

National Curriculum Review

THE 'EXPERT PANEL' REPORT, THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSALS AND THE CPR

Since last December the Department for Education (DfE) has been consulting on the national curriculum report of its 'expert panel' (EP). A statement from the Secretary of State is expected very soon. It will launch draft proposals for the revised national curriculum for England together with draft KS1/2 programmes of study for the designated 'core' subjects of English, maths and science.

We hope that you'll join in the discussion and debate about the proposals, for that is what the Secretary of State will invite and that is what the Cambridge Primary Review stands for. As always, CPR believes that although there is much justified cynicism about government 'consultations', it is better to engage than to remain passive. In anticipation, you may be interested in a commentary on the EP report presented by CPR's director at a recent conference. [20120423_CPPS_text_Alexander.pdf](#). The commentary raises critical questions about the EP's approach to children's educational entitlement, curriculum aims, breadth and quality, and the use the EP makes of international comparisons to justify its stance on 'essential knowledge'.

By way of comparison with the EP report and whatever the Secretary of State proposes, you may also care to revisit the CPR's own analysis of the problems of the current national curriculum and its proposals for change in the form of an aims/domains framework with an enriched approach to language and literacy at its core and a substantial 'community' element. See [CURRICULUM BRIEFING REVISED 2_11.pdf](#). You may also be interested in Colin Richards's brief but trenchant critique of the EP report (see this page, 'News').

Robin Alexander's commentary raises the question of how far the national curriculum can be truly national when over half of England's secondary schools, and an increasing number of primary schools, have become or will become academies and on that basis will not be obliged to follow the national curriculum. Whatever one may think about the merits of this arrangement, it does at least present schools with a significant opportunity to explore alternatives, and for that reason we believe that the CPR's own curriculum framework has continuing currency. Indeed we know of primary schools which are already using it. To explore this framework in detail, and the evidence and argument on which it is based, see *Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review*, chapters 12-14, pp 174-278. <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415548717>

For other CPR publications and resources for curriculum discussion and planning, go to http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/themes/the_primary_curriculum.php