

Does every child still matter as much?

By Chris Waterman FRSA



Although the core schools budget has been largely protected from public spending cuts and the pupil premium will be allocated to the most vulnerable children, Chris Waterman remains concerned about how austerity measures will impact on children.

One of the most dramatic changes of direction made by the coalition government - although some might deny it – is away from what had become known as the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda. Michael Gove’s early ‘re-branding’ of the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as the Department for Education (DfE) was the first indication of what the priority would be: the sole focus of the new administration has been on the schools agenda. In the Comprehensive Spending Review, the schools budget was ‘protected’ with the ring fence retained. This was in sharp contrast to children’s services which will need to compete for funding through the local authority corporate ‘pot’. The DfE Business Plan 2011-2015 states plainly that “we are committed to transforming our education system so that all children, regardless of their background, thrive and prosper” and that “all children and families receive the support they need, particularly the most vulnerable” but what is not yet clear however is what impact the broader range of coalition policies will have on families with children. Some of the early analyses indicate that the richest will suffer most in cash terms.

However, the cumulative effect of the policy decisions; the consequences of the spending decisions that central government have taken; and budget decisions that local government will have to take, will impact disproportionately on children and families. A further concern, backed by early analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies is that it will be some of the most vulnerable families that will be hardest hit. What is needed, as the Coalition policies are implemented and the spending cuts begin to bite, is a rolling impact assessment on a range of different families.

This is not an argument for not reducing expenditure on education and children’s services: in the current circumstances reductions are inevitable. What it is an argument for is an assessment of the cumulative impact of the reductions on actual families in each level of society, and what the sum of the parts will be. This would make it possible to discuss, on the basis of hard evidence, how ‘fair’ the Coalition policies are. While expecting us all to share the pain is understandable, we must avoid widening the gap between the most vulnerable and the rest. A lot has been made of the moral purpose’ of government policies: we must ensure that this ensures that the most vulnerable families are not denied the opportunity to take a full part in our future.



RESOURCE BANK

Many thanks to everyone who has already uploaded resources to the site. To make this useful requires a critical mass of resources so that there is a file for the majority of topics. So, if you haven’t yet had a chance to upload any resources please sign up with Amanda and upload a file to one of the sections.

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See page 2 for more.

LATEST JOBS:

- Park High School, Harrow
- Bower Park School, Havering
- Oasis Academy Enfield
- Bentley Wood High School
- Featherstone High School
- Mossbourne Academy
- Highgate School, Haringey
- Edmonton County School
- Longfield Comm. School

Fairtrade Fortnight

The Fairtrade Foundation



For Fairtrade Fortnight 2011, we want to show off Fairtrade cotton and highlight the injustices that make Fairtrade a vital lifeline for cotton farmers. Fairtrade cotton has been around for five years and we want to celebrate by letting everyone know how Fairtrade helps cotton farmers in India and West Africa by giving them a better deal. Did you know?

- There are 30 million cotton farmers in 65 countries around the world
- Cotton cultivation uses about 50% of all chemical pesticide used in farming
- Cotton covers 2.4% of the world's farmland

Fairtrade Fortnight is approaching and this year, one of the many ways to show off about Fairtrade will be to paint, draw or sew a piece of bunting to express what Fairtrade looks like to you. We're aiming to smash the world record for the longest string of hand-designed bunting, currently at 2,696 metres of individual, hand-made, bunting triangles.

To mark Fairtrade Cotton's fifth anniversary, Trevor Leighton has teamed up with the Fairtrade Foundation and some of Britain's best loved personalities to produce a special collection showing off the very best of the Fairtrade Cotton range.

To become a Fairtrade School you need to meet 5 goals

- Set up a Fairtrade School Steering Group with at least half pupils and which meets at least once a term.
- Write and adopt a Fairtrade Policy which has the support of the board of Governors and is signed by the Head teacher.
- Use and sell Fairtrade products as much as possible.
- Learn about Fairtrade in at least three subjects in two year groups.
- Take action for Fairtrade at least once a term in the school and once a year in the community.

"First of all we needed to get permission from our Headteacher. We created a PowerPoint show with information and a business plan. We also gave him a free sample. I think that improved our chances because he said 'yes'!"



For more information, visit:
<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

PUZZLE – 8 legs

A spider is hanging 1m below the top of a 6m high tree. Each time the spider drops another 1m he will bounce back up 50cm. How many times will it bounce back up before it hits the ground?

ISSUE 3 SOLUTION:

Rotate 180° i.e. I + X = XI

The Pupil Panel: When the pupils call the shots

By Richard Davies



Straight faced, note books open and pens poised to make copious notes to record the finer detail of my responses, two year 7 pupils and a year 8 'Chair' confronted me on the other side of the table as I braced myself for the infamous Pupil Panel. For the next 30 minutes I was to be grilled by these consummate professionals who would not have looked out of place in a Blue Chip HR Department. Having been reliably informed, in advance, that one of these was an 'expert' I quickly ascertained the volley of questions coming from the Chair suggested she had put many an aspiring teacher through their paces. Alongside the more predictable questions such as "why do you want to work here?" were a mixture of detailed professional questions and those seeking an insight into who you were. Think about your responses to the following:

- How do you go about setting targets and how do you involve parents and pupils in this?
- How would your pupils describe you in three words?
- What can you bring to the school?
- How do you make lessons enjoyable?
- How would you contribute to the school community?
- What would you do to stop bullying in school?
- What is your favourite film and why?

I hope this gives you a few ideas of what might be in store. RD

NOTES:

