

## SCHOOLS NorthEast weekly update

*The future of our region is in school*

### This week...

Sees the start of the Labour party conference in Brighton, where as we mentioned last week education is likely to be one of the key talking points as Gordon Brown prepares his party for “the fight of their lives” in the build up to next year’s general election.

Schools minister Ed Balls has had a noticeably visible presence over the last month or so with the much glorified opening of the new academies acting as a stark contrast to the largely disappointing first group of results for the Government’s flagship diplomas in August.

But it is the Conservatives who have illustrated their confidence in winning the next general election as it emerged this week that Tory lawyers have already begun working on legislation which will make up their new Education Bill, the first since 1996.

The bill is likely to include an expansion of the academies programme, an introduction of thousands of additional school places and reduced local authority control over schools, but we want to know what you would include if you were responsible for a new wave of education policy? Send your thoughts to [think@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com).

### SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit 2009

There is now just over one week to go until the SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit at Wynyard Hall, and as 8 October fast approaches the line-up continues to bring up new ways that you and your school could benefit from what will be a participatory and challenging day, encouraging different perspectives, innovative approaches, creative solutions and new relationships.

Our events focusing on the relationship between schools and the media have been hugely successful in the past, and the Summit will expand upon this, offering an opportunity to have a one-on-one media training session with TV presenter and former ITV news reader Kim Inglis, and the chance to take part in a workshop with Chris Rushton, head of PR at Sunderland University, where he will look at the ways that your school can work alongside the media.

There is still time to book a place - to do so and for more information, visit [www.schoolsnortheast.com/summit](http://www.schoolsnortheast.com/summit).

### News and events

#### **School Food Trust – Supporting special schools**

As we build up to the SCHOOLS NorthEast EPIC Summit, each week we will be looking at one aspect of the work of our major sponsor, the School Food Trust. This week we look at the work they do in supporting schools with pupils who often have special dietary needs.

The School Food Trust understands that meeting the food-based and nutrient based standards for school lunches can be more challenging in a school where a large proportion of the pupils have special dietary needs.

That is why they created ‘Eat Better, Do Better’, a practical tool to help to support special schools in achieving and maintaining National Healthy Schools Status, implementing the school food standards and developing a positive healthy eating culture for the whole school community.

For more information on Eat Better Do Better click [here](#). Plus if your school has not yet signed up to the Million Meals campaign you can do so by clicking [here](#).

### **RSA Open Minds Primary Conference**

The RSA are holding the first Opening Minds Primary Conference on 3 November. Opening Minds is a curriculum framework, developed by the RSA, to allow schools to give young people the skills they need to thrive both at school and outside of school while teaching them the same knowledge as a traditional curriculum.

The conference will be an opportunity to hear from experienced primary school teachers and Head Teachers about how they are using and benefiting from Opening Minds, as well as guest speakers Sir Jim Rose and Barry Sheerman MP.

For more information and to book your place click [here](#).

### **Maths in Work party**

Maths in Work is a project run by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics aiming to collect short video footage of maths in a business environment, which will then be used by teachers in schools and colleges to show students the relevance of maths to the real world of work.

To raise awareness of the project, the NCETM are hosting a 'bubbly twilight gathering' at the BALTIC on 24 November from 4pm til 6pm.

If you would like to attend this evening and meet some of the people who have been involved in the project, contact Steve Humble on (07787) 588 568 or email [steve.humble@ncetm.org.uk](mailto:steve.humble@ncetm.org.uk).

### **CPD on sustainability and diversity**

There are a very limited number of places still available on the 'Me, You and Our World' day which is being held at the Tees Valley One World centre on 14 October.

The day is designed to show teachers how to encourage pupils to engage with diversity and sustainability issues, and will give you ideas and inspiration to help embed global citizenship in to your curriculum.

The day costs £70 and includes two resource DVDs. For more information or to book one of the last remaining places click [here](#).

### **Children's book week 2009**

Children's book week is a celebration of reading for pleasure for primary school pupils. This year it will take place between will take place from 5 to 11 October, and the theme will be 'words and pictures'.

