



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

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Reason for confidentiality:	
Name: Professor Peter Mandler, President/Professor Arthur Burns, Vice President and Chair Education Policy Committee	
Organisation (if applicable): Royal Historical Society	
Address: Royal Historical Society University College London Gower Street London	

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:

The Royal Historical Society

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 checked="" 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:

The Society welcomes much of the statement on proposed aims set out in the Framework document. Indeed, many of our reservations about the *Subject Content* specifications for our own discipline, History, could be said to reflect areas where we believe they do not live up to the aspirations and aims set forth here: for example (2.1), that the National Curriculum will help schools fulfil the requirement that they teach a ‘balanced and broadly based’ curriculum that ‘prepares pupils ... for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’; (3.1) that the National Curriculum ‘provides pupils with an introduction to the core knowledge that they need to be educated citizens’ and ‘introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement’; and that (3.2) ‘The National Curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons’. We believe that the specifications for History in the Framework document provide a less effective response to these challenges than those set out for other disciplines.

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?

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

In the specific case of History, we want to comment on the *Aims* set out on p. 165 of the Framework document. The initial statement of the *Purpose of Study* seems to us to sell the discipline short. We would like to see a more inspiring statement, noting alongside its relevance to citizens' capacity to meet challenges on the basis of a knowledge of 'Britain's past, and our place in the world' the access History gives to the rich treasure of past human experience more widely conceived, and the accompanying inspiration and stimulus to improved problem-solving, creative and imaginative thinking, and heightened curiosity. Turning to the following *Aims*, such themes and the disciplinary points made in the previous paragraph come through much more in bullet points 4-7 than in the more knowledge driven points 1-3, and we would like to see these receive more emphasis

We welcome in 3.2 (and by implication in 4.1) the recognition that teachers are highly skilled professionals, and the intention to allow them to establish, maintain and improve effective pedagogy in the classroom on the basis of established national standards through developing 'exciting and stimulating lessons'. Nevertheless, we find the process by which teachers are expected to develop 'aims' from a specified 'content' far from self-evident and intrinsically counter-intuitive. We believe it poses particular challenges for those disciplines where teaching in both primary and secondary schools may be in the hands of non-subject specialists, without a clearly developed understanding of what the aims of teaching in that discipline could be without more explicit guidance. Thus History -- especially at primary but also in secondary schools (especially since the inclusion of the subject in the E-Bacc specification has increased take-up at GCSE putting more pressure on specialists' teaching time) -- is often delivered by non-subject specialists. We are concerned that without more guidance (and History is provided with a thinner statement of *Aims* than some other disciplines) non-specialists may see the aims of History in 'common-sense' and unchallenging terms as perhaps merely 'learning the facts about what happened in the past' rather than appreciating the full range of skills and approaches which define and underpin our *discipline's* rigour and analytical power and usefulness to the future citizen: these cannot be adequately identified primarily through a discussion of *content*.

More generally, the *Aims* with these reservations do offer a challenging and appropriate set of subject aims which if delivered would provide pupils with a well-rounded and ambitious historical education. However, as indicated below, we are not convinced that the following *Subject Content* is well-designed to deliver these *Aims* (notably bullet point 3) despite the latter's generality. Nor do we foresee teachers being able in practice to exercise their judgement and skills with sufficient freedom to meet these *Aims* if all the *Subject Content* is to be delivered in its current form. We also worry, as our earlier remark suggests, that where the teaching of History is delivered by non-subject specialists, the lack of indication of some of the 'skills and understanding' set out in the current National

Curriculum and of the current 'Attainment target level descriptions' might leave non-specialists unclear about how the level of challenge should be raised during Key Stages 1-4, or the range of historical evidence and approaches to which pupils can be introduced in exciting and demanding pedagogy. If it is not included in the National Curriculum, it is important that such advice and encouragement is available in learning resources provided to assist teachers by other providers (- eg, how to conceptualize a local study).

