

# Review of the National Curriculum in England

## Summary report of the call for evidence

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report summarises the response to the call for evidence for the National Curriculum review for England. The call for evidence was open from 20 January to 14 April 2011, during which time 5763 responses were submitted. The Department for Education is grateful to everyone who took the time to contribute to this important exercise.

## Background

On 20 January 2011, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, announced that the Department for Education would lead a review of the National Curriculum in England. The remit for the review, published at the same time, set out that the review would be conducted with the following objectives in mind:

- to give teachers greater professional freedom over how they organise and teach the curriculum;
- to develop a National Curriculum that acts as a benchmark for all schools and provides young people with the knowledge they need to move confidently and successfully through their education, taking into account the needs of different groups including the most able and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- to ensure that the content of our National Curriculum compares favourably with the most successful international curricula in the highest performing jurisdictions, reflecting the best collective wisdom we have about how children learn and what they should know;
- to set rigorous requirements for pupil attainment, which measure up to those in the highest performing jurisdictions in the world; and
- to enable parents to understand what their children should be learning throughout their school career and therefore to support their education.

The review was asked to consider the essential knowledge that children need to be taught in order to progress and develop their understanding in those subjects that Ministers had announced would definitely remain within the National Curriculum in all four school key stages (English, mathematics, science and physical education).

The review was also asked to develop proposals as to whether each of the remaining National Curriculum subjects - art and design, citizenship, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music - should continue to be part of the National Curriculum, and if so, at which key stages. The second phase of the review would produce draft Programmes of Study for all subjects which Ministers decided should be part of the National Curriculum in the future or where it was decided that there should be a non-statutory programme of study.

The review was also remitted to consider:

- the extent to which the content of the National Curriculum should be set out on a year-on-year basis, to ensure that knowledge is built systematically and consistently;
- what, if anything, should replace existing attainment targets and level descriptors to better define the standards of attainment that children should reach, and be assessed against, at various points throughout their education;
- what is needed to provide expectations for progression to support the least able and stretch the most able;
- how the National Curriculum can support the provision of more helpful advice and information to parents on their child's progress; and
- how the content of the National Curriculum can support the embedding of equality and inclusion.

In addition to the call for evidence, the review's work to date has been informed by analysis of existing research, including international evidence, and consulting more widely through a series of events, workshops and meetings with subject experts, academics, teachers and other key partners.

### **Conduct of the call for evidence**

The call for evidence was announced and opened alongside the launch of the review. Interested parties were invited to respond to a series of questions dealing with the issues being considered by the review.

The Department used a number of channels to raise awareness of the call for evidence, including the Department for Education's website, social media, partner and stakeholder organisations and sector specific publications. Events were staged to engage subject communities, and members of the review team and officials appeared at a number of external events and conferences. The very high response rate (for an exercise of this type) attests to the effectiveness of this activity as well as the significant interest that the review has engendered.

### **Overview of responses received to the call for evidence**

The call for evidence generated 5763 responses. The largest proportion of responses received were from respondents identifying themselves as teachers (42%), with the next largest groups being those defining themselves primarily as parents, other individuals and representatives of the higher education sector.

#### *Headline Issues*

The key messages emerging from the responses include:

- there was broad support from respondents for reducing unnecessary prescription and bureaucracy and giving teachers greater freedom to use their professional judgement to help all children to realise their potential;

- respondents were also generally supportive of the principle of a National Curriculum. Particular reasons cited for this support included the way that the National Curriculum provides continuity and consistency: the fact that it ensures continuity as children move through the key stages, as well as when they move between schools within key stages;
- many respondents were of the opinion that there was a need to better balance the teaching of knowledge and skills in the National Curriculum;
- there were mixed views on the current system of level descriptors, with some finding the current system difficult to understand and too prescriptive whilst others felt that the levels do provide a benchmark for comparisons and a good guide to children's progress;
- respondents set out a range of knowledge that they considered essential to include in the Programmes of Study for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and physical education and many favoured Programmes of Study for these subjects on a key stage rather than a year-on-year basis;
- many respondents supported the retention of art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages and music within the National Curriculum. There was less support for the retention of citizenship; and
- respondents highlighted the need to allow time and support for teachers to implement and embed a new National Curriculum, and that this was needed regardless of whether the introduction was phased or not. Some respondents favoured a whole key stage implementation of the Programmes of Study at one time as this would ensure that planning was coherent and progression was addressed.

## **Next Steps**

The call for evidence responses described in this report, along with other evidence gathered during the review, will inform decisions on the future National Curriculum. Draft versions of the Programmes of Study for English, science, mathematics and physical education are being developed and will be shared more widely next year prior to a formal public consultation. The intention is that the final Programmes of Study for these subjects, and any other subjects that it is decided should remain in the National Curriculum, will be available to schools by September 2013 with teaching in maintained schools to commence from September 2014.

## Detailed analysis of the responses to the call for evidence

As some respondents may have answered a number of options for questions, the total percentages listed under any one question may exceed 100%. Throughout the report, figures are expressed as a percentage of those answering each question, not as a percentage of all respondents.

The organisational breakdown of respondents was as follows:

Secondary School	1282
Primary School	1077
Parent/Carer	722
Individual	691
Higher Education – Other	266
Higher Education – Education Specialist	247
Subject Association	210
Local Authority	194
Pupil/Student	191
Other*	135
Employer/Business	101
Consultant	97
Charity	94
Academy	69
Chair of Governors-Governor	63
Independent School	58
Learned Society	53
Special School/SEN Sector	47
Further Education Provider	43
Teaching Association/Union	37
Government Body	28
Trainee Teacher	24
Early Years Sector	18
Awarding Organisation	16

*\*Those which fell into the 'other' category included those who did not specify a type, individual or group response.*

## Parent questions

### Q1 Do you have a child or children in any of the following age groups?

There were 1353 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Under 4	314	23%
4-10 years	716	53%
11-16 years	505	37%
Over 16	376	28%

### Q2 What would most help you to know what your children should be learning in different subjects at school?

There were 631 responses to this question.

229 respondents to this question (36%) felt that they needed to know the subjects and topics their children should cover, and the targets and outcomes they should achieve during each year in order for them to progress. Respondents mentioned that the following products would be useful to them:

- a yearly curriculum, or list of topics, that their children would be learning;
- a list of core content that would be studied and intended outcomes;
- an overview of the knowledge and skills their child would be expected to achieve at different ages;
- more information about qualifications and examination specifications; and
- an approximate time sequence showing when subject content would be taught (e.g. for older children, the units of a GCSE).

212 (34%) said that they would like clear information on the National Curriculum subjects. Suggestions included content and topics the school intended to teach sent home in the form of newsletters, letters, reports or leaflets or an email sent to a personal home address to reduce paperwork.

190 (30%) said they would prefer to receive information about their child's learning and entitlement on-line, via an easily accessible website. It was mentioned that this could be through the school's own individual website or a centralised parent-friendly website.

75 (12%) thought that schools should have parents' evenings or face-to-face meetings in order to explain the National Curriculum to parents. It was suggested that these could be held at the beginning of each key stage or on a termly basis.

63 respondents (10%) said that closer home to school relationships were essential so that parents could keep up-to-date with what their children were learning, and this could also help them to provide guidance and support to their children.

**Q3 Currently schools use eight National Curriculum "levels" to identify the level at which children are working in each subject (e.g. "Your child is at level 4 in English and level 5 in mathematics"). Does this kind of reporting help you to understand how well your child is doing at school?**

There were 1015 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	574	57%
No	326	32%
Not sure	115	11%

234 respondents to this question (23%) thought that the levels were not widely understood by parents and were confusing and unwieldy, especially the 'sub-levels'. Views expressed included that they were meaningless numbers which did not relate to what children could do, and potentially labelled and segregated children in the early years of their education. Some respondents also believed the levels must be simplified and more freedom given to teachers to be creative in their teaching. Parents suggested the following approaches to reporting on their children's progress, which they believed would be more useful to them:

- the use of letters instead of numbers (A, B, C, D);
- age-related expectations;
- using levels only to show a child's progress against developmental criteria;
- revising the levels to reflect the year groups (i.e. level 3 expected at end of year 3, level 7 expected at end of year 7); and
- a re-think of the use of 'sub-levels'.

140 (14%) thought that the levels did provide a useful benchmark for comparison but qualitative comments were also necessary to explain them properly. Some parents said that the meaning of levels was never made clear to them by teachers, and that there was an assumption in many schools that parents fully understood them. They said that there must be clear descriptions of how the levels linked to their child, with a full explanation of how they were used and their meanings.

104 (10%) said that they were not interested in receiving information about the level their child was at, but wanted to know whether their child was happy, behaving well, progressing and working to the best of their ability. Some of these parents stated that they wanted personalised information on their child's development and what they could do to help them to improve.

**Q4 Is there anything that you think could be done to the National Curriculum that would help you support your children's learning more effectively?**

There were 538 responses to this question.

146 respondents to this question (27%) said that the current National Curriculum is too prescriptive and that they wanted bureaucracy reduced in order to free up teachers to teach. They believed that the National Curriculum was too full, with pupils expected to cover too many areas, particularly in the primary phase. It was mentioned that there must be more flexibility for teachers to use their professional

judgement to teach what was appropriate for the pupils in their classes, and in a way that best suited the learning styles of those pupils.

125 (23%) said that the National Curriculum must develop the whole child and teach them the skills necessary to learn. Views expressed included that the National Curriculum should set out to ensure that children had a broad education which provided them with good life and social skills as well as academic knowledge. Respondents also suggested that the National Curriculum should teach pupils the skills which employers would require of them, in order to prepare them for the workplace.

105 (20%) asked for more information and guidance on how they could support and help their child's learning at home to reinforce what they were learning at school. Some suggested that schools could help them by providing ideas for activities, better communication about homework, and by giving them materials.

99 (18%) said that learning should be more creative and enjoyable and not be so results driven. Some respondents expressed a belief that children were turned off education because they were put under far too much pressure to achieve, and would learn better if they were enthusiastic and excited about subjects. Respondents also believed that learning should be interactive and fun, and suggested that activities such as out-of-school visits and trips should be arranged in order to consolidate classroom learning.

60 (11%) said that it was important that teachers effectively engaged with parents, and involved them more in their children's learning and education. Respondents wanted to be able to discuss their children's progress, and felt that teachers should be able to tell them how well their children were doing, and provide help and guidance if there was a concern.

**Q5 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about issues covered in this section.**

There were 40 responses to this question.

17 respondents to this question (43%) said that there had been too many changes to the National Curriculum, and that often these changes had been politically driven. It was also suggested by several of these respondents that the new National Curriculum should be developed for the long term in order to provide greater stability.

12 (30%) said that there should be more vocational options in the National Curriculum for pupils who were less academically minded.

12 (30%) expressed their belief that information and communication technology is an essential component for a 21<sup>st</sup> century National Curriculum. It was also suggested that technology should be used more effectively to communicate between school and home.

## General views on the National Curriculum

### Q6a What do you think are the key strengths of the current National Curriculum?

There were 3392 responses to this question.

