pushed onto inappropriate college courses after being misled by staff at around half of secondary schools. The watchdog said it is concerned about the impartiality of the advice offered to pupils, and that schools with sixth forms often encouraged students to take A-levels without telling them about the 'wider opportunities' available in further education, colleges and work-based training programmes.

- [Children 'misled' by poor careers advice](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Pupils given poor careers advice](#) (Guardian)
- [Schools under fire on careers advice](#) (Financial Times)
- [Careers advice 'patchy': Watchdog](#) (Press Association)
- [Careers advice in schools 'still hit and miss', Ofsted claims](#) (inthenews.co.uk)
- You can read the full Ofsted 'Moving Through the System' report by clicking [here](#)

Link between bad behaviour and parenting

Mary Bousted, General Secretary of the ATL, has said that parents are fuelling bad behaviour in the classroom by 'buying off' their children with gadgets including computer games and televisions rather than teaching them basic social skills. She said that some children are living in 'isolation' and that parents failed to "support the right of the teacher to teach", and of pupils to learn, by failing to create the right social conditions at home. She said: "Parents have a duty to ensure they're bringing their children up so that they understand how they should be behaving in school, and learn about respecting those in authority, the right of the teacher to teach and the right of their peers to learn"

- [Bad behaviour in the classroom is being fuelled by parents, says union leader](#) (Guardian)
- [Parents buying off children with gadgets causes bad behaviour, says teachers' leader](#) (Times)
- [Middle class parents blamed for buying off kids](#) (britainnews.net)

Private school parents' 'guilt'

The Independent Schools Council has said this week that parents should not be made to feel guilty for sending their children to private schools. In a document dubbed a 'manifesto' and written to be sent to the three main political parties in the run up to the General Election, the ISC said private schools don't just serve the elite, and that families had the right to pay for their child's schooling without fear of discrimination. It accused the Government of undermining the sector's independence, and said that independent schools played a crucial role in the UK's education system.

- ['Stop parents' guilt' over private school](#) (BBC News)
- [Don't feel guilty if you pay school fees, says head](#) (Guardian)
- [Independent schools attack 'elitist, posh' tag](#) (Times)
- [Private school parents 'made to feel guilty'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Parents 'should not feel guilt over private education'](#) (Independent)
- [Private school parents 'made to feel guilty by liberal hypocrites'](#) (Daily Mail)

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

Events and opportunities

Enterprise of 2012 workshops

This week, North East pupils have been developing their enterprise skills while getting involved in the 2012 Olympics as the Get Set team delivered 'Enterprise of 2012' workshops in their schools. John Spence Community School in North Shields, St Thomas More School in North Tyneside and Walker Technology College in Newcastle have hosted the events for Year 9 and 10 pupils which focus on enterprise and the Olympic and Paralympic Values, covering creative thinking, business planning, sales and marketing, finance and target setting skills.

Get Set is the official London 2012 education programme for schools and colleges in the UK, driven by an interactive website featuring a range of flexible resources for 3 to 19-year-olds. The website is largely aimed at young people, offering films, games, activity ideas, and 'the Get Set map' showing the Olympic and Paralympic inspired activities taking place in schools. If you would like to register for the Get Set programme, go to www.london2012.com/getset.

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.

SSAT student performances

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust is looking for singers, dancers, actors, musicians and performing artists from SSAT member schools to perform at their 2010 national conference, and it would be fantastic if some of our talented young people from the North East could be represented.

Student performance will feature throughout the conference, and will display the talent, passion and creativity of the pupils. Full information can be found by clicking [here](#), and the deadline for applications is Friday 23 April.

Get Real Canteen Rescue

The School Food Trust is offering five schools the chance to win a makeover for their canteen up to the value of £12,000. Any school who has signed up to the Million Meals campaign can take part in the competition by having their pupils come up with a design for the new canteen and giving their reasons for the changes.

Full information can be found by going to www.canteenrescue.getreal.uk.com, and if you haven't already signed up for the Million Meals campaign you can by clicking [here](#).

Grants and funding

Science and Technology Facilities Council school grants

The Science and Technology Facilities Council have launched a small grants scheme aimed specifically at schools and colleges, offering grants of up to £500 for small scale projects or events linked to the teaching or promotion of physics. Projects linked to astronomy, space and particle physics are particularly encouraged.

The scheme is open to all schools catering for pupils aged between 5 and 18. Click [here](#) for full information and to apply.

BBC Children in Need small grants scheme

BBC Children in Need offers grants to schools to pay for specific projects to support disadvantage children and young people under the age of 18. They offer two types of grant: small grants of up to £10,000 or less per year, and main grants of over £10,000 per year for up to three years.

The next application closing date is 15 April. For more information and to download an application form, click [here](#).

