

Note: The full report runs to some 76 pages and is very closely argued and extensively referenced. This document is a précis of the Key Principles and Executive Summary, retaining the language of the report.

Key Principles (page 6)

- The new National Curriculum will be developed in line with the principles of freedom, responsibility and fairness – to raise standards for all children.
- Schools should be given greater freedom over the curriculum. The National Curriculum should set out only the essential knowledge (facts, concepts, principles and fundamental operations) that all children should acquire, and leave schools to design a wider school curriculum. The content of our National Curriculum should compare favourably with curricula in the highest performing jurisdictions. The National Curriculum should embody rigour and high standards and create coherence in what is taught in schools, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to acquire a core of knowledge in the key subject disciplines.
- The National Curriculum should provide young people with the knowledge they need to move confidently and successfully through their education, taking into account the most able and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- It is important to distinguish between the National Curriculum and the wider school curriculum (the whole curriculum as experienced by pupils in each school). There are a number of components of a broad and balanced school curriculum that should be developed on the basis of local or school-level decision making, the National Curriculum should not absorb the overwhelming majority of teaching time in schools.
- The National Curriculum will continue to be a statutory requirement for maintained schools but will also retain its importance as a national benchmark of excellence for all schools, providing parents with an understanding of what their child should be expected to know.

Recommendations (Page 7ff)

Knowledge, Development and the Curriculum (Chapter 1)

the National Curriculum review should be framed by awareness of fundamental educational processes so that the necessary attention to curricular detail does not take place without regard to its consequences for the curriculum as a whole. In particular, this should include consideration of the basic interaction between subject knowledge and individual development.

Aims and Purposes of the Curriculum (Chapter 2)

We believe defining curricular aims is the most effective way of establishing and maintaining coherent provision.

We recommend that aims should be expressed at the following levels:

Level 1: Affirming system-wide educational aspirations for school
Level 2: Specifying more particular purposes for schools and for their curricula; and

Level 3: Introducing the goals for the Programmes of Study of particular subjects.

Reinforcing aims throughout the system will help to ensure congruence and coherence. We believe it will help to align assessment, resource development and allocation, teacher recruitment and training, and inspection.

The Structure of the School Curriculum (for primary and secondary) (Chapter 3)

we agree with the stated intention of the National Curriculum review to draw a clear distinction between the **National Curriculum** and the **school curriculum**, (i.e. the whole curriculum as experienced by the pupils in the school). We also support the Government's intention to recast the National Curriculum so that it sets out a core of essential knowledge to allow more scope for curricular provision determined at school or community level.

Subjects in the Curriculum through the Key Stages of Schooling (Chapter 4)

A key intention is to slim down the statutory curriculum requirements

on schools. to remove subjects altogether from statutory curriculum requirements; to retain subjects as statutory but not specify what should be taught in these subjects; or to retain subjects as statutory, but to reduce the extent of the specification of what is to be taught.

that most existing curriculum elements should be retained in some statutory form. There would no longer be statutory Programmes of Study for such subjects. In addition, we recommend that subjects that retain statutory Programmes of Study should have their content specified in less detail.

We believe that at Key Stage 4 there should be greater breadth. Specifically, we recommend that, in addition to existing arrangements, curricular provision in certain subjects should be made statutory at Key Stage 4

The Structure of Key Stages (Chapter 5)

Key Stage 2 (as currently configured) is too long. We recommend that the present Key Stage 2 be split in two to form two new key stages, each of two years' duration.

We have therefore been considering the benefits of reducing Key Stage 3 to just two years to enable Key Stage 4, and GCSE preparation, to expand to three years in duration and thus provide a higher quality curriculum.

The Organisation of Programmes of Study (Chapter 6)

we will not recommend year-on-year specification (with the possible exception of mathematics in primary education).

We recommend instead that Programmes of Study should use our proposed key stage structure as explained above, i.e. 2-2-2-3-2 (or 2-2-2-2-3 if Key Stage 4 were to be extended to three years).

The Form of Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets (Chapter 7)

We emphasise the importance of establishing a very direct and clear relationship between *'that which is to be taught and learned'* and *assessment* (both formative and ongoing and periodic and summative). Programmes of Study should be stated as discursive statements of purposes, anticipated progression and interconnections within the knowledge to be acquired, with Attainment Targets being stated as statements of specific learning outcomes related to essential knowledge.

Programmes of Study could then be presented in two parallel columns. A narrative, developmental description of the key concept to be learned (the Programme of Study) could be represented on the left hand side. The essential learning outcomes to be assessed at the end of the key stage (the Attainment Targets) could be represented on the right hand side. This would better support curriculum-focused assessment.

Assessment, Reporting, and Pupil Progression (Chapter 8)

we suggest a new approach to judging progression that we believe to be, in principle, more educationally sound. the focus should be on ensuring that all pupils have an appropriate understanding of key elements prior to moving to the next body of content resources should be prioritised for pupils who have either fallen behind or are identified as at risk of falling behind the rest of the class. We term this approach 'high expectations for all'

Oral Language and its Development within the National Curriculum (Chapter 9)

There is a compelling body of evidence that highlights a connection between oral development, cognitive development and educational attainment. We are strongly of the view that the development of oral language should be a particular feature of the new National Curriculum.

There are a number of possible ways of achieving this.

Risks (Chapter 10)

There are several risks that we wish to highlight. These include the pace of the review process, the need to ensure that we achieve 'curriculum coherence', and the need to ensure that those working within the teaching profession are supported in delivering the new National Curriculum.