1348 respondents to this question (40%) said that the key strength of the current National Curriculum is that it provides a consistent approach and experience for pupils throughout the country. Many of these respondents expressed the view that this consistency made transfer from school to school much easier and allowed further and higher education providers to have a better idea of what young people had previously been taught. It was mentioned that the current National Curriculum has had many years to bed in, and as a result it was well used and understood by teachers.

1203 (35%) thought that breadth of subjects was a key strength of the current National Curriculum and that this helps schools to provide a broad and balanced education and cater for a wide range of interests and abilities. These respondents tended to think that the current National Curriculum is effective in outlining the key skills, knowledge and understanding that should be taught to pupils in all schools and offered real opportunities for creating a comprehensive learning experience.

620 (18%), the majority of which were responding as part of a campaign response, said that one of the key strengths of the current National Curriculum was the provision of practical cooking lessons for all pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3 (*although, in fact, practical cooking is not currently a compulsory part of the National Curriculum*). Respondents believed that it was important for children to learn basic cooking skills to give them the skills and knowledge they needed to take responsibility for their own diet and health, and that of their families in the future.

555 (16%) expressed the view that a key strength of the current National Curriculum was the way that it offered teachers the opportunity to create broad learning experiences for pupils. They thought that the statements of teaching approaches were sufficiently broad to allow teachers to select the best method for each specific piece of teaching and flexibility in delivery models which led to a variety of qualifications encouraging pupils' ambition and progression.

489 (14%) thought that a key strength of the current National Curriculum was that it does not focus solely on knowledge and understanding, but also on the development of skills. It was mentioned that skills development of equal importance to the learning of facts and knowledge, and that once pupils had acquired the skills to learn (e.g. communication, thinking skills and problem solving), they could easily apply this across subject areas.

476 (14%) thought that a key strength of the current National Curriculum was having key learning and skills described within level descriptors, allowing teachers to plan and measure pupil progression. Views expressed by these respondents included that the current National Curriculum provides an effective framework for teachers to support pupil progression through each of the subject areas. Respondents also said that the current National Curriculum helps schools to demonstrate clear progression between year groups and key stages.

449 (13%) thought that a key strength of the current National Curriculum was that it set out objectives and skills for each age phase clearly, and helped teachers to plan a broad curriculum. Respondents mentioned that it was visually clear, and easy to use and understand. It was also said that the subject Programmes of Study were comprehensive and easy to use.

362 (11%) said that the current National Curriculum is effective in giving guidance to teachers as to what should be taught to pupils, for example the skills, knowledge and understanding needed in the different subjects covered at each key stage. Programmes of Study were considered to be a good framework to plan from, especially for less experienced teachers.

### **Q6b What do you think are the key things that should be done to improve the current National Curriculum?**

There were 2277 responses to this question.

1109 respondents to this question (49%) expressed concern that the current National Curriculum was too prescriptive and was a barrier to teachers being able to teach creatively. They stressed that schools and teachers must be allowed more flexibility to implement the National Curriculum, and a number expressed the view that the National Curriculum should act as a guide rather than a rule book. The following suggestions were put forward as ways to improve the National Curriculum:

- have a set of key skills for core subjects linked with the Assessing Pupils' Progress framework, giving teachers greater freedom to implement and teach in an inspiring way;
- less specification and greater simplification of curriculum content;
- the 'core' subjects should contain only the irreducible core and not try to cover the whole subject; for example, English could have a compulsory core but with the addition of locally decided content;
- make the curriculum less fact-based;
- remove the prescriptive and repetitive QCDA schemes of work; and
- make the school curriculum less subject to prescriptive examination specifications.

824 (36%) said that the National Curriculum should be less knowledge-based and more focused on the learning of skills, for example stating that children needed access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities. It was mentioned that a skills rather than knowledge-based curriculum might be considered for primary level as pupils can quickly acquire knowledge later if they had the skills to do so. However, respondents defined skills in different ways and emphasised different types of skills such as practical skills, life skills and critical thinking skills. Similarly, what respondents understood by knowledge differed markedly, making it difficult to draw any clear conclusions. Some respondents also emphasised that there needed to be a balance of knowledge and skills and that an emphasis on one over the other was not useful.

502 (22%) were of the opinion that the content and learning objectives currently included in the National Curriculum, particularly in foundation subjects, should be slimmed down. It was mentioned by a number of respondents that they did not think there was enough time available for teachers to teach the essential basics at the

primary stage. It was also mentioned that the degree of prescription and level of detail offered within the Programmes of Study throughout the whole National Curriculum should also be slimmed down.

Proposals put forward by respondents to achieve this slimming down included:

- publishing statutory Programmes of Study only for the core subjects and then using assessment criteria to guide teaching in other subjects;
- combining Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and having subject Programmes of Study that cover the whole of the 11-16 age range; and
- once the Programmes of Study have been developed, they should not be added to in a piecemeal fashion as doing this had led to overload in the current curriculum.

**Q7a What are the key ways in which the National Curriculum can be slimmed down?**

There were 2450 responses to this question.

670 respondents to this question (27%), of which 361 (54%) were teachers, believed that slimming down could be achieved through a cross-curricular approach to teaching to ensure that pupils learned to transfer skills and knowledge between subjects. They suggested that it should be possible to identify the core subject knowledge and skills required for each curriculum area and then to deliver the curriculum through topics or themes. Respondents also suggested that a set amount of time could then be put aside each week to achieve the basic skills and knowledge required in the key curriculum areas. Respondents also considered that cross-curricular links could be created which would remove the need for discrete subject areas. Cross-curricular links suggested by respondents were the learning of science through mathematics, geography through science, and literacy through ICT, ensuring that very similar objectives were not repeated. Respondents also mentioned that it would be beneficial if cross-curricular teaching already common in primary schools was continued at the beginning of Key Stage 3.

550 (22%) said that the National Curriculum could be made slimmer by placing greater trust in teachers to plan and deliver exciting and inspirational lessons without the prescription that comes with the statutory Programmes of Study. Some respondents said that teachers must be allowed to 'dip into' the National Curriculum rather than be required to cover it all and choose the parts they wanted to cover based on the needs of their pupils and their own subject knowledge and skills. Some also wanted greater flexibility in terms of which foundation subjects should be taught to give the opportunity for schools to fit the curriculum to the needs of their pupils.

537 (22%) expressed their belief that the National Curriculum should focus on the key elements required to ensure that all young people left school literate and numerate. They said that the core subjects must be at the forefront of learning and that the National Curriculum should restrict its statutory requirements to those core subjects. Teachers could then use the greater flexibility they would enjoy to develop more creative teaching approaches.

515 (21%) argued for the retention of the breadth of National Curriculum subjects in both primary and secondary, but said that it was important that the schemes of work and amount of content in these subjects should be slimmed down. Respondents

were of the opinion that a reduction in specified content would allow topics within the curriculum to be studied in greater depth, and would also allow deeper understanding, rather than having a superficial study of a greater span of content.

512 (21%) said that the National Curriculum should not be slimmed down. A number of these were concerned that slimming down the National Curriculum would result in a reduction in the breadth of subjects taught and could possibly endanger the status and importance of those subjects not included in the English Baccalaureate.

403 (16%) thought that creativity was an important element of the National Curriculum.

243 (10%) said that the National Curriculum could be slimmed down by merging subjects to meet the needs of all pupils. A number expressed the view that pupils learned best when they could make connections between subjects. Suggestions of how and which subjects could be merged were as follows:

- reducing the National Curriculum to 6 areas - for example through extending the six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage up to Year 6;
- combining citizenship and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE);
- combining art and design with design and technology;
- incorporating design and technology into science;
- incorporating ICT into design and technology; and
- combining geography and history.

**Q7b Do you think that the proportion or amount of lesson time should be specified *in any way* in the National Curriculum; e.g. for particular subjects and/or within particular key stages?**

There were 3834 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1981	52%
No	1352	35%
Not sure	501	13%

There were mixed views on the issue of specifying the amount of lesson time in the National Curriculum. Those who said “no” tended to argue that the absence of prescribed lesson time allows for a more holistic curriculum. Those who said “yes” tended to argue that it would be helpful for schools to have a guide as to how much time should be spent teaching the various subjects, and also that the specification of the amount of time to be spent on subjects would support breadth and balance in the curriculum and help to ensure that no subject became undervalued.

985 respondents to this question (26%) argued that experienced teachers should be able to assess the needs of their pupils and how best to cater for these needs, and that they should be free to adapt their timetable to make the best use of the time available.

689 (18%) argued that a minimum amount of time for practical subjects such as art and design should be specified. Respondents said there was a danger that these

subjects, regarded by some as non-academic, would be marginalised in the new National Curriculum.

387 (10%) believed that guidance should be given to schools to set out the minimum entitlement and range of subject coverage, but this should be a guideline only and not be set on a statutory footing.

**Q8 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

There were 431 responses to this question.

208 respondents to this question (48%) thought that schools needed the freedom to respond to what motivated their pupils and said it was not desirable to take a 'one size fits all' approach. They argued that the curriculum in a school should reflect the school's priorities and should be based on raising standards and making progress.

136 (32%) said that there should be a move to a more creative, child-centred, joined-up curriculum. They believed that this would not mean a reduction in rigour, but rather a different approach to learning.

113 (26%) believed that attempting to define a 'body of essential knowledge' was an outdated way of looking at education and it would be a backward step if the Government intended to move back to rote learning based solely on knowledge and facts. They suggested that a lot of work had been done in previous years to help children understand subjects, rather than learning by rote or learning facts in isolation.

54 (13%) mentioned the need for more information and guidance about the National Curriculum. Respondents asked for the following:

- guidance on the teaching methods used by schools;
- guidance to free schools and academies;
- that current guidance should be updated and aligned with the Government's new approach to the curriculum;
- the clarification of statutory responsibilities; and
- clear assessment criteria.

41 (10%), of whom over two-thirds were teachers, stated that in the primary curriculum the subject-specific elements were fit for purpose. It was also mentioned that the recent revisions to the new secondary curriculum had created a more flexible and suitable framework for schools, and that pupils were learning more effectively and were more engaged and motivated. These respondents tended to believe that the current National Curriculum was fit for purpose and that no further improvements or revisions were needed at this time.

# English, mathematics, science and physical education

## English

Key stakeholders who responded on English included the National Literacy Trust, English Association, University of Oxford, the National Association for the Teaching of English and NAACE.

Broadly, these stakeholders tended to support a requirement for the National Curriculum to promote reading and writing widely and for pleasure, to create effective readers, writers and communicators, and also focused on the importance of reading, writing, listening and speaking and their inter-relationship. However, there was some variation in the comments made on some of the more specific issues including:

- views on whether a year-on-year approach to setting out curriculum content would be preferable to the current key stage approach were mixed. Two organisations thought that teachers needed greater flexibility which the adoption of a year-on-year approach may restrict, whereas one thought it may be helpful to facilitate planning;
- speaking and listening needed to be explicitly taught – the view was expressed that it is sometimes assumed that children just pick it up, but this is not the case, and therefore speaking and listening should be embedded in all elements of the National Curriculum;
- phonics is crucial for learning to read but not sufficient on its own to produce effective readers. Other reading strategies must also be represented within the Programme of Study, including other cueing systems for learning to read and knowledge of units of meaning;
- reading for pleasure should be encouraged from the beginning of primary school and maintained throughout. OECD research has found a strong link between enjoyment and attainment;
- it is important to ensure good grounding in the technical aspects of writing including spelling, punctuation and correct use of grammar, as well as composition;
- setting out specific knowledge of the English language is acknowledged as important but this must be balanced with the process and skills of learning to talk, listen, imagine, read and write; and
- the use of ICT and multi-media were identified as important aspects of teaching English and should be embedded both within the English Programme of Study and across the whole National Curriculum.

