



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

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website (<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>).

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.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name Dr Rita Gardner CBE
Organisation (if applicable) Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
Address: Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
1 Kensington Gore
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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 tick 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify: The learned society & professional body for geography & geographers

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is the learned society and professional body for geography and geographers. The Society maintains a strong overview of the discipline, its position and its practice in schools, higher education, and the workplace, including professional accreditation. We advise on and support its advancement, dissemination and practice in these realms and within wider public engagement and policy. We have 15,000 members and Fellows and our work currently reaches more than three million people per year. Each year the Society works with teachers and pupils from about 50% of English secondary schools and our online educational resources receive c. 1 million 'user sessions' annually.

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 checked="" 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:

The Society welcomes the National Curriculum's focus on core knowledge and its explicit subject disciplinary structure and focus. In identifying a minimum entitlement of what should be taught to all pupils, the National Curriculum rightly leaves it to teachers to choose how best to develop exciting and stimulating lessons.

The Society notes that geography is not a statutory subject at Key Stage 4. However, we welcome the Key Stage 4 Entitlement Area which provides for all pupils to have a statutory entitlement to be able to study the humanities (comprising geography and history) after the age of 14. In some schools this has not been the case. For example, in 2009 Ofsted noted that 137 maintained schools entered no pupils for geography GCSE. In many schools pupils are also limited to a single choice of either geography or history. These subjects are not interchangeable and many pupils, given a free choice, would wish to study both to GCSE.

The welcome introduction of the EBac has helped address this issue with candidate numbers for GCSE geography now at their highest for 13 years. However, there remains the need to continue to reinforce the responsibility of schools to offer the geography (and history) courses post 14. The proposed new accountability measure for secondary schools works against this, as it currently stands, since it is possible for a student to gain the 'measure of 8' without studying an humanity (either geography or history) at GCSE. This needs, in our view, to be remedied and we are responding accordingly to that separate consultation.

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?

X Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

It is for teachers to decide how best to teach the National Curriculum to their pupils.

The Society is pleased to see the curriculum return to a clear focus on subject knowledge, understanding and disciplinary skills. It is the Society's experience that there are many good and outstanding geography teachers who will rise to the new curriculum.

However, for many years the general teaching workforce has had its pedagogical approaches largely corralled by centrally determined initiatives – such as the National Strategies or QCA 'schemes of work'. Some teachers' responses to the draft National Curriculum for geography have harked back to the previous context with a sense of 'just tell me what I'm supposed to do and how to do it.' It is not helpful to have teachers wedded to and awaiting instruction from a central dictat; which can only serve to weaken a teacher's professional judgement and skills. For such teachers, and particularly those with weak subject knowledge or non-specialist primary colleagues, they will need significant support to get to grips with the new curriculum. The Society believes that this support is best developed within a subject discipline context, connecting up-to-date subject knowledge with the classroom, and that subject bodies are best placed to provide it.

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

Comments:

In relation to Geography:

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) welcomes the proposed new geography Programme of Study for pupils aged 5 to 14. The Society is pleased to see that key elements of the Society's approach and suggestions - made during discussions with Ministers and officials - have informed DfE's published draft.

It has a necessary focus on core knowledge: the understanding of locations, country contexts, the key natural and human characteristics of our world, and the human and environmental processes that shape and change the world constantly and differentially. It requires map work and fieldwork at all key stages. In this way it clearly identifies the building blocks of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills that should be taught, and which underpin the understanding of more complex topics in later stages of study.

In particular the Society welcomes:

- An explicit focus on geographical place knowledge, together with geographical understanding and subject specific geographical skills
- A rebalancing of human and physical geography, redressing the erosion of the latter which had occurred over recent years
- Good coverage of geographical skills, requiring the use of globes, maps (including Ordnance Survey maps) and GIS at Key Stage 3
- Explicit requirement for fieldwork across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3
- A curriculum that provides progression, not repetition, for example Key Stage 1 focuses on the use of geographical vocabulary, Key Stage 2 on geographical features and Key Stage 3 on geographical processes
- The clarity of the draft which 'looks like geography'.

In addition the Society strongly urges that the teaching of climate change is explicitly included in Key Stage 3 geography programme of study.

This will signal to teachers, importantly, that climate change should not be taught in geography at earlier key stages and it will enable the strong geographical dimension to climate change study to be introduced alongside the atmospheric chemistry elements that are already explicit in the science programme of study at KS3. Climate change is taught in complementary ways through both geography and science. At KS3 the geography element should focus, in our view, on the factual record of evidence that documents change in climate in different parts of the world from the ice age to the present.

Further comments on this matter are given in section 14 of this consultation response.

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?

X Sufficiently ambitious

Not sufficiently ambitious

Not sure

Comments:

Made in relation to geography

Yes. The draft National Curriculum for Geography provides sufficient challenge at each respective key stage. In addition, taken together from ages 5 – 14 the geography curriculum provides a broad, balanced and rigorous programme of study which will introduce pupils to core knowledge about the world's people, places, resources and environments.

