

guardian.co.uk

MORTARBOARD BLOG



Cambridge primary review: why the government rejects it

Below is the full reaction from the schools minister, Vernon Coaker, to [today's Cambridge primary review](#), setting out why the government is rejecting its findings. Does he have a point?



I should Coaker ... the schools minister 'refutes the claim that primary standards have not risen across the board'. Photograph: David Sillitoe

"It's disappointing that a review which purports to be so comprehensive is simply not up to speed on many major changes in primaries. The world has moved on since this review was started. If every child making progress and reaching their potential is what matters then Professor Alexander's proposals are a backward step.

"We're already putting in place the most fundamental reforms for decades following Sir Jim Rose's primary review – to make the curriculum less prescriptive and free it up for teachers. [Alexander] suggests a schools starting age of six but this would be a completely counterproductive – we want to make sure children are playing and learning from an early age and to give parents the choice for their child to start in the September following their fourth birthday.

"Our expert group on testing said it would be a backward step to scrap English and maths at 11 and we are piloting a "school report card", which will give parents a far broader picture of how schools are doing.

"The report is at best woolly and unclear on how schools should be accountable to the public – we're clear that it would be a retrograde step to return to days when the real achievements of schools were hidden. And he completely fails to mention our own major review to transform SEN (special educational needs) education and support for parents.

"We completely refute the claim that primary standards have not risen across the board. Independent Ofsted inspections shows there have never been so many outstanding and good primary schools, and Key Stage 2 results show huge progress over the last decade – a tribute to the outstanding quality of teaching, training and heads."

[Previous](#)

[Blog home](#)

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009