



NORTHERN Teacher

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Key Stage 2 SATs results due in March? What is the point?

When asking if there were any particular topics to write about I was told *the SATs results will be published around the time Northern Teacher is due out – perhaps comment about them.* This led me to three initial thoughts.

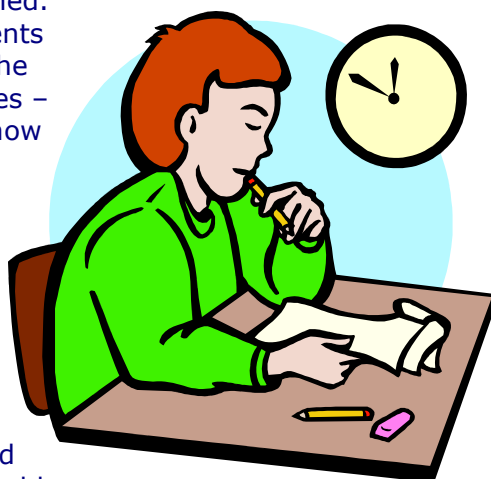
First; I was surprised that they were to be published because as far as I was aware schools have not been told when they would be published. Second; I am not sure parents are very concerned about the results put into league tables – though many do want to know how their own children got on. Third; I wondered what damage they would do to individual children and schools this year.

You might remember the furore caused by the "SATs fiasco" last summer, and the controversy over the standard of marking and delays. Most parents were told of their own children's results in the summer, or autumn if the school didn't get their papers returned in time.

As I write in early March, 10 months after the tests, I am still not yet satisfied with the outcome of our appeals against some of the shoddiest marking I have seen. All our last year's writing papers were re-marked and the scores were adjusted on *every* paper. One child's work was down marked by 18% and another increased by 14% - that is an error range of 32%! That the marking agency now expects us to pay for the remarking,

might be seen as a cynical way of deterring schools from challenging their marking.

It is good that in the south lakes area at least one newspaper doesn't list schools in order of scores, perhaps understanding the limitations of such a crude system to grade schools. The validity of school scores where classes are less than 40 is even



acknowledged in the detailed school reports. The vast majority of schools have far less than 40 year 6 children, and the match between socio-economic and SATs data is clear. So if individual pupil scores might have errors and the validity of school data is questionable why are our oldest primary pupils still subjected to the current SATs system?

SATs have been significantly changed for 7 year olds and abandoned completely for secondary schools, and of course Scotland and Wales don't do

use them. So why do our KS2 children still have to do them?

Do parents actually want them? I don't know any parent who has told me they think they are useful. Some people like them because they sometimes confirm their own view of their school as doing well. I have known other parents get angry when League Tables publicly humiliate whole communities – usually the communities that already face some of the most difficult circumstances. So they don't seem to inform anyone about anything they don't already know. I would be interested to know what the readership of Northern Teacher feel. Do you think Key Stage 2 SATs League Tables are useful? If so how are they useful?

(Could the NW Evening Mail have an online survey of these two questions? I even wonder if anyone would take note of a public vote against them – it didn't seem to stop a Barrow Academy though did cost some local politicians their seats!)

Last July I also wrote about SATs questioning their usefulness while making it clear that, as a professional body, most teachers recognise the importance of assessing children's progress but are against such assessment being used in the way they are. Last year the school data wasn't ready for the beginning of the autumn term, but they

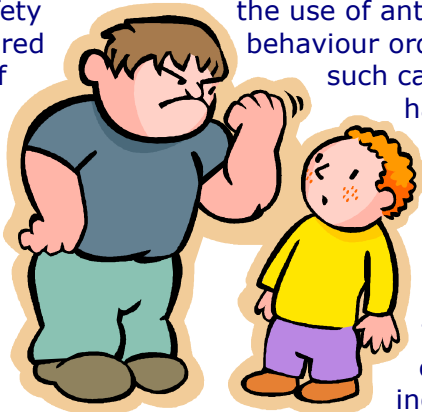
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Safety in English Schools

English pupils feel more at risk than children from most other countries. Data from the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study, carried out across 41 countries, found that only 37 per cent of English of pupils felt there was a high level of safety in schools, compared with 90 percent of Headteachers.

England only ranked 27th out of 41 for pupil's general perception of school safety. Of particular concern was the finding that 59 per cent of English pupils reported that someone in their class had been injured in the last month, ranking England second in the world for school violence, after Spain.

One of the worst aspects of



the safety problems is cyberbullying. The DCSF has described the practice as "unacceptable" and "insidious" and ministers have asserted that the worst forms of cyberbullying might contravene criminal or civil law, raising the possibility of the use of anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) in such cases. The DCSF has also urged schools to involve police in the most serious forms of cyberbullying. The guidance on this subject includes a new emphasis on

"bystander bullying" by young people who pass on images or comments made by the original bully without thinking. "Laugh at it and you are part of it" is the prominent warning on the online "pop-

ups" which form part of the campaign directed at pupils.

Advice for victims of cyberbullying includes:

- don't respond to malicious texts or emails;
- save evidence;
- report incidents;
- keep passwords safe and don't reveal personal information over the internet.

Teachers too are subject to demeaning and offensive attacks through pupil's videos and comments on websites. Ed Balls, Secretary of State for DCSF, said "Schools need to get to grips with the newer forms of bullying and the different impacts these have on their victims".

Information on safety in schools can be accessed at: <http://snipurl.com/e2g28>

Information about cyberbullying can be accessed at: <http://snipurl.com/e2g43>

Key Stage 2 SATs results

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made absolutely no difference to the children starting their secondary school. Cumbrian secondary schools use a different test in the autumn; they don't seem to need or trust SATs results.

So why do we still have SATs? Parents don't need them; many children don't like them, and most professionals oppose the way they are used. So why do we still have SATs?

One argument for SATs seems to hanker after the need to grade children like the old 11 plus - a necessary evil?

I was one of the last children in the borough I grew up in to take the 11 plus. I

have gone on to become relatively successful, and it could be said that it didn't do me any harm. But we shouldn't do things hoping that they don't harm us; we should do things that we think will help.

I failed my 11 plus and so the test at 11 clearly wasn't successful for me, or a helpful grade of me at 11 and so it was clearly not necessary. It wasn't a great success because I still went on to complete a degree - so don't despair if you or your child doesn't get a level 5 or 4!

It seems that the only people who want to keep SATs are politicians. I have always supported the idea of

trying to keep politics out of education - so is it time to get rid of SATs?

I say they should never have been imposed on schools and I think the argument is clear - its time for SATs and League Tables to go. The only real questions left are how long will it take the current generation to get over them, and when will schools stop having to spend so much effort and energy limiting the worst impact of SATs - when will they go? I fear not soon enough.

**by Chris Brooksbank,
Headteacher of Flookburgh
CE Primary School and
Secretary of Furness NUT**

One-to-one tuition

This government funded scheme to raise individual pupil achievement has already started in some schools and is to be fully rolled out in April 2009, with more funding coming on stream in 2010.

Target pupils will be selected by qualifying schools according to present pupil achievement data, and the idea is to tutor pupils on a one-to-one basis in order to raise their achievement.

At present the majority of tutoring in Newcastle upon Tyne is needed at Key Stage 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4 only the Four National Challenge Secondary Schools in Newcastle qualify for this additional funding.

Qualified Teachers are needed to tutor pupils from Stage 2 to Key Stage 4

individually on an hourly basis over 10 weeks. This may be during or outside the school day, usually on school premises.

Various contractual payment methods may be considered including:

Payment of £300 for 10 hours tuition (£25 per hour x 10 hours, plus £50 preparation time - ie 10% PPA time), if the teacher provides tuition outside the school day in addition to their contractual hours.

All staff must have an enhanced Certificate of Disclosure (CRB).

Who can be employed as a tutor? A tutor must:

- have qualified teacher status (QTS), although they do not have to be currently employed as a

teacher;

- be a non-QTS in the summer before gaining QTS;
- be an overseas trained teacher qualified to teach in schools in England;
- be an overseas trained teacher without QTS but who has been teaching in schools in England for less than 4 years and for whom one-to-one teaching counts as 'supplementary employment'; or
- be an FE or HE trained teacher with appropriate subject qualifications.

If you are interested in becoming a tutor under this scheme you should contact schools individually, or the Supply Teaching Agency of your Local Authority.