Last year, children in schools all over the region took part in activities aiming to promote reading, and if you want to hold an event at your school this year the Book Trust have produced a range of free resources to help with the organisation.

All the information can be found on the Children's Book week website, which can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### **Assessment and Monitoring in Turbulent Times CEM conference**

SCHOOLS NorthEast members can still receive an exclusive discount when they sign up for the Assessment and Monitoring in Turbulent Times conference being run by the CEM centre on 10 November.

More information can be found at [www.cemcentre.org](http://www.cemcentre.org), where you can also book your place. Simply quote the promotional code **SNE-091110** to claim your exclusive SCHOOLS NorthEast discount.

## News round-up

Last week, we asked you where you thought the Government should be making cuts they aim to slash £2bn from the education budget, and judging by the responses it seems as though the issue has sparked quite a debate!

One suggestion said that the costs surrounding Year 6 SATs are a “crazy waste of money” which could be cut to make savings, and questioned that while schools must take accountability for what they do, is Ofsted the best value for money?

Another suggested that merging schools may not be the perfect solution to cuts, saying: “What happens if and when you’ve cut all the costs and saved all the saveable from merging and sacking Deputy Heads? The next option will be to close all the merged federation of schools and sell the properties to supermarkets.”

One more suggested: “If local authorities went out to tender on all services provided to schools the saving would be very significant without any impact on school budgets.”

If you would like to share your view on any of this week’s education news feel free to contact us by emailing [think@schoolsnortheast.com](mailto:think@schoolsnortheast.com).

### Regional news

- [School build programme to boost business economy](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Former pupil saddened to see school demolished](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Splash the cash to boost school’s £1m pool appeal](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Awards night honour for Middlesbrough mum who opened school for autistic kids](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Redcar & Cleveland College submit £3.5m extension plans](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Mums call for Saltburn school route revamp](#) (Evening Gazette)
- [Caring school gets top marks in Ofsted](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [School gives Jamie the boot over trainers](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Schoolgirls hit with skirt ban](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Pupils pot gear from drug farm](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Monkseaton High School commended for green features](#) (Journal)

### Politics

- [Tories begin planning for rapid education shake-up after election](#) (Guardian)

### Youth Parliament

- [Pupil activism boosted by national power base](#) (TES)

### School value for money

- [Schools waste millions – report](#) (BBC News)
- [Schools are wasting millions, says leaked report](#) (Guardian)
- [Thousands of class assistants face the sack](#) (Independent)
- [Cameron’s school buses face the axe](#) (Independent)
- [Ed Balls urged to axe 40,000 teaching assistant jobs](#) (Daily Mail)

## Standards

- [Grammar school county warned over GCSE results](#) (Independent)
- [One in 12 secondary schools 'failing'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [One in three academies missing GCSE target, says Ed Balls](#) (Times)
- [Sharp fall in struggling schools](#) (BBC News)
- [Problems from the outset at Richard Rose Central Academy, Carlisle](#) (Times)
- [Balls promises tough action on failing academies](#) (Guardian)
- [Ofsted in demand](#) (TES)

## Male primary teachers

- [1 in 4 primary schools has no male teachers](#) (Independent)
- [A teacher's story: 'Parents didn't want me to look after their children](#) (Independent)
- [Male teachers shun primary schools](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Paedophile fears are 'driving male teachers from primary schools'](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Male teachers still absent from a third of primaries](#) (TES)

## Head Teacher shortage

- [Head teacher shortage 'is easing'](#) (BBC News)
- [Not enough talent to go round: how schools struggle to fill headships](#) (TES)
- [Staff room revolution as women take top school jobs](#) (Guardian)

## Budget cuts

- [New labour's one-time 'poodle' bears his teeth](#) (TES)
- [How do we get better with a £2bn cut?](#) (TES)
- [Put down the machete, Mr Balls](#) (TES)

## Consensual relationship debate

- [Blurred boundaries for teachers](#) (Guardian)
- [Abuse or love? Jailing of lesbian re-opens debate](#) (TES)

