

The Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Summer 2011

Issue

18



Family Drug and Alcohol Court a success

The only Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) in the UK has been successful in improving outcomes for children by tackling the substance misuse of parents at an early stage of care proceedings, according to an independent evaluation funded by the Foundation and led by Professor Judith Harwin at Brunel University.

Parents who had been through the FDAC system were more likely to stop their substance misuse than those in ordinary care proceedings, meaning fewer children were taken into care. At the time of the final court order, 39% of

FDAC mothers were reunited with their children compared to 21% of mothers from a comparison group in ordinary care proceedings.

When parents were unable to control their substance misuse, FDAC made swifter decisions to find permanent alternative homes for children. The integrated approach also has potential to reduce costs.

FDAC's success has been recognised by two major government reviews of family justice and child protection. *The Munro Review of Child Protection* was 'impressed' by the pilot and used it as an example of how multi-disciplinary teams can provide effective interventions for

vulnerable children. *The Family Justice Review* interim report said FDAC showed 'considerable promise' and 'potentially justifies a further limited roll out'.

Parental substance misuse is the main factor in up to two thirds of care proceedings. Unlike conventional care proceedings, parents in FDAC see the same judge throughout and meet with them every fortnight. They also receive support from a multi-disciplinary team, including fast access to substance misuse services and assistance with other issues such as housing, domestic violence and financial hardship. [www](#)

Welcome to the Nuffield Foundation Newsletter

Further details on all the stories marked with this icon [www](#) can be found on our website, www.nuffieldfoundation.org

The newsletter is published three times a year. For additional copies, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact fbright@nuffieldfoundation.org

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www.nuffieldfoundation.org

The truth behind SEN statements



We have awarded a grant to Professor Peter Blatchford at the Institute of Education to examine the nature of the teaching and support of primary school pupils with a statement of special educational need (SEN).

One in five children in the UK are identified as having SEN, but only 2.7 per cent have a formal 'statement' outlining their needs and detailing how they should be supported. There is very little evidence about these children's experience of the teaching and support they receive, and Professor Blatchford is seeking to address this by tracking over

40 pupils in Year 5 to find out how the reality compares to the provision set out in the statements.

As well as observing the classroom experience of children, the research team will analyse transcripts of adult-pupil interaction and interview key people involved in the provision of support.

The government has recently consulted on its proposals to reform the SEN system and will set out detailed plans by the end of 2011. This study will be crucial in providing evidence for both policymaking and classroom practice. [www](#)

National Curriculum Review

The National Curriculum should offer a range of pathways in 14-19 science and mathematics education, taking the different needs of pupils into account. It should also look to the research on Twenty First Century Science as a model for GCSE pathways and content.

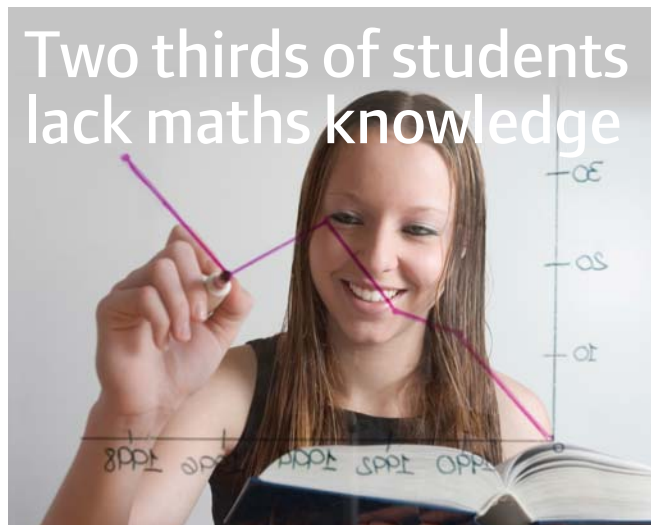
These are some of the recommendations made in our response to the government review of the National Curriculum. We advocate a curriculum that offers a minimal core with plenty of potential for additional content. Our response also highlights the

importance of cross-curricular links between subjects, and recommends continued development of the applied science route. We believe assessment should be designed to drive teaching and learning through inquiry, practical work and discussion.

We also recommend consultation with the educational research communities to ensure a curriculum based on a sound, evidence based educational framework. Our full response is available to download from our website. The DfE is expected to publish phase one recommendations in early 2012. [www](#)



Two thirds of students lack maths knowledge



Of the 330,000 students studying university courses that require mathematical knowledge beyond GCSE level, 210,000 of them (64%) do not have the required skills, causing problems for both students and universities.

These findings are from the Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME)'s *Mathematical Needs* report. Funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Clothworkers' Foundation, researchers analysed the mathematical content of a range of university courses and found there was a marked discrepancy between the number of courses requiring mathematical skills beyond GCSE and the number of people with these skills that the UK is producing.

The report looked at the mathematical needs of employers, universities and learners themselves. It recommends a wider mathematical curriculum and changes to the assessment regime that reflect the importance of problem-solving, reasoning and communication. It also recommends universities are more explicit about their preference for mathematics qualifications. [www](#)



State failing in its commitment to young witnesses

Children's evidence is becoming an increasingly important part of criminal proceedings. Between 2006/7 and 2008/9 there was an increase of 60 per cent (30,000 to 48,000) in the number of children called to give evidence.

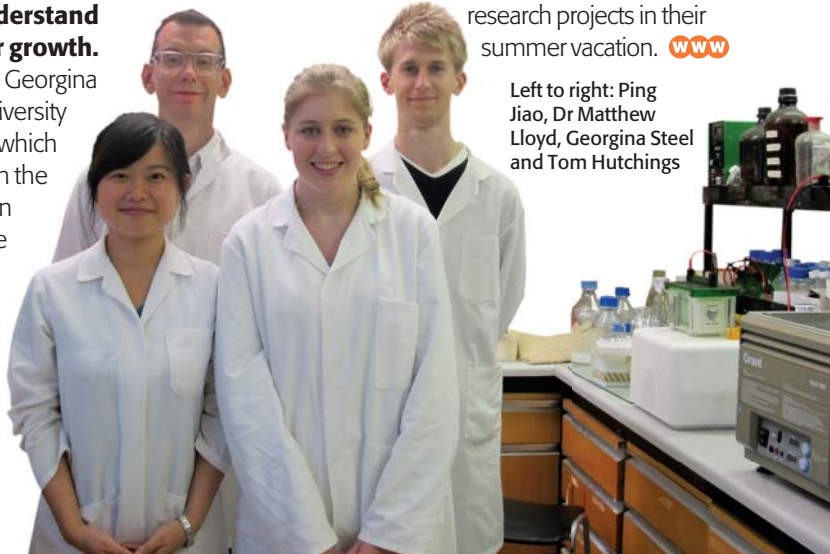
In partnership with the NSPCC, we have published a follow-up report to 2009's *Measuring up?*, which examined the experience of 182 young witnesses and made 42 recommendations for improvement. The report's authors found that despite some improvements to policy and practice for young witnesses in criminal proceedings, there remain areas in which the state is failing in its commitment to enable them to give their best evidence.

One of the biggest challenges remains how to question children in a developmentally appropriate way. Current cross-examination methods often contravene principles for obtaining complete and accurate reports from children and may actually exploit their developmental limitations. Enabling young witnesses to give their best evidence is essential to ensure fair trial outcomes, but it should be done in a way that recognises they are children, not adults. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

Science Bursary students in cancer discovery

Two of our Science Bursary students have been instrumental in a discovery that could help scientists better understand how to block cancer growth.

Tom Hutchings and Georgina Steel were part of a University of Bath research team which discovered that drugs in the same class as ibuprofen are all processed by the body through a protein called AMACR, which converts the drug into its active form. AMACR is overactive in almost all prostate cancers, some bowel cancers and several other types of cancer



Left to right: Ping Jiao, Dr Matthew Lloyd, Georgina Steel and Tom Hutchings

and is thought to fuel the growth of the disease by boosting the cell's energy supply. So understanding how drugs like ibuprofen might alter AMACR activity could help scientists better understand how they are able to block cancer growth.

The project was led by Dr Matthew Lloyd and funded by Cancer Research UK. Nuffield Science Bursaries are available for year 12 students and undergraduates to work on research projects in their summer vacation. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)

Coalition works

Two recent projects undertaken by UCL's Constitution Unit with funding from the Foundation, shed light on the mechanics of government. The first, which looked in depth at the coalition

government, concluded that despite the ructions documented in the media, its first year had been characterised by unity and stability.

Researchers conducted 90 interviews with senior people in Whitehall and

Westminster and found that the Lib Dems succeeded in getting 75% of their manifesto items into the coalition agreement, compared with 60% of the Conservative manifesto.

The second study looked at the impact of select committees and found that a third of committee recommendations calling for significant policy change are implemented by government. Interviews with parliamentary and government insiders also showed that committees influence policy by 'generating fear' in government. Anticipation of committee scrutiny helps keep Ministers and senior officials on their toes, making for better decision-making. [www](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org)



Unity and stability: Nick Clegg and David Cameron

Oliver Bird Centres recognised for excellence

Three of our Oliver Bird Rheumatism Programme Centres have been awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status by the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR).

The Musculoskeletal Research Collaboration at the University of Aberdeen, the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases at the University of Glasgow and the Musculoskeletal Research Group at Newcastle University are three of only 18 institutions across Europe to receive the honour.

EULAR is a Europe-wide organisation that aims to stimulate, promote, and support the research, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of rheumatic diseases. [www](#)

Captain
Oliver Bird



Shared parenting legislation

Academics from the University of Oxford have published an analysis of proposed legislation to introduce and enforce a presumption of shared parenting time for separating couples. Funded by the Foundation, the authors examine relevant research evidence, with particular reference to Australia, which introduced similar legislation in 2006.

They conclude there is no empirical evidence that having legislative provision for a presumption of equally or substantially shared time spent with a non-resident parent would improve outcomes for children. [www](#)

Global health inequalities

Global health experts from around the world gathered in London at an international symposium hosted by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics last month. Participants explored the ethical and moral arguments for improving health globally, including debates on the social determinants of health; chronic and non-communicable disease; and the role of emerging biotechnologies.

A video of the day is available on the Council's website and a full report will be available soon. [www](#)



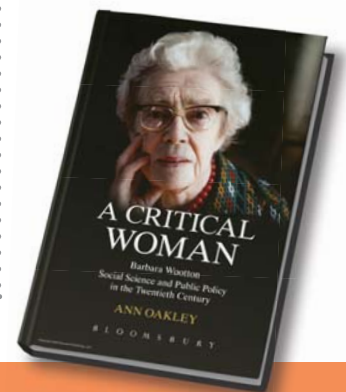
Annual report

The Foundation spent **£9.6 million** on charitable activities in 2010. Full details on last year's achievements and expenditure can be found in the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements 2010, available on our website. [www](#)



A Critical Woman

Barbara Wootton was one of the extraordinary public figures of the twentieth century. A pioneer in economic planning, social science and evidence-informed public policy, her work contributed to the emergence of a distinctive British social science. A new biography by Professor Ann Oakley has now been published by Bloomsbury Academic. [www](#)



William Morris, Lord Nuffield
1877-1963

The Nuffield Foundation is a charitable trust endowed by William Morris, Lord Nuffield, the founder of Morris Motors. Our aim is to improve social well-being in the widest sense. We fund research and innovation in education and social policy, primarily in the UK but also in Europe and Africa. We also work to build capacity in education and science and social science research.

Full information on all our current activities and details of how to apply for grants can be found at www.nuffieldfoundation.org

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