

Personal Details

Name: Paul Springford

Email: paul.springford@naace.org

Address: Naace PO Box 6511 Nottingham NG11 8TN

Organisation: Naace

Response on Behalf of an organisation: Yes

Keep response confidential: No

Allowed to contact in the future: Yes

Request a response acknowledgement: Yes

Request to be informed when the consultation results are published: Yes

Respondent Information Questions

Please tick one box that best describes you as a respondent:

- Teacher
- Parent
- Governor
- Professional Association/Professional Body
- Teacher Union
- Early Years Professional
- Local Authority
- Other (please specify)

Consultation Questions

Questions 1a to 1e refer to Aspect 1: Curriculum Design and Content

1 a) In relation to the curriculum what is it reasonable to expect schools to provide and manage within the statutory time requirements of the primary school day?

Answer/Comments

n/a

1 b) Should primary pupils continue to be introduced to all the subjects of the National Curriculum from Year 1?

Answer/Comments

n/a

1 c) What should be the position of science and ICT within the primary curriculum?

Answer/Comments

Naace is the professional association for those who are concerned with advancing education through the appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT). Naace was established in 1984 and has become the key influential professional association for those working in ICT in education.

Naace has already submitted evidence to the CSF Parliamentary Committee's enquiry into the National Curriculum. Our submission to the Rose Review draws partly on that evidence. We are aware that the two reviews are overlapping but distinct. For the purposes of the Rose Review, we have focussed on Aspect 1: Curriculum design and Content, and specifically on the question: What should be the position of...ICT within the primary curriculum? Members of Naace would be willing to participate in further discussion and debate about any of the topics included in our submission.

1 Summary

- Naace endorses the ongoing work of QCA to share a "big picture" of the curriculum.
- The National Curriculum has established ICT as a subject in its own right in schools and has helped to provide a baseline entitlement for all children.
- The National Curriculum framework for progression in ICT has helped many teachers to support and extend children's learning in the subject more effectively.
- The study of other subjects can be improved through the use of ICT and we believe that use of ICT should be embedded in all learning and teaching.

- ICT capability is an essential attribute for citizens in the 21st century and mechanisms are needed to ensure that it is developed as part of the education of all children.
- A revised curriculum could be based on a new framework of capabilities
- Testing and assessment in ICT continues to be a challenge and can distort educational priorities.
- Many children adopt new technologies very rapidly, and there is a risk that the curriculum will fail to keep up with the new opportunities they are already exploiting.
- ICT itself challenges the ways in which learning currently takes place and is organised, and will put at risk a primary curriculum which is not relevant and vibrant.

2 The Big Picture

2.1 Naace endorses the ongoing work of QCA to develop and share a holistic "big picture" of the curriculum in which required subject content is merely one component and serves broader and widely-agreed aims. We encourage the Review to take this into account during its deliberations.

2.2 At present there is a danger that schools, and the young people who attend them, are judged on the basis of a limited view of the curriculum, i.e. performance in relation to a selection of National Curriculum attainment levels. This narrow focus colours the view of some Naace members, who worry that the National Curriculum does not adequately exploit the opportunities which ICT creates. Naace would never deny the importance of standards of attainment and we emphasise the particular importance of improving attainment in ICT. Nevertheless, assessment and evaluation measures which take more account of the wider purposes of the curriculum will make it easier to persuade innovative educators to engage more enthusiastically with the notion of a statutory curriculum.

3 An entitlement curriculum

3.1 When the National Curriculum was first designed and implemented, computers were already used in the majority of schools, but children's access to and experience of ICT was extremely variable, and in many cases depended upon the interest and capability of individual teachers. The introduction of a National Curriculum has established ICT as a subject in its own right in all schools and has helped to provide a baseline entitlement for all children. Pupil's experience of ICT is still too variable and there continues to be an ongoing need for high quality ICT training within the school workforce.

3.2 Nevertheless, the National Curriculum for ICT has undoubtedly extended the amount of school time during which children use ICT primary level and it has significantly broadened the range of activities for which ICT is used.

Without a statutory Programme of Study for ICT, it is highly unlikely that ICT would be adequately covered within the curriculum of many schools. The challenging scope of the PoS for ICT has helped to move schools away from a narrow and superficial view of the role of technology in classrooms.

3.3 Whatever the outcomes of the Rose Review, Naace urges that wide-ranging and progressive experience of ICT remains at the heart of all children's educational entitlement, including throughout both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

4 Progression

4.1 In both primary and secondary schools, there are too few teachers and teaching assistants with a specialist background in ICT. As a result, many staff involved in teaching the subject are poorly equipped to understand what progress in ICT might mean. The National Curriculum framework for progression in ICT has helped these teachers to support and extend children's learning in the subject more effectively by indicating what the next steps might be in order for them to achieve more.

