

Review of the Northern Ireland Post-Primary Curriculum and its Assessment Arrangements

**Report of the Outcomes of
Consultation 2002**



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Introduction

The methods used for consulting on the review of the Northern Ireland Curriculum for post-primary education consisted of a number of public meetings, seminars, a postal questionnaire and a web questionnaire. Seminars were held with teachers, principals, and community groups. A number of general meetings were held throughout the province, open to all members of the public. Postal questionnaires were sent to all schools in Northern Ireland, community groups, charities, political parties, ELBs and other educational bodies.

RESPONSE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Collective Response	552	68.8	72.9	72.9
	Individual Response	205	25.6	27.1	100.0
	Total	757	94.4	100.0	
Missing	Missing	45	5.6		
Total		802	100.0		

There were 802 responses to the post-primary consultation questionnaire. 552 of the responses were collective; therefore the views of 8353 individuals are represented in the quantitative tables.

The report of the outcomes of the consultation contains the qualitative views expressed at the seminars, public forums and the questionnaire responses.

FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS

Section 1: Form of the Key Stage 3 Curriculum

1.1 PROPOSAL THAT THE STATUTORY CURRICULUM FOR KEY STAGE 3 BE SET OUT IN CURRICULAR AREAS RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS

Curriculum areas not subjects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	274	3.3	3.5	3.5
	Agree	3300	39.5	42.0	45.4
	Disagree	2430	29.1	30.9	76.3
	Strongly Disagree	1862	22.3	23.6	100.0
	Total	7866	94.2	100.0	
Missing	Missing	487	5.8		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.1.1 Outcome

54.6% of respondents **oppose** the proposal that the curriculum should be set out in curricular areas as opposed to subjects, whereas 45.4% of respondents support the idea.

1.1.2 Opposition to the curriculum being defined in Areas rather than discrete subjects

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 54.6% opposing the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Insufficient detail**

Many respondents opposing the proposals indicated that they did so because there was insufficient detail to allow them to make an informed judgement. *‘The problem for us is that we have not seen the detail – it has not been specified, teachers face this unknown detail with uncertainty and possibly opposition’.*

- **Manageability**

Although respondents could see some merit in an Area approach because it would offer greater flexibility for schools, many were concerned about how it would be managed by individual schools.

- **Teacher preference for discrete subjects**

Generally, respondents were concerned about the disappearance of subjects indicating that *‘teachers prefer to teach their individual specialist subject’*. While some acknowledged that a bigger emphasis is required on curriculum areas, they stressed that this *does not mean we do not need individual subjects*. Concern was expressed that if the curriculum is defined in areas subjects are encoded and are too vague.

A number of respondents referred to their previous experiences of “Integrated Humanities”, which was tried in past, was not held in high regard by inspectors, and was confusing for pupils. Some respondents indicated that they would prefer to examine / develop their own links with other subject areas. Several felt that *‘the curriculum for key stage 3 seems to be working well finally, with the key*

stage 3 tests and core subjects'. Some respondents were of the view that parents prefer subjects, as they command greater esteem.

Many respondents were concerned about ensuring that important aspects of some subjects are covered in detail, for example, *'who teaches the correct use of grammar if pupils did not go to an English class'*. Cannot over emphasise skills to the exclusion of knowledge and understanding. Also highlighted was the danger that NI Teachers might become *"Jack of all Trades, masters of none"*.

- **Challenge of assessment**

Some respondents were concerned about assessment in Areas, for example, *'How do you agree on a level across curriculum areas?'* A few respondents indicated that they would prefer a detailed syllabus so *'that we know exactly what is going to be assessed at the end of key stage 3'*.

- **The needs of GCSE**

There was concern about the follow-on from Key Stage 3 to GCSE. *'Are GCSE's going to be subject based or area based and will they be graded using the same level theme?'*

- **Inset Needs and Pressure on Teachers**

Many respondents highlighted the enormous implications for teacher training and continuing professional development. Some felt that this proposal would increase workload and stress for an already stressed profession.

- **Dilution of subjects**

A number of respondents felt that all subjects must have equality. Among the cases made for particular subjects the following were strongly highlighted:

- Music & Art are both important subjects in their own right; many different skills required i.e. Listening skills / 3 dimensional modelling.
- PE must be a subject in its own right. All pupils must have access to language learning.
- RE must be part of any legal curriculum.

