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Major inquiry launched into primary education

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The biggest independent inquiry into primary education in England for almost 40 years will be launched today.

The two-year review aims to help shape the future of how children are taught in their first years of formal education.

Those behind it are a team of 60 researchers from universities across the UK and a 20-member advisory committee.

The review, the most comprehensive of its kind since the Plowden Report of 1967, will focus on how the current system is working and how it can be improved.

It will also assess the impact of the past two decades of Government policies on how young children learn.

Government education bosses welcomed the debate, but said primary school education has never been better.



The two-year review aims to help shape the future of how children are taught

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ander, Fellow of Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, will direct the

He said: "Forty years on from the last major inquiry into primary education and with two decades of government initiatives behind us, it's time to take stock.

"How well are we doing? Where are we heading? What kind of education should young children receive?

"This is an independent review and it will ask the questions that need to be asked, without fear or favour.

"We urge all who are concerned about the education which young children receive and the world in which they are growing up to take advantage of the opportunity which the review provides."

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The launch follows three years of planning and consultation involving the Government, opposition parties, national educational agencies and teaching unions.

The review is supported by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, one of the largest independent grant-making bodies in the UK.

A spokesman for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) said primary school standards are at their highest ever level.

He said: "Our Primary National Strategy has delivered a substantial and sustained improvement in primary results since 1997."

The spokesman added that the department is "never complacent" and has recently implemented the results of a review into reading skills.

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