**Q9a What knowledge do you regard as essential to include in the Programme of Study for English? Please also set out why this is essential and at what age or key stage.**

There were 1811 responses to this question.

The majority of respondents said that pupils needed to be secure in the basics of reading and writing and speaking and listening before they could progress in other subjects. They also said that the teaching of English should be focused on developing confident literacy skills to ensure high levels of pupil achievement.

## *Reading*

1096 (61%) said that a greater emphasis should be placed on early reading because this was the key to success across the entire curriculum. They said that screening for reading difficulties should be carried out as early as possible so that pupils who found reading difficult could be helped quickly and effectively. The importance of children hearing good stories read aloud in class and having exposure to a range of literary forms (e.g. drama, novels, short stories and various types of poetry) was also highlighted.

323 (18%) said that it was vital that, above all, children enjoyed and valued reading and writing for pleasure. Respondents mentioned that children who showed enthusiasm for language and literature developed critical and reflective skills. It was also said that more emphasis could be placed on fiction and poetry than is the case in the current Programme of Study and that texts must engage children. Respondents said that children should be able to comprehend both fiction and non-fiction books.

306 (17%) said that there should be a focus on phonics and believed that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Year 1 needed regular practice of phonics in order to be able to build up words.

263 (15%) said that pupils should be taught how to read texts critically, pay attention to tone and structure and to interpret what they were reading. These respondents also emphasised the importance of pupils having secure comprehension skills by the end of Key Stage 2 to enable them to develop higher reading skills in Key Stage 3.

## *Writing*

1100 (61%) specifically discussed the importance of writing, with many arguing that a Programme of Study for English should ensure that children learn to:

- write with clarity;
- organise writing into paragraphs; and
- write in different styles for a range of purposes, with particular emphasis on non-fiction writing skills as these are more likely to be used in adult life.

742 (41%) said that it was essential to stipulate knowledge of spelling, punctuation and accurate grammar in the Programmes of Study - they felt that this was not given sufficient prominence currently. They said that the teaching of these skills would ensure clear and effective written communication.

187 (10%) believed that, regarding writing, English should be more focused on those genres which demonstrated a good command of the English language. Respondents said that previous curricula covered too wide a range of genres for writing in English, which led to many children struggling because they were not at the level of ability needed to progress in all of them.

## Speaking and Listening

743 (41%) said that speaking and listening must continue to be a central element in the statutory curriculum at every key stage. They were of the opinion that the ability to communicate effectively was fundamental to all aspects of human development and should therefore not be omitted or downgraded.

322 (18%) specifically wanted to see more emphasis on vocabulary and oral skills and children being taught to speak in different situations and how to respond appropriately to others.

### **9b Considering your response to the above, should the Programme of Study for English be set out on a year-on-year basis or as it currently is, for each key stage?**

There were 2183 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key stages	1263	58%
Year-on-year	655	30%
Not sure	265	12%

Over half of those responding to this question (58%) favoured a key stage approach for the English Programme of Study. A main explanation for this was that key stages allow teachers to introduce flexibility and ensure that teaching and learning is appropriate for the ability of the pupils. Many of these respondents believed a year-on-year approach would be overly prescriptive and would not allow teachers to introduce current issues and ideas that support the teaching of English. They were of the opinion that a key stage approach allowed themes to be looked at over time with different levels of complexity, and enabled teachers to return to a theme to ensure pupils' understanding.

Those respondents who indicated a preference for the Programmes of Study to be set out on a year-on-year basis said that this would help to show a progression of skills and knowledge. They tended to believe that the adoption of a year-on-year approach would help to highlight areas where a pupil had a particular issue and would allow teachers to focus on addressing that issue. It was also mentioned that a year-on-year approach would help teachers to plan and set clear expectations of what should be covered at each stage.

Those respondents who were unsure as to their preferred approach suggested that teachers should be free to choose the most appropriate Programme of Study for their pupils. It was suggested that it did not matter whether the Programme of Study was organised on a year-on-year or key stage basis as long as teachers had the flexibility to teach in a way that allowed them to realise their pupils' potential – the point was also made that pupils tend not to learn in a linear fashion and that teachers need the flexibility to be able to take account of this. Some respondents said that while they felt Key Stage 2 to be too long, a year-on-year approach would be too constricting and offered other suggestions for organising Programmes of Study. One suggestion was for three bandings in primary:

Key Stage 1:                      Years 1 and 2

Lower Key Stage 2:            Years 3 and 4

Upper Key Stage 2:            Years 5 and 6

394 (18%) said that because children progress at different rates, progress over a key stage was a more reliable indicator than year-on-year judgments. Respondents mentioned that teachers differentiated for their classes according to the needs of pupils, so a ladder of skills progression would be more appropriate than a prescriptive year-on-year guide.

223 (10%) said that teachers need greater flexibility to be able to apply the Programmes of Study to meet the individual needs of their pupils. They thought that, as in the case of a programme like the National Literacy Strategy, there was a danger that teachers thought they had to adhere to it rigidly, regardless of context. They also tended to think that teachers should have more flexibility and choice when designing the curriculum for their pupils.

## **Mathematics**

Key stakeholders that responded on mathematics included the Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education, London Mathematical Society, Mathematical Association, Association of Teachers of Mathematics, Mathematics in Education and Industry, Personal Finance Education Group, Royal Statistical Society and National Association of Mathematics Advisors.

The key findings from the evidence submitted included:

- support for a key stage approach rather than year-on-year;
- support for a slimmed down curriculum built upon around key components that enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts;
- the importance of presenting content so that it captured key mathematical ideas and presented them in a way that showed connections that would aid understanding of the links between different aspects of mathematics;
- the importance of including mathematical processes, such as reasoning and problem-solving, to support the use and application of mathematics;
- the need for a greater focus on the importance of algebraic and arithmetic manipulation; and
- support for reduced content in primary mathematics to create more time for the learning of key concepts to be consolidated before pupils entered secondary school.

**Q10a What knowledge do you regard as essential to include in the Programme of Study for mathematics? Please also set out why this is essential and at what age or key stage.**

There were 1499 responses to this question.

The majority believed that application of the four operations, multiplication tables, place value, measures, data handling and geometry, were all essential, and must be taught in real and purposeful contexts so that children could see how and why they would use these skills throughout their lives.

876 respondents to this question (58%) said that basic number skills were key to everything in mathematics and the National Curriculum must ensure that pupils acquire a sound understanding of the fundamentals. They stressed that the basics of addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication were all essential.

733 (49%) believed that applying mathematics to real life situations was a useful way of engaging students in a subject that they may feel is dull or lacks relevance. They said that children needed to see how they could apply what they had learnt. Respondents mentioned the need for more emphasis on the practical mathematical skills that were used in everyday life such as functioning with money, time, measure, and problem solving. It was suggested that every child should leave school with basic competence in practical, everyday arithmetic so that they could, for example, verify their own bills and payslips.

291 (19%) said that pupils, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2, must know basic geometry and be able to identify the names and properties of shapes.

261 (17%) were of the opinion that pupils should be able to interpret and display statistics and know how to record standard data.

257 (17%) thought that there should not be any significant changes to the current Programme of Study in mathematics.

234 (16%) said that multiplication tables were important and children should be expected to know them by the end of Year 6. They suggested that the lack of a secure knowledge of tables at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was a major concern for teachers at secondary level.

198 (13%) thought that quantities and measures were vital and should remain as per the current Programme of Study. Respondents said that pupils should be taught to measure length, area and weight.

**Q10b Considering your response to the above, should the Programme of Study for mathematics be set out on a year-on-year basis or as it currently is, for each key stage?**

There were 1988 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key stages	1081	54%
Year-on-year	656	33%
Not sure	251	13%

The majority of respondents argued that the Programme of Study for mathematics should continue to be set out by key stage. They believed that a year-on-year curriculum would be overly prescriptive as teachers would have to refer to several years' Programmes of Study in mixed ability classes, and this could lead to repetition.

Respondents who favoured a year-on-year approach said that this would help to build up a child's knowledge over the year and prevent concepts from being introduced too early. They suggested that the end of a key stage was an arbitrary cut off point, based largely on historic factors. It was suggested that the National Curriculum should ensure that there was a progression in skills, and must not restrict teaching to a linear method, as this did not allow teachers to adjust the Programme of Study where necessary to provide creativity and variety in teaching.

Those respondents who were unsure mentioned that it would be beneficial if the Programmes of Study could be set out in a way that helped to demonstrate progression but without restricting it to year groups or key stages. They believed this would allow pupils to develop their mathematical understanding at their own pace within the limits of the general areas of learning.

238 (12%) said that pupils made progress at different rates and the key stage format enabled them to make quicker, slower or different progress than the expected rate. It was mentioned that the flexibility of key stages is helpful in that that they can be shortened or elongated for different groups of pupils when it is appropriate to do so.

## Science

Key stakeholders that responded to questions about science included the Science Community Representing Education (SCORE) which is a coalition of organisations including the Association of Science Education (ASE), the Institute of Physics, the Royal Society, the Royal Society of Chemistry, and the Society of Biology. The Royal Society and ASE also submitted their own, separate responses.

The key issues emerging from their evidence included:

- support for a slimmed down curriculum, focused on the 'big ideas' of science that 'earn their keep' in terms of explanatory power and overarching importance;
- the importance of teaching ideas about science (principles and concepts of scientific enquiry) as well as ideas of science (substantive course content across the disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics);
- emphasis that science is a practical subject and students should have an 'authentic experience' of what it means to work as a scientist;
- curriculum statements should refer to procedural skills in laboratory and fieldwork that enhance technical and manipulative skills;
- understanding of scientific procedures and knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts;
- primary level science should take as its starting point children's existing experience of and preconceptions about the world, and should aim to develop these into explicit understanding and challenge them where they do not stand up to scientific scrutiny;

- science should not be taught as the separate disciplines until Key Stage 3 or later, although it is appropriate to specify material as belonging to one of biology, chemistry or physics;
- the curriculum should be coherent in terms of non-repetitive progression of learning over time, appropriate sequencing of material across topics and disciplines, and meaningful linkage to the mathematics curriculum;
- the current National Curriculum has important strengths to retain; and
- there is an urgent need to clarify the relationship at Key Stage 4 between the National Curriculum and GCSEs.

**Q11a What knowledge do you regard as essential to include in the Programme(s) of Study for science? Please also set out why this is essential and at what age or key stage.**

There were 1410 responses to this question.