4.2 For ICT specialist staff as well, the progression framework has been of benefit in their planning, teaching and assessment of the subject. In a comparatively new and developing subject such as ICT, there will always be some debate about what should constitute a particular level. The level statements have provided a degree of definition and coherence, without which the provision for learners would be yet more variable. This is another area in which a degree of prescription has been of benefit in ensuring an adequate level of provision in schools.

5 ICT in the wider curriculum

5.1 While it is not a legal requirement for schools to organise teaching on the basis of subjects per se, the division of the National Curriculum into a set of subject-based programmes of study can reinforce traditional silos and serve as a deterrent to the kind of connected learning needed for success in the 21st century. The study of individual subjects within the curriculum can be improved through the use of ICT and Naace believes that use of ICT should be embedded in all learning and teaching. At the same time, ICT has a possibly unique ability to encourage learners and their teachers to make connections between different topics and different aspects of their learning. Naace therefore wishes to emphasise the importance of ICT as a learning environment serving all areas of a reinvigorated curriculum, giving learners access to an ever-widening range of information, materials and people and, as a result, promoting coherence and continuity in the experience of learners.

5.2 For the generalist primary teacher, the distinction between ICT as a subject with its own key ideas and progression levels on the one hand, and ICT as a powerful medium for learning on the other, can be unclear. Both are important elements within a 21st century curriculum and there will be times when they coincide. Naace believes that the Review can make a significant

contribution by helping the large number of non-specialists in the schools workforce to differentiate between and plan more effectively for these two complementary aspects of ICT.

5.3 As an extension to the notion of ICT as a medium for learning, Naace would like to emphasise the importance of ICT in assisting those with physical handicaps or learning difficulties to have access to the curriculum. Appropriate hardware and software, supported by properly trained staff, should be routinely available to children who need them. ICT can reduce disadvantage by enabling more children to experience the current core entitlement and to exploit opportunities to pursue personal interests beyond the core.

6 Capability

6.1 From the first introduction of the National Curriculum, the notion of ICT Capability has been at the heart of the subject. Skills and techniques have to be acquired, but the focus is on children's ability to use technology in order to find things out, develop ideas and communicate. Progression involves being able to do more complex things with ICT, rather than knowing how to use more complicated hardware and software. It implies being able to learn continuously and to apply knowledge and experience in new and unfamiliar situations. This has been reinforced in the recent review of the curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4.

6.2 Naace fully supports this view of ICT's place in the curriculum. ICT capability is an essential attribute for citizens in the 21st century and mechanisms are needed to ensure that it is developed as part of the education of all children. Should the statutory primary curriculum be removed or significantly changed, Naace would seek reassurance that education in ICT would not be undermined and would continue to require much more than skills training.

6.3 In the context of Every Child Matters, e-safety is another vital component of children's well-being which schools need to address. The review of KS3 and KS4 strengthened the focus on moral, social and safety issues relating to ICT, and these should be equally prominent within the primary curriculum.

6.4 Naace suggests that the Review should investigate further the notion of a primary curriculum based on capability. This could be based on a framework of traditional subjects. In other words, what do you need to be able to know and do to be a capable primary geographer, historian and so on? Alternatively, a new set of capabilities could be defined, based on the needs of learner citizens in a global 21st century society. Capabilities might include learning to learn, media literacy, citizenship and international communication, for example. Knowledge, skills and understanding from current subjects would contribute to the capabilities but the emphasis would be different. ICT Capability could have a fundamental place in a new framework and while ICT for learning would continue to be embedded in the wider curriculum.

7 Assessment

7.1 Few primary schools formally test pupils in ICT. Nevertheless, it is important that teachers can reliably assess progress and attainment in order to ensure that children are fully supported and able to achieve their potential.

7.2 In paragraph 2.2 above, we referred briefly to general worries among education professionals about potentially damaging aspects of the present assessment regime. In the workplace, in academic life and in leisure, use of ICT typically involves collaboration, experimentation and individual effort and flair. It is a practical activity which also requires thought and imagination. It is not necessarily easy to provide robust evidence that pupils and school leavers possess all these attributes. Recent work by NAA to support formative testing of ICT at Key Stage 3 through on-screen tasks has demonstrated an encouraging recognition of the need to find more effective ways of assessing ICT. Nevertheless, the development has been fraught with difficulty in spite of the substantial sums of public money and school workforce time which have been invested in it.

