

SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update - Week 16

January 10th, 2012 at 5:00 pm



The banner features the 'SCHOOLS NorthEast' logo on the left, with the tagline 'The future of our region is in school!'. To the right, the text 'WEEKLY UPDATE' is prominently displayed. Further right is the logo for 'The Education Broker' with the tagline 'where value is easy'. Below this, a dark blue box contains white text: 'This weeks newsletter is sponsored by The Education Broker who specialise in staff absence insurance. SCHOOLS NorthEast members recieve a 10% reduction this year. Simply quote promotional code SNE2012 when applying online. Click here to find out more.'

Welcome to the first Weekly Update of 2012. We have revamped the format for the New Year and new features include 'School to School,' where we ask a local Head to give us a brief insight into their school, 'Local news story of the week' and 'Tweet of the week.'

In this issue

- A roundup of all the latest local and national education news
- North East education New Year honours list
- Details of events and training on procurement, creativity and school improvement
- 'School to School' with Willow Fields Community Primary in Sunderland

Focus on...What will 2012 bring?

It seems that the only certainty in education is change. In recent years, the pace of new announcements, legislation and reforms has been dizzying and there is unlikely to be much let up in 2012. Developments this year will include:

More Academies

2012 will bring an increasingly 'mixed economy' amongst the community of schools in our region. In some areas of the region, the majority of secondary schools are now academies or in the process of converting, whilst academies have hardly penetrated other areas. The New Year will herald many new conversions and chains of academies and school-led multi academy trusts are likely to become a growing feature of the North East educational landscape.

Academisation of 'weak primaries'

The Government has made clear that a major priority in the coming year will be tackling 'underperforming primary schools'. This will include schools that are viewed to have consistently failed to improve being 'taken over' by other local academies or external providers.

Free Schools

Since the 2010 election, Free Schools have been one of the Government's flagship policies. In the Autumn, we saw the first three Free Schools approved in the North East. If they are able to find

suitable premises etc. these schools could open in September 2012. SCHOOLS NorthEast is hearing about new Free School bids that are in the early stages of development on a regular basis so it is likely that more new schools are on the horizon.

No new curriculum yet

Just before Christmas, the Education Secretary announced that he had postponed the new curriculum as the interim outcomes of the review had suggested much more substantial and far reaching changes than envisaged. Early indications are that a new National Curriculum now pencilled in for launch in 2013 for delivery in 2014, will include the extension of Key Stage 3, division of Key Stage two and an increase in the number of core subjects compulsory at GCSE level to include humanities, modern foreign languages and the arts. More details will emerge throughout 2012 with further consultations planned.

Changes to exams

Newspaper exposes on corruption in the exams brought the credibility of the whole system into sharp focus. The Government has launched an inquiry and reforms will follow in 2012. Few expect the current competitive relationships between exam boards run as private enterprises to continue. What should take their place is a matter of debate.

Increased Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium that was introduced in 2011 has been increased for 2012 and schools are being increasingly inventive as to how they spend the money. For some schools, this money aimed at providing extra support for pupils from deprived backgrounds to narrow the gap in attainment, represents a significant increase in budget but for others it simply replaces the money lost through cuts in other areas. However schools choose to spend their pupil premium, the Government has made it clear that they will be held to account on the outcomes they achieve as a result of this investment. Expect a lot of discussion between Head Teachers about how they are using the Pupil Premium and what impacts they are seeing on pupil progress in 2012.

New Ofsted Framework

Near the top of most Head Teachers to do list for the early part of 2012 will be getting their heads around the new Ofsted framework that comes into effect in January (especially if you are due a call from the Inspector!). The new framework, the third in just four years, again changes the criteria and processes by which schools are judged. New Ofsted Chief, Sir Michael Wilshaw takes up his post next month and has already announced his intention to introduce no notice inspections for all standard Ofsted Inspections from September.

Continued economic pain for North East communities and challenges for young people

Finally, in terms of what is most important for our children and young people, the impact of the continued economic slump and lack of opportunities for students leaving school is the greatest worry for 2012. The scrapping of the Educational Maintenance Allowance and introduction of higher tuition fees is having an impact on the number of young people staying on in school and progressing to University. Our region has the highest levels of youth unemployment and child poverty is increasing as household incomes are squeezed.

2012 promises to be another year of upheaval and that is before you start on league tables, teaching schools, pension reforms, funding , the Olympics... ...so good luck and our best wishes for the New Year and remember we are here to help so do get in touch!

Local news story of the week...

North East school leaders recognised in New Year Honours List

A number North East school leaders have been recognised for their outstanding service to education in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

June Foster, Head Teacher at Moorside Primary and Executive Head at the Arthur's Hill Federation, in Newcastle's West End and Christine Haddock, Head Teacher of Larkspur Primary School in Gateshead were both awarded the OBE and Gustav MacLeod, former Head Teacher and current Chair of Governors at Thomas Bewick Special School in Newcastle received an MBE.

The services of Governors were also recognised with an OBE for Teessider George Davies, who has served as Chair of Governors at Egglecliffe School for 24 years and MBEs for Derek Nicholson, the former Chair of Governors at Cramlington Learning Village in Northumberland and Governor at The King's School, in Tynemouth and John Damian Waugh, Chair of Governors at Our Lady Queen of Peace School, Washington.

Finally PE teacher and school sports volunteer Dorothy Margaret Best, of County Durham received an MBE for services to physical education.

Congratulations to all.

- [Unsung North East stars are recognised in New Years honours](#) (Journal Live)
- [Teesside's great and good recognised in New Year Honours](#) (Gazette Live)

Local news by area

Darlington

- [Driver pleads guilty after Darlington school bus horror](#) (Gazette Live)

Durham

- [Pupils celebrate opening of Consett Academy](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Memories of a Consett school after 50 years](#) (Chronicle Live)

Gateshead

- [Oakfield Junior School pupils deliver us festive stories](#) (Chronicle Live)

Hartlepool

- [School date for cabinet meeting](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [A class reunion for former Brierton school pupils](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [College safety scheme backed](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils get back to nature](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Throston pupils look back on 2011](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Bid to give youngsters better start](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Pupils given early look at school](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Throston pupils brush up on their IT skills](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [School drop-off zone shut by ice](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Demolition plan for school site](#) (Hartlepool Mail)
- [Celebration of top class test results](#) (Hartlepool Mail)

Middlesbrough

- [The school that is open for business](#) (Guardian)
- [Abingdon Primary School is jumping for joy](#) (Gazette Live)
- [First Ofsted reports hails Thornaby Academy](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Children bring Christmas cheer in Nunthorpe](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Ormesby School caretaker retires after 38 years](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Teesside children design Christmas cards for Redcar MP Ian Swales](#) (Gazette Live)

Newcastle

- [MBE for ex-head teacher](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [Newcastle Royal Grammar School head rejects academies sponsor calls](#) (Journal Live)
- [Academy award in here](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [New outdoor classroom for Richardson Dees Primary](#) (Chronicle Live)

North Tyneside

- [School's delight at outstanding rating](#) (News Guardian)
- [Pupils' masterclass in Punjabi cooking](#) (News Guardian)

Northumberland

- [Children turn the tables on their teachers](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [School goes to the top of the class for results](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [School closures in Ponteland](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [Ofsted praise for improving middle school](#) (Berwick Advertiser)
- [School supports Amnesty](#) (Hexham Courant)
- [Prudhoe Community High School to Launch games academy](#) (Journal Live)
- [Corbridge accident puts road safety in spotlight](#) (Journal Live)
- [School brings festive cheer to the elderly](#) (Morpeth Herald)
- [School faces race against the clock](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Saving lives can be child's play](#) (News Post Leader)
- [In the frame for old school memories](#) (news Post Leader)
- [Absolutely Fabulous visit has children cock-a-hoop](#) (News Post Leader)
- [Schools sign up to anti-bullying](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Education in mourning](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Our town in just amazing, says pupils](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [More cash will mean fairer deal](#) (Northumberland Gazette)
- [Parents launch fight to save their school](#) (Northumberland Gazette)

