



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 Education Secretary to Christians in Science

Organisation (if applicable) Christians in Science

Address:

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](mailto: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 type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify

CiS is an international network of those concerned with the relationship between science and the Christian faith, open to scientists, teachers, students and all those with an interest in this dialogue.

Among our 1000+ members are scientists engaged in research & development, science lecturers, teachers, administrators in university, school or industry, science writers, philosophers, theologians and others who have an interest in the relationship between science and Christian faith. Members include highly distinguished senior scientists, bench scientists, students and school pupils.

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 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		

As described above the Christians in Science reflects a wide community. There is a significant diversity of subject skills represented. Science is often a common factor, but CiS membership would probably cover many of the above areas.

**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:

Christians in Science, [www.cis.org.uk](http://www.cis.org.uk) , welcomes emphasis on academic rigour and the provision of a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and in society. An emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy is also welcomed. Christians in Science welcomes provision for a daily act of collective worship and the teaching of religious education to pupils at every key stage. However, religious education needs to be well taught and superficial adherence to collective worship or the teaching of religious education is unlikely to draw out the higher level thinking skills that form part of the ambition represented by this curriculum reform.

It is important to CiS that the administration of change within schools/educational environments is facilitated in such a manner as to support timely and well considered curriculum development.

Christians in Science are concerned that academically robust models representing discourse between science and faith have their place within curriculum models. Whilst it is understood that the Science curriculum may not be the best place for discussion of religious ideas connected with Science, neither would it be entirely truthful or balanced if Science should be presented as the sole preserve of the secular humanist. Such views are much promulgated, but these views are historically and intellectually highly disputed and at worst inaccurate and anti-educational. UK students and teachers need a higher calibre, and nuanced understanding of such Faith-Science ideas in the context of international business and of an increasingly plural society.

CiS members have in recent years worked extensively with institutions including the Royal Society, the Stapleford Centre, the Bible Society and the Faraday Institute, to name a few, to ensure that high quality training and resources are available to UK students and teachers. These and other institutions have co-operatively acted to support a comprehensive understanding of strong education values, providing a cohesive, rigorous and well evidenced base to ensure that a balanced spiritual and moral framework is supported.

**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?**

Not sure

Comments:

Christians in Science would support greater teacher autonomy if the outcomes were likely to improve the educational provision to students. This will, however, inevitably depend on the quality of institutions and local provision. A detailed sub-level framework may in some cases have merit, however, to experienced and highly performing practitioners, it may appear prescriptive and unnecessary. A supportive, but not statutory advisory framework may present freedom, but a supportive reference. Such an approach may also allow institutions to change at a rate that does not too sharply refocus institutional attention on perceived and significant curriculum reform at a resourcing cost to wider teacher and learning objectives.

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

Comments:

No specific comment other to express a desire that curriculum content could perhaps be usefully aligned to strategic key need areas for the UK. A former UK Chief Scientific Officer presented a twenty year plan to the ASE a few years ago. It would seem pragmatic and sensible to align such projected UK strategic needs to curriculum development. That would, at least, enable the vocabulary of scientific endeavour to be underpinned within educational curriculum models.

**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?**

Not sure

Comments:

If it is to be argued that content *per se* inhibits ambition, there is a danger that we have too narrowly defined the causes of limited ambition. Current reform has highlighted the importance of literacy and numeracy and CiS would welcome this. A challenge that may need to be addressed is how attainment may be assessed in such a way to reward and encourage exceptional ability whilst recognising that this will not be a normative outcome. Any model must, therefore, be truly inclusive, but offer stretch and challenge. Highly ambitious models may require institutions to explore accelerated learning and extension, these aspects of intervention should not be negated or excluded.

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

Comments:

The wording needs to be accessible, but specifically and contextually defined where necessary.

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

Not sure

Comments:

It is not the programmes of study that provide effective progression. More important is the quality and vision of the teaching and learning.

**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

Comments:

CiS is a body that has high regard for academic rigour and supports an academic journal and learned conferences. Although CiS may have no specific view on this subject, it would be no surprise if CiS members were not strongly in support of the proposed changes.

Again, in keeping with earlier comment, some consideration of the impact and rate of change on teachers would be consistent with CiS's Christian perspective on the value of human persons.

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

Yes

Comments:

Strong emphasis on numeracy and literacy skills is important in giving students access to all other areas of the curriculum. The underlying emphasis on cognitive models and understanding of conceptual theory is ambitious as is the emphasis on analytical and evaluative skills. This ambition is useful, however, the success of the reforms are likely to depend on teaching and learning development. Key skills need to be developed by teachers and learners. Higher standards need to be seen as achievable across the spectrum and this may require some modelling. Christians in Science members have been extensively engaged in such modelling to students and teachers. Both Scientific theory and philosophical and theological debate require these high skill levels. It is important that the level of such debate is raised so that students may engage with science and technology without an associated detachment of belief and value structure (and visa versa).

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

Comments:

It would be harmful to science and society if science were to be seen as the sole preserve of secular humanism. Strong social and media pressure often promote this view, as well as, regrettably occasionally some voices from the Royal Society. It is a widespread and often expressed view of members of Christians in Science that a Christian Faith is entirely compatible with academic rigour within science. These views are also expressed within the worldwide Christian church and other academic bodies that represent science and faith. Values derived from religious perspectives can greatly support and inform a moral and contextual frame that, in turn, support cohesive and integrated learning.

Education in its finest tradition can represent and articulate this learning: learning that speaks to the heart of western development and cultural heritage.

**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:

This remains to be seen. The proposed replacement of NC levels and sub-levels and the inclusion of subject comment is probably helpful. Especially if achievement, attainment and progression can be clearly communicated at a subject level. More could be done to standardise and improve the quality of reported communication to parents. However, due regard is essential with respect to the workload of teaching practitioners. Educational objectives are unlikely to be enhanced by losing sight of the importance of excellent classroom delivery. Some research, communication and dissemination of models of excellence may be helpful in this area.

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

Comments:

Significant change, if properly implemented needs time. Consultation and reflection is required. Clear communication of what remains and what is to be changed is helpful. If a flexible and sequential model is presented the teaching profession will have more opportunity to consider and implement change.

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

Comments:

The Wonder Project [www.wonderproject.co.uk](http://www.wonderproject.co.uk)

The Stapleford Centre [www.stapleford-centre.org](http://www.stapleford-centre.org)

Christians in Science [www.cis.org.uk](http://www.cis.org.uk)

The Faraday Institute [www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday](http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday)

...have all developed extensive experience working in the areas of Faith –Science dialogue and education. Members of Christians in Science have made major contributions to this in recent years.

**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?**

Agree

Comments:

Agree – but maintain flexibility and seek to preserve the best of the old whilst considering carefully whether sound educational goals may best achieved with the gradual consent of the teaching profession.

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

Comments

No.:

**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:

I sometimes found the possible choices for answering the questions left me with the only option to say "not sure" when in fact I then presented an alternative position in the comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

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:** \_\_\_\_\_

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?

Yes

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](mailto: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](mailto:NationalCurriculum.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)