



*Council for Subject Associations  
A Voice for Subjects*



## A JOINT STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION'S CONSULTATION ON PRIMARY NATIONAL CURRICULUM DRAFT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY - AUGUST 2012

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### Introduction

This joint statement has been agreed by a group of academics, teacher's unions, professional associations and children's authors with expertise in primary education.

### Statement

We agree that all pupils must be given every opportunity to succeed. However, too many elements of the proposed National Curriculum Draft Programmes of Study will inhibit progress for large numbers of children and label others as failures. Using too prescriptive an approach will not achieve the Government's aim of raising standards. International evidence from Finland and other high-performing countries indicates that improving pupil attainment requires more emphasis on coherence across the whole curriculum, recognition of the adverse, as well as the positive, effects of assessment mechanisms and trust in teachers' professional judgement.

The following are the common areas of concern for the signatories to this statement:

- **meeting children's needs** - The proposed curriculum is over-prescriptive and leaves little or no room for teacher or school flexibility. Teachers will have little opportunity to create an appropriately tailored curriculum for each separate, inclusive class of pupils.
- **breadth** - With increased over-prescription and a focus on only three subjects we are concerned that breadth and balance in the curriculum will be lost.
- **deep understanding** - The draft programmes of study may well place too great an emphasis on rote learning. This means that children will be required to memorise information but not necessarily to understand it or think for themselves.
- **trust** – Teachers must be trusted and allowed to use their professional judgement and experience to teach children.

We therefore call on the Government to:

- revise the draft programmes of study very significantly, especially to reduce the detailed content to be covered, before moving to the formal consultation stage;
- consult with a range of academic experts and teachers in a variety of schools as to what can realistically be expected of children at particular ages;
- include a clear oracy strand within the English curriculum and reinstate drama to the English curriculum as it plays such a key role in enhancing children's language skills and confidence;
- place a strong emphasis on reading for meaning and pleasure and writing for a variety of purposes; and
- include a greater emphasis on mathematical thinking, reasoning and problem-solving.

Additional detailed information to support the points highlighted in this statement is attached in the form of separate responses from each individual and organisation listed below. These are entirely their own views which may or may not be shared by the other signatories.

**Association of Teachers and Lecturers**

**Margaret Brown, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Education, Kings College, London**

**Campaign for State Education**

**Children's authors – 72 children's authors including Michael Rosen and Alan Gibbons**

**Council for Subject Associations**

**Dr Tony Eaude, University of Oxford**

**Information for Schools and College Governors**

**National Association of Advisers in English**

**National Association for Primary Education**

**National Union of Teachers**

**Professor Colin Richards, University of Cumbria**

**Professor Terry Wrigley Visiting Professor Leeds Metropolitan University, Editor of *Improving Schools* journal**

**Professor Dominic Wyse, Professor of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Institute of Education**