Stockton

- [Red House School in Norton receives "outstanding" report](#) (Gazette Live)

Sunderland

- [Staff and pupils pay tribute to ex-head](#) (Sunderland Echo)

- [Pupils helped to tackle prejudice](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland kids are Olympic winners ahead of London 2012](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland and Durham school meal teams tackle fat kids](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Eye-opening trip to Africa](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Winner Demi is snap happy](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Sunderland parents face £50 on-the-spot fines for truant kids](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Kids miss out on free school meals](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Home time for Sunderland headteacher](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [School gets great report](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [Youngsters brighten up work place](#) (Sunderland Echo)
- [£7 million funding boost for Sunderland schools](#) (Sunderland Echo)

South Tyneside

- [School's new hair salon is a cut above](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Teachers agree routine is good for kids](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School's tribute to inspirational head](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Schools benefit from new website](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Cut price school meals plan sparks row](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [More kids 'unfit for schooling'](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Kids not so green on eco-friendly issues](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Schools chiefs' praise for primary pupils](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Classy school gets a good report](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Art and life Mix at Perrie's old school](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Ex-Black Cats help bag cash for school](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Our schools are on the write track](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Experts join in schools' battle of the bulge](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [School's special cards to our injured heroes](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Primary school takes a healthy route](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Bid to banish junk food-culture among our kids](#) (Shields Gazette)
- [Village school goes to top of the class](#) (Shields Gazette)
- ['More schools head for academy gravy train'](#) (Shields Gazette)

Redcar

- [Pupils get involved to help cause close to teacher's heart](#) (Gazette Live)
- [Loftus St Joseph's RC Primary under threat from cuts](#) (Gazette Live)

Regional news

- [Figures show the battle to get into North East schools](#) (Journal Live)
- [Rise in North East people training to become Primary School Teachers](#) (Journal Live)
- [Youngsters shine at more school nativity plays](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [North Head Teachers warn over kids' lack of skills](#) (Chronicle Live)
- [Most popular North East schools in 2011 revealed](#) (Chronicle Live)

National education news

Education chiefs set out their agenda for 2012

Education Secretary Michael Gove started the New Year with a battle cry to opponents of his Academies Programme. In a speech at Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College, London, Gove accused Local Authorities and other groups that were resisting Academy conversions in their areas as being 'happy with failure' and told them "Change is coming. And to those who want to get in the way, I have just two words: hands off".

Responding to the growing numbers of academies in an interview with the Times, the New Ofsted Chief Sir Michael Wilshaw, proposed the creation of a network of local commissioners to identify failing academies and report on the performance of schools in their area. Wilshaw who will take up his post as England's new Chief Education Inspector next month, also suggested that some school governors should be paid in a bid to improve their performance and that scruffy teachers could be reprimanded.

In a speech to the North of England Education Conference, Schools Minister Nick Gibb reflected on the Coalition's changes to education in 2011 and outlined their plans including the 'conversion of weak primary schools' and a focus on reading and sport in school.

- [Michael Gove speech on academies \(DfE\)](#)
- [New Ofsted chief proposes creation of team to identify failing academies \(Guardian\)](#)
- [Nick Gibb speech on school improvement \(DfE\)](#)

Changes to the national Curriculum

The overhaul of the national curriculum in England is to be delayed by a year, with planned changes now going ahead in 2014. Education Secretary Micheal Gove justified the delay stating that the longer timescale will allow for further debate with everyone interested in creating a genuinely world-class education system, as well as giving schools more time to prepare for a radically different and more rigorous approach.

