

Primary Review calls for radical curriculum change



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Section: News

A transformation of testing is needed to ensure that the primary curriculum is broad and balanced, says a report from the Cambridge Primary Review published today.

The review, led by Professor Robin Alexander, has published its vision of a curriculum based on eight broad subject areas, including a protected local component.

It will feed into Sir Jim Rose's government-commissioned review, which has proposed six "areas of learning". Professor Alexander's return to first principles and 12 aims of primary education have been welcomed.

The review calls for the creation of eight domains - for example "language, oracy and literacy" and "place and time" - which would have equal priority. It also recommends the end of the Primary National Strategy and a change to testing as currently the "assessment tail wags the curriculum dog".


The report, *Towards a New Primary Curriculum*, does not spell out what should replace the testing system. Recommendations on assessment will be published in the summer.

Mick Brookes, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "I hope (the Government) will do Robin Alexander the courtesy of taking it seriously because a lot of work has gone into it and a lot of people from the primary sector have contributed to it."

The Commons' children, schools and families select committee will publish its own report on the national curriculum next month. Chair Barry Sheerman said: "I think there are some interesting ideas in what he has to say. It is a very thorough piece of research. We will take the group's work into consideration when preparing our report."

Analysis, pages 20-21.

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Robin Alexander has brought forward publication of his three-year independent inquiry to coincide with Sir Jim Rose's official curriculum proposals. Helen Ward examines the issues that divide and unite the two men