The majority of respondents thought that at primary level, the attention should be on skills and understanding and the sciences must not be separate disciplines. They said that pupils should be encouraged to be curious about the world around them and the focus should be on providing an authentic experience of scientific phenomena. Respondents were of the opinion that separate science disciplines should be brought in at Key Stages 3 and 4 (see table at 11c-f). They believed that the core should contain the fundamentals of biology, chemistry and physics, and the teaching at these key stages must be about knowledge that could be used in later life. Most respondents said that in Key Stage 4, pupils should be given the opportunity to choose which areas to study in greater depth i.e. two areas, such as biology and chemistry, or physics and biology etc. It was mentioned that regardless of 'the three science disciplines' the greatest focus must be on developing investigation and enquiry skills. Respondents believed that pupils must not just learn scientific facts but should be engaged in how the world works.

668 respondents to this question (47%) said that pupils often switched off from science at Key Stages 3 and 4 because it was not 'fun' any more. Teachers also struggled to cover the prescribed content. Respondents believed that pupils should undertake more experiments so that they could discover things for themselves. They suggested that there should be a scientific and technological Programme of Study that developed pupils' investigative and enquiry skills, enabled them to engage in scientific investigations and promoted enjoyment.

442 (31%) were of the opinion that science in primary schools should be trimmed right back to nature study and health and should be as relevant to everyday life as possible. Respondents believed that Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils should develop an understanding of biology (i.e. life and living processes) and physical processes. They thought the current Programme of Study to be too detailed in terms of knowledge that pupils had to cover, and that this in turn had led to shallow learning.

249 (18%) said that it was vital that physics and physical processes were included in the National Curriculum.

244 (17%) said that it was essential that the science Programme of Study should have a real life context so innovations could be made. They believed that science should be creative and facts should be learnt with a practical application. Respondents said it must be based on the acquisition of skills in a practical setting so

that a pupil's ability would develop naturally and the skills could be applied throughout their lives.

219 (16%) were satisfied with the current science curriculum and believed that it met the needs of children and should remain as it was. They said that the present National Curriculum was comprehensive and gave children a broad and balanced experience of scientific knowledge and understanding.

218 (15%) thought that pupils must have knowledge of atoms, elements, compounds and mixtures as a minimum as these were the basis for all chemistry.

**11b Considering your response to the above, should the Programme(s) of Study for science be set out on a year-on-year basis or as it currently is, for each key stage?**

There were 1931 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key stages	1214	63%
Year-on-year	504	26%
Not sure	213	11%

The majority of respondents were of the opinion that children developed and matured at different rates so a key stage approach would be preferable. It was also mentioned that schools needed flexibility, and the problem with a year-on-year approach would be its prescriptive nature and its unresponsiveness to pupils' needs.

Respondents who supported a Programme of Study set out on a year-on-year basis said schools needed a structure for progression to avoid repetition of content. It was mentioned that the existing key stages were too unevenly distributed across the primary years. One suggested approach was to reorganise into a new Key Stage 1 which spanned years 1-3, and a Key Stage 2 spanning years 4-6. Those suggesting this approach believed that this would allow pupils to further advance their skills in language and mathematics, resulting in a greater maturity at Key Stage 2 and would provide an opportunity for further progress within science.

**Do you believe that the Programme(s) of Study for science should identify separate requirements for biology, chemistry and physics?**

**Q11c to Q11f:**

	Number of responses	Yes	No	Not sure
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	2159	366 (17%)	1655 (77%)	138 (6%)
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	2138	602 (28%)	1335 (62%)	201 (9%)
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	2043	1505 (74%)	334 (16%)	204 (10%)
Key Stage 4 (14-16)	2067	1789 (87%)	108 (5%)	170 (8%)

## Physical education (PE)

Key stakeholders that responded on PE included the International Council of Sports Science and Physical Education, Association of Physical Education, Youth Sport Trust and Sport England.

Key messages included:

- a preference for a key stage rather than a year-on-year approach to specifying curriculum content, as children develop at different rates;
- support for physical literacy and learning core skills at Key Stage 1, improving basic skills through movement and applying skills to an increasingly challenging broad range of activities at Key Stage 2 and 3, and building on knowledge and skills and providing pathways to lifelong engagement with sport and physical activity at Key Stage 4;
- the importance of striking a balance between competitive and non-competitive sport to engage pupils less inclined to participate in sport;
- support for teaching the relationship between physical activity and a healthy and active lifestyle;
- any new PE National Curriculum must fit the needs of diverse learners, including SEND pupils and those who were gifted and talented;
- support for the inclusion of swimming; and
- support for a slimmed down Programme of Study which retains the strengths of the current National Curriculum.

### **Q12a What do you consider should be the essential elements of the Programme of Study for physical education (PE)? Please also set out why these elements are essential and at what age or key stage.**

There were 1580 responses to this question.

The majority said that children should understand the importance of personal health and fitness and the long term health effects of not taking exercise. They stressed that there must be a variety of sports and activities to choose from, i.e. sport for fun, sport for competition, team games and individual sports, so that children could find something they liked and would want to continue with in later life. Some respondents expressed concern at perceived suggestions by the Government that the focus in the PE curriculum would be on competitive team sports. They believed that this could lead to a fall in participation. It was suggested that a balance should be struck between the competitive and participation based approaches as it was important to remember that there were lots of children in schools who enjoyed participating, but did not want to engage in competitive, inter-school activities.

649 respondents to this question (41%) said that children should learn the importance of exercise and its effect on health, and understand that being physically active was part of a healthy lifestyle. They were of the opinion that physical activity should be compulsory and undertaken daily. It was mentioned that the amount of time spent on PE in schools must not be decreased from the current 2 hour recommendation, with some saying that this should be increased.

369 (23%) said that PE must also be about the development of skills and not just about exercise. They said that children needed to learn fine and gross motor skills

and coordination, good hand/foot-eye coordination as well as co-operation and how to compete. Respondents were of the opinion that in Key Stages 1 and 2, the emphasis should be on catching and throwing, running, jumping, skipping, games skills (e.g. hitting and kicking a ball), swimming, dancing and gymnastics, with competitive organised team sports such as football, netball and rugby introduced before the end of Key Stage 2.

328 (21%) said that competitive team games were a good way of interacting with others whilst keeping fit and provided opportunities to strengthen motivational skills. It was mentioned that competitiveness should be reintroduced within PE so that children could learn to cope with the experience of 'losing'. They said that children should have the opportunity to take part in competitive sports, including individual and team sports. It was also suggested that children should be taught the skills which would allow them to compete at their own level, and those who were showing a particular talent should be offered the opportunity of further specialist coaching.

327 (21%) did not think that the sports or activities in which children participated should be prescribed, and it was more important that every child was participating in some form of physical activity. It was mentioned that the Programme of Study should stipulate covering a 'breadth of physical exercise' and the interpretation of this should be left to schools. However, some respondents suggested that if the Programme of Study for PE was to be prescribed then it must be broadened to include activities such as cycling, skateboarding, climbing and other more modern sports.

311 (20%) thought that dance must remain an essential element of the curriculum, particularly at Key Stages 1-3. It was mentioned that it could be maintained in the National Curriculum in PE as now, or it could be a separate subject linked to the arts. Respondents suggested that dance was a combination of academic learning and intense physical training. They mentioned that the value of dance was that it promoted creativity, and the possibilities it offered for the development of a child's imaginative, physical, emotional and intellectual capacity.

306 (19%) mentioned the inclusion of games in the National Curriculum, but did not specify a particular sport or type of game; or whether they should be competitive or non-competitive.

276 (17%) said that the focus must be on the enjoyment of playing games together, interacting and having fun. They believed it was important that children were encouraged to enjoy physical exercise for life. It was also mentioned that the risk assessment part of out-of-school activities should be relaxed so that pupils could be encouraged to be more 'risk aware'.

272 (17%) thought that swimming must be included for all key stages as it was a life and safety skill. It was also suggested that in later key stages water safety and life-saving skills should be included. However, respondents expressed concerns over the funding needed for pupils to partake in this form of exercise.

250 (16%) said that gymnastics was important in order for pupils to learn about their own abilities and limits, and how to use apparatus properly and creatively.

230 (15%) said that it was important that pupils learnt how to be a good sportsperson, i.e. they followed rules and respected officials even when they did not agree with a decision. They thought pupils should be taught the attitudes that came

from a range of games and sports such as leadership, team playing, dedication and determination.

**Q12b Considering your response to the above, should the Programme of Study for physical education be set out on a year-on-year basis or as is currently, for each key stage?**

There were 1993 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key stages	1238	62%
Year-on-year	489	25%
Not sure	266	13%

The majority were of the opinion that PE was an area where it was essential that the focus should be by key stage, because a year-on-year approach assumed that everyone learnt at the same rate. They said that key stage-based Programmes of Study would allow teachers the flexibility to respond to the needs of individual pupils. It was suggested that if pupils' attainment was judged year-on-year, it would not take into account that there could be nearly 12 months' age difference between two pupils in an academic year group. Therefore they believed that key stages were a much fairer way to judge attainment over a more extended period of time.

Those who were in favour of a year-on-year approach believed that key stages would be unrealistic in the PE curriculum because the physical differences and performance levels varied widely between children within each key stage. They suggested that a key stage approach was arbitrary and created an artificial barrier that led to transition issues.

Those who were unsure suggested that a framework was needed that showed clear progression through the acquisition of skills, and gave an average age at which these skills should be acquired. They said that this would allow for a clear tracking of pupils' progress through the education system and would provide teachers with a concise document allowing them to differentiate for pupils both above and below average.

**Q13 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

There were 81 responses to this question.

A lot of comments made by respondents were covered in the previous questions in this section.

24 respondents to this question (30%) mentioned that ICT must be included as a core subject. They believed it that it would be a retrograde step to remove ICT from the core curriculum, given the pace of technological change and the world that today's primary aged children would grow up in. They suggested that correctly managed, ICT was used to support all other areas of the curriculum, and children would need to be IT literate if they were to flourish in future. Respondents said removing ICT from the core curriculum would be likely to widen the attainment gap between rich and poor.

22 (27%) were of the opinion that more resources were needed in order to deliver the new curriculum. It was mentioned that funding must be available to schools for facilities, staffing, staff expertise, specialist equipment and access to outside providers for certain activities.

40 (49%) said that it was important that teachers received training in PE, as high quality PE came through having staff who had access to high quality training courses.

## Other subjects currently in the National Curriculum

### Art and Design

**Q14a Art and design is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-3. In future, do you think art and design should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2576 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2020	79%
No	445	17%
Not sure	111	4%

The majority of those who responded said that if a new National Curriculum were to be designed then it was imperative that art and design was included as a compulsory subject. They said if art and design was removed it would jeopardise its position in schools and demote its value. Respondents said that art was essential in the early stages of child development and that children should have access to quality creative activities to develop their creative thinking skills. Respondents thought that art and design enabled older children to fully experience creative expression. They said that its removal from the National Curriculum would eventually affect the national economy, as the country would experience a potential shortage of designers, artists, architects, advertisers, and graphics experts.

Those who disagreed or were unsure mentioned that, although art and design has an important place in schools, the content of the Programme of Study in its current form was geared towards teaching it as a subject rather than focusing on the beneficial skills it promoted or teaching it in a creative and engaging way. These respondents believed that art and design should not have a statutory Programme of Study, but should be taught in a more flexible and cross-curricular way.

**Q14b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 2258 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	2006	89%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	2048	91%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	1856	82%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	714	32%
No key stage given	118	5%

439 respondents to this question (19%) said that art was an essential component for the development of creative thinking, and creativity and use of imagination were skills that should be nurtured and fostered. They were of the opinion that art and design was a subject which engaged children from an early age and that learning in all areas was greatly enhanced through the creative approaches developed within this subject area. Many respondents referred to Sir Ken Robinson's arguments on whether schools are killing creativity.

**Q14c** If you think art and design should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?

There were 1275 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	757	59.5%
No	411	32%
Not sure	107	8.5%

**Q14d** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 1009 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	718	71%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	724	72%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	632	63%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	319	32%
No key stage given	103	10%

**Q14e** For any key stages in which you think art and design should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?

There were 1439 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	774	54%
No	520	36%
Not sure	145	10%

**Q14f** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 982 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	394	40%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	383	39%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	401	41%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	588	60%
No key stage given	116	12%

## Citizenship

### Q15a Citizenship is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 3 and 4. In future, do you think citizenship should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?

There were 3084 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1729	56%
No	1066	35%
Not sure	289	9%

Respondents had mixed views on the retention of citizenship in the National Curriculum.

Those respondents who said yes believed that pupils should learn about how the world worked, including democratic processes, human rights/responsibilities and the challenges of living in a diverse society. They said that citizenship education was the only subject where current global issues were discussed, and where pupils were taught how to deal with controversial issues. They suggested that it was vital for young people to become informed and active citizens. It was mentioned that citizenship should be introduced at Key Stage 2 so that children would have the best possible chance to make sense of the world they lived in. It was also suggested that, if citizenship was not part of the National Curriculum, teachers would struggle to know the content they should be teaching.

Those respondents who disagreed, or were not sure, argued that, although they acknowledged that citizenship was an important topic, they were unsure that it should be taught as a separate subject. They thought that it could be taught in other relevant disciplines such as geography, history or PSHE. Respondents mentioned that if the decision was made to keep citizenship in the National Curriculum, then its Programme of Study should be slimmed down.

784 (25%) thought that it was important for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of the wider world and to respect the people who lived in it. They believed that pupils must be helped to understand the rights and responsibilities of being a 'good citizen'. They said that it was important that pupils began to develop an understanding of society and their role in that society from a very early age. It was mentioned that if a 'Big Society' was to be developed, then citizenship was where future contributors to this society would be cultivated. Respondents also mentioned the current apathy surrounding politics, and believed the low turn-out at elections was symptomatic of a nation where individuals did not see themselves as part of a society or 'nation', so it was essential to continue with the teaching of citizenship in schools.

525 (17%) said that citizenship should be compulsory to give children the entitlement to learn about, and become involved in the UK's political, legal and financial systems, and that it was integral in helping them become informed citizens. They believed that it was essential to retain a statutory Programme of Study to ensure that issues such as racism, discrimination, diversity and inclusion were covered by all schools, in all

year groups. Respondents said that citizenship was a crucial subject area and was more essential to our lives than ever before.

497 (16%) were of the opinion that citizenship was a useful way to deal with issues that came up in a school environment. They said that citizenship needed to be embedded in the vision of a school, so that responsibilities were applied daily by pupils within their school community. They believed that pupils would then adopt these responsible attitudes and skills and use them later in their adult life.

**Q15b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 1838 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	1058	58%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	1499	82%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	1662	90%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	1505	82%
No key stage given	99	5%

**Q15c If you think citizenship should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?**

There were 1416 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	616	43.5%
No	660	46.5%
Not sure	140	10%

**Q15d If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 876 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	502	57%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	549	63%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	557	64%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	504	58%
No key stage given	174	20%

**Q15e For any key stages in which you think citizenship should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?**

There were 1397 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	739	53%
No	532	38%
Not sure	126	9%

**Q15f If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 880 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	525	60%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	562	64%
Key Stage 3 (7-11 years)	520	59%
Key Stage 4 (11-14 years)	519	59%
No key stage given	120	14%

## Design and Technology

**Q16a Design and technology is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-3. In future, do you think design and technology should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 3642 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2837	78%
No	670	18%
Not sure	135	4%

The majority of respondents who answered this question thought that design and technology (D&T) should be retained within the National Curriculum. They said that if children engaged with design thinking, craft processes and technological innovation it would further develop their skills in creativity, questioning, making judgements, testing and evaluating, and working independently. It was mentioned that D&T should be a compulsory subject because not all pupils had the ability to excel in the academic subjects, and if it was removed some pupils would be forced to spend more time on subjects they did not enjoy. Respondents expressed concern that if D&T was removed from the National Curriculum, there would be a real risk that schools would not commit to teaching it as it is more resource intensive than other subjects.

**Q16b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 3150 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	2498	79%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	2767	88%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	2822	90%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	1257	41%
No key stage given	144	5%

758 respondents to this question (24%) thought that it was important to keep food technology and cooking within D&T to cover the fundamentals of diet, nutrition, and cooking skills to help ensure that children made healthy lifestyle choices.

515 (16%) said that the combination of practical and life skills made D&T a vital subject and taught children essential 'hands on' practical skills. Respondents also believed that it taught children life skills such as the ability to analyse, research, evaluate, problem solve, plan and be knowledgeable about sustainability. It was mentioned that these skills enabled pupils to progress and succeed in life, and enabled them to meet the challenges of a changing and technological world. It was suggested that pupils enjoyed learning about the 'built world' as well as technological advances, and it was important that they understood the design and manufacture of everything around them.

466 (15%) said that D&T was essential for creativity, and the country's reputation for producing forward thinkers and innovators. Respondents mentioned the need for D&T to lose its dull and vocational image, and be perceived more as an academic and creative subject.

341 (11%) argued that it was difficult to see how the country's manufacturing base could be broadened and made more successful if D&T was not included in the National Curriculum. They also expressed the opinion that this subject inspired children and young people to become the future technicians, engineers and designers who are essential for the UK's future economy.

**Q16c If you think design and technology should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?**

There were 1321 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	620	47%
No	573	43%
Not sure	128	10%

**Q16d If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply**

There were 846 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	496	59%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	524	62%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	457	54%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	323	38%
No key stage given	120	14%

**Q16e For any key stages in which you think design and technology should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?**

There were 1389 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	767	55%
No	489	35%
Not sure	133	10%

**Q16f If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 872 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	435	50%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	469	54%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	422	48%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	410	47%
No key stage given	150	17%

## Geography

**Q17a Geography is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-3. In future, do you think geography should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2831 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2413	85%
No	324	12%
Not sure	94	3%

The majority who answered this question were of the opinion that geography should remain as a separate compulsory discipline within the National Curriculum. They believed that geography was the key to understanding and responding to global issues, such as environmental change. Respondents said that the skills taught in this subject were easily transferable into other disciplines. However, at primary level respondents thought that more emphasis should be placed on basic geographical knowledge, for example, the locations of countries and map reading, in order to slim down the curriculum.

Those respondents who said no, or were unsure, believed that any elements of geography deemed essential should be amalgamated into other curriculum areas, such as science or PSHE. Some suggested that geography and history should be combined as one discipline to slim down the National Curriculum.

571 respondents to this question (20%) believed that it was vital for children to learn about the world around them. These respondents said that children needed to have a sense of place, to understand global issues and politics, to care for the environment and to know their role in the world. They stressed that children should know where natural resources came from, and understand the impact of their lives on the natural environment.

**Q17b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 2521 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	2154	85%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	2356	93%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	2340	93%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	1180	47%
No key stage given	50	2%

**Q17c** If you think geography should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?

There were 1046 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	513	49%
No	459	44%
Not sure	74	7%

**Q17d** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 779 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	453	58%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	431	55%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	367	47%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	290	37%
No key stage given	137	18%

**Q17e** For any key stages in which you think geography should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?

There were 1120 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	599	53%
No	437	39%
Not sure	84	8%

**Q17f** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 775 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	368	47%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	320	41%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	250	32%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	402	52%
No key stage given	126	16%

## History

**Q18a History is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-3. In future, do you think history should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2559 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2178	85%
No	316	12%
Not sure	65	3%

A significant majority of those who answered this question were of the opinion that history should remain as a separate discipline in the National Curriculum. They said that it was key that children had an understanding of who they were, where they came from, and that they had a good knowledge of, and pride in, their heritage. It was mentioned that history was an explicit part of curricula in other countries, and respondents believed it was important that it was accorded the same importance in this country.

Some of those respondents who said no or were unsure thought that history should be part of a cross-curricular approach or linked with geography to form a new humanities subject. It was specifically mentioned that history should be incorporated into other areas of learning at Key Stages 1 and 2, and not be a stand-alone subject. Respondents believed that history should be included in 'knowledge and understanding of the world' at these key stages. It was also mentioned that the National Curriculum could simply outline the key skills to be taught, but it should be left to individual schools to decide on the content or themes through which to develop these key skills.

345 respondents to this question (13%) said that it was vital for pupils to have an understanding of the past in order to understand current and future issues, and how actions in the past had an impact on the future. They believed that without history, pupils would find it hard to build an identity and have an understanding of the world.

**Q18b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 2247 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	1907	85%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	2125	95%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	2077	92%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	980	44%
No key stage given	48	2%

**Q18c** If you think history should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?

There were 974 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	489	50%
No	422	44%
Not sure	63	6%

**Q18d** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 749 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	433	58%
Key Stage 2 (7 -11 years)	422	56%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	362	48%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	269	36%
No key stage given	147	20%

**Q18e** For any key stages in which you think history should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?

There were 1019 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	574	56%
No	382	38%
Not sure	63	6%

**Q18f** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 750 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	343	46%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	309	41%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	244	33%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	384	51%
No key stage given	128	17%

## Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

**Q19a Information and communication technology is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-4. In future, do you think information and communication technology should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2560 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1954	77%
No	497	19%
Not sure	109	4%

A majority of respondents to this question were in favour of ICT remaining as a compulsory National Curriculum subject through all of the key stages. It was argued that if ICT was removed from the National Curriculum, it was probable that children in areas of deprivation, where access to ICT at home might be more limited, could be disadvantaged. Other respondents, however, were of the opinion that ICT should not be taught as a separate subject, but as a skill to be learnt and used through other National Curriculum subjects.

520 respondents (20%) were of the opinion that the teaching of ICT is a necessity for children in today's society. They believed that more precedence should be given to ICT and to new technologies as children needed the skills to function successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was mentioned that children should be taught ICT skills from a young age, in order to be able to keep up with technological advancements.

346 (14%) said that ICT should be taught in a cross-curricular manner. Many of these respondents said that technology was advancing at too fast a rate for a curriculum to be written that would remain relevant in the long term.

**Q19b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 2084 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	1751	84%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	1912	92%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	1902	91%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	1454	70%
No key stage given	45	2%

**Q19c** If you think information and communication technology should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?

There were 934 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	477	51%
No	380	41%
Not sure	77	8%

**Q19d** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 678 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	395	58%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	395	58%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	391	58%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	369	54%
No key stage given	127	19%

**Q19e** For any key stages in which you think information and communication technology should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?

There were 884 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	513	58%
No	309	35%
Not sure	62	7%

**Q19f** If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

There were 653 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	332	51%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	316	48%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	314	48%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	360	55%
No key stage given	128	20%

## Modern Foreign Languages

**Q20a Modern foreign languages (MFL) is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stage 3 only. In future, do you think modern foreign languages should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2679 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	2171	81%
No	389	15%
Not sure	119	4%

A significant majority of those who responded to this question were of the opinion that MFL should be part of a broad and balanced National Curriculum so that pupils develop an awareness of languages and cultures outside of their own. They believed that learning a foreign language not only helped pupils to understand their own language more deeply, but also helped them to respect and understand other cultures around the world. It was noted that children in many parts of Europe began to learn at least one foreign language at the age of 7. For England to be competitive in the European business market, it was therefore important that when young people left school they were able to converse in at least one other language, rather than relying on other countries to speak English. However, concerns were raised by respondents that GCSE must not be the sole outcome at Key Stage 4. They said that MFL in Key Stage 4 led only to GCSE language examinations and felt this was counter-productive as GCSE was not an appropriate qualification for all pupils.

Those respondents who disagreed with MFL being included in the National Curriculum expressed the following issues and concerns which were mainly about the teaching of MFL in Key Stages 1 and 2:

- primary school children did not need to learn a foreign language as it took valuable curriculum time away from other vital subjects;
- MFL was more suitable for secondary schools who had specialist teachers;
- Key Stage 1 must be about learning to read and write English before pupils started to learn another language; and
- it was unrealistic to force pupils struggling with English to study a foreign language to exam level.

351 (13%) were of the opinion that in order to be proficient in another language, pupils needed to begin learning as soon as possible. It was suggested that, at primary level, pupils were more open to learning new and exciting things. Respondents said that there was overwhelming evidence that an early start went a long way to instilling positive attitudes to languages and foreign cultures, and children had recently made good progress in learning languages at Key Stage 2. They were concerned that the work that had been done to introduce languages into primary schools would be curtailed. They believed the excellent progress at primary level should be extended into Key Stage 3, with children enabled to communicate in another language. Those with a specific interest or talent could opt to study MFL further in Key Stage 4.

**Q20b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 2276 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	1279	56%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	1874	82%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	2112	93%
Key Stage 4 (14 -16 years)	1359	60%
No key stage given	67	3%

**Q20c If you think modern foreign languages should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?**

There were 1109 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	449	41%
No	568	51%
Not sure	92	8%

**Q20d If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 724 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	358	49%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	373	52%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	294	41%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	269	37%
No key stage given	141	19%

**Q20e For any key stages in which you think modern foreign languages should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?**

There were 1163 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	659	57%
No	423	36%
Not sure	81	7%

**Q20f If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 803 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	427	53%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	354	44%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	266	33%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	319	40%
No key stage given	120	15%

## Music

**Q21a Music is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stages 1-3. In future, do you think music should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?**

There were 2593 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1803	70%
No	673	26%
Not sure	117	4%

The majority of those who answered this question said that music should remain as a subject within the National Curriculum. They were of the opinion that the inclusion of music would help to promote arts and creativity in schools and safeguard against an emphasis on academic subjects. They suggested that access to music education should be a right for all children. Respondents mentioned that the UK had a rich musical heritage and it was essential that this continued. They said that children must have the opportunity to develop musically throughout their school life so that musical innovators and audiences were produced. It was also mentioned that huge efforts had been made both in the primary and secondary phases to include initiatives such as 'Wider Opportunities', 'Sing Up' and 'Musical Features', and these must be maintained.

Those respondents who disagreed said that music should not be compulsory or a discrete subject and consideration should be given to having a combined creative or performing arts subject, which could include drama and dance. They thought that music was best taught in a cross-curricular way and skilled or specialist music teachers would be needed.

354 respondents to this question (14%) were of the opinion that music helped to develop many other skills in children and musical thinking was a universal form of intelligence that shaped social interaction. Respondents suggested that music:

- could be used as a tool to deliver other skills e.g. phonics and reading, building discipline and mathematical understanding;
- allowed confidence building, self expression, and team work;
- was a vehicle for identity and cultural expression;
- developed and enhanced concentration, creativity, performance, and enjoyment;

- raised self-esteem in children and aided relaxation;
- brought a fun element to life at home and school; and
- developed motor skills.

282 (11%) said that music must be maintained as a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1-3, and should be offered as an option at Key Stage 4. They mentioned that this was recommended by the Henley Review of Music which reflected the role of the National Curriculum in providing a basis for music education both in and out of school and supported equality of access to music education for all children.

**Q21b If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 1966 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	1812	92%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	1844	94%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	1609	82%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	508	26%
No key stage given	49	2%

**Q21c If you think music should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?**

There were 1367 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	677	50%
No	614	45%
Not sure	76	5%

**Q21d If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 921 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	576	63%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	576	63%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	504	55%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	327	36%
No key stage given	111	12%

**Q21e For any key stages in which you think music should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory Programme of Study, to be used by schools as guidance?**

There were 1345 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	767	57%
No	495	37%
Not sure	83	6%

**Q21f If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.**

There were 919 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)	415	45%
Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)	420	46%
Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)	414	45%
Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)	477	52%
No key stage given	149	16%

**Q22 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

There were 442 responses to this question.

204 respondents to this question (46%) raised the following issues and concerns about the English Baccalaureate (EBacc):

- if subjects beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and PE were not compulsory, schools would drop them and offer only those relevant to the EBacc and league tables;
- a problem with the EBacc was that ICT was excluded which would not be justifiable in this digital age;
- religious education (RE) needed to be brought into both the National Curriculum and the EBacc;
- removing the arts from the National Curriculum, in addition to excluding them from the EBacc would detract from providing a rounded education; and
- music should remain a National Curriculum subject and should also be included in the EBacc.

182 (41%) said that RE must be included in the National Curriculum at all key stages. They believed that RE was a key subject and it was important that children learnt about living globally - RE helped them to explore their own beliefs and values. They stated that including RE would ensure that all children had access to a balanced impartial knowledge about key religions which was an essential part of community cohesion.

142 (32%) were of the opinion that, although not part of the review, PSHE, including sex and relationship education (SRE), should be a compulsory part of the National Curriculum.

## Supporting and recognising progress

### Q23a Do you think the National Curriculum should continue to specify the requirements for each of the 8 levels of achievement?

There were 2910 responses to this question.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	1955	67%
No	502	17%
Not sure	453	16%

The majority of those answering this question, of whom 64% were teachers, said that this was a long-established approach and schools did not want any change. They believed that specifying levels of achievement provided a good way to measure pupils' understanding and progress. Respondents also thought that the level descriptors were very broad measures that enabled teachers to make well-founded summative judgements at the end of key stages.

Those respondents who said "no" thought that the structure of the levels combined different purposes of assessment (i.e. evaluative, summative and formative). They thought that this one system could not adequately achieve all three purposes, and was widely misunderstood by teachers. It was also mentioned that having levels of achievement suggested that knowledge was fundamentally hierarchical and developmental. A number argued that the development of knowledge was contextual and very rarely linear and predictable; therefore levels of achievement would always struggle to reflect the different ways in which children learn. Some respondents mentioned that an approach to assessment was needed which would recognise the collaborative and cooperative aspects of learning, and the facility to use the knowledge and understanding of others.

Respondents who were unsure said that, although they supported the principle of determining levels, they were concerned about the way in which they were used. They thought that the levels both determined and restricted the curriculum through the setting of targets and the collating of data. They believed that this forced schools to 'teach to the test' and any alternative must overcome the tendency to do this. They suggested that levels should be returned to their original purpose of supporting progression in learning and supporting teachers to guide next steps. It was mentioned that sub-levels of attainment should be abolished, and the link between cognitive levels of attainment and overall school performance published in league tables should be removed.

389 (13%) of those who responded to this question said that having the 8 levels of achievement created a coherent path for pupils to follow from Key Stage 1 to 3. Some respondents believed that removing this path would affect standardisation across schools. It was mentioned that the levels gave teachers, pupils and parents clear and consistent guidance on pupils' progress, no matter which school they were in.

**Q23b If you have answered no or not sure, what alternative(s) do you propose to replace Attainment Target level descriptors? You may want to suggest different approaches for different subjects and/or different key stages.**

There were 536 responses to this question, of which 254 (47%) were from teachers.

Respondents thought that having 8 levels of achievement for all subjects was very prescriptive, and meant that some subjects could be disadvantaged by having to tailor what was taught to fit into the 8 level structure. They said that the level descriptors for each subject should be revised so that they were easier to interpret and standards made more explicit. It was mentioned that the expected progress in Key Stage 3 was much less ambitious than in Key Stage 2, and that this was not appropriate.

283 respondents to this question (53%) believed that the Assessing Pupils' Progress guidelines should replace attainment targets for the core subjects. Respondents said that more use of professional judgement, teacher observations and ongoing assessment should be encouraged.

240 (45%) were of the opinion that not all pupils would reach the levels expected at the end of each key stage and as long as they were making excellent progress they should not be made to feel under pressure or inadequate because they had not reached the expected level. It was suggested that the targets should relate to progress between levels only and not to a particular level of attainment for a certain age, as every child started and ended differently. Respondents said that the level descriptors must demonstrate the range of progress expected across the full range of pupil needs, aptitudes and talents and should only be used for their intended purpose which was summative assessment.

69 (13%) thought that the levels should be much more precise than was currently the case.

**Q24 Within each Programme of Study, how should the curriculum and attainment targets be defined to ensure appropriate education for pupils in a wide range of circumstances as learners?**

There were 1073 responses to this question.

338 respondents to this question (32%) suggested that teachers should be given the flexibility to evaluate the needs of their pupils and define expectations on the basis of their knowledge, experience and expertise. They said that the objectives could be provided but teachers should decide how to teach them.

237 (22%) said that the attainment targets needed to be clearer and made more understandable for professionals, parents and pupils. They said that they should be less wordy and written in clear English, with less room for interpretation. Some of the ways suggested by respondents to define and make the targets clearer are set out below:

- level descriptors should be broken down for internal tracking purposes only;
- a move towards concepts within Programmes of Study as opposed to specific content would allow for differentiation of response within a subject area;

- express the end of key stage benchmark in terms of a simple 'I can' statement that related to the fundamental operations, principles and concepts as set out in the Programmes of Study;
- each level could be broken down into detailed stepping stones so that those making less than expected progress could see what small steps they needed to take to progress further;
- split the levels into a, b, c;
- simplify by having one level for each year;
- discourage the use of sub-levels which were often produced artificially from numerical data and had little meaning; and
- for English, mathematics and science the expected sub-level should be assigned to the relevant year group.

184 (17%) were of the opinion that attainment targets should be defined in relation to the acquisition of key skills. They mentioned that if the attainment targets related to skills, it did not matter what circumstances pupils were faced with as they could learn these skills through a variety of contexts.