7.3 In secondary schools, testing and assessment in ICT continue to be a challenge and can distort educational priorities. This can result from an over-reliance on written tests or even on practical tasks which place disproportionate demands on pupils' literacy. These tests rarely reflect the reality of ICT in the wider world, and the current assessment climate reinforces an approach which rewards specific ways of working at the expense of others.

7.4 Other approaches to assessment, including the use of portfolios, presentations and vivas, and peer-evaluation, have all proved worthwhile in the field of ICT. The challenge, therefore, for a statutory curriculum incorporating ICT is to ensure that approaches to assessment, whether formative or high-stakes summative, are not at odds with the spirit of the subject. Naace welcomes the work on alternative approaches and would like the regulatory authorities to encourage and support it.

8 New technologies; new opportunities

8.1 It has become something of a cliché to talk about the speed of technological change and about the difference between digital natives and immigrants and their ability to embrace new developments in ICT. Without necessarily accepting this stark division between the generations, we can all recognise the explosion of opportunity which ICT has generated. While the fundamental concept of ICT Capability described in paragraph 6 above remains sound, the range of innovative tools available to learners expands at a remorseless pace. For many, this creates exciting new opportunities, and there are countless examples of children and young people using developing technology imaginatively and purposefully with very little input from their teachers.

8.2 Many but not all children adopt new technologies inventively and very rapidly, and there is a risk of a statutory, or even a personalised curriculum

failing to keep up with the new opportunities which significant numbers of children are already exploiting. This is partly, but only partly, a matter of ongoing professional development in ICT for the school workforce. If a revised curriculum is to express children's entitlement to desirable learning experiences, it will need to be agile enough to accommodate innovation in the tools and activities which many children will be embracing routinely in their lives outside school.

9 New ways of learning

9.1 ICT itself challenges the ways in which learning currently takes place and is organised. Via the internet, learners now have access to formal professionally-authored course materials and to less formal resources published by experts and enthusiasts in every conceivable field. Similarly, specialist interest networks spanning the globe can provide rapid responses to almost any enquiry. Online forums, wikis and blogs enable any statement to be reinforced, modified or challenged by other users in a dynamic process of collaborative knowledge building. Peer comment and peer evaluation of learners' work become readily available, and the learners' "peers" are not necessarily in the same location or even the same age group as they are. Learning can now fit an individual's timetable rather than an institution's.

9.2 Naace members are very close to many of these developments and have regular opportunities to consider their implications for the education system. They are enthusiastic about the excitement and determination which children and young people display when they are exposed to these new ways of doing things. Technology is personalising and transforming virtually every aspect of business and the public services, and education inevitably needs to respond to the challenges it brings. It is increasingly clear not only that ICT should continue to be a key component of any statutory framework for learning, but also that its ubiquitous presence and impact in the world at large will put at risk a primary curriculum which is not personalised, relevant and vibrant.

1 d) Should some of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development, and pedagogy, be extended into the primary curriculum?

Answer/Comments

n/a

1 e) What is case and scope for reducing prescription and content in the programmes of study?

Answer/Comments

n/a

Questions 2a and 2b relate to Aspect 2: Reading, writing and numeracy

2 a) How might schools be enabled to strengthen their focus on raising attainment in reading, writing and numeracy?

Answer/Comments

n/a

2 b) What can be done to ensure that these vital subjects are taught thoroughly and systematically, and fully integrated within all areas of the curriculum?

Answer/Comments

n/a

Question 3 refers to Aspect 3: Modern Foreign Languages

3 What are the best ways of introducing a modern foreign language as a compulsory requirement of the curriculum at Key Stage 2 as recommended by Lord Dearing's Languages Review?

Answer/Comments

n/a

Questions 4a and 4b refer to Aspect 4: Personal Development

4 a) What are the personal, social and emotional capabilities that children need to develop through their schooling?

Answer/Comments

n/a

4 b) What is the most appropriate framework for achieving greater integration of these capabilities throughout the curriculum?

Answer/Comments

n/a

Questions 5a and 5b refer to Aspect 5: Transition and progression

5 a) How might schools make best use of the information available about prior learning, and information from parents and other professionals working with children, to secure optimum continuity and progression for all children from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, paying particular attention to the key transition points?

Answer/Comments

n/a

5 b) What are the options for providing more choice and flexibility in start dates for children entering primary school, especially summer-born children?

Answer/Comments

n/a

6 Do you have any other comments or contributions to make?

Answer/Comments

n/a