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This page covers the latest literacy news from the primary sector in the last four weeks. To search for more in-depth information or news and initiatives by subject area please visit the [site A-Z](#). You can also keep up to date with literacy news by subscribing to our free [email newsletter](#).

[Read about recent NLT project activity in primary schools](#)

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Conflict and struggle make best reads for children

The *Telegraph* has covered this year's shortlist of novels for the Carnegie Medal. The shortlist for the country's longest-running prize for children's books is comprised predominantly of histories about violence.

Two novels are set in the Crusades, while another is set against the background of the genocide of American Indians on the Mexican border in 1800. Angela McNally, the chairman of the group that runs the prize, said that despite their tough subject matter all the novels "are beautifully written and entirely suitable for the 10-plus age group."

The winner will be announced on 26 June.

(Telegraph, 18 April 2008)

New reports from the Primary Review

New reports from the Primary Review have prompted the Independent to report that primary school education has been damaged by "prescriptive state nationalisation", which has taken all the fun out of children's learning.

Three reports have been published, examining teacher professionalism, training and leadership.

The report, part of the ongoing Primary Review, warned that teachers had been de-skilled and demoralised by the constant Government interference and that the relentless focus on targets had created an 'impersonal' system. The study, by Liz Jones, Andy Pickard and Ian Stronach at Manchester Metropolitan University, concluded that many older teachers felt demoralised by lack of freedom to run their own lessons in the face of government "micro-management of their work".

Centralised control over primary education has increased in the past 15 years as ministers introduced new targets, more testing and league tables.

The Liberal Democrats accused the Government of treating teachers like robots. David Laws, their education spokesman, said: "There is a danger of the Government squeezing the life out of education and preparing teachers in a robotic way to deliver a very prescriptive curriculum."

Andrew Adonis, the schools minister, defended the Government's record. He said: "We make no apology for policies which are delivering the highest standards ever."

The three reports are:

- *Primary schools: the professional environment, Primary Review Research Survey 6/2.*
- *Primary teachers: initial teacher education, continuing professional development and school leadership development, Primary Review Research Survey 6/3.*
- *Primary workforce management and reform, Primary Review Research Survey 6/4.*

All are available at www.primaryreview.org

(Independent, 18 April 2008)

300 primary school sites sold in past decade

The *Guardian* has reported on research which reveals that almost 300 primary school sites have been sold in the past 10 years to raise money.

The survey was conducted by Channel 4 news using the Freedom of Information Act. Many of the sites have been sold to housing developers as councils cashed in on raising land values. Councils say they are abiding by strict government funding arrangements to close schools with falling pupil numbers. A DCSF spokesperson said 85% of primary schools that closed since 1999 were part of an amalgamation or reorganisation of local schools.

(Guardian, 15 April 2008)

Active literacy in North Lanarkshire

Elizabeth Bluie reports on traditional tales, magnetic boards and other tools which are part of an active literacy programme in North Lanarkshire schools.

Read the full article on the TES website - www.tes.co.uk/search/story/?story_id=2602540

(TESS, 4 April 2008)

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