Fast Tracking Teachers

Commenting on the Government's proposals to train teachers in 6 months, Christine Blower, Acting General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, Europe's largest teaching union, said;

"Training someone to be a teacher in 6 months is an ill thought out scheme that consigns Gordon Brown's vision of a world class education system to the scrap-heap.

"It may work for a mathematician or scientist to come into schools and teach a small group of interested 16 - 18 year olds but quite another for someone to take over the teaching of a class of primary school children or those in the early stages of secondary school. Having knowledge and being able to teach it are not

the same thing.

"Teaching is not a profession that can be picked up at the drop of a hat. There needs to be the time for reflection and the capacity to undertake in-depth theoretical study. To bring in an entry

route that does not provide a good grounding in theory will not only undermine the status of the profession but will also jeopardise the education of our children and young people."

Are you expecting the inspectors?

From September 2009 there will be a new framework for the inspection of all maintained schools in England.

How prepared for a possible 'no-notice' inspection are you and your school?

You may also need to re-think how you prepare for other changes to the inspection regime. Forewarned is forearmed!

To support NUT members, Cumbria NUT has brokered an agreement with Cambridge Education, one of the current inspection providers, to offer training as to what to expect from inspection from September 2009. The proposed date is Tuesday 16 June from 9-12 with the venue likely to be Keswick or Penrith. Although open to non-NUT members, priority and subsidised rates will be applied to NUT members.

To ensure you reserve your place or receive updated information regarding this event, contact angieleonard@onetel.com

JOINT TRADE UNIONS AGAINST TRUST SCHOOLS

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North Tyneside Local Authority is currently consulting Governors and Staff on a proposal to change all schools in North Tyneside to an Authority wide Trust. As far as we are aware this is the only Authority in the country making such a proposal. The North Tyneside NUT Association Secretary, Sheila Best, Ian Grayson, National Executive Member and Mike McDonald, Regional Officer are currently working with other trade Unions in opposing these plans. The Joint Trades Unions have secured a slot in the LA consultation events, allowing us to challenge the proposal



and present an alternative. We have also held a joint all members meeting to raise awareness amongst our members of our concerns

regarding an Authority Wide Trust.

The LA is not proposing to consult with parents until after the Mayoral Election in June.

If you want further information or would like to assist in our campaign opposing an Authority wide Trust and our alternative proposals of a Soft Federation then please contact the Regional Office.

Thanks to everyone who assisted with the planning and presentation of the Regional Early Career Teachers' Conference this year—once again it was a very successful event and it was particularly pleasing to see so many young teachers leading and presenting workshops and plenary sessions—our efforts in recent years are certainly beginning to bear fruit now and we look forward to their continued involvement in our Union.

Here are some comments from satisfied participants:

"Fantastic workshops!

Thanks for a wonderful, informative weekend!

Really enjoyed the day.

Can we come again??

Thanks for a great weekend."

Not only the biggest, but also the best!

Why choose the NUT? Here are ten good reasons to join us

1. The NUT is the largest and most influential teachers' organisation in England and Wales.
2. The NUT seeks professional unity: one teachers' organisation to speak for the whole profession.
3. The NUT provides access to a first rate legal service through its network of experienced and qualified staff, including practising solicitors in its offices throughout the English regions and in Wales to give immediate cover to teachers in trouble – legal and professional advice, guidance and support.
4. The NUT has a network of representatives working on a voluntary basis to represent members in schools, colleges, services and units throughout England and Wales.
5. The NUT offers a wide range of high quality, good value benefits and services from endorsed suppliers.
6. The NUT offers its members a range of opportunities for high quality training and professional development in a 'no threat, no blame' climate.
7. The NUT is a trade union and a professional association, working on professional and curricular issues as well as teachers' conditions of service and pay.
8. The NUT recruits qualified teachers or those who are on courses or in posts that will lead to teacher qualification, so it is best placed to speak on behalf of the profession.
9. The NUT has a long and proud tradition of campaigning for equal opportunities for teachers and for pupils.
10. The NUT is affiliated to the TUC but not to any political party so it can speak freely and independently to the Government.

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Our Aim:

One Union for all teachers

