

Eastern Daily Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY
SINCE 1870

Pupils must be able to have confidence in exam marking

The importance of good exam results is impressed upon children from an early age.

Strong qualifications can unlock doors to higher education and a fulfilling career.

While they are not a binary indicator of success later in life, they are a key hurdle and can be nerve-racking for pupils.

So it is concerning that questions have been raised over the accuracy of GCSE marking.

A series of Freedom of Information requests to high schools in our region showed thousands of papers were re-marked, with around one in five grades changed.

The number of re-marks rose sharply last year.

Pupils put in many hours of study in a bid to achieve the top grades, but some were given lower marks than they deserved.

They must be able to have confidence that their marks reflect their achievement.

Schools may well be requesting more re-marks in an effort to reach the government's floor standard.

But the significant percentage of grades being changed suggests there may be a genuine issue with inaccurate marking.

South Norfolk MP Richard Bacon, who sits on the Public Accounts Committee, has pledged to raise the matter with the Department for Education.

There must be scrutiny of the marking process to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Erroneous marking, the added cost of a re-mark and a lengthy wait cannot become the new norm.

It is simply not fair on pupils.

Long devotion to duty

She is the longest reigning British monarch of all time.

And as Queen Elizabeth II begins the year of her 90th birthday, she continues to carry out royal engagements.

Her first engagement of the year was here in Norfolk, at St Mary Magdalene church in Sandringham.

A service was conducted by the Rector, Canon Jonathan Riviere, who led prayers for people in war-torn Syria, those affected by the floods in northern England, and for children starting school today.

And in keeping with tradition, scores of well-wishers turned out to see her.

Among them was David Lawrence-Brooks, who said: "To be entering her 90th year now, and to have been head of state more than 60 years, is amazing.

"You never hear any criticism of her – she is super."

Those are sentiments which many others will share. Long may she reign over us.

Making a difference

Money is tight, and times are tough for all those groups who do so much good in our community.

So the EDP is delighted to be working with the Norfolk Community Foundation in the Community Chest project.

Whatever the organisation, whatever the need, there is a share of £100,000 on offer to groups across the region.

By the end of 2016, Community Chest will have made a real difference to people's lives.

Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm. Winston Churchill

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READER'S PICTURE OF THE DAY

iwitness24



■ Andrew Thorpe took this picture while visiting the RSPB reserve at Titchwell recently. He said the light was amazing for late December and this lovely shot of the landscape perfectly represented the raw beauty of the place. If you would like to submit a picture for possible publication in the EDP, visit www.iwitness24.co.uk

It's more than just bridges that link Scandinavia

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The BBC4 TV series *The Bridge* is currently being watched by over one and a half million viewers in Britain, so it's safe to assume that there are plenty of EDP readers among the viewers.

As you'll have noticed if you watch it, the series is called *Broen* in Danish and *Bron* in Swedish. *Bro* means bridge in both languages, with the endings *-en* and *-n* representing the definite article 'the'. The Norwegian word for bridge is also *bro* or *bru*: the three languages are very similar, and pretty much mutually intelligible.

When Norwegians go to Sweden, they just carry on speaking Norwegian, though maybe a little more slowly than usual and avoiding expressions they know might cause problems. This isn't too different from how English people communicate in the USA.

You can see how this intelligibility operates in *The Bridge*. The series plays out on either side of the Øresund bridge which, with its associated tunnel, is about eight miles long. Opened in 1999, it joins the cities of Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden.

In the series, the Swedish actors playing the parts of Swedes quite naturally speak



■ The Øresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark.

Picture: SUBMITTED

Swedish, and the Danes speak Danish, but unless you're familiar with Scandinavian languages you won't necessarily pick up on what is going on linguistically.

The Swedish and Danish characters in *The Bridge* understand each other perfectly well, though there are sometimes little jokes – which the subtitlers ignore because they can't cope with them – about specific words the others use or misunderstandings, much as you sometimes find in interactions between Scots and English people, or British people and Americans. A Norwegian colleague, however, tells me that he has discussed this with some of the actors, and in real life they say it's not necessarily as easy as all that.

The fact is that language change is grad-

ually taking the Scandinavian languages further apart. There are very few intelligibility problems between Swedish and Norwegian, though this does depend on whereabouts in those countries speakers come from.

But spoken Danish seems to be getting increasingly difficult for the others to understand. Norwegians can read Danish without any problem, but some of them report that they're finding younger Danish people increasingly hard to comprehend when they speak. In fact, it sometimes now happens that young Swedes travelling to Denmark speak English when they get there.

So far we haven't seen Saga and Henrik doing that.