

Council for Subject Associations

The following are comments sent to the Council for Subject Associations about the National Curriculum Draft Programmes of Study

Dr John Steers, Chair, Council for Subject Associations

National Association of Teachers of English (NATE)

- Fundamental misunderstanding of how children learn and not sequenced coherently. Speaking and Listening – poor understanding of what this involves – doesn't mention talk for learning. Formal talk is acknowledged.
- Easily measured elements are at the fore e.g. phonics ahead of everything else.
- Welcome the focus on wider reading for pleasure
- Aims are great – problem with actual match to curriculum
- Problems with split between 'word reading and comprehension'
- Would like to see a clear and distinct Speaking and Listening strand
- Lack of explicit element that references Drama/ Role Play/ Speaking and listening
- SEN issues/ EAL – no recognition
- No mention of ICT/ Digital literacy/ Media
- No recognition of how children learn
- 1950s curriculum for 2050 children
- No recognition of developmental differences in a year group – including summer birthdays
- Impact on assessment – what will the 'national standard' be? How will it be measured?
- Content doesn't match well researched 'age related standards' – by making it 'harder' you won't raise standards.
- Over emphasis on phonics is counter productive
- Where is the research-based evidence to support the curriculum? International comparisons – are the jurisdictions comparable?
- What support is in place/ CPD? What plans to support teachers
- Testing re Y1 phonics inappropriate – and doesn't recognize that children try to make meaning, even when told not to! (so storm for strom. Blow (as in flower) not accepted, yet it's a logical phonic response.
- Progression as whole class cohort illogical. How can children progress to L6 (or whatever advanced attainment will be) without differentiation?
- p.6 Reading 11 – only books with their phonic knowledge? Dull. Dry.
- What about books on the classroom shelf – are high quality picture books banned if they have words the children might try to read.
- **Spelling:** expectations very high – and no recognition of the fact that some of the common e.g. homophones continue to cause difficulty, despite regular discussion. (there, their, they're; to, too, two; are our – because of the way they are often pronounced; and grammatical point of 'should of', etc. ALSO confusion of wh and non wh words – whent,

were/where, etc.) Why were these particular spellings chosen? Are they based on research?

- **Grammar strand not age appropriate:** No recognition of subtlety of some punctuation – even commas are not always straightforward, let alone semi-colons. (Current NC punctuation requirements are sensible for the age group).

National PSE Association for Advisors, Inspectors and Consultants (NSCoPSE)

For some primary schools, the only sex and relationships, drug and healthy eating education children receive is from the science programmes of study. Children and young people consistently tell us that the information they receive about relationships, sex and reproduction is too little, too late, focused primarily on the girls, is too biology focused and rarely discusses healthy relationships. The draft programme of study for science presents a carefully structured development of knowledge from Year 1 to upper primary school. Our objections to this structure is not so much that it covers topics we welcome, but that the very structured and detailed nature of the programmes of study for each year group leaves little room for teachers to engage children in wider, broader, debates that are tailored to their level of development and include moral and ethical considerations alongside the factual scientific knowledge.

National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)

Primary curriculum – there is a question around why RE was ignored again in the materials published. Why couldn't there have been a sentence – even half of one – which indicated that requirements regarding the teaching of RE to all children remains unchanged.

National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE)

NAWE's comment is limited to the English Curriculum and it doesn't have a big axe to grind over grammar etc. Instead:

We approve the repeated mention of reading whole books, and of reading for enjoyment. We also approve how the discussion of reading is to lead (amongst other things) to narrative/fictional composition.

We do not, however, understand the approach to poetry. Learning poetry by heart is fine – perhaps not crucial, but potentially rewarding. There is though no mention of *writing* poetry, or of making any use of the poetry learned by heart in terms of developing pupils' own expressive use of language. We assume that this is an oversight, given the equivalent attention to the reading/writing of narrative/fiction. We urge that this matter is addressed, as there is otherwise minimal value placed on exploring the expressive and imaginative capabilities of language, which nourish so much good writing, not just poetry, and which engender a positive, productive engagement with English as a whole.