- [Written Ministerial Statement on the National Curriculum Review \(DfE\)](#)
- [Curriculum changes pushed back to 2014 \(BBC\)](#)

Schools encouraged to tackle the takeaways

Schools are to be given new freedoms to help them to take on takeaway outlets and boost the uptake of school lunches and tackle obesity. Currently, schools need special permission not to charge everyone the same amount per item. The changes introduced by the Government and due to come in force from September 2012, will allow schools to offer price promotions with less red tape. Examples of potential school meal deals include offers for pupils starting a new school to get them into the canteen, special prices for siblings regularly eating school meals, or cheap deals for different year groups each day.

- [Schools encouraged to offer meal deals to pupils \(BBC News\)](#)

Exercise and bedtimes improves grades

A daily routine of set bedtimes and mealtimes can help improve academic performance, new research reveals. The Prince's Trust suggests those with poor exam grades are twice as likely to claim their days lacked structure as they grew up.

These findings coincide with new evidence which indicates exercise can also increase academic performance. A Dutch review of previous studies found strong evidence of a "significant positive relationship" between physical activity and academic performance. This could be down to exercise

increasing blood and oxygen flow to the brain as well as reducing stress and improving mood, making children more likely to behave in the classroom.

- [Academic performance at school linked to exercise](#) (BBC)
- [Report claims instability at home costs students dear](#) (Journal Live)

Events

This Month's Events:

CPD opportunity for Senior Managers in schools - January 17

Looking for new ideas for school improvement in 2012? Take inspiration from Woodham Community Technology College in Durham, who recently transformed their culture through the 'Success Zone Approach' offered by SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, AT Consultants for Change. As a result the school has seen significant improvements across a range of areas including behaviour and attainment.

To showcase their achievement and help inspire other schools, the school is holding an open day for Head Teachers. The event will include presentations from the Head Teacher and staff, classroom observations and the opportunity to discuss the Success Zone™. The open day will be on **January 17 2012 between 9.30am and 1.00pm**, with lunch provided. Tickets cost £30 per person and you can book a place by emailing Lindsey@atconsultantsforchange.com.

Professional development day - 19 January and 20 January

If you want to inspire curious and independent learners and develop an innovative curriculum that raises attainment, then SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Supporter, Cap-a-Pie are holding a professional development day centred on creativity. Participants will leave with a practical and theoretical grounding in creative enquiry based learning and how it can be applied to curriculum design and delivery.

Choose to attend on either **Thursday 19 January 2012** at Wynyard Hall or **Friday 20 January 2012** at the Toffee Factory in Newcastle. The day will cost £160 plus VAT per person. There is a **15 per cent early-bird discount exclusively for SCHOOLS NorthEast members if booked before 16 December**. To receive your exclusive discount or for queries, please email sally.fixter@cap-a-pie.co.uk or call **07875 012732**.

Procurement breakfast session – 24 January

Join Aura on **24 January 2012** at a special information event that aims to help schools get the best from procuring goods and services. A series of issues will be explored, such as the potential for cluster buying and other procurement strategies; this will include supportive information on the legal side of procurement to help schools make informed, commercial value for money choices when buying goods and services. The event will take place from 8.30am until 10.15am at Muckle LLP offices in Newcastle. Email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com to book a place.

Science Teaching Courses – 25 January

Science Learning Centre North East is holding a 'Practical Work in Chemistry' course later this month. This course will enable your teachers to explore a range of ideas for teaching topics across the chemistry curriculum and develop an understanding of how practical work can be made more relevant and effective. For further details or to book your place contact: Nicola Hall on 0191 3706200 slc.northeast@durham.ac.uk

Future Events:

School Improvement seminars – 1 February and 2 February

SCHOOLS NorthEast Commercial Sippoter, Go4 Schools, is hosting seminars on school improvement for Secondary Schools. Go4 Schools aims to support whole-school improvement and make it easier to capture, analyse and share classroom data in real time; allowing staff, students and parents to make better decisions. Attend on either **Wednesday 1 February 2012 at 4.30pm – The Education Centre Stockton** or **Thursday 2 February 2012 at 4.30pm – Newcastle**

To book a place, please visit <http://www.go4schools.com> or contact Jackie Davies on 01793 516326

Grants and funding

Funding for 'hands on' science projects

If you're looking to bring science to life in your school then the Partnership Grants scheme provides grants of up to £3,000 for science projects run at a primary or secondary school. The scheme gives pupils the chance to work in a 'hands-on' environment with a scientist or engineer, gaining a better understanding of what they do and of the science involved.

For your chance to benefit from this grant, apply online at royalsociety.org/education/partnership before **24 February 2012**. If you need inspiration for your project then have a look at the case studies and project summaries of work which has been funded in the past by visiting.

[Cash grants allow real experiments in school science](#) (BBC News)

School to School

In this new feature, we ask a local Head give us a brief insight into their school. Thanks to **Head Teacher, Jonathon Twidle** who introduces us to **Willow Fields Community Primary** situated on the northern outskirts of Sunderland. He describes the school as "a unique school with a village school feel in which, from when you first enter, there is a sense that everyone connected with the school wants to do their best for each other".

Our school mission statement is 'Learning Together'.

Our fundamental aim is to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment in which all children can reach their potential, based on a mutual trust and respect between adults and children in all their interactions.

Our school is good at seeking out excellent practice in other schools regionally and nationally and adapting it to meet our school's needs.

The biggest challenges for our school are in building on the low starting points of our children, particularly in terms of communication skills, and raising the aspirations of many of the families and children we serve. In the last term we have created a Foundation Stage unit to respond better to the varying needs of our children on entry and we are excited about the impact it is having.

We have run a parents Life Skills programme, funded through 'Awards for All', which has focused on boosting self-esteem and this has enabled some parents to gain employment and others to be motivated to seek advice on how to set up their own business. We are working towards gaining The Right Respecting Schools Award and developing a pupil passport of entitlement that outlines the experiences and opportunities we hope to provide our pupils before they move to their chosen secondary school.

We think other schools would be interested in our efforts to engage pupils in their own learning. In the last term we have adapted the curriculum to involve the pupils more in its design, making it more relevant and reflecting their interests. We also run a Pupil Ambassador programme which enables pupils to visit other schools, share experiences and bring back ideas for our own school improvement plan. In addition, we recognise the importance of staff development. Recently two of our teachers have been trained on the Outstanding Facilitators Programme which enables them to support colleagues to move from Good to Outstanding practitioners. This will be a resource not only to Willow Fields but to other interested schools.

We would be interested in hearing from other schools about using new technologies to engage all groups of learners.

Our question to next week's school is: What have been your most successful intervention strategies and what made them so successful?

School

website: <http://www.witherwackprimary.org.uk>

If you would like to contact Jonathan please email r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com.

Tweet of the week

We are seeing an increasing number of North East schools using social networks such as Twitter. If you are a Tweeter then make sure you follow @SCHOOLSNE for the latest regional school news. Every week we will pick the 140 characters on Twitter that have inspired/challenged or informed us the most... please forward us your suggestions for next week.

Be driven by next-generation needs, school leaders should plan for learners' future not external pressures #BETT

Tweet of leadership message delivered by Mick Waters at BETT 2012

Have a great week!

Have you signed up as a SCHOOLS NorthEast Enhanced Member yet? For full details on the great range of benefits available to Enhanced Members, click [here](#).

The SCHOOLS NorthEast Weekly Update goes out to every Head Teacher in the North East every Tuesday, but if anybody else in your school or LA would like to receive the Update, please send their name and email address to r.clegg@schoolsnortheast.com.

Plus if you have any issues you would like to see covered in the Update, or any other comments, I would love to hear from you at the above address.