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

Comments:

We have very significant reservations about the *Subject Content* set out in the draft programme of study for our own discipline, History. In a number of respects we believe it to be less fit for purpose than that in the current National Curriculum, which we believe has considerable strengths, with many of the problems which have been identified in its delivery relating more to the time available for History teaching in schools as a whole than to intellectual or pedagogic deficiencies in the curriculum specifications themselves. The History draft appears to reflect concerns that pupils currently emerge from the compulsory study of History at school with an inadequate sense of chronology; patchy acquaintance with the main events of British history; and insufficient factual knowledge more generally. We would welcome a new National Curriculum which offered the prospect of significantly improved sense of the chronological relationship of historic events and periods, an enhanced knowledge of the broad sweep of the history of the United Kingdom, its component parts and their interactions with the wider world, and a larger knowledge base for historical understanding. However, we would argue that in as far as they are real problems (and in some instances the evidence presented in public debate that there are is worryingly thin and anecdotal) the only practical solution would be to extend the curriculum time allocated to History in Key Stages 1-3. In the absence of such a change, we believe great care needs to be taken in adjusting the *Subject Content* of a Curriculum which, whatever else, has a proven ability to enthuse and excite pupils to continue their historical studies beyond Key Stage 3 as reflected in the buoyant figures for entries for History at GCSE and A-level, and which, as indicated in the Ofsted report *History for All* (2011), has produced some excellent teaching and outcomes for pupils. It is certainly timely to revisit the existing National Curriculum to reflect changes in the context of History teaching in schools and the experience of its actual delivery, but we believe the proposals have a number of shortcomings which we outline below.

- 1) The Curriculum is over-prescriptive in detail as to the *Subject Content* in History at Key Stages 2 and 3. Assuming that it is desirable to cover the whole of British history from the early Britons to the 1980s (and one could

challenge this), we believe that the amount of detail entered into the matters to be covered in the chronological survey of British History is excessive. The National Curriculum Framework document, as well as the DfE representatives with whom we have discussed this issue and the Secretary of State, all state that the *Subject Content* set out in the framework document is not to be the whole content delivered to students studying History. The document makes clear that students should also have the opportunity to undertake a 'local study' (KS2) and 'in-depth studies' (KS3), and to be made aware of the variety of historical approaches and fields (KS2 and 3). Given the amount of classroom time likely to be allocated to History in Primary and Secondary schools at KS2 and 3, however, we do not see that it will be possible to make space for such activities while attempting to cover all the specified content in anything other than the most superficial manner. This is before taking into consideration the current practice in many schools of embarking on GCSE study at the end of Year 8 rather than Year 9; the *Framework Document* is silent on this issue. Not only would full implementation of this *Subject Content* be incompatible with the continuation of this practice, but more importantly the failure of the Framework Document to address this fundamental problem of curricular time (and the tendency of schools to focus on key accountability measures at Year 11) means that its high aspirations are unlikely to be realized. Furthermore, although many individual elements currently specified in the content to be taught could perhaps be conveyed in a brief account of some key dates and events or a short biographical account (if one of limited educational value), there are others -- such as 'the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire', 'feudalism', 'Norman culture', 'the Enlightenment in England' [sic], 'the slave trade and the abolition of slavery', causes of the First and Second World Wars, and 'Nazi atrocities in occupied Europe, and the unique evil of the Holocaust' -- which of necessity would require relatively extended treatment. They also require care and circumspection lest a teacher be laid open to the accusation of dumbing down or misrepresenting the complex historical events and processes involved. Teaching such elements properly and responsibly will require considerable disciplinary-specific skill and time, and will inevitably impact on the time available for other elements in the *Subject Content*, let alone other activity.

We would therefore recommend that the amount of specified content to be taught be reconsidered and reduced, and that exemplars be preferred to a single list of prescribed content (as in the KS1 proposals for the significant lives to be considered, where the phrase 'such as' is more in evidence than later in the proposals).

- 2) We certainly share the conviction that it is important that pupils understand how the periods of history they study interrelate. But we believe that the decision to insist on a single broad chronological sweep through British History across KS2 and KS3 has undesirable

consequences. First, we do not believe that a renewed emphasis on understanding chronology requires an approach based on a single chronological progression across two key stages: indeed we would argue that a proper appreciation of chronology might be better served by two broad sweeps through history, one at KS2 and one at KS3, supported by age-appropriate in-depth case studies. We think such an approach would have additional benefits. First, we regard it as inherently undesirable that pupils do not receive any further compulsory exposure to history of any period before 1688 in KS3. There is of course already widespread concern at possible over-concentration on the recent past and in particular European dictatorships in the teaching of History in schools. We recognise that in insisting on a single chronological spine part of the intention is no doubt to avoid such repetition within the National Curriculum. But in the absence of further detail as yet on changes to be made in GCSE specifications, we must express our concern that the current approach could lead to a situation where pre-modern History's position in secondary education could be significantly weakened. This would be regrettable on a number of counts:

- It would encourage a 'whiggish' understanding of History, in which pupils come to assume that human experience becomes more complex and sophisticated through time, as a consequence of only being exposed to more sophisticated approaches in their encounter with more recent periods
- It would deprive pupils of the opportunity to engage with some of the most exciting and stimulating historical scholarship at an age when they would be capable of engaging with it
- It fails to take account of the fact that some of the challenges of historical work on earlier periods are if anything more demanding than those involved in studying the more recent past, not least in terms of the interpretation of a more limited body of historical evidence left by a more unfamiliar society
- It would not serve as an effective preparation for renewed encounters with earlier periods at higher levels of study, both in schools and at university

But equally, we regret the lack of provision for compulsory study of history after 1688 in KS2. This is particularly to be regretted for two additional reasons:

- first, that teachers' experience is clear that one of the most effective routes into historical understanding for younger children is being taught about the past in contexts where they can access the topic through discussion with their own immediate family members and engagement with the most immediately and universally accessible local environment of buildings and historical records;
- and second because of the wealth of resources and opportunities that have been created over recent years in the Heritage sector for supporting teaching of the more recent past – notably the Victorian

era and the Second World War – that the removal of these periods from KS2 would render obsolete and difficult to replicate for more remote periods of history without considerable effort and expense.

We would therefore recommend:

That the National Curriculum be amended to provide opportunities for the study of pre-modern History at KS3, and of modern History at KS2, which need not in itself interfere with providing a sequentially chronological account of History if the content specification of the latter is thinned down or if (as we suggest) the chronological sweep is addressed twice, first at KS2 and then at KS3.

3) We would strongly advocate increased attention within the National Curriculum to the history of Europe and the wider world in its own right. The statement of *Aims* on page 165 makes important reference to the ‘broad outlines of European and world history’ as a key element to be delivered in the National Curriculum, but we do not find this adequately reflected in the *Subject Content* that follows. While the attention given in the current proposals to the British encounter with Europe and the wider world is welcome, this cannot compensate for the loss of the opportunity (save in the case of ancient civilizations) for the requirement to study other histories in their own right. This loss in comparison with the current curriculum is to be regretted for several reasons:

- It deprives pupils of the opportunity to appreciate just how much of the rich treasure of the record of human experience can only be accessed through the study of the history of cultures remote in time and space
- Properly conceived it can introduce students to important understandings of chronology and spatiality of a very different kind to those encountered in a detailed sequential study of a single nation, and in ways that may serve as important bridges to understandings of time which underpin other disciplines in both the sciences and humanities
- There are also more instrumental grounds in a globalised world and multicultural society for making pupils cognisant of the range of readings that may be given to events depending on the perspective and historical context available to both historical actors and historians; one could argue that learning something of the historical perspectives fashioned by an understanding not beginning from the pupils’ native culture equips them for intercultural exchanges in the same way that learning a foreign language does.
- One of the most remarkable achievements of the British historical profession over the past century has been the impact its historians have had on the self-understanding of other nations through their contributions to their

historiography, which has become a key part of our disciplinary culture

- The absence of such study is potentially poor preparation for the teaching of the discipline to be encountered in later school study or at university, where the study of global history is in particular a rapidly developing field.

We would therefore recommend:

That the National Curriculum at both KS2 and KS3 be revised to include further opportunities for the study of non-British history in contexts not dependent on British encounters, and to introduce pupils to other perspectives on historical time and periodization than those encountered in national histories.

4) The *Aims* on page 165 of the Framework document make reference to a wide range of histories and contexts for historical understanding, and this intention is reiterated in the preambles to the ensuing Key Stage *Subject Content* specifications: thus at KS2 ‘pupils should be made aware that history takes many forms’ (167); at KS 3 ‘they should develop an awareness and understanding of the role and use of different types of sources ... they should also examine cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social aspects and be given the opportunity to study local history’ (169). We do not believe, however, that the *Subject Content* as currently set out sufficiently fulfils this aspiration. We recognise that in certain topic specifications economic, intellectual and cultural history is indicated. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the programme of historical study set out remains overwhelmingly political (with a small ‘p’) in focus, and we would argue that there is a strong case for a more determined effort to encourage the teaching of other approaches to historical explanation and understanding. We would argue that the current approach:

- deprives pupils of the opportunity to appreciate the range of historical approaches which are characteristic of the current writing and study of history, and which it is important that they are exposed to as preparation for those who will go on to study History at a higher level in school or in University
- produces an impoverished appreciation of how historians understand some of the key developments in British and other histories specified in the *Subject Content*
- places too heavy a burden on those elements of History teaching at these levels to be carried on beyond the specified content to deliver these alternative approaches, not least if the amount of specified content is not significantly reduced
- risks a situation where these other forms of understanding will inevitably be those first sacrificed when decisions are made on how to deliver the current body of specified *Subject Content* within the limited time available.
- risks sacrificing some approaches to the teaching of history at

early stages which most readily lend themselves to the devising exciting lesson content which can stimulate the imagination and enthusiasm for History which has been one of the great strengths of the existing curriculum as evidenced in *History for All*

- risks alienating many teachers with strong subject knowledge and training who will be denied the opportunity to put to full use this knowledge in the classroom as they believe they are being required to teach an etiolated form of their discipline.

We would therefore recommend

That the commitment to teaching a variety of forms of historical understanding and explanation currently articulated in the Aims be more effectively embedded in the Subject Content specifications not least in the substitution of additional non-political content at the expense of some of the less important political specifications.

From our discussions with colleagues in the teaching profession and in university departments we believe that these reservations are very widely shared among the vast majority in both groups. There is very serious concern among those teaching in Higher Education that the current specifications will place a very heavy burden on GCSE and A level to inculcate a sufficient basis for the effective study of the discipline at an advanced level (a concern all the more understandable in the current uncertainty about the future of GCSE and A level). Among teachers there is clearly a strong perception that the proposed specification is either undeliverable or undesirable, and risks both putting pupils off the prospect of further study and failing to alert those who cease to study the subject at 14 to the educational and cultural riches and resources further engagement with history in a private capacity might make available, while at the same time equipping them with a very limited cultural capital for their future in terms of the History with which they have been equipped at the end of KS3. We suspect that without significant rethinking there may be a much more limited take-up of the Curriculum in those schools not required to implement it by statute than would be anticipated by its devisors.

We would therefore strongly advocate significant further rethinking of the specifications of the National Curriculum in History, and in particular of the Subject Content. The Royal Historical Society would be very happy to offer assistance in such further development work, sharing as it does in the underlying aspiration to improve the delivery of historical education in schools as part of a revised National Curriculum.

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?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sufficiently ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not sufficiently ambitious	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ✓	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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Comments:

We have ticked the 'not sure' box here to indicate that we find the content of the draft programme of study for History in some respects not sufficiently ambitious, and in others significantly over-ambitious, an option we are not offered above.

As already indicated, we believe the absence from the Subject Content for History in the New National Curriculum of any coverage of the history of Europe and the rest of the world after Key Stage 1 save in the context of interactions with the British Isles a serious limitation, and one in which the new specifications compare unfavourably with the existing National Curriculum. A key skill which History teaches is the ability to recognise that historical actors and indeed historians can experience or interpret events in very different ways depending on the perspectives they bring to them from their own cultures and histories. For the reasons set out in point 3 of our answer to Question 3 we believe that the new specification does not adequately seek to develop this capacity in pupils. Similarly, as set out in point 4 of our answer to Question 3, we believe it is insufficiently concerned to develop a proper appreciation of the sheer diversity of human experience and of historical approaches to it .

Thirdly, we believe that the failure to expose pupils at KS3 to the challenges of pre-modern History at a more advanced level than is possible at KS2 is regrettable (see point 2 in our answer to Question 3).

On the other hand, we believe the sheer quantity of specified content in KS2 and 3 is over-ambitious in the context of the curriculum time available for the teaching of History in schools in the current dispensation, and that this will result in superficial teaching if everything is indeed to be covered.

We would also question the appropriateness of the level of challenge of some of the specification for Key Stage 1 in particular. Some of the concepts which are indicated as indicative content seem to us potentially too abstract to be addressed at this age in a meaningful way and might be better embedded into an aspiration for the result of teaching across Key Stages 1 to 3 (for example, 'civilization', 'democracy', 'nation'). We believe that much more immediately relevant and narrative-based approaches will be more likely to provide an effective starting point for the study of History at this early age.

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

Comments:

We do not believe it is as appropriate in History as it may be in other subjects to define levels of attainment in terms of specific knowledge and *Subject Content* in terms of events and periods that should be taught. As indicated in the answers to 1 and 2 and 3, we are not unsympathetic to the more minimalist statement of the level of attainment in terms of a requirement to 'know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes' as specified in Framework as far as they relate to the *Aims* on p. 165 and the preambles to each Key Stage specification, but worry that the disproportionate focus on the 'matters' in the *Subject Content* to be taught may lead to neglect of the 'skills and processes', especially where the teacher is not a subject specialist, as will frequently be the case in Primary Schools, and to a lesser extent in Secondary Schools.

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

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

Progression in the discipline of History is best understood in terms of a deepening understanding of the potentialities and challenges of historical analysis confronted by the complex residue of evidence of various kinds and reflecting differing perspectives left behind by past societies. Something of this is captured in the brief preambles to each of the Key Stage *Subject Content* outlines for History in the Framework document, but as already indicated, we do not believe this receives effective articulation in the detailed accounts offered of the matters to be taught. We suspect that to many pupils too much of the progression between KS2 and 3 will appear to be in terms of chronological sequence rather than the challenge of historical analysis at a more advanced level, and indeed as indicated in our answers to Questions 3 and 4 it may also encourage a degree of confusion between the two which subsequent teaching will need to untangle before pupils are prepared for study at more advanced levels.

We are in this respect at least as concerned about the as yet invisible

progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 pending the release of new specifications for GCSE as we are about that between KS 2 and 3.

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:

We do not take a view on this issue as a learned society in History.

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure√
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Comments: We accept that the National Curriculum is intended to lever improved understanding of History for all pupils and to empower them through acquisition of such key factual knowledge of the past as may enable them to act effectively as citizens. We remain to be convinced that a programme of such detailed specification of knowledge as opposed to understanding or interpretation will actually represent the kind of 'cultural capital' envisaged in section 9.2 of the Consultation Document, especially in the necessary exclusion of a whole range of historical knowledge which it may be argued is equally significant in this respect. We also we think it will present too congested a programme to enable teachers to adapt the delivery to meet the needs of diverse pupil cohorts with different needs as indicated in section 9.3.

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

Comments:

As a learned society primarily concerned with the academic study of History at advanced levels in schools and universities or in disciplinary work beyond the academy, we do not believe that we are in a position to offer significant informed comment on the impact of the pedagogy advocated in the *Framework Document* on 'protected characteristic groups'. We would, however, offer two observations.

- 1) We would make the obvious point that, depending on how the extent to which pupils have acquired the knowledge and skills which they are intended to gain through the National Curriculum is to be assessed, in a subject like History where there specification places such a high premium on knowledge to be acquired over disciplinary skills to be cultivated, there is a risk that those less able to retain or process knowledge but nevertheless able to think or reason critically and effectively may be disadvantaged.**
- 2) We would stress in this context the importance we would attach to increasing the opportunities for studying world history as argued in our answer to Question3. If we accept that Britain is a multicultural nation, and we wish to signal to all its inhabitants that their history is taken seriously and given due regard, then the best way to do this is not through sometimes token efforts to teach English history as multicultural, but to give due space to the histories of all the peoples of world in their own right.**

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:

We do not believe that the new National Curriculum will make this very clear. Many elements in the Subject Content will be entirely unfamiliar to parents lacking a higher education in specific fields of History (such as ‘the Heptarchy’ or ‘Llywelyn and Dafydd ap Gruffydd’). The presence within the list of quite broad categories such as ‘Norman culture’ will not help them ascertain how adequately these are being delivered in a particular school. We believe the Aims and preambles set out for each of the Key Stages do offer helpful accounts of the types of historical understanding the National Curriculum should aim to foster in pupils, but that the lack of apparent connection between these and the detailed Subject Content specifications will make it hard for parents to identify how well these aims are being met.

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

Comments:

- 1) There is an obvious potential problem in the fact that the introduction of the new National Curriculum will coincide with major changes in higher qualifications in schools at GCSE and A-level. For staff in secondary schools this may mean great difficulty in confronting the root and branch nature of the changes proposed in the National Curriculum at the same time as implementing significant changes elsewhere. Given the importance of accountability measures, it is hard to imagine that the National Curriculum will be given the highest priority.**
- 2) At primary school, the decline of subject specialist teacher training for primary teachers may well mean many teachers are poorly placed to respond to the new Curriculum, both in terms of their understanding of the events and themes enunciated in the *Subject Content*, but also in terms of the opportunities and challenges involved in devising curriculum aims for themselves. Here we suspect the main challenge may come from the likely concentration of schools and headteachers on the subjects of English, Maths and Science if they have to choose between the allocation of scarce resources and CPD time for teachers.**
- 3) In all schools, the availability of subject specialists on the staff will be a**

key factor affecting their ability to implement the new Curriculum, and it is clear that these will be very unevenly available across the sector.

