

*From Professor Robin Alexander, LittD, PhD  
Fellow of Wolfson College  
Director of the Cambridge Primary Review*

*Faculty of Education  
184 Hills Road  
Cambridge CB2 8PQ*

Tel: +44 (0) 1223 767523  
Fax: +44 (0) 1223 767602  
Email: [rja40@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rja40@cam.ac.uk)

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**To members of the Secretary of State's Expert Group on Assessment**

With some difficulty I have found how to contact the group in order to submit evidence. There is no named contact, and it appears impossible to send material in hard copy.

However, I now been given have a contact e-mail address and would like to submit the following seven documents on behalf of the Cambridge Primary Review:

- 1. *Standards and quality in English primary schools over time: the national evidence (Cambridge Primary Review Research Survey 4/1) by Peter Tymms and Christine Merrell, University of Durham. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.***
- 2. *Standards and quality in English primary schools over time: the national evidence. Cambridge Primary Review Research Briefing on the above report.***
- 3. *Standards in English primary education: the international evidence (Cambridge Primary Review Research Survey 4/2) Chris Whetton, Graham Ruddock and Liz Twist, National Foundation for Educational Research. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.***
- 4. *Standards in English primary education: the international evidence. Cambridge Primary Review Research Briefing on the above report.***
- 5. *The quality of learning: assessment alternatives for primary education (Cambridge Primary Review Research Survey 3/4) Wynne Harlen, University of Bristol. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.***
- 6. *The quality of learning: assessment alternatives for primary education. Cambridge Primary Review Research Briefing on the above report.***
- 7. *How well are we doing? Research on standards, quality and assessment in English primary education. Cambridge Primary Review Overview Briefing on all three reports above.***

It seems to me that since the group's remit concentrates on the testing process rather than on the debate about standards, the report by Wynne Harlen (document 5 above) is of greatest relevance. Nevertheless, because the other two reports raise questions about the reliability and validity of existing test procedures, they cannot be ignored. Assuming that group members have limited time, may I therefore suggest that at least they look at documents 7 (the overview briefing on all three reports) and 6 (the summary of the report by Wynne Harlen). Both are very short.

You will probably be aware that these reports were published a year ago as commissioned evidence to the Cambridge Primary Review. The Review is currently preparing its final report, which will have two major chapters on assessment, testing, standards, quality and accountability. These chapters draw on the full range of the Review's evidence, not just the reports above. That evidence includes

818 written submissions, some of them of considerable length, reports from 94 regional and national soundings sessions, reports on 138 other meetings, trawls of official data and of course the 28 commissioned surveys of published research which between them cover nearly 3000 sources.

Unfortunately, although the two relevant chapters are now written, our final report will not be published until some time after you are scheduled to complete your work. Nevertheless, if you think that there is any way that we can be of assistance, please let me know. As with the current DCSF review of the primary curriculum, I believe that if the government proceeds to its conclusions on matters within the remit of the Cambridge Primary Review - the most comprehensive enquiry into English primary education for 40 years - without taking full account of what the Cambridge Review has assembled, that would be an almost perverse waste of data, not to mention the wisdom the thousands who have participated in the Cambridge Review and the exceptional wealth of expertise and experience which it has brought together.

If the group would like hard copies of any of the listed documents, please contact our administrator, Catrin Darsley: [cd372@cam.ac.uk](mailto:cd372@cam.ac.uk) .



Robin Alexander  
Director, The Cambridge Primary Review