181 (17%) said that Programmes of Study should be set out as progression statements which would apply irrespective of age or year group. They felt that this would allow teachers to assess and plan progress.

174 (16%), of whom over two thirds were teachers, said that the guidance was clear within each National Curriculum subject, and consistently written across all National Curriculum subjects so should be left as it was. Respondents also said that the current level descriptors generally provided good benchmarks for pupils to aspire to.

120 (11%) thought that attainment should be judged through teacher assessment, for example through the monitoring of children's work produced in class and homework they have produced rather than by exams or tests.

### **Q25a How do you think the needs of low attaining pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?**

There were 1906 responses to this question.

778 respondents to this question (41%) said that it was crucial that the principle of an accessible curriculum for all pupils was retained, and greater emphasis should be placed on differentiation. They said teachers should be trusted to differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of their pupils.

702 (37%) believed that there must be the flexibility to deliver a personalised curriculum to meet the individual needs of low attaining pupils. Respondents mentioned that it should be left to teachers to decide how best to teach the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in each subject. They said that teachers should be able to use their professional judgement to address the needs of low attaining groups and have flexibility over the time allocation needed to teach them. It was mentioned that clear guidance and examples from best practice should be provided to support teachers and show how low attaining children could make accelerated progress.

486 (25%) said that the needs of low attaining pupils should be met through specialist intervention work, delivered by trained professionals, and through one to

one tutoring. It was also mentioned that it was essential that funding should be provided to allow for smaller group teaching.

264 (14%) thought that low attaining pupils should be taught a narrower range of subjects and the focus should be on the core skills of literacy and numeracy to support their progression. It was mentioned that pupils should be able to read, write and do basic mathematics before they accessed a wider curriculum.

199 (10%) suggested that the needs of low attaining pupils should be addressed through practical work tailored to their level. It was suggested that there must be provision for low attaining pupils to opt out of certain subjects, such as languages and humanities, which they often found more difficult, and have more opportunities to develop creative skills.

### **Q25b How do you think the needs of high attaining pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?**

748 respondents to this question (40%) said that it was crucial that the principle of an accessible curriculum for all pupils was retained, and greater emphasis should be put on differentiation. They said that teachers must be trusted to differentiate their teaching and learning to meet the needs of high attaining pupils.

708 (38%) were of the opinion that more opportunities for challenging work that went beyond the basic knowledge base should be provided for high attaining pupils. They suggested that these pupils should have the opportunity to further develop areas of specific interest and challenges to maintain a high level of achievement. Respondents thought that they must be allowed to do independent learning projects, open ended tasks and have more opportunities to explore their own interests in order to push them further.

592 (32%) said that teachers should be recognised as professionals who would do their best to ensure that all children reached their full potential. They said the needs of high attaining pupils would continue to be addressed by high quality teaching, supported by a modern and flexible curriculum.

213 (11%) said that high attaining pupils would be extended by working at a higher level of the National Curriculum, and they must work to their ability and not their age.

179 (10%) thought that the needs of high attaining pupils should be addressed by the introduction of Programmes of Study aimed specifically at this group.

### **Q25c How do you think the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) should be addressed through the National Curriculum?**

There were 1686 responses to this question.

634 respondents to this question (38%) said that reasonable expectations of attainment would vary considerably according to the nature of a pupil's needs and disability. They were of the opinion that teachers should have flexibility to adjust their teaching methods and content and teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in the best way that suited a pupil's abilities.

528 (31%) said that it was crucial that the principle of an accessible curriculum was retained for all pupils, and greater emphasis should be put on differentiation.

465 (28%) thought that more time, money and resources should be invested in schools to support SEND pupils.

**Q25d How do you think the needs of other specific groups of pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?**

There were 1097 responses to this question.

553 respondents to this question (50%) said that this must be addressed by schools. They stressed that teachers should be recognised as professionals who would use their expertise to ensure that all children reached their full potential whatever their ability.

318 (29%) suggested that it was crucial that the principles of an accessible curriculum were retained for all and that tailored approaches should be adopted to challenge individual pupils and respond to personal needs.

223 (20%) said that equality of opportunity did not mean treating everybody equally, as some children would need extra support at different stages of their development. Respondents mentioned that the needs of specific groups should be met through specialist intervention work, delivered by trained professionals and with one to one tutoring. It was mentioned that it was important that funding should be provided to allow for smaller group teaching. Respondents also mentioned that support should be provided to assist children acquiring English as an additional language to reach nationally agreed age appropriate standards.

180 (16%) believed that the National Curriculum should show an appreciation of different groups and cultures to generate a better understanding of other people's needs and beliefs. It was suggested that the Programmes of Study should be broad and balanced enough to accommodate the culture, ethnicity and gender of all pupils and particularly of those pupils who were disengaged. It was also mentioned that teachers should ensure a variety of learning and teaching approaches to ensure inclusion, interest and motivation.

**Q26 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

There were no other issues raised.

## International comparisons

**Q27a Please give examples of any jurisdictions that could usefully be examined to inform the new National Curriculum. Please also briefly describe the reasons for the examples given.**

There were 675 responses to this question.

245 respondents to this question (36%) suggested that Finland had a very strong education system, especially at primary level, and that it demonstrated that a nurturing approach helped children to develop in the early years. It was mentioned that, in Finland, formal grading was not introduced until secondary school, and that the inspection regime was based on the quality of provision, rather than the grades a school achieved. Respondents thought that Finnish school environments were of the highest standard and research should be done to ascertain the differences between their system and the English system.

205 (30%) suggested Asian countries should be researched. Respondents mentioned specifically:

- Japan and Hong Kong's approach to the teaching of mathematics;
- Singapore's use of new technology in teaching;
- Singapore's 'Teach less Learn more' education strategy;
- China's approach to teaching children (i.e. the use of selection via competitive examinations and differentiated schooling for pupils with particular aptitudes and abilities); and
- Singapore's use of selective examinations to determine admission to a particular type of school.

112 (17%) said that leading European states should be researched, ideally those with a similar demographic profile to England.

104 (15%) mentioned that Scandinavian countries should be looked at in respect of their approach to early years education. Respondents mentioned that these countries also had excellent linguistic structures in place, and had a great emphasis on outdoor learning in their 'Forest Schools'.

103 (15%) believed that Canada's model of a credit system for courses, which means if pupils do not pass they re-sit the course or repeat a year, was worth investigating. Respondents also mentioned that every course had an equal weighting and the curriculum followed in Ontario offered units of study broken down for each year group and levels within that year group.

75 (11%) said that Scotland and Ireland should also be considered, especially in terms of the core curriculum. It was mentioned that Northern Ireland had retained much more academic rigour in its schools and had out-stripped the rest of the UK in attainment at GCSE level. It was also suggested that England should look to the Scottish 5 - 15 guidance and Curriculum for Excellence materials, and to the former Scottish system used throughout the 1970/80s under which learners had real choice in terms of the subjects they could specialise in at Key Stage 4. Respondents also stated that Scotland had a single examination board and nationally agreed outcomes which were very effective and should be investigated.

73 (11%) believed that contextual factors such as parents' working patterns, early years childcare provision, social conventions and access to out of school activities must be looked to before meaningful comparisons with other countries could be made. Respondents said the context in which children learnt was different in other countries, so it was impossible to adopt their educational systems entirely. It was also stressed that PISA should not be seen as the only measure of the UK's educational performance and it should be recognised that drill and practice may raise scores but did not necessarily produce well-rounded employees suited to the modern workplace.

71 (11%) said that Australia was worth researching, particularly Adelaide and New South Wales. They suggested that Australia valued vocational learning and there was much more freedom for schools and communities to set the school curriculum. However, respondents noted that Australia was about to introduce a new curriculum, and it would be wise to keep abreast of this as feedback could help inform the new National Curriculum in England.

68 (10%) were of the opinion that Germany's teaching of technology in its schools had enhanced their economic success and that this should be researched.

67 (10%) suggested looking at best practice in the USA. One example given was the way in which in some American states pupils were made to repeat years until they had mastered key knowledge. It was also mentioned that the US 'National Education Technology Plan 2010' defined an expectation that ICT was essential to modern education.

**Q27b Considering your response to question 27a above, what features of their national curricula or wider education systems are most significant in explaining their success?**

There were 465 responses to this question.

184 respondents to this question (40%) believed that the freedom and trust placed in schools to provide a relevant and rounded education, based on the needs of pupils was the key reason other countries were more successful. They said that other countries delivered a broad and varied choice of subjects to pupils of all abilities, and allowed flexibility for teachers to work under an overarching umbrella, which guided rather than stipulated what and how they taught.

143 (31%) believed that structured learning was started too early in England and pointed out that formal education did not start until age 7 in other countries. Successful countries had a child-centred approach to learning, where the focus was on learning through play. They were of the opinion that a later start to formal education did not hamper these children, as research had shown that their attainment quickly overtook that of children in England. They suggested that the Government should consider allowing children to start formal education later than the present 4 or 5 years of age.

127 (27%) said that great care needed to be taken as social, economic and community structures differed greatly between countries. Respondents observed that what worked in some countries had a tendency to be held up as an example for all. This was a mistake as what worked in Finland, for example, was unlikely to work in England.

86 (18%) were of the opinion that other countries placed more trust in their teachers to teach and were not overly target or attainment driven. They said they did not have the added pressure of test results being used to rank schools in league tables.

70 (15%) said that teachers were more respected and valued by society in other countries and this helped to produce more excellent teachers.

58 (12%) said that a feature of success was having strong parental involvement and good home-school relationships.

46 (10%) thought that teachers in other countries were encouraged to continue with training and professional development, and that the recruitment of highly qualified teachers, and teachers with an expertise and specialism, was key to their success.

**Q28 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

There were 169 responses to this question.

101 respondents to this question (60%) said that comparisons should not be made with other countries. Respondents said that they had different educational and social structures that could not be meaningfully compared with the English system.

71 (42%) thought that although comparisons were of great interest they should be handled with care as the social and economic contexts varied considerably between countries.

45 (27%) said that comparisons to other countries could only be made when the same assessments were used: otherwise there was no point in comparing two completely different systems.

**Q29 What research evidence on how children learn provides the most useful insights into how particular knowledge should best be sequenced within the National Curriculum Programmes of Study?**

There were 522 responses to this question.

235 respondents to this question (45%) said that a greater focus on knowledge in the National Curriculum would not be the best way forward as it could result in 'teaching to the test'. The terms 'skills' and 'knowledge', however, were used to mean different things, making it difficult to draw clear conclusions. Respondents suggested that the focus should be on teaching skills, as knowledge alone did not foster inspiration, creativity or enterprise. It was mentioned that pupils should be taught the skills to learn so that they can gain for themselves the knowledge that was appropriate for the subject.

145 (28%) said that children learned best when they were involved, engaged, and able to make connections across their learning. Respondents said that children learned best through topics that interested them, and believed that the current National Curriculum had become boring.

80 (15%) supported the conclusions of the Cambridge Primary Review.

61 (12%) observed that children did not learn in the same way or at the same speed, and nor did they reach the same levels of attainment.

61 (12%) stated their support for the recommendations of the Rose Review of the primary curriculum.

## Transition

### **Q30 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 to ensure a smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage?**

There were 869 responses to this question.

The majority believed that the biggest issue was the transition between two completely different curricula and the lack of join-up between the two stages.

544 respondents to this question (63%) said that it was vital for Key Stage 1 to demonstrate continuity with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) because this would allow for the development of skills through play-based learning rather than an emphasis on knowledge. It was also noted that the Rose Review and the Cambridge Primary Review both proposed the extension of the EYFS approach into Year 1, and both saw the value of combining subjects through topics or thematic work. Respondents believed that this approach would enable teachers to introduce and practice literacy, numeracy and scientific skills in a context that would interest and stimulate children.

131 (15%) said that a structure should be introduced in the early years which continued into Key Stage 1 so that there was familiarity at the point of transition between the two. It was suggested that the “learn by play” model in reception year was not adequately preparing children for Key Stage 1 and was inhibiting learning. Respondents believed that there needed to be more structured teaching in the EYFS, which would ensure that all children understood very basic mathematics and English before they started compulsory schooling.

111 (13%) believed that the needs of each individual child must be considered and the personal, social and emotional needs were foremost at this stage of their development. Respondents said that there should be an emphasis on play, creativity, the development of basic learning skills and attitudes (i.e. social skills and interpersonal skills) and developing aspirations and independence.

89 (10%) said that there should be similar areas of learning, and common or clearly linked measurement scales for assessment purposes, across the two curricula.

88 (10%) said if the National Curriculum was based on the six areas in the EYFS there would be a much smoother transition between the two. Respondents mentioned that the new National Curriculum should relate to the early learning goals and clearly show the progression from the Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 1. It was also suggested that a new method of assessment needed to be put in place to allow the objectives met in the Foundation Stage to be built upon.

86 (10%) said that formal knowledge-based learning should not be introduced until children were ready to start formal learning.

**Q31 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 to ensure a smooth transition from Key Stage 2?**

There were 1109 responses to this question.

449 respondents to this question (40%) said that it was essential that good communications and relationships between primary feeder schools and secondary schools were developed. They felt that it was essential that there was cooperation and good quality dialogue and transition links between them. They said that it was important that there was a better understanding and preparation of teachers within both these phases, and that there was joint planning and teaching prior to and during the transition period.

440 (40%) suggested that it was essential that there was a clear definition of content and coverage in Key Stage 2 so that Key Stage 3 teachers could build on prior knowledge, and pick up and carry on seamlessly. They said that Key Stage 3 teachers must have knowledge of the curriculum in Key Stage 2, and vice versa. Respondents suggested that Key Stage 3 needed to build on Key Stage 2 with an extension of ideas so that children did not lose momentum, and that it must link directly to what was taught in Key Stage 2, using the same terminology and concepts. Preparatory work must be done in Key Stage 2 to allow for a smoother transition. It was also mentioned that a Year 6/7 shared curriculum would help with this transition.

192 (17%) were of the opinion that many children 'switched off' during the early years at secondary school as they were repeating lessons from Key Stage 2. Respondents mentioned that secondary schools must teach new material and make it practical and interesting so that children were not bored. Some thought that a reduction in what was taught at Key Stage 2 would allow Key Stage 3 to deliver new and exciting material.

121 (11%) expressed concern about Key Stage 2 and 3 assessments.

**Q32 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 4 to ensure the effective operation of GCSE and other public examinations?**

There were 616 responses to this question.

167 respondents to this question (27%) were of the opinion that transparency about what was to be learnt and what was examined was an important factor. Some respondents said that clear choices with an explanation of the potential long term benefits were essential.

146 (24%) said that pupils should experience continuity between all key stages, with clear progression through their attainment targets.

114 (19%) thought that more focus should be placed on developing skills for use in the workplace. They said that the skills learnt in Key Stage 4 needed to focus on developing good citizens, who possess the skills needed to compete in a global economy.

111 (18%) thought that allowing children to have more choice of GCSE subjects that played to their strengths and interests was important. There was some concern that forcing children into subjects they did not enjoy, or were not naturally skilled at, could limit their future prospects. Respondents said that a broad base of equivalent courses from which students could choose courses and programmes appropriate to their interests, ability and aspirations was required. It was also mentioned that if the range of compulsory subjects were to be reduced at Key Stage 3 then options at Key Stage 4 would automatically be reduced.

68 (11%) felt that Key Stage 4 had become too prescribed. They said it was essential that pupils continued to be challenged and engaged by a subject, and that exam preparation did not become the top priority in Key Stage 4.

62 (10%) felt that there was a lack of joined-up thinking between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 because GCSE did not address the skills developed in Key Stage 3. They believed that GCSEs should be subject to review in the same way as the current National Curriculum because GCSEs were themselves unfit for purpose. They suggested that GCSE content was unappealing and did not challenge pupils, and until GCSEs were changed, the curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4 would be driven by GCSE specifications.

62 (10%) were of the opinion that careers education was very important and expressed concern that this was to be changed. Respondents believed that careers education was central in motivating pupils to achieve their best, and to identify the roles they would be best suited to in life. They believed that if careers advice was delivered effectively it would raise expectations and achievement, and also increase social mobility.

**Q33 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.**

Respondents did not raise any other issues.

## Implementation

### **Q34 What are the particular issues that need to be considered in phasing the introduction of the new National Curriculum in the way proposed, with Programmes of Study in some subjects introduced in 2013 and the rest a year later?**

There were 1556 responses to this question.

676 respondents to this question (43%) mentioned that a major problem in relation to the implementation of previous reviews of the National Curriculum had been the lack of time for appropriate teaching and resource development, and stressed that teachers needed time and support to implement and embed, and prepare and plan. They said that schools must have access to any materials in good time in order to become familiar with the layout and ethos. The following issues were also mentioned:

- the need for sufficient time to consult with interested organisations and to train teachers to ensure that they could deliver the new curriculum confidently;
- that there should be opportunities for teachers to work with professionals from other organisations to enrich their knowledge and facilitate opportunities related to specific subject areas in the curriculum; and
- although teachers were used to coping with change, any changes would need to be handled sensitively and with plenty of support if a complete overhaul to the National Curriculum was brought in.

644 (41%) believed that the National Curriculum would only be as good as the teachers who implemented it, and the process of implementation would require significant subject support. They were of the opinion that to accompany the launch of a new National Curriculum it would be vital to encourage and support teachers with guidance, teacher training, and continuing professional development (CPD). They stressed that this would promote confidence and understanding of how best to apply the new National Curriculum in the classroom.

251 (16%) said that schools would need to carry out a review of their current curriculum provision, and how the new National Curriculum would impact on this provision in order for the relevant funding and resources to be in place. Respondents suggested that if there were big changes in the areas to be taught, funding for training and time for staff to be released to carry out new planning would be required.

207 (13%) thought that teachers would need to look at current practice and how the proposed changes would be implemented and that this would require extra training or INSET days.

177 (11%) were of the opinion that much of the knowledge and skills content of the current National Curriculum was suitable and could be used as a reference point in the preparation of the new Programmes of Study. They believed that the existing National Curriculum had strengths and care should be taken to ensure that these were not lost. It was mentioned that many teachers had just spent years developing a 'creative curriculum' in primary schools and any changes that seemed to be taking a backward step would not be well received by teachers.

166 (11%) said that there must be full and effective consultation with teachers, schools and others to allow them to comment on the draft National Curriculum before it was introduced. They believed that the National Curriculum must be absolutely correct before it was implemented on a wide scale, and that any new Programmes of Study should be fully discussed with teachers before being implemented.

**Q35 What other arrangements, if any, need to be considered in implementing the new National Curriculum, and how they should be addressed?**

There were 346 responses to this question.

129 respondents to this question (37%) were of the opinion that teachers must be treated as professionals, and the Government should have more trust in teachers to deliver. Respondents believed that schools should have the flexibility to implement the new National Curriculum as appropriate to meet the needs of their pupils.

118 (34%) expressed concerns about the inspection framework and the monitoring of the new curriculum and respondents asked when Ofsted would start to inspect the provision under new National Curriculum. They said that inspection criteria should be made more explicit. The following issues were raised:

- the Ofsted schedule should take changes into account and adapt as necessary whilst giving schools the chance to adjust to the changes in the National Curriculum;
- there were concerns raised over whether Ofsted would be sufficiently knowledgeable about the new National Curriculum to undertake inspections; and
- if there was to be less prescription, inspectors must be able to make judgements that went beyond assessing a school or teacher's compliance with a particular approach or strategy.

70 (20%) said that the new National Curriculum should be piloted first before full implementation in order to trial the changes and reflect on the evidence that this would produce. They believed that the quick introduction of the original National Curriculum had resulted in so many changes after the first year that it meant that teachers had to make frequent changes to the curriculum. They believed that each time a new initiative had been introduced in previous years there hadn't been enough trialling, which had resulted in further modifications.

42 (12%) said that it was vital to engage with parents. Respondents also said that parents needed information about the National Curriculum, and consideration must be given to how parents would be reached. Respondents said that parents were very important to effective learning, and the requirements of a revised curriculum must be communicated clearly to them so that they could support learning at home. In particular, the expectations of progress and attainment through the curriculum needed to be understood so that parents could support and challenge schools with their delivery of the new curriculum.

## Other issues

### **Q36 Please use this space for any other evidence or views you wish to feed into the review at this stage.**

There were 468 responses to this question.

175 respondents to this question (37%), of whom 69% were teachers, said that it would be good for children, schools and teachers to be given longer to make something successful before any more changes took place. They felt that the curriculum was constantly being reviewed or changed and that they must be allowed time to embed and consolidate before more changes were made.

98 (21%) said that it was vital that both knowledge and skills were included in the National Curriculum, believing it would be meaningless to try and articulate one without the other. It was mentioned that very often children were expected to remember methods, rules, and facts without grasping the underpinning concepts, or make connections with earlier learning, particularly in mathematics and science subjects.

85 (18%) said that it was vital that vocational learning continued within any new National Curriculum. It was mentioned that there should be more employment-based vocational training which was more linked to external employers than at present.

69 (15%) commented that any National Curriculum must be creative, innovative and a lot more exciting and engaging for children.

61 (13%) were of the opinion that slimming down the National Curriculum could result in pupils receiving a poorer education and the proposed changes should not therefore be put into place. The importance of breadth and balance must not be overlooked.

57 (12%) said that the National Curriculum should act as an equal opportunity leveller and the three principles of inclusion in the current National Curriculum should be retained. They thought that the statutory inclusion statement should be made much more prominent and the fact that learning opportunities should be appropriate for each child or group of children made clear. It was mentioned that under the previous Government, social partnership played a key role in raising standards in schools. The Equality Act (2010) placed a duty on schools and other public bodies to eliminate discrimination, to promote equality and to foster good relations between groups. The curriculum was a key vehicle for enabling schools to do this. The National Curriculum aims and objectives should include explicit reference to the duty placed on schools. The aims and objectives should make it clear that schools were expected to use the curriculum to challenge discrimination, promote equality and foster good relations between groups.

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