

# National Curriculum Review - Call for Evidence

## Consultation Response Form

### SECTION A: ABOUT YOU

Please select ONE box that best describes you as a respondent. (Head teachers and teachers please select the school sector you work in).

☒ Teaching Association/Union

Please Specify:

***The Association for Language Learning (ALL) is the major subject association for those involved in teaching foreign languages at all levels. There are currently 5,500 members. Members include teachers and head teachers from state primary and secondary schools and from independent schools, university academics and researchers, colleagues from adult and further education, colleagues with responsibility for languages from national and international organisations and local authorities.***

***The Association promotes the teaching and learning of foreign languages by:***

- ***providing information and publications***
- ***organising professional development activities***
- ***acting as a public voice on behalf of members***

Is your response representative of an organisation or is it an individual response?

☒ Organisation

☐

Individual

Please Specify:

***This response is on behalf of ALL members. The Association has conducted a comprehensive online consultation exercise to elicit views from its members. A full analysis of responses has fed into this response, which can be taken to represent the majority view from the ALL membership.***

## SECTION C: GENERAL VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM (Q6a - Q8)

The National Curriculum is one part of the wider school curriculum. Each subject in the National Curriculum has a statutory Programme of Study that is determined by the Government setting out the content to be taught in that subject. Schools are legally required to teach these subjects and the specified content to all pupils at the relevant key stages (a key stage is a group of school years). More information on the current National Curriculum can be found [here](#).

The National Curriculum was originally envisaged as a guide to what children should learn in key subjects, giving parents and teachers confidence that students were acquiring the knowledge necessary at each level of study to make appropriate progress. As it has developed, the National Curriculum has come to include more subjects, prescribe more outcomes and take up more school time than originally intended. It is the Government's intention that the National Curriculum be slimmed down so that it properly reflects the body of essential knowledge in key subjects and does not absorb the overwhelming majority of teaching time in schools. Individual schools will then have greater freedom to construct their own curricula in subjects outside the National Curriculum, to reflect local circumstances and the needs of their pupils.

The purpose of this section is to find out your general views on the current National Curriculum and what, if anything, you think should be changed.

6 a) What do you think are the key strengths of the current National Curriculum?

Comments:

The strengths of the current National Curriculum are:

1. It sets out a common framework of expectations of what should be taught in a range of statutory subjects for learners from 5 – 16.
2. It is an entitlement curriculum which is based on the principle of equality of opportunity for all learners irrespective of their background.
3. It offers the potential for breadth and balance by enabling learners to choose from a wide range of subjects from 14 to match their needs and interests.
4. The attainment targets and level descriptions allow teachers, parents and students to understand what should be achieved at each level and how to build on what has already been learned.
5. The statutory programmes of study outline the intended learning outcomes for learners at each key stage and support teachers in their planning.
6. The non-statutory guidance provides clear information for teachers and parents on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

6 b) What do you think are the key things that should be done to improve the current National Curriculum?

**Comments:**

1. The distinction between core and non-core subjects in the National Curriculum can create a problem and unnecessary competition between curriculum time and opportunities for curriculum development. This is particularly evident in the primary curriculum where non-core subjects suffer from a lack of status and time in the taught curriculum e.g. primary languages in KS2 although currently an entitlement are often removed from the curriculum entirely for the second two terms of Year 6, as children prepare for SATS. Other foundation subjects also compete for curriculum time and are taught on a rotational basis, which is unhelpful and leads to a fragmented and confused understanding of the subjects affected. Where this occurs, the current National Curriculum cannot guarantee a suitable foundation on which to build subject learning at points of transition.

2. The Curriculum Review for primary schools should address breadth, balance and relevance and ensure that an essential core of knowledge, skills and understanding, including heuristic skills are represented. In any future curriculum the learning of English and another language, apart from the mother tongue should be essential drivers of the curriculum so that children educated in England are not at a disadvantage from their peers in other major jurisdictions in Europe and worldwide.

3. With regard to the secondary curriculum, the same competition for curriculum time in KS3 exists as for the primary curriculum. Despite the 2007 revisions to the content of the secondary curriculum resulting in less prescription of content, the breadth of choice often leads to restrictions in the amount of time available for statutory non core subjects, e.g. modern foreign languages. Recent research evidence from OECD showed that England provides the least amount of curriculum time for languages. There is evidence from OFSTED and from the CILT / ALL / ISMLA Language Trends survey (<http://tiny.cc/LangTrends>) that many schools are restricting the time available in KS3 for language learning and in some cases are reducing the languages curriculum entitlement to Years 7 and 8.

4. The shortage of time in KS3 followed by the optional status of languages at KS4 has led to an unprecedented fall in the number of students studying a language for GCSE. This is injurious to the education of our young people, as it leaves them ill-prepared to face the challenges of an interconnected and increasingly mobile global labour market. The major challenge now for the Curriculum Review is to reverse this decline and encourage more young people to choose languages at KS4. ALL believes that the inclusion of statutory languages in the secondary curriculum is of paramount importance.

5. Plainly a further urgent need to address the national interest in language capability must be to plan and construct learning programmes in the new curriculum which take full account of what has been achieved in primary schools.

ALL believes that decisions regarding the future status of primary languages should not be delayed.

Following significant national investment over more than a decade, many primary schools, having introduced primary languages first as an entitlement and then in the expectation that primary languages would become compulsory from 2011, are now unsure of the future. Primary languages are in imminent danger of losing momentum and teacher expertise.

Language learning for the E-Bac should build on the solid foundation that primary languages can provide. Therefore, the government's commitment to statutory language learning in primary schools should be made explicit at the earliest opportunity.

6. Time allocation for language learning should be reviewed and increased in all three compulsory key stages, KS2, KS3 and KS4.

7. Further consideration should be given to initial and continuing professional development for teachers of languages in primary schools and in enhancing teacher capability in secondary schools, since there has been a significant loss of teacher expertise as a result of the declining provision of languages at KS4.

7 a) What are the key ways in which the National Curriculum can be slimmed down?

Comments:

1. With regard to curriculum content, appropriate attention should be given to defining an essential core of subject knowledge and skills and heuristic skills. This essential core should provide the foundation which should be taught in all schools to allow for equality of opportunity and coherence at points of transition.

2. In the case of modern foreign languages this essential core should include attention to functional grammar and guidance in relation to high frequency common core vocabulary. However, decisions relating to the contexts for learning and the pedagogical approach employed should remain as close to the point of learning as possible, so that teachers can make local decisions about how and what they teach.

3. The essential core should not occupy the full time available in the National Curriculum to allow for innovation and curriculum development to take place according to the talents, needs and interests of teachers, learners and the local community.

7 b) Do you think that the proportion or amount of lesson time should be specified *in any way* in the National Curriculum; eg for particular subjects and/or within particular key stages?

✓ Yes

☐ No

Not Sure

Comments:

Time allocation for languages in England is substantially lower than in all other major jurisdictions. cf. Education at a glance 2010: OECD Indicators (<http://tiny.cc/OECDIndicators>).

The Association recommends that England should at least match the same curriculum time commitment for languages as provided by other competing countries.

Our reasons for this recommendation are that the current National Curriculum in many schools does not provide sufficient time for pupils studying cumulative subjects like languages to gain a deep understanding and secure command of the subject knowledge and skills. This is particularly the case for pupils aged 11 - 14. In comparison with the time allocations in other countries, England offers the least time in the curriculum for the study of languages. It is unsurprising therefore that the outcomes of those pupils who complete their language study at 14 are relatively low in relation to their European peers.

There are several sources of information regarding the number of guided learning hours required to reach recognised levels of language competence. In considering these with respect to pupils in classrooms in England, it is important to bear in mind that most recommendations refer to the learning of English and describe typical learning requirements for adult learners. However, taking those contextual factors into account, there is nonetheless an emerging consensus about the minimum typical time allocation recommended for language learning within the curriculum. Across Europe, account is taken of the advice given in the Common European Framework of Reference which recommends that an average learner will require between 350 and 400 guided learning hours in order to reach B1; this is the equivalent of the current Higher Level GCSE. To progress to B2, the equivalent of Advanced level, between 500 and 600 hours of guided learning would be recommended.

It is commonly accepted that between 90 – 100 hours will be required to reach A1 Breakthrough. This implies that the recommended one hour for primary languages should be retained. A minimum of 180 – 200 hours will be required to reach A2, the equivalent of Foundation GCSE.

The Association will be happy to discuss these recommendations and their implications for curriculum planning.

It is important to note that schools intending to introduce the study of more than one language should be aware that each language will require its own time allocation; experience has shown that it is counterproductive to attempt to teach two languages in the time allocation appropriate for the study of one.

These recommendations should provide useful points of reference in making any firm decisions with regard to the allocation of curriculum time for languages within the Curriculum Review. We believe that an increase in time allocation will be an essential factor in improving the nation's capability in languages.

8 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section

Comments:

There continues to be some controversy over the measurable learning gains of primary learners from an early start in languages, but there is a general consensus with regard to the longer term benefits to language learning in terms of the training of the ear, phonological control, awareness of pattern, risk-taking and motivation to learn and an understanding of different cultures.

From recent research funded by the former DCSF, (NFER 2009) (Cable et al 2010) the majority of primary schools are not providing the minimum recommendation of one hour per week for primary languages; the 2008 data show that the median time spent in class per week on languages was 40 or 45 minutes, depending on the age group of the pupils.

Those schools which can provide one hour or more are able to demonstrate significant progress at the end of KS2. There are case studies which report that children assessed through ASSET languages in all four skills have shown achievement which is commensurate with similar achievement in KS3 learners following learning programmes with a similar allocation of time.

## **SECTION E: Other subjects currently in the National Curriculum (Q14a -Q22)**

As noted in the introduction to Section C, the overall aim of the review is to slim down the National Curriculum, thus giving teachers greater freedom to use their professional expertise to design a school curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils.

The remit for the review makes clear that English, mathematics, science and physical education will remain subjects within the National Curriculum at all four key stages in future, and in Part D we asked for your views on the content of the Programmes of Study for those subjects. For all other subjects that are currently part of the National Curriculum - art and design, citizenship, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and music - the review will consider whether or not they should remain National Curriculum subjects and if so at which key stages. For any subject which it is decided should not be part of the National Curriculum in future, the review will also consider whether that subject, or any aspect of it should nevertheless be compulsory (but without a statutory Programme of Study) at certain key stages, and/or whether the Government should produce non-statutory guidance on the curriculum for the subject.

This section seeks your views on these issues. Please bear in mind in considering your responses that removing a subject from the National Curriculum would not mean that that subject was not important, or that schools should stop teaching it. Instead, it would mean that it is not necessary for the Government to specify in a statutory Programme of Study precisely what should be taught in that subject, and that decisions should instead be made at local level, by individual schools and teachers.

Because decisions on these issues need to be taken before work starts on drafting new Programmes of Study, this Call for Evidence does not ask for detailed suggestions for the content of those Programmes of Study: a further Call for Evidence on that will follow early in 2012. If, in the meantime, you would like to submit any evidence relating to the content of potential Programmes of Study in subjects covered in this section, you can email it to: [NCRReview.DOCUMENTS@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NCRReview.DOCUMENTS@education.gsi.gov.uk)

***Note: Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and religious education (RE) are not part of the National Curriculum and are not being considered as part of this review. In the Schools White Paper - 'The Importance of Teaching' - The Government announced its intention to conduct a separate review of PSHE education. No changes to the statutory basis for religious education are planned.***

## 20 a) Modern Foreign Languages (MFL)

**Modern foreign languages** is currently a compulsory National Curriculum subject, with a statutory Programme of Study, at Key Stage 3 only. In future, do you think **modern foreign languages** should continue to be a National Curriculum subject?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

20 b) If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

☐ Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)

☒ Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)

☒ Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)

☒ Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)

Comments:

The Association for Language Learning (ALL) firmly approves of the aim to encourage a balanced curriculum in primary and secondary schools, including languages, because the country needs more young people with language skills.

We, as a trading nation, are losing out due to our poor language skills. In the global economy our young people compete for work with their peers from across the world, many of whom speak English and often one or more other major languages. Our monolingual school and university leavers are not starting out on a level playing field.

There are self-evident and powerful arguments for developing the language skills of the next generations. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world a strong national capability in languages serves the interests of the economy, of international relations, of trade, of cultural exchange and of national security.

Far from being a monolingual nation, England is strikingly plurilingual. Language learning has therefore a part to play in community coherence: a better understanding of 'otherness' and of different communities within our own society. It leads to an appreciation of cultural diversity and identity and thus to greater tolerance.

We warmly welcome the encouragement to all children to achieve their full potential and believe that all children should have the opportunity to learn languages from an early age and that coherent and relevant programmes of language learning which build on what has been learned in each key stage should be available throughout our children's primary, secondary and higher education.

The last ten years have seen a serious decline in the number of pupils learning languages at KS4. The decline has arisen in part from the decision of the previous government to make languages an optional subject at this Key Stage. Since the decision was implemented in September 2004, ALL has consistently voiced anxiety about the number of pupils, many of them high attainers, dropping languages at the end of KS3.



Since 2003 an annual survey, *Language Trends*\* (<http://tiny.cc/LangTrends>), has tracked a steady decrease in the number of pupils studying languages at KS4 and more recently – most strikingly in 2010 - a worrying decline in pupil contact time in languages at KS3.

The major challenge now is to reverse the decline and encourage more young people to choose languages at KS4.

In an interconnected global economy, we believe that there is a powerful case for learning languages for employability and mobility. Language learning should therefore form a part of compulsory education at every stage. The current loss of capability in languages is likely to have a major impact on the UK economy, social cohesion and on our role in international affairs. The inclusion of languages in the secondary curriculum is of paramount importance.

A second urgent need is to maximise the progress that has been made with the introduction of language learning in primary schools

The sustainability of primary languages is a crucial element in building the nation's capability in languages. Decisions regarding the future status of primary languages should not be delayed. Many primary schools, having introduced primary languages first as an entitlement and then in the expectation that primary languages would become compulsory from 2011, are now unsure of the future and are now in danger of losing momentum. Language learning for the E-Bac should build on the solid foundation that primary languages can provide. Therefore, language learning in primary schools should become statutory.

We recognise the contribution that the E-Bac can make to raising the status of language learning in KS4 but equally we are aware through our members that the current GCSE may not be suitable for all learners. Appropriately rigorous vocational qualifications should remain available and be further improved to allow relevant learning to be accredited for students aiming for early entry into the world of work.

In conclusion:

- All human beings are capable of learning languages;
- All pupils from KS2 to KS4 should have a right to language learning;
- Language learning should therefore be statutory from Key Stage 2 to KS4.

20 c) If you think **modern foreign languages** should not be part of the National Curriculum at one or more key stage, do you think it should be compulsory for pupils to study the subject, but with the content of what is taught being determined by schools and colleges?

✓ Yes

No

☐

Not Sure

20 d) If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

☒ Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)

☐ Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)

☐ Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)

☐ Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)

Comments:

At KS1 children are still exploring English (and possibly other languages at home); at school the emphasis at KS1 should therefore be on language development - training the ear, oracy and engaging children's curiosity about language and other language communities. As part of this language education, English literacy and the learning of other languages should be related and jointly planned.

20 e) For any key stages in which you think **modern foreign languages** should not be a part of the National Curriculum, do you think the Government should produce a non-statutory programme of study, to be used by schools as guidance?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

20 f) If yes, please tick all key stages to which this should apply.

☒ Key Stage 1 (5-7 years)

☐ Key Stage 2 (7-11 years)

☐ Key Stage 3 (11-14 years)

☐ Key Stage 4 (14-16 years)

Comments:

There is currently a wide range of good practice in developing early language awareness in many KS1 classrooms across the country with a variety of approaches. This is especially the case of classrooms where many different first languages are spoken. Non-statutory guidance would be most helpful for KS1 teachers, providing examples of good practice to meet a range of different circumstances. Such guidance can be best achieved by consultation with practitioners and parents. ALL would be willing to support the development of appropriate guidance, working through its members and its school networks.

## SECTION F: SUPPORTING AND RECOGNISING PROGRESS (Q23a-Q26)

Currently, the National Curriculum defines pupils' attainment through subject specific Attainment Targets which set out 8 level descriptors (Level 1 to Level 8) describing what pupils should be able to do to achieve each level. The expectation is that most pupils achieve:

- Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1
- Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2; and
- Level 5/6 at the end of Key Stage 3.

At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are assessed through GCSE examinations.

Under the 2002 Education Act the specified purpose of statutory assessments for the key stages is to ascertain what pupils have achieved in relation to the attainment targets (eg the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have) for that key stage.

Schools also have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, and the National Curriculum [statutory inclusion statement](#) sets out three principles for developing an inclusive curriculum:

- Setting suitable learning challenges.
- Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

In setting out the range of needs of pupils, the current National Curriculum includes the following groups of pupils:

gifted and talented

pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities

pupils from different ethnic groups including travellers, refugees and asylum seekers

pupils who are learning English as an additional language

boys and girls with different needs

children in care

This section is about your views on supporting progress of all pupils. In particular, whether there are credible alternatives to attainment targets that would better support and recognise all pupils' progress, irrespective of their attainment and background, and how to address the needs of all pupils through the National Curriculum.

23 a) Do you think the National Curriculum should continue to specify the requirements for each of the 8 levels of achievement?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

It is helpful for teachers, parents and pupils to have clear descriptions of the expectations of each level. This enables pupils to improve their performance.

An unfortunate consequence of levels of achievement has been that teachers and pupils have tended to use these descriptions as ability markers rather than flexible indicators of current performance.

There is also wide variation in current practice, showing that teachers do not always apply the descriptions of performance consistently in their assessment of pupils' progress.

In the future Curriculum Review, fresh approaches should be taken towards assessment, emphasising how descriptions of performance can support improvement and how such descriptions can be better understood by teachers and learners. Local networks can play a crucial role in improving teaching, learning and assessment practices. This could feature in the dissemination strategy for the new curriculum.

23 b) If you have answered no or not sure, what alternative(s) do you propose to replace Attainment Target level descriptors? You may want to suggest different approaches for different subjects and/or different key stages.

Comments:

24 Within each Programme of Study, how should the curriculum and attainment targets be defined to ensure appropriate education for pupils in a wide range of circumstances as learners?

Comments:

The programmes of study should define the essential core of subject knowledge, skills and understanding, including heuristic skills that learners need to be successful linguists. The current attainment targets are a helpful point of reference. A key role for the Curriculum Review will be to develop greater pupil independence in language use. This will come about from taking fresh perspectives on the place of functional grammar in classroom teaching and offering guidance on high frequency vocabulary within the programmes of study. This should not mean restricting the contexts for learning or the pedagogic approaches adopted in the classroom. Decisions on how and what to teach should remain as close to the point of learning as possible. This flexibility supported by clear attainment targets and programmes of study will liberate teachers to plan programmes of learning which can be adapted to the needs of different learners and different languages.

25 a) How do you think the needs of low-attaining pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?

Comments:

The Association of Language Learning believes that all human beings are capable of learning a new language commensurate with their ability to communicate in their first language. The new National Curriculum should provide a commitment to providing entitlement to languages for all. Decisions relating to what parts of the new Programme of Study are most appropriate should be determined by teachers, parents and learners, with such decisions being guided by the best interests of the individuals being taught.

Therefore teachers will be empowered to design individual learning programmes based on the new Programmes of Study which are relevant and worthwhile for each student, building on best practice.

25 b) How do you think the needs of high-attaining pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?

Comments:

With a fresh focus on functional grammar and discourse competence within the new Programme of Study, high attaining pupils will be able to make progress at a faster pace, where appropriate. If decisions relating to how to teach remain as close to the point of learning as possible, teachers will be able to design intensive programmes of language learning for high attaining pupils. Teachers and head teachers can also consider innovation in the curriculum, offering accelerated learning or bilingual learning for high attainers. With greater freedoms emerging from the slimmed down curriculum, head teachers could consider offering opportunities to study two or more new languages, including linking classical and modern languages or introducing a wider range of world languages. High attainers may also choose to focus on intensive reading programmes in several languages, building on their first or second new language, e.g. a student of French can make rapid progress on reading Spanish and Italian.

25 c) How do you think the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND) should be addressed through the National Curriculum?

Comments:

The principles outlined in our response to question 25a are also relevant to the specific needs of learners in difficulty. Teachers should be free to choose the knowledge, skills and understanding from the Programme of Study which best fit the needs of their pupils. Individual Learning Programmes can be designed to suit all learners. Non-statutory guidance would be very helpful for teachers of special educational needs and the Association would be happy to offer support from its members in drawing up such guidance.

25 d) How do you think the needs of other specific groups of pupils should be addressed through the National Curriculum?

Comments:

England is certainly not monolingual. There are many pupils in England whose first language is not English and who learn a number of additional languages both inside and outside of the classroom. Every learner should have the opportunity to learn a new language and to improve their command of English, if this not their home language. Opportunities should also be provided for learners with other languages to validate their language capability through a recognition scheme. Currently, ASSET languages provide a robust and reliable system to accredit a range of home languages.

This should be sustained and extended.

26 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.

Comments:

The Curriculum Review would be wise to sustain and further develop accreditation routes for the range of languages spoken in our multi-lingual society. This should be seen as part of our national language capability and not as a problem.

## SECTION G: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS (Q27a - Q28)

The remit for the review makes clear that we need to learn from the very best that has been achieved in other jurisdictions - countries or regions within countries - and ensure that the construction and content of the new National Curriculum is based upon international best practice.

This section seeks your views on what can be learned from other countries and states to inform the development of the National Curriculum. Your views may be based on particular expertise in international comparisons, or from your own experiences of living or working in particular countries.

We would be particularly keen to learn about international comparisons beyond the commonly assessed areas of literacy, mathematics and science in the PISA, TIMMS and PIRLS studies.

27 a) Please give examples of any jurisdictions that could usefully be examined to inform the new National Curriculum. Please also briefly describe the reasons for the examples given.

Comments:

It would be helpful to consider the curriculum models adopted in many European countries, including *sections bilingues*. Highly successful learning environments are available for international comparisons in Germany, Austria, France, Spain, Finland and some autonomous provinces of Italy. Eurydice Report 2006: <http://www.eurydice.org/>.

There is also much to be learned from a closer comparative study of other Anglophone communities such as Canada and Australia. Canada has a long and successful history of bilingual and second language learning cf. Genesee, F (1994).

27 b) Considering your response to question 27a above, what features of their national curricula or wider education systems are most significant in explaining their success?

Comments:

The success of these programmes relies on the status that languages hold within the school curriculum and within the society as a whole. There is significant emphasis on language capability as being a key criterion of measuring educational success in these countries and language is a compulsory part of the curriculum.

Sufficient time is allocated in the curriculum to languages and highly qualified teachers are available to teach the language. Assessment frameworks include languages as a key component and in some cases matriculation requirement. Therefore, languages have instrumental value in defining future success.

In some cases, remuneration is given for language competence in public sector jobs.

28 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.

Comments:

It is essential that the Curriculum Review revitalises the importance of language education for all our children. This includes giving full value to the study of English language and literature and the use of English for specific purposes in learning across the curriculum. The development of language education should include the study of English and at least one other new language.

As the curriculum and programmes of study are defined for the future generation, it would be a wasted opportunity not to include a more comprehensive review of language education when drawing up the English National Curriculum Orders during the first phase of the Curriculum Review, to include links to learning other languages and to the use of English for learning across the curriculum. Language is used to formulate and express our thoughts; our command of language defines the parameters of our logical mind; language can extend our capability or limit it. To this extent, our command of more than one language can only extend our capabilities and our capacity to make a difference and participate on equal terms with our multilingual peers.

Often in the recent past, opportunities have been lost to bring England into line with other competitors from Europe. Curriculum Reviews have tended to be esoteric and have not taken full account of the best practice of our near and distant neighbours. On this occasion, it would be helpful to review more comprehensively the curricula of other nations and not to dismiss too readily the rich resources which already exist within the Council of Europe. These too may require revision and adaptation for our purposes but a review which pays due attention to what appears to be working effectively across Europe would be a wise starting point.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is widely used across Europe and is now influencing practice in the USA. It would be helpful to take the CEFR as a point of reference as we review our current curriculum and make fresh decisions about its direction.



## SECTION I: TRANSITION (Q30- Q33)

The review will be taking into account the emerging conclusions of the review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) by Dame Clare Tickell to ensure a smooth transition from the EYFS to Key Stage 1. The review will also take into account the need for the National Curriculum to be embodied readily into GCSE subject criteria and support the effective operation of public examinations at the end of compulsory schooling. The development of new GCSE criteria themselves is outside the scope of this review.

This section is about your views on how to best take into account the key transition periods in schooling in developing the new National Curriculum.

30 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 to ensure a smooth transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Comments:

31 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 to ensure a smooth transition from Key Stage 2?

Comments:

While not restricting teachers to arbitrary lists of vocabulary, it will be helpful to define a minimum core of essential knowledge, including a fresh perspective on functional grammar and recommendations for the inclusion of high frequency core language which should reasonably be expected to be taught at each transition point. This core language may well be defined differently – within the non-statutory guidance – for languages with (for example) non-Roman scripts. The contexts for learning and the pedagogical approach should be determined as close to the point of learning as possible. This should liberate teachers to plan innovative teaching programmes to suit the needs and interests of their pupils.

In this sense the KS3 Programme of Study can build systematically upon the KS2 Programme of Study.

Neither programme of study will be so over laden as to occupy the full allocation of recommended curriculum time available.

32 What are the most important factors to consider in developing the National Curriculum for Key Stage 4 to ensure the effective operation of GCSE and other public examinations?

Comments:

The focus of the new Curriculum should be on developing pupils' independence in using language for a variety of purposes. Pupils should become increasingly able to read a wide range of information sources and communicate confidently in speech and writing in a wide range of circumstances including for pleasure, for creative purposes, for learning and in some cases for vocational purposes. Opportunities to listen to and interact with authentic materials and with authentic audiences should be a key feature of the Programme of Study for KS4.

33 Please use this space for any other comments you would like to make about the issues covered in this section.

Comments:

The E-Bac will provide a stimulus for many learners to continue learning a language at KS4, but ALL is concerned that the Curriculum Review does not close the door to other alternative forms of accreditation. Our members have expressed confidence in the rigour and validity of some of the currently available vocational qualifications. These should be evaluated and reviewed to support the Curriculum Review and to ensure that there are appropriate routes of accreditation available for all learners.

## SECTION J: IMPLEMENTATION (Q34 - Q35)

This section is about what arrangements need to be put in place to support the successful implementation of the new National Curriculum in schools. For example, this may relate to teacher training, inspection, statutory assessment, support and guidance for schools, etc.

As explained in Section C, the Government's intention is that the implementation of the new National Curriculum should be phased in, with new Programmes of Study for English, mathematics, science and physical education published in autumn 2012 for first teaching in schools from September 2013, and those for other subjects published in autumn 2013 for first teaching in schools from 2014. The remit for the review includes consideration of what further phasing may be necessary (for example whether the new Programmes of Study should be introduced in all key stages/year groups simultaneously, or over a period of time).

34 What are the particular issues that need to be considered in phasing the introduction of the new National Curriculum in the way proposed, with Programmes of Study in some subjects introduced in 2013 and the rest a year later?

### Comments:

The phasing of the introduction to the National Curriculum should provide adequate time to plan sufficiently detailed and robust training opportunities for continuing professional development and also allow for modifications to the initial teacher education programmes currently available for language teachers in all key stages. ALL through its branches and networks is keen to support the profession throughout this period of change.

However, an unintended consequence of the phasing of Languages could be the demise of primary languages. Much has been achieved over the last decade with significant capital investment from the previous government into training and support for the introduction of primary languages. Currently, 92% of schools are offering primary languages. But, the announcement that primary languages were not to become statutory from 2011 has already had a profound negative impact on the schools, with some schools withdrawing primary languages from the curriculum.

ALL strongly recommends that a positive statement affirming the Government's commitment to primary languages in the curriculum should be made at the earliest opportunity, if we are not to lose the momentum of the last ten years. It is our belief that languages should be a statutory component of the curriculum in KS2, KS3 and KS4.

35 What other arrangements, if any, need to be considered in implementing the new National Curriculum, and how they should be addressed?

### Comments:

Change inevitably requires time to communicate to the profession and to develop a full and shared understanding of new expectations. The languages community is a vibrant and creative community and is certainly not resistant to change. There is, however, significant outstanding practice which should be retained and endorsed within the new Programme of Study.

Much of this excellent practice has been developed directly from networks of teachers sharing ideas and evaluating their teaching methods through discussion and a close look at how best pupils learn in the classroom.

The Linked Up scheme managed by ALL which concluded on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 was an example of how effective teacher collaboration can be in bringing about significant improvement to the quality of teaching in the classroom.

As the New Curriculum is introduced, it will be helpful to learn from initiatives like the Linked Up initiative in order to set in place structures for training teachers which are cost effective, sustainable and professionally valuable.

In order to consolidate the support for primary languages, there will be a need for ongoing language training to strengthen teachers' language competence and for the continued support of language teaching methodology. The kinds of support that Language Learning Networks or Local Support Groups coordinated by a leading teacher and supported perhaps by a University or Local Authority are unrivalled in terms of the impact that they bring to the quality of teaching. Primary teachers cannot leave the classroom for training and do not tend to travel too far from where they live at the end of the school day, hence, high quality support provided locally through a local network is the most effective way of ensuring that relevant professional development is accessible and sustainable.

## **SECTION K: OTHER ISSUES AND COMPLETING THIS CALL FOR EVIDENCE (Q36-Q37)**

36 Please use this space for any other evidence or views you wish to feed into the review at this stage.

Comments:

The Association for Language Learning is greatly encouraged by the Secretary of State's belief in the importance of teaching. We share his confidence in the ability of teachers to embrace change and develop robust and rigorous learning programmes for the future.

We also recognise the expertise and experience of our 5,500 members, representing teachers of languages from all sectors and all parts of the country. We are committed to developing language learning for all our learners and would reiterate our offer of support to the Minister during this time of change.

We are happy to be consulted whenever relevant and would also be keen to offer our support through the active involvement of our branches and networks prior to Phase 2 implementation, if required.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views.