Beyond the curriculum itself the Society is concerned that three significant issues may serve to undermine its potential and how it is viewed in schools.

First the lack of subject specialist geographical knowledge in primary schools, particularly at Key Stage 2. The Society's understanding is that c50% of new entrants to primary ITT courses have not studied geography beyond 14 themselves, and further that the average length of time dedicated to geography on these courses is a mere 7 hours. As Ofsted has reported, the lack of geographical subject knowledge within the primary sector often leads to geography being badly taught &/or combined together with another subject (typically history) which we believe serves neither subject well.

Secondly, the compression of Key Stage 3 courses in to two years (or less) and/or the introduction of integrated humanities at Key Stage 3 (often combining geography, history, citizenship and RE). The Society understands the geography programme for Key Stage 3 to have been written for a 'full three year course'. Teachers who are working in schools with compressed or integrated Key Stage 3 courses have clearly expressed their concerns that they would not be able to cover the draft in their available time.

Thirdly, perceived lack of parity with history given the different levels of detail and lengths of their programmes of study. We worry that those structural differences will mean that SMTs will see history as more important and demanding of teaching time than geography, when in fact they are of equal status in the curriculum. This is further explained in section 14 of this consultation response.

The Society believes these are negative trends which will only serve to undermine the good intention of the draft National Curriculum for geography.

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

Comments:

No comments made

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

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

In relation to geography

The Society believes the development of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills (within the practical constraints of a 'slimmed down' document) is well expressed. There is good development from a KS1 focus on locational knowledge and using geographical vocabulary, to Key Stage 2 description and understanding of geographical characteristics and features, through to Key Stage 3 focus on geographical processes.

The development of locational knowledge, pupils' understanding of where places are, what they are like and how they change, follows through the Key Stages and also provides sufficient opportunities for teachers to draw on additional case studies relevant to their school's circumstances.

A number of Key Stage 3 teachers have specifically commented that the primary curriculum (if well taught) provides greater clarity for them in understanding what geography their Year 7 intake should have covered. The Society hopes that the new curriculum will encourage greater collaboration between KS2 and KS3 schools and their teachers. Through its CPD networks the Society has been supporting pilot work around KS2/3 transition in geography and believes that such partnerships can help develop primary colleagues subject knowledge, build more effective use of fieldwork across the

key stages and also provide opportunities for secondary colleagues (and potentially their A Level geographers) to better support geography in their feeder schools.

There is a case for separate exemplification to support progression from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3 and the Society would welcome the opportunity to discuss the provision of this in greater detail with the Department.

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?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

No comment made

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

X Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

The Society welcomes a focus on the core knowledge, understanding and (subject specific) skills in geography. There is substantive content in the programme of study in geography. We believe this helps embody a higher expectation for the education of children in geography classrooms. This view has been similarly supported by teachers who have been asked by the Society to review the National Curriculum proposals.

The draft curriculum also places a greater demand on teachers (especially in the primary years) to enhance their geographical subject knowledge and maintain this throughout their teaching. Some may view this as a negative impact of the new curriculum. The Society does not take this view and believes that if good quality teaching is to take place in geography classrooms, teachers themselves must have a good understanding of the discipline.

A 'tyranny of low expectation' in geography, either for pupils or their teachers, will not provide current and future generations with a high quality geographical education. The new National Curriculum rightly raises the geographical horizon for all children.

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

Comments:

No comments made

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:

In relation to geography:

The Society believes the new National Curriculum for Geography will help parents better understand what their children should be learning at each key stage. The draft National Curriculum for Geography provides greater clarity, in straightforward language, about what should be taught. Parents should also be able to gain a better understanding of the contribution of geography to the totality of their children's education.

In relation to the clear requirements for geographical fieldwork at all Key Stages, the Society believes that this will encourage parents to see fieldwork as a necessary and developing part of their children's education.

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

Comments:

The following factors will be critical in the successful implementation of the new National Curriculum for Geography.

- The geography teaching community being given a strong subject discipline lead in relation to the new opportunities provided by the geography curriculum and how this can support young peoples' education. The Society would be delighted to work alongside the Department to help fulfil this leadership role.
- Geography teachers in both the primary and secondary phases being given, by their SMTs, sufficient support and time to respond positively to the new curriculum – rather than just 'going through the motions'
- School SMTs understanding that geography and history programmes of study are of equal status and require comparable amounts of teaching time to be successfully delivered (in contrast to the way they currently appear to differ in terms of length and level of detail in the programmes of study)
- Engaging geography teachers with up-to-date subject knowledge in order for them to fully understand the demands of the new curriculum (at both the primary and secondary phases) and engage positively in planning their own schemes of work to implement it
- New resources to respond to those significant areas of the curriculum that are currently under-resourced e.g. physical geography (KS2&3), resources on North and South America (KS2) and high quality locational resources (all key stages); or in which there are new approaches in the programme of study (such as providing detailed place-based context for thematic, process-based study).
- Ensuring that teachers have SMT support for geographical fieldwork and the

skills necessary for fieldwork to be stimulating and relevant to the programme of study

- Subject specialist CPD to enhance teachers own knowledge of this subject and to ensure they have the skills to use and teach with GIS.

