

Photo competition: Send us your best water pictures

Image © Andrzej Bochenski, Picture2050 /EEA

Water is everywhere – from the tiniest cells in our body to vast oceans – and people, animals and plants all depend on water. The EEA's [WaterPIX photo competition](#) aims to bring attention to water as a vital resource for all life on Earth.

You can depict water, its uses and what it means for life in many different ways. Just use your creativity and send us your best photographs by 15 August 2018. You can submit photographs in three competition categories:

1. Water and us

We drink it, bathe in it and cook with it. Floods or droughts can affect entire cities. What does water mean to you?

2. Water and nature

Rivers, lakes and seas do not only support life on land but they are also home to many animals and plants. Oceans play a key role in ensuring a stable climate for the planet. Can you capture the visible and the invisible benefits that water provides? Is clean water under threat?

3. Water and the economy

Water is essential for producing food, electricity and many products. Rivers and seas are major trade routes, connecting countries and cultures. What is the importance of water for our economies? How does the economy affect water in return?

The winners in each competition category will receive a cash prize of 1000 Euros. The EEA will also award a special Youth Prize for the best photo submitted by a young person between 18 and 24 years and a Public Choice Award is selected among all finalist photos through an open online vote.

The competition is open to citizens of the [EEA member countries and West Balkan cooperating countries](#). All participants must be 18 or older. Read more about the competition rules and how to participate on the [WaterPIX competition page](#).

The EEA will announce all winners in the end of October 2018.

Good retail sales in March 2018

The British Retail Consortium reported a few days ago that March retail sales overall rose by 2.3% year on year. They said "This is above the 3 months and 12 months moving averages of 1.8% and 1.9% respectively but is positively distorted by the timing of Easter."

Today's more detailed news is that sales on the High Street fell by 8.6%, with a much smaller decline in shopping centres and good rises on line. None of this has anything to do with Brexit. There is a strong trend for people to buy more on line and less in shops, probably speeded up in March by the dreadful weather. Food sales were particularly strong In March , with a rise of 5.3%.

Some people like to report part of the retail sales story, usually quoting so called like for like in shops, to give a gloomy answer.

Press release: National primary offer day

- 90% per cent of pupils offered their first choice of primary school and 97.2% were offered a place at one of their top three last year
- Disadvantage gap index at Key Stage 2 down 10.5% since 2011
- 825,000 new school places created since 2010 – with 90,000 more over 2016-17 alone

Pupils across the country will find out today (Monday 16 April) which primary school they will be going to in September, amid rising education standards in England.

Figures show 97.2 per cent of pupils were offered one of their top three primary schools in 2017 and follows the creation of 825,000 new school places since 2010.

Families will receive their offers as standards continue to rise thanks to the government's reforms and the hard work of teachers, with 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and nine out of ten schools awarded this rating at their last inspection.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

This morning, thousands of pupils and their parents will find out which primary school they will be going to this September. Thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, academic standards in

our primary schools are rising across the country. Our young readers are among the best in the world, the proportion of primary school pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and maths standards went up 8 percentage points last year and the attainment gap between children from wealthier and poorer backgrounds has narrowed by 10.5% since 2011.

A good primary school education lays the foundations for success at secondary school and beyond, so it is right that we help make sure every child reaches their potential from the moment they start their education. That's why we're investing £5.8 billion to create even more good schools and good school places – building on the 825,000 we've created since 2010 – resulting in 9 out of 10 pupils securing one of their top three choices of schools.

Academic standards are rising following the introduction of a more rigorous primary school curriculum to match the best education systems in the world, with latest performance data showing:

- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in a combined measure of English, reading and mathematics has decreased in each of the last six years, narrowing by 1.3% in the latest year and 10.5% since 2011;
- There are now 154,000 more six-year-olds on track to become fluent readers than in 2012, with England's recent rise up the international PIRLS rankings putting the success of the government's reforms on a global scale; and
- In 2017 72% met the expected standard in reading, 75% in maths and 77% in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

On top of this, the government has invested in programmes to help raise standards in these crucial early years of education, including a £26 million network of specialist English Hubs around the country to improve pupils' literacy and £41 million to follow the same approach to teaching maths as world leading countries through the Shanghai Mastery for Maths programme. □This is on top of wider changes to the primary assessment system which will reduce unnecessary workload for teachers so they can focus on what really matters in the classroom.

West End Surgeries #dundeewestend

With the Easter school holidays now over, it is back to West End Ward surgeries this coming week. My Mitchell Street Centre and Harris Academy

surgeries take place later today.

My full surgery details are below – although I can also be contacted via esurgery@frasermacpherson.org.uk or phone me at home on 459378 anytime :

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

OUNCILLOR'S SURGERIES

WEST END WARD

Cllr Fraser Macpherson
can be contacted at his constituents' surgery

Mitchell Street Centre
(The Base) Mitchell Street
Mondays 4.20pm (prompt)
(except school holidays)

Harris Academy
Perth Road
(Main Reception Area)
Mondays 4.50pm (prompt)
(except school holidays)

Blackness Primary School
(Staff Room on ground floor)
Pennycook Lane
Thursdays 6.15pm (prompt)
(except school holidays)



To arrange a home visit, information or advice
call number as shown below



Alternatively, Cllr Macpherson can be reached
at home by telephoning 459378
or at the City Chambers on 434985
or e.mail: fraser.macpherson@dundee.city.gov.uk

 [@dundeewestend](https://twitter.com/dundeewestend)  www.facebook.com/dundeewestend

Recording of the week: a windy

delivery

This week's selection comes from Cheryl Tipp, Curator of Wildlife and Environmental Sounds. It's not only letters, local newspapers and pizza flyers that pop through our letterboxes. Sometimes the wind can get through too. This can be heard to great effect in the following recording, made on a blustery January...