- 4) In the primary sector, we believe the new specifications will present particular challenges to small schools where classes may be taught across age groups. How can the chronological approach set out here work if a class contains more than one cohort?
- 5) In all schools the lack of curriculum time available for History will make it difficult to deliver all the content of the National Curriculum specifications and the additional imaginative teacher led teaching the proposals envisage
- 6) We are concerned that there will be difficulty in ensuring that sufficient resources are available to enable teachers and schools properly to support the new curriculum by the date of its intended launch. It is likely that History will not be the top priority of those normally responsible for delivering such materials given the clear priority attached to other subjects where there may be more direct accountability for schools operating on limited budgets in a time of financial stringency. This would be the case both within schools and in terms of the suppliers of text books etc.
- 7) There may also be difficulty in identifying suitable sources for the CPD and teaching input that will be required to support the Subject Content outlined in the specifications (see answer to Question 12).
- 8) Where schools currently end Key Stage 3 at the end of year 8 it will be very difficult to implement the National Curriculum
- 9) We believe that those schools currently not obliged to implement the National Curriculum in History may in fact choose not to adopt it given these problems and the issues identified above regarding content, which we have good evidence is not widely welcomed in the profession.

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

Comments:

We are concerned that the extent of the changes required in implementing the new National Curriculum and the nature of the subject matter specified in the Subject Content may make it difficult to provide sufficient support quickly enough to support the new specifications in History. In some key areas, such as Anglo-Saxon history, elements of the specification adopt a terminology and approach which is no longer current in the historiography of the subject, and significant subject expertise will be required to translate specifications into deliverable content which does not misrepresent current understandings while nevertheless simplifying and limiting the content to a scale deliverable within this context. The current pressure on university academics to concentrate on research outputs rather than assisting with the development of teaching materials has already significantly affected the ecology of textbook production in the UK, and their lack of engagement with the current curriculum content may be a further disincentive to their participation in the production of relevant materials against such a demanding deadline. Weaknesses in the CPD framework and current pressure to move significant teacher training to a school-based model may also handicap the ability of the teaching profession itself to respond. We find the account of the ecology of CPD and training set out in the Consultation document in section 11.3 unconvincing and unlikely to be realised against such tight deadlines and in the current financial situation particularly in a subject like History not at the top of the priority list for headteachers allocating scarce resources including staff time.

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:

It is probably only possible to implement the new curriculum in September 2014 in the wake of such a disapplication. But we are convinced that the timetable is too demanding to enable a smooth transition to the new model given how little time there is before the disapplication would apply, and given that much relevant data is not yet available: any revision of the National Curriculum in the light of this consultation; new specifications for GCSE; the future of A levels, not to mention at the local level budgetary information, and knowledge of where relevant materials might be obtained or even if they will be created.

In addition, we would worry about the situation of children in Years 6 and 9 in 2014-15 who would be thrust into the new Curriculum for their final year having been taught on the existing Curriculum up to that point. We would advocate instead an approach in which the new Curriculum is phased in from the first years of KS2 and 3 and would not be taught across all the years of both Key Stages until the first cohort completed its education at each Key Stage.

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

Comments:

We regret the limited opportunities to date for formal consultation on the content of the National Curriculum in History. While we welcome this consultation and evidence that there may be some reconsideration in light of representations currently being made, this has come very late in a process with a very tight timetable to implementation. We believe earlier consultation, more along the line of the wide-ranging consultation that preceded the implementation of the first national curriculum and which involved many key stakeholders at the core of the process, would have carried less risk of last-minute tinkering and helped assuage some of the public and professional disquiet which has now become the most significant obstacle to the widespread take up of the new curriculum beyond those who will be required to implement it.

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:

The consultation was reasonably easy to find. As in the last exercise on EBC, the text boxes on the main word document were not easy to complete without the latest version of word. It seems to us bad practice to not offer a full range of options in the tick boxes where relevant: eg, where we are asked for an opinion on the ambition of the proposals, it ought to be possible to indicate 'over' as well as 'sufficiently' and 'insufficiently' ambitious.

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 checked="" 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