

## THE ROSE AND CAMBRIDGE REPORTS ON THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

*(Source: Cambridge Primary Review. Reprinted as Appendix 2 of the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee report on the national curriculum, April 2009)*

### DCSF ROSE REVIEW

### CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW

#### **NATURE OF THE TWO REVIEWS**

<b>STATUS</b>	Commissioned by government.	Independent.
	Based at DCSF.	Based in a university.
	Team membership and management not specified, apart from review leadership and QCA involvement.	Cambridge team together with 70 research consultants, guided by advisory committee, steered by management group. All named: details at <a href="http://www.primaryreview.org.uk">www.primaryreview.org.uk</a> .
<b>REMIT</b>	Restricted.	Open.
	Treats current policy as mostly incontestable.	Treats no policy as beyond question.
	Exclusive focus on curriculum.	Curriculum placed in broader context.
	Assessment/testing specifically excluded.	Assessment/testing included.
<b>EVIDENCE</b>	569 mostly closed-response questionnaire returns; 2-month response deadline.	1052 open-response submissions: 6-month response deadline (latecomers accepted). Average submission length: 30 pages.
	'Unsolicited contributions'.*	
	Commissioned evidence reviews from QCA and NFER.*	28 commissioned research surveys from 70 academics in 21 universities and NFER, covering nearly 3000 published sources.
	School visits.*	87 school-based regional 'community soundings'.
	Stakeholder meetings.*	148+ stakeholder meetings, including conferences and 9 'national soundings' with major organisations, teachers and other professionals. In all, with the community soundings, over 235 meetings to date.
	Official data.	Official data.
	Comments invited on interim report.	Comments invited on interim reports.
	Consultations with opposition parties: not known.	Meetings with Conservative and Liberal Democrat education shadows / groups. 3 sessions to date with House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee.
<b>REPORTS</b>	1 Interim report, December 2008.	29 interim reports, October 2007 – May 2008.

		37 briefings, October 2007 - May 2008.
		2-volume curriculum report January 2009
	Final report scheduled March 2009.	Final report scheduled spring 2009.
	<b><u>DCSF ROSE REVIEW</u></b>	<b><u>CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW</u></b>
<b>REPORT PROVENANCE</b>	Review leader named, but actual report authorship unclear.	Review leader/report editors named.
	Very few evidential sources cited, almost entirely official or otherwise within the loop of current policy.	All evidential sources cited, mix of official and independent.
<b><i>TREATMENT OF CURRICULUM</i></b>		
<b>PROBLEMS</b>	View of what is problematic dictated largely by the review's remit.	View of what is problematic dictated largely by the review's evidence.
	Witness concerns mainly restricted to what is covered by the consultation questionnaire.	Witnesses determine their own concerns: exceptionally wide-ranging.
	Considers problems of perceived curriculum overload, unmanageability, progression/continuity from the EYFS, and transition to KS3. Also school starting age. Central concerns appear to be to reduce the number of subjects and simplify the programmes of study. An exercise in re-arrangement rather than reform?	Considers all problems identified by Rose, plus: children's loss of entitlement to curriculum breadth and balance; curriculum impact of KS2 tests and the national strategies; marginalisation of the arts and humanities; the opposition of 'breadth and 'standards'; underlying problems in the way curriculum is conceived and discussed, especially in relation to subjects, knowledge and skills; character of specific subjects, notably English; centralisation, micro-management, and the balance of national, local and school in decision-making. Also, and fundamentally, asks what primary education is for and what its priorities should be.
<b>AIMS &amp; VALUES</b>	Takes as 'platform' the 2007 Children's Plan and endorses as applicable to primary education the existing QCA aims for the secondary curriculum.	Starts from first principles: 12 aims for primary education to shape curriculum, pedagogy and school life, plus 18 procedural principles to guide the work of government, national bodies, local authorities and schools. Aims and principles grounded in the Review's evidence and independent analysis. Finds the QCA aims inadequate.
	Aims and curriculum devised separately; not necessarily consistent.	Aims devised first and then reflected in proposals for curriculum, pedagogy and the wider life of the school.
<b>PRIORITIES</b>	Literacy and numeracy given highest priority.	Language, oracy and literacy given highest priority.
	Current 3-subject core (English, maths, science) replaced by four 'skills for learning and life' (literacy, numeracy, ICT, personal development).	Current core replaced by mandatory commitment to high-quality teaching in all specified domains, regardless of how much time each is allocated.
<b>FRAMEWORK</b>	Curriculum conceived as concentric	Curriculum conceived as a matrix of

circles of  
(i) 3 DCSF/QCA secondary aims  
(ii) 4 'skills for learning and life'  
(iii) 6 'areas of learning'.

