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Impact

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A warm welcome to this post-election issue of *Impact: NFER's research news for schools*. Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education in the new coalition Government, has recognised the importance of 'getting education right'. To do this he and his colleagues will need independent, reliable research to inform their decisions – and this is exactly what NFER offers politicians, policy makers, managers and practitioners involved in education and children's services.

NFER is currently carrying out a major evaluation of the new Diploma and Gill Featherstone writes about what learners think about the qualification. Generally they seem to be enjoying it and are prepared to recommend it to friends – as long as they're prepared to work hard.

Our research often explores controversial subjects and several of the articles in *Impact* reflect this. Getting their child into the school they want arouses strong emotions amongst parents – not surprising, as Peter Rudd acknowledges in his article about the controversies surrounding school admissions, as the right school is so important for their offspring's life chances. Assessment policy is an area where opinions are divided, and Sarah Maughan discusses a national monitoring survey as a possible alternative to key stage tests. And then there's sex education; what should children be told and when? NFER recently surveyed 17 countries and the results make interesting reading!

NFER launched its Research-engaged School/College Award last year and the first winners were announced recently, with more recipients in the pipeline. On the subject of winners, we were pleased to award a prize of £100 Amazon vouchers to Stamford Park Infant School in Altrincham, Cheshire, whose name was picked out in the prize draw of the readers who replied to the questionnaire about *Impact* in the previous issue. I'd like to thank everyone who completed it for their feedback, which was very positive.

I hope you'll find *Impact* interesting and informative, but as it can only offer a glimpse of NFER's activities please visit our website at www.nfer.ac.uk.



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When you need to respond to the latest initiatives, develop new policies and plans, initiate consultations and discussions or provide guidelines for schools and parents, EMIE can help by supplying background material, relevant documents or contacts working in the same area.

EMIE at NFER provides a range of information services to staff working in, or with, local authority children's services and education departments. The aim of the service

is to support the work of local authorities and their partners through sharing expertise and effective practice. By providing a proactive information service on management and policy issues EMIE supports work to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

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