

The Newspaper
Reviewed by Geoff Barton

The Newspaper, www.thenewspaper.org.uk, £75 plus £12 post and packing for 32 copies 6 times a year

As a newspaper addict, none of the flashiness of internet news feeds, tickers, text updates or podcasts (all of which I also love) has dented my physical enjoyment of regularly reading a newspaper. To the irritation of my family, I'll quite happily sit for an hour beside a holiday swimming pool reading a paper whose news is stale and slipping into irrelevance.

So of course, like many teachers, I want the current generation of pupils to get the newspaper bug too. Here's a very good idea for how to do so. The Newspaper ("Today's readers. Tomorrow's leaders") is published six times a year, once each half term. It's available in class sets so, during a Citizenship or English lesson, you could legitimately all sit back and read the paper.

Whilst it's firmly aimed at pupils, The Newspaper has many of the features we expect of grown-up newspapers. The January/February issue, for example, leads with research into the murky world of text message bullying. There's a polemic on the fur trade; an analysis one year on from the Tsunami; features on the young stars of Nanny McFee and the winner of the X Factor, plus quizzes and puzzles.

Its target audience feels to me like top of KS2 and the lower end of KS3 and it manages to stay this side of worthiness by a lively design and enough references to popular culture to give it credibility. What I liked most was its determination to show that issues like global warming and animal rights are absolutely the stuff that young people should be (and usually are) passionate about.

I had some reservations too. The Newspaper sometimes comes packaged in marketing material (the March/April edition is promoting the film *Ice Age 2*). It means that you don't get the immediate impact of a newspaper splash, in this case about child poverty. But bearing in mind that media heavyweights like The Times and The Independent have produced junior editions that subsequently folded, promotional material for decent products (films and books) is a small price to pay if it helps the project to keep going.

So thumbs up to The Newspaper. With six editions a year it isn't going to ignite that passion for reading a daily paper that can make contemporary life feel richer. But if it strengthens pupils' interest in relevant global issues, without patronising them, then long may its presses roll.

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