## Rose review

- [Heads claim Rose overhaul will have limited impact](#) (TES)
- [Scrap Sats to give Rose review a chance, says heads](#) (TES)

## Electronic exam marking

- [Computers being used to mark exams could be rolled out to GCSEs and A-levels](#) (Daily Mail)
- ['Robot' computer to mark English essays](#) (Guardian)
- [Essays to be marked by 'robots'](#) (TES)
- [Computers to mark English tests](#) (Times)

## Other exam news

- [Bring back the polys and scrap A-levels, says Williams](#) (Independent)
- [The national scandal of the lost university pages](#) (TES)
- [Edexcel accused of deflating AS results](#) (TES)
- [Chief of Edexcel resigns](#) (TES)
- [Resting on our laurels is not an option](#) (TES)

#### Primary news

- [Primary 1 class size to be capped](#) (BBC News)

#### Special school news

- [Special needs system shake-up to improve support of pupils](#) (Guardian)

#### Technology in schools

- [Text message speak 'not harmful to children's spelling', says research](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- ['Facebook generation' of teachers must be promoted](#) (Independent)
- [Money-mad 'millennials' are just kids](#) (TES)

#### Humanities teaching

- [History has done a bunk. Now to save it...](#) (TES)
- [Half a day on humanities – 'it's not enough'](#) (TES)
- [History – it's not bunk any more](#) (TES)

#### NQTs

- [How C-grade maths NQTs show multiple shortcomings](#) (TES)

#### Teacher/pupil relationship

- [Teens may suffer if teacher relationship is poor](#) (TES)

#### Sexual bullying

- [It's all just a bit of fun, isn't it?](#) (TES)

#### Admissions

- [Parents fear school admission chaos if postal strike goes ahead](#) (Daily Telegraph)

#### Private schools

- [Private schools hindered by 'bureaucrats'](#) (Daily Telegraph)
- [Parents face £300k bill for costs after public school 'bullying' case collapses](#) (TES)

#### Prep schools

- ['Sorry day' for preps](#) (TES)

#### Other education news

- [Donor offers to help dinner lady](#) (BBC News)
- [Fruit supplied to primary schools is 'laced with pesticides'](#) (Daily Mail)
- [Schools 'hamper' migrant children](#) (BBC News)
- [Spacey takes on teacher who cared to evolve](#) (TES)
- [Sixth formers' artwork comes to the crunch](#) (TES)
- [CPD takes deeper meaning during day trip for 'healers of fear'](#) (TES)
- [What, no Fortnum's? Staff exodus as development quango is sent to Coventry](#) (TES)
- [Ministers' boasts on fall in exclusions is challenged](#) (TES)
- [OECD study pronounces link between market forces and innovation unproven](#) (TES)

- [School tenders fixed](#) (TES)
- [1 in 3 schoolchildren are active for less than an hour a week](#) (Daily Mail)

## Head to Head

This week we spoke to Jackie Barker, Head Teacher of Thomas Hepburn Community School in Gateshead. She told us, among other things, about how the school has sent one of their science teachers to the US work with astronauts.

**Last week was** a good week to focus on learning. We returned to the school after the summer break to a building site. Our new BSF project had begun. This made the focus for the first two weeks cleaning, unpacking and tidying up the site. Although it is all very exciting it is nice to get back to our real “meat and drink”.

**The two best things that happened at school this week were** firstly one of our science teachers was asked to lead the Gateshead visit to Houston and Cape Canaveral to work with the astronauts. Secondly we began to give out our new laptops to all students amidst a great buzz of excitement.

**The biggest disappointment at school last week was** that we did not break the 95% attendance challenge I had set. We got close but not close enough!

**The funniest thing that happened at school this week was** when the whole music class jumped out in front of one of our teachers as he drove onto the site!

**One thing that would have made my job easier this week was** if all of the ICT equipment had been up and running.

**Top of my to-do list this week is** being prepared for our Celebration of Achievement evening on 5 October.

**My hero of last week was** our Year 7 Achievement Leader who ensured I made it to all our partner primary schools on time to lead Year 6 assemblies. The other heroes and heroines were the children who went with us.

**My villain of last week was** the young man who discovered a range of uses for super glue – none of them were of a positive nature! We are a science college and encourage creative thinking!

**What do you most enjoy doing outside of school?** Spending time with my husband, children and dogs.

**My question for next week’s head is...** What was your greatest achievement in your first year of headship?

## Star pupil... *the Facebook generation*

Former senior Government advisor Prof David Hargreaves said this week the ‘Facebook generation’ of young teachers should be appointed to top school posts to help pupils switch back on to learning. Speaking at a Learning Skills Foundation lecture, Prof Hargreaves said that pupils were “highly motivated” by the internet and got emotionally involved online, but in the traditional classroom format their motivation to learn was “variable”. He said: “Generation Y teachers and students should be given opportunities in schools for extensive innovation. You should think about the promotion to leadership of Generation y teachers to do this work.”

Could try harder... *free fruit*

An official report has revealed this week that free fruit distributed to thousands of primary schools to improve the diet of pupils is laced with pesticides. The details emerged alongside the Government's Pesticides Residues Committee annual report. However committee chairman DR Ian Brown insisted the levels of pesticides were low enough not to be a cause for concern, and said: "I understand that people are concerned about pesticide residues in their food, but as a doctor I cannot state too strongly the importance of eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day."

## Opportunities and Resources

### **Morpeth bouldering wall**

A new climbing wall in Morpeth is being made available to schools in an effort to help the young people of the region increase their fitness levels while having fun.

The wall has been developed by Castle Morpeth Borough Council, and activities are currently being reviewed with a view to building a new programme including after school clubs and bookable sessions for schools.

More information can be found at [www.morpethbouldering.com](http://www.morpethbouldering.com) or by contacting Chris Menzies on (01670) 514 881 or [chris@barnabas-northumberland.org.uk](mailto:chris@barnabas-northumberland.org.uk).

### **Anti-bullying week 2009**

Anti-bullying week shines a light on bullying, sending a clear and positive message that it is neither acceptable, nor inevitable, in our schools and communities. This year, the anti-bullying week campaign is 'stay safe in cyberspace'.

Research has discovered that more than a third of 12 to 15-year-olds have faced some kind of cyberbullying; the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else.

The anti-bullying alliance has developed a briefing pack on cyberbullying in support of the week, which takes place from 16 to 20 November, and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### **DCSF KS3 framework for languages**

The renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for languages, together with exemplification, guidance and a glossary of terms is now available on the National Strategies' web area to support teachers of modern foreign languages.

The web-based e-learning modules offer professional development for teachers, including issues and solutions, examples of good practice and ways in which departments can reflect upon and develop their practice.

To access the renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for languages and online modules, visit [www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/ad5/mfl](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies/ad5/mfl).

### **Get you pupils booked up!**

There is still time to take advantage of the fantastic Booked Up scheme, where every Year 7 pupil is entitled to a free book. Available titles include Flood Child (Emily Diamond), Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief (Rick Riordan), Desirable (Frank Cottrell Boyce) and Underworld (Catherine MacPhail).

For more information or to sign up for the Booked Up scheme visit [www.bookedup.org.uk](http://www.bookedup.org.uk), email [enquiries@bookedupmail.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bookedupmail.org.uk) or call (0845) 606 4262. The deadline for ordering books is Friday 23

October, but if you order by Wednesday 30 September you could receive a free box set of contemporary titles for your school library, while stocks last.

And finally...

Journalists have been trying unsuccessfully for the last couple of years to get Schools secretary Ed Balls to admit he wants the top job in the cabinet, but this week a group of pupils from London, who won the chance to interview Mr Balls in a spelling competition, finally got him to admit he wouldn't mind having a go at living in Number 10. He also revealed that he used to pole vault for the county when he was at school, and that he was once given detention for climbing onto a roof to collect a ball! To watch a video of the interview captured by The Times, click [here](#).

Have a great week!