(i) 12 new aims for primary education

(ii) 8 domains of knowledge, skill, enquiry and disposition, all of which are essential.

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(iii) national and local/community components (below).

## **CONTENT**

The six areas of learning essentially re-organise existing NC subjects under a smaller number of headings; little re-conceptualisation or revaluation apparent.

The domains derive (a) from the 12 aims, (b) from a list, grounded in the Review's evidence, of 15 kinds of knowledge, skill, enquiry and disposition which are essential to a properly-conceived primary education. They also build on the EYFS and lead readily to the KS3 curriculum.

The 8 domains incorporate familiar disciplines but also entail radical re-conceptualisation of, especially: language, oracy and literacy; citizenship and moral education; children's health, emotional development and wellbeing.

The domains require much-enhanced public, political and professional understanding of the importance of science, the arts and humanities, and a challenge to the perception of the latter two as 'soft', undemanding or marginal.

No clear perspective on community, culture, society and the world apparent.

Global, national and local dimensions of curriculum identified. Strong community orientation in response to widespread concern. Culture and cultural engagement are major elements.

Aims detached from curriculum.

In this reconceptualisation the 12 aims are crucial, for they set the educational priorities for the primary phase as a whole.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

Status ambivalent; each 'area of learning' focuses more on 'understanding' than on knowing. Tendency to reductionism in treatment of knowledge and skill.

Status unequivocal: knowledge, broadly conceived, is central, alongside a more discriminating concept of skill.

## **NATIONAL STRATEGIES**

Disquiet about NLS/literacy component of PNS acknowledged, but main concern seen as primary/secondary strategy continuity.

Problems with NLS/NNS/ literacy and numeracy components of PNS, especially literacy, strongly conveyed by witnesses. Strategies' distortion of the language curriculum a major concern.

National strategies to continue, with some rationalisation.

Literacy and numeracy components of PNS to be wound up in present form. Literacy and numeracy to be re-integrated with English and mathematics and re-framed in programmes for the new domains.

## **NATIONAL AND LOCAL**

Content to be described centrally but in ways 'that allow for local interpretation'.

Curriculum combines statutory national and local components. Proposed allocations of yearly

		<p>teaching time: National Curriculum 70%, Community Curriculum 30%. NC to be determined nationally, CC to be determined locally, by new bodies set up by LAs. Statutory national framework for the 8 domains, but</p> <p><b><u>CAMBRIDGE PRIMARY REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>national and local programmes of study non-statutory.</p>
	<b><u>DCSF ROSE REVIEW</u></b>	
<b>STRUCTURES</b>	<p>Advocates building on EYFS, but also lowering school starting age which some see as threat to EYFS.</p> <p>Possibility of restructuring KS1/2 as three 2-yearly phases hinted at.</p>	<p>EYFS to be respected and built on. Proposals for starting age and clarifying EY/primary phasing will be in the final report.</p> <p>See above.</p>
<b>CONSULTATION AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p>Comments invited on the interim report, but the essentials of the proposed curriculum framework appear to be exempted since QCA is invited to have draft programmes of study for the six areas of learning ready by two months before the end of the consultation period.</p> <p>No significant change to current curriculum and policy infrastructure envisaged.</p>	<p>Open discussion invited on all issues. The report is presented as both the outcome of a two-year programme of evidence-gathering and consultation and a stimulus to further debate.</p> <p>Success of the proposals seen as dependent on (a) reform of national bodies, requirements and procedures, (b) loosening of central control, (c) rigorous professional capacity-building in local authorities, teacher training and schools, (d) deeper understanding of curriculum issues and resistance to the current knowledge/skills reductionism.</p>