

The future shape of the National Curriculum....

Beyond the core subjects

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Westminster Education Forum

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The Legislative Context

- The requirement for the curriculum of maintained schools to be broadly based and balanced is set out in Section 78 of the Education Act 2002. In order to be considered broadly based and balanced the curriculum must:
 - Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
 - Prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- The requirement to provide a broad and balanced curriculum applies to the school curriculum, e.g. all the teaching and learning and any extra-curricular activities offered by a school.
- Secretary of State has a legal duty to publish Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets for National Curriculum subjects by Key Stage

The National Curriculum Today

| Subject | KS1 | KS2 | KS3 | KS4 |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| English | • | • | • | • |
| Mathematics | • | • | • | • |
| Science | • | • | • | • |
| PE | • | • | • | • |
| ICT | • | • | • | • |
| Art & Design | • | • | • | |
| Citizenship | | | • | • |
| D&T | • | • | • | |
| Geography | • | • | • | |
| History | • | • | • | |
| MFL | | | • | |
| Music | • | • | • | |

Review objectives

- Coalition Agreement commitment for all schools to have greater flexibility over the curriculum.
- *The Importance of Teaching* White Paper (2010): stated that the National Curriculum should:
 - set out the **essential knowledge** that all children should be expected to learn.
 - embody their **cultural and scientific inheritance**
 - **avoid covering every conceivable area** of learning or endeavour.
 - learning from the **highest performing jurisdictions** in the world

Subject Breadth and the Review

- National Curriculum review launched in January 2011
- The remit for the review states (paragraph 2) that it is the Government's intention that

“....the National Curriculum be slimmed down so that it properly reflects the body of essential knowledge which all children should learn and does not absorb the overwhelming majority of teaching time in schools.”

- It also states (paragraph 16) that the review will consider

“....whether each of the remaining subjects (i.e. apart from English, mathematics, science and PE)....should be part of the National Curriculum with statutory Programmes of Study, and if so at which key stages. For any subjects which are not recommended to be National Curriculum subjects in future, the review will advise on whether there should be non-statutory programmes of study available at particular key stages, and/or whether those subjects or any aspects of them, should nevertheless be compulsory but with what is taught being decided at local level.”

Review - December announcement

Published:

- Expert Panel report and recommendations
- Summary report on the Call for Evidence
- Evidence on curriculum breadth
- Evidence on curriculum content in English, mathematic and science

Extension of timetable by one year:

- Engaging with stakeholders on **Expert Panel recommendations**
- Full alignment of National Curriculum with **GCSE reform**
- **More time** to develop the National Curriculum for English, mathematics and science in the light of feedback
- New curriculum for **all subjects** published together in Autumn 2013 and first teaching from **September 2014**

Expert Panel recommendations: aims structure and standards

Aims and purpose

- Defining **whole curriculum** and **subject specific** aims

Structure

- Articulated distinction within the school curriculum between the **prescribed** curriculum and the **local** curriculum
- **Two year Key Stages** from Year 1 to Year 6
- Consider **two year Key Stage 3** & **three year Key Stage 4**
- Programmes of Study **content defined by Key Stages** but see case for year on year approach for primary mathematics

Standards and Progression

- Flaws identified in current 'levels' approach – Panel recommended approach based on more detailed descriptions of specific learning outcomes tied more closely to the curriculum

Expert Panel Report: Subject Breadth

- Evidential link between high performance and broad provision
- Tendency toward broad forms of curriculum provision in high-performing jurisdictions
 - e.g. history taught to 16 in most European countries
 - Tendency towards a broad curriculum to 16
- Support from stakeholders for retaining statutory breadth
 - 35% of respondents to the Call for Evidence stated that breadth is a key feature of the current National Curriculum
 - Little desire to 'drop' subjects
- Support for the retention of individual subjects that currently compose the National Curriculum
 - Large majority of respondents to the Call for Evidence supported retention of history and geography as National Curriculum subjects
 - Weakest support for citizenship but still over half of respondents supported its retention

Expert Panel Report - Options

- Noting that the review is remitted to **slim down** the prescriptive elements of the National Curriculum the Expert Panel identified **3 options**:
- **Option 1 – remove subjects**
 - Not favoured by Panel on the balance of the evidence (see previous slide)
- **Option 2 – reclassify subjects**
 - Change statutory basis so that certain subjects are moved into the ‘**basic curriculum**’ meaning **no Statutory Programme of Study or Attainment Targets**
- **Option 3 – reduce prescribed subject content**
 - Condensed and refined Programmes of Study for all non-core (i.e. outside English, maths and science) subjects – Government prescribes only the very key elements and minimal Attainment Targets

Expert Panel Report: Recommendations

- The Expert Panel **rejected** Option 1
- Instead set out recommendations based on **Option 2** and **Option 3**:
 - **Retention** of art & design, geography, history, music and PE in the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1-3
 - Design and technology, geography, history, MFL and 'The Arts' **extended** to National Curriculum Key Stage 4
 - Modern foreign languages **retained** at Key Stage 3 and extended to Key Stage 2
 - All of the above with condensed Programmes of Study
 - Citizenship **moved** to the basic curriculum – compulsory at Key Stages 3 and 4 but no prescribed Programme of Study
 - ICT and design and technology **moved** to the basic curriculum – compulsory at Key Stages 1-4 but no prescribed Programme of Study

Expert Panel Recommendations: Comparison

Current NC

| Subject | KS1 | KS2 | KS3 | KS4 |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| English | • | • | • | • |
| Maths | • | • | • | • |
| Science | • | • | • | • |
| PE | • | • | • | • |
| Art | • | • | • | |
| Citizenship | | | • | • |
| D&T | • | • | • | |
| Geography | • | • | • | |
| History | • | • | • | |
| ICT | • | • | • | • |
| MFL | | | • | |
| Music | • | • | • | |

Department for
Education

Proposed NC

| Subject | KS1 | KS2a | KS2b | KS3 | KS4 |
|---------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|
| English | • | • | • | • | • |
| Maths | • | • | • | • | • |
| Science | • | • | • | • | • |

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| Subject | KS1 | KS2a | KS2b | KS3 | KS4 |
|-----------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|
| Art | • | • | • | • | |
| Geography | • | • | • | • | • |
| History | • | • | • | • | • |
| MFL | | ? | • | • | • |
| Music | • | • | • | • | |
| PE | • | • | • | • | • |

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| Subject | KS1 | KS2a | KS2b | KS3 | KS4 |
|-------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|
| Citizenship | | | | • | • |
| ICT | • | • | • | • | • |
| D&T | • | • | • | • | • |
| The Arts | | | | | • |

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Issues

- **Expert Panel Report raises a number of questions for DfE:**
 - A slimmed down National Curriculum?
 - Consequences of increasing breadth at Key Stage 4?
 - How will condensed and refined Programmes of Study affect teaching and learning in 'foundation' subjects
 - And how do we establish the prescribed core in these subjects?
 - How would not having Programmes of Study at all affect teaching and learning in subjects moved to the basic curriculum?
 - What does this all mean in a world where more and more secondary schools are converting to Academies?

Next Steps

- Currently consulting informally with teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders on the Expert Panel's Report
- Ministers to announce proposals by the Summer
- Work to develop new Programmes of Study for any subjects to be included (subject to Ministerial decisions) over and above English, mathematics, science and PE
- Consultation on those Programmes of Study in **2013**
- Final versions published **Autumn 2013**
- First teaching from **September 2014**