1.1.3 Support for the curriculum being defined in Areas rather than discrete subjects

Among the wide-ranging views expressed by the 45.4% in support of the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Potential Improvements in Learning**

A joined-up approach to Curriculum was viewed by some as much more relevant than individual subjects, breaking down traditional subject boundaries and creating meaningful links between different areas of the curriculum. It was felt that this would promote not only heightened interest and understanding, but also the concept of lateral thinking.

- **Greater coherence and manageability for pupils**

Responses from parents focused on the issue of manageability for pupils transferring from one teacher in primary school to so many teachers in post-primary. *'Looking at my daughter's first year report I can see how, as with Primary, it would also help adjustment'*. One also remarked that *'Looking at my*

daughter's report I can see how so many subjects could be interlinked, with ICT running across the spectrum'.

- **Increased flexibility**

Many respondents welcomed the potential for greater flexibility for schools, particularly because of so many subjects. Many felt that it would allow all pupils a wider range of opportunities. Some schools requested the freedom to interpret the curriculum areas as they wish, keeping traditional subjects, if appropriate, to give pupils structures.

- **The need for more detail**

Among those in favour of the proposal, many also indicated that more detail is needed. In particular respondents were concerned about how this would work in practice *'because we are unaware of the curriculum content'.*

- **In-service training needs**

Many respondents highlighted the implications for teachers who have trained to teach a particular subject. *'It's a big culture change and there's a need for staff development. Teachers must be given adequate time to re-train for the demands of the new curriculum areas'.*

- **Potential to address equality issues**

There is scope for the language and literacy area to offer sign language as a second language and scope within the Environment and Society area to include rights and responsibilities for a minority group. i.e. the deaf community.

- **The need for subjects to be visible within Areas**

Even among those in favour of the proposal, concern was expressed about the potential dilution of subject content for more able pupils. Some responses, while broadly favouring the proposals, made the case for certain individual subjects being retained as discrete entities.

- *'Fear of the emphasis and importance of PE being lost. Must be a discrete subject'.*
- *'The distinct processes and products of History should be preserved at all costs'.*
- *'Religious Education should be an area. Spiritual values inherent in RE must permeate all content areas of the curriculum'.*
- *'Surely the learning of modern languages must feature more prominently'.*
- *'All existing subjects can be located within the proposals for curriculum areas, with the exception of Home Economics'.*
- *'Science has skills and content, which need to be taught by specialists to all pupils to enable them to understand and contribute to 21st century living'.*
- *'Music and Art are both important subjects in their own right'.*

1.2 PROPOSAL: THE CURRICULUM AREAS PROPOSED ARE APPROPRIATE HEADINGS FOR THE KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM

proposed areas are appropriate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	685	8.2	8.8	8.8
	Agree	3524	42.2	45.1	53.8
	Disagree	2345	28.1	30.0	83.8
	Strongly Disagree	1265	15.1	16.1	100.0
	Total	7819	93.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	534	6.4		
	Total	534	6.4		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.2.1 Outcome

Just over half of respondents (53.8%) agree that the curriculum areas proposed are appropriate headings for the Key Stage 3 Curriculum, whereas 46.2% of respondents disagree.

1.2.2 Support for the curriculum areas proposed at Key Stage 3

Among the slight majority of (53.8%) supporting the proposal, the most frequently cited views were in relation to:

- **Continuity with primary**

Many respondents welcomed the proposal because it removes the rigidity of subject content. They feel the proposals represent an essential move away from the stranglehold exerted in the existing curriculum by A levels and GCSEs.

A number of respondents recommended that the curriculum Areas at Key Stage 2 and 3 should be common and that there should be a consistency of terminology across the Key Stages in order to facilitate continuity and progression in pupil learning and assessment and reporting processes. A few respondents referred to evidence from the cohort study, which underlines the importance of a smooth transition between Key Stages. They also highlighted where the proposed curriculum changes encourage disjunction.

- **Collaborative Learning and relevance**

A few respondents highlighted the potential for a much more integrated approach focusing on a range of themes and issues, which would enhance pupil motivation and learning. A few respondents suggested that the curriculum areas should address issues that were considered relevant by young people, highlighting life skills more strongly, for example, *'Language and Literacy should contain a description relating to the basic literacy needed to understand advertisements, marketing ploys and payment details'*.

- **Specific concerns**

While agreeing with the proposed Areas in principle, many respondents voiced concern that:

- There was insufficient detail given and further discussion is required on