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

Comments:

In relation to geography, it is the subject community through its subject bodies which are best placed to support schools with the teaching of the new curriculum and the development of resources which teachers can use in their classrooms and during fieldwork.

Because of the Society's long established and strong partnerships with schools, higher education and the professions it is best placed to provide a coherent and up-to-date programme of subject disciplinary support (including CPD, resources and other support) to teachers in the upper primary and secondary years.

The Society has a proven track record of providing successful and well used support and resources for schools, we currently provide CPD training for over 500 geography teachers annually and the Society's online educational resources receive over 1 million 'user sessions'. The Action Plan for Geography (supported by Government over the period 2006 – 2011 and run jointly and equally with the GA) successfully demonstrates how the subject community can work in collaboration with government and teachers to make a significant impact on the teaching workforce. For example in its 2011 inspection report on geography Ofsted commented, "the best geography was usually seen in schools which were participating in the professional development programme offered through the Action Plan for Geography, in specialist schools or where schools shared good practice with local partners schools."

The Society would welcome further discussions with Government to explore support for subject specific exemplification, resources, fieldwork support and CPD to support the implementation of the new National Curriculum for Geography.

Other providers:

The Society recognises there is a legitimate role for commercial providers of support and resources, such as educational publishers. However, the Society does feel that previous examples of 'endorsed' text books and other resources (which have often been linked to examination courses) have tended to narrow, rather than widen

geographical studies in the classroom

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?

X Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Comments:

Yes

This would provide some reassurance to teachers that they could focus on planning towards the new National Curriculum for 2014, rather than continuing to focus on the old one.

Ofsted would also need to review how best this disapplication should be reflected in the inspections it carries out over this period.

Government should also consider how best it can encourage School Heads to support and provide time for their teachers to successfully plan for the new curriculum, which will precede future changes at GCSE and A Levels in 2015.

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

Comments:

1. Geography and History – parity in the curriculum

One specific issue the Society has raised with DfE is the area of parity between geography and history. The two subjects are at the heart of the study of the humanities within schools and, at GCSE, have equal status within the English Baccalaureate and in the new accountability measure. However, the manner in which the draft National Curriculum orders are presented may suggest differently, and the Society feels this should be addressed.

The geography report is seven pages long, whilst the history report spans ten pages and contains over 300 additional words. In the hands of some Senior Management Teams/Head Teachers this significant difference may lead to history being considered a subject that requires more time on the school timetable, more resources or the greater use of subject specialist teachers.

It is for the historians to decide whether their report is too long and too detailed. However, there are a number of key bullet points in the geography orders where – the Society would argue – the heart of geography has been overly compressed. An example of this is the following bullet point from KS3:

- Understand, through the use of detailed place-based exemplars at a variety of scales, the key processes in:
 - physical geography relating to: glaciation, plate tectonics, rocks, soils, weathering, geological timescales, weather and climate, rivers and coasts
 - human geography relating to: population, international development, economic activity in the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors, urbanisation, and the use of natural resources

The Society is *not* arguing for additional content to be added into geography. However, we have argued that some rebalancing of the relative lengths of geography and history could be achieved by providing some further exemplification of the *existing* geographical content in the draft orders. For example, additional text added to the above bullet points on geographical processes could provide teachers with a clearer overview of the proposed content and the expectation in terms of level, pitch and range. The Society would welcome the opportunity to provide more detail commentary to DfE concerning this issue.

- ### **2. The inclusion of an explicit reference and requirement to teach about climate change at Key Stage 3 in geography**
- in a manner that relates to geography and is complementary to those aspects of climate change being taught in science at the same phase.

Climate change sits naturally within geography since the subject embraces the study of changes to the earth's surface and atmosphere over the past 2 million

years, during which time the climate has warmed and cooled repeatedly.

Climate change also sits within geography since (a) its cause and consequence lies, in part, with the manner in which societies interact with the environment and its resources; (b) the changes are spatially differentiated both in terms of nature and impact; and (c) the climate and its changes over the past two million years has been a driving factor in the development of the world's landscapes and our current hydrology and weather-related hazards.

We believe it is absolutely right that young people learn about weather and climate before tackling climate change as a topic. That said, we do think it important that climate change is introduced in KS 3 geography (not earlier; and preferably taught in the second half of KS3). The teaching at KS3 should focus on understanding the factual documented evidence for how the climate has changed in different parts of the world, and at over what time frames, during the ice age and in the Holocene (ie over the past 2 million years). This would follow naturally from the study of weather and climate characteristics and processes, and would introduce and prepare young people for an in depth study of the topic in KS4 for those who opted for geography.

Furthermore, by being clear that the topic is to be taught in KS3, it would discourage teachers from seeking to introduce it as a topic at earlier key stages, when, in our view, it is far less appropriate given the complexity of this issue and the presence of a non-specialist workforce.

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:

It was straight forward and clear.

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 X

E-mail address for acknowledgement: s.brace@rgs.org

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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

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