Resources and ideas

Free Start School resource pack from Ladybird Books

You can now register to receive a free resource pack for Reception classes starting school in September 2010. The pack contains:

- A classroom poster
- Activity sheets for your 2010 intake to take home following their first school visit in the summer
- A leaflet for parents of the 2010 intake with starting school tips and offers
- Two Ladybird books for the classroom

The first 50 schools who sign up will also receive a pack of 30 disposable Ladybird cameras. For full information and to register go to www.ladybird.co.uk/startschool. The closing date for applications is 26 April.

CEWE Photobook competition – win 100 year books worth £26.99 each!

The TES have teamed up with CEWE Photobook to give away 100 school year books, which can be designed and personalised online. All you have to do to is enter your details at www.surveymonkey.com/s/cewe by 16 April.

For more details on how you can design a personal year book go to www.cewe-photobook.co.uk.

Deafness Research UK 'Bionic Ear Show'

The Bionic Ear Show is a lively interactive educational show which tells the story of sound as it travels through the ear to the brain. It uses entertaining illustrations, demonstrations and audiovisual techniques to engage the audience and raise awareness of the importance of hearing, how it can be damaged and what you can do to protect it.

Their team can deliver the show at schools anywhere in the UK, so if you would like to book the show for your school contact Laura Ganpot at laura.ganpot@deafnessresearchuk.org.uk or call 020 7679 8951. For more information, go to www.bionicearshow.org.

Head to Head

This week we spoke to Kirsten Dinsdale, Head Teacher of Tollesby School in Middlesbrough. She told us about an inventive way of celebrating their new school building, and the difficulty schools are facing in light of reduced budgets.

This week was long, interesting, enjoyable, frustrating... but mainly long!!!

The two best things that happened at school last week were firstly, we are in the very fortunate position of having a new school built and we will be moving into it in April 2011. This week we celebrated the new build by having a Steel Signing Ceremony. Instead of the usual turf cutting, we thought we would do something a bit different and ask our pupils to sign the steel so that their names would be part of the school forever! Secondly, we found out this week that a group of our pupils have been chosen to help illustrate a children's book which we think is fantastic news.

The biggest disappointment at school last week was finding out that the consultation on a proposed staffing re-structure due to budget pressures may well result in a 'collective dispute'.

The funniest thing that happened at school last week was getting my final budget and wondering how we were going to make ends meet. I know all about tightening belts and making do and mend but really...!

One thing that would have made my job easier last week would have been simply to find some quality time to sit and get to grips with the things that really matter in school.

Top of my to-do list for this week is to make sure my SEF is reasonably presentable for my meeting on Monday morning with my SIP.

My hero of last week was, well it would have to be heroes - and they are the staff that work with infinite patience, tolerance and understanding to make a difference in the lives of the very challenging young people we work with.

My villain of last week was nothing to do with school. It would be Adam Pearson for putting Phil Brown on 'gardening leave' and employing Ian Dowie. For those who don't know, Phil Brown was (and still should be) the manager of Hull City FC.

Question from last week's Head Teacher: "With the proposed push to reduce the national deficit, where would you start with public funding savings?" Simply by reducing the number of people who earn a lot for doing a little.

My question for next week's Head: How do you manage the ever growing needs of the pupils with the ever diminishing budget?

Star pupil... *Greenside Primary School*

Congratulations to Greenside Primary school in Gateshead which has been rated as outstanding by Ofsted, three years after it was placed into special measures. It took just twelve months for the school to be removed from special measures, a year ahead of schedule, and has now achieved the highest grade despite the new inspection framework. Head Teacher Dawn Foster said: "We are absolutely delighted by the report. It is nice to be given the recognition for the hard work put in by both staff and pupils."

Click [here](#) to view the report in full.

Could try harder... *Imperial War Museum chief*

The Director General of the Imperial War Museum has said that school trips are spoiling museum visits for other visitors in a recent private address to the Museums Association. Diane Lees complained that she did not want to 'expand classrooms in museums' because staff are already at capacity. She said: "Given that most museums are already reporting that they are at capacity for schools and are finding it difficult to balance the experience of non-school visitors against a tide of children with worksheets, we have a problem".

Fortunately the North East is blessed with some fantastic museums which both welcome and encourage school trips. Just look at www.twmuseums.org.uk, www.beamish.org.uk, www.ilikemuseums.com or www.destinationhartlepool.com/section_hames for more details.

And finally...

It sounds like the perfect excuse for the sleepy teenager, but an Oxford University project carried out at Monkseaton High School has boosted exam results and slashed absenteeism – by starting lessons at 10:00am rather than 9:00am. The scheme was trialled in the North Tyneside school to measure the effects of reducing tiredness by working in harmony with what experts have found are the different sleep patterns of adolescents. Head Teacher Paul Kelley said: “The data is only preliminary but it shows that lateness has dropped by 8% and long-term absence by 27% because of the changes to the start of the school day. Our GCSE results in Maths and English in January this year were significantly improved on the scores in January 2009.”

I wonder if the scheme showed similar benefits in the teachers...?

Have a great week!