



Department
for Education

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 16 April 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date.

Reform of the National Curriculum in England

Consultation Response Form

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for confidentiality:	
Name: Ed Pawson (chair)	
Organisation (if applicable):	
National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)	
Address: National Association of Teachers of Religious Education 1020 Bristol Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6LB	

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Public Communications Unit by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

Please indicate one category that best describes you as a respondent

<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisation representing school teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Subject Association	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Further Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer/Business Sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other		

Please Specify:

We are the subject association for teachers of Religious Education, representing RE teachers at all phases, from age 5-19 years.

Are you answering this consultation in response to particular subjects? Please tick all those that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	science
<input type="checkbox"/>	art & design	<input type="checkbox"/>	citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	computing
<input type="checkbox"/>	design & technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	history
<input type="checkbox"/>	languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	music	<input type="checkbox"/>	physical education
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable				

1 Do you have any comments on the proposed aims for the National Curriculum as a whole as set out in the framework document?

Comments:

1 Section 3.1 (Aims), rightly makes reference to the importance of core knowledge, but no mention is made of the way children learn. The skills young people need to develop in order to understand how to learn are also a key ingredient in our educational system.

2 Study of RE enables young people to encounter significant core knowledge and thinking skills helping them to become fully educated citizens. There is a danger that, because it is not a part of the NC, it is omitted from this discussion and thus marginalised. Therefore, even though it is not a NC subject, RE must be referenced throughout this NC document.

3 As an example, RE must be added to the grid in para 3.5. Without RE here there is a clear implication that it is irrelevant to the school curriculum.

4 RE must be added to the list of humanities subjects at KS4 (entitlement areas)

2 Do you agree that instead of detailed subject-level aims we should free teachers to shape their own curriculum aims based on the content in the programmes of study?

	Agree	x	Disagree		Not sure
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Comments:

Detailed subject-level aims are important and should continue to be specified. This applies especially to subjects like RE, where teachers are often not subject specialists, and who may therefore not be very familiar with the underlying significance of particular topics, themes or skills.

3 Do you have any comments on the content set out in the draft programmes of study?

Comments:

1 There seems to be an anomaly between the expressed desire to give schools greater curricular freedom, and yet to have massive over-prescription in certain areas (eg History)

2 There also seems to be an over-emphasis placed on factual knowledge acquisition, to the detriment of concepts, skills and processes.

3 In many subjects (eg History) there seems little consideration given to age appropriate learning.

4 There should be guidance on how learning will be assessed.

5 The model for English, Mathematics and Science, with one column for statutory content and another for non-statutory guidance, is helpful.

4 Does the content set out in the draft programmes of study represent a sufficiently ambitious level of challenge for pupils at each key stage?

	Sufficiently ambitious		Not sufficiently ambitious	x	Not sure
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Comments:

There is such variation in content and expectations between subjects that this is difficult to answer in one comment. There is massive over-prescription in History, which is completely unrealistic. The idea that 5-7 year olds should be able to understand “concepts such as civilisation, monarchy, parliament, democracy, and war and peace that are essential to understanding history” is not realistic or helpful. Whereas the instructions for a subject like Citizenship are realistic and the brevity is helpful.

5 Do you have any comments on the proposed wording of the attainment targets?

Comments:

1 The statements about attainment targets are very vague and non-specific. They don't seem to add anything to the PoS. It is difficult to see in what sense they are targets, and in the case of history 'skills and processes' seem quite absent from the PoS.

2 Parents, pupils and teachers have come to understand the 8 point progressive levelling system which has become established in all curriculum subjects over the last 20 years. This gives a clear statement of development of skills and knowledge which allows comparisons to be made within and across subjects, through time. What is being proposed is unclear and seems less helpful. It will not allow such a useful, universal overview of a child's academic progression.

6 Do you agree that the draft programmes of study provide for effective progression between the key stages?

	Agree		Disagree	x	Not sure
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Comments:

Some of them do, but where they are too focused on core knowledge (eg History), it is hard to see how skill development will be progressing.

7 Do you agree that we should change the subject information and communication technology to computing, to reflect the content of the new programmes of study?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

No comment

8 Does the new National Curriculum embody an expectation of higher standards for all children?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x	Not sure
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Comments:

It does for English, Mathematics and Science. The amount of prescribed subject content contained in the History PoS is unrealistic and age-inappropriate so not conducive to raising standards at all. It is not easy to say for other subjects because there isn't enough detail to be clear about the expectations and there are no measures of attainment to show exactly what levels would be reached.

9 What impact - either positive or negative - will our proposals have on the 'protected characteristic' groups?

Comments:

No comment

10 To what extent will the new National Curriculum make clear to parents what their children should be learning at each stage of their education?

Comments:

No more than before.

Lists of facts, events and dates to learn don't add up to cognitive development and it may help parents identify content, but does that really signify intellectual and emotional growth?

11 What key factors will affect schools' ability to implement the new National Curriculum successfully from September 2014?

Comments:

1. Primary: a long period of prescription has meant many primary teachers, especially more recently qualified ones, have relatively little experience in planning their own curriculum. The changes will allow more freedom and this may pose a challenge to them.
2. Secondary: the nature and availability of resources will be a key factor.

12 Who is best placed to support schools and/or develop resources that schools will need to teach the new National Curriculum?

Comments:

Subject associations.

13 Do you agree that we should amend the legislation to disapply the National Curriculum programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements, as set out in section 12 of the consultation document?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure
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Comments:

14 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposals in this consultation?

Comments:

- 1 This document and other DfE publications on the curriculum need to be clearer that RE is a statutory part of the whole curriculum and needs to be taught by law.
- 2 Where statements are made about what needs to be taught, lists need to include RE, albeit stating (perhaps as a footnote) that it is not an NC subject.
- 3 More emphasis needs to be given to the fact that RE must be taught as an academic discipline on a par with the rest of the curriculum.
- 4 NATRE agrees that recent curriculum changes have focused too much on processes and too little on content. However, partly because of a desire for brevity and partly because of a renewed emphasis on core knowledge alone, there does seem to be far too little guidance given here on the development of skills to enable learning.
- 5 NATRE believes that, as RE is a statutory requirement for all schools, the publication and dissemination of the revised framework for the National Curriculum should include full reference to RE, so that schools are aware of the whole of the statutory curriculum not just part of it. Indeed the RE Council is working on a RE curriculum document parallel to the NC Framework and it would be good if they could be linked.

15 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, whether it was easy to find, understand, complete etc.)

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply

E-mail address for acknowledgement:

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected
- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 16 April 2013

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit,
Area 1c,
Castle View House,
East Lane,
Runcorn,
Cheshire,
WA7 2GJ.

Send by e-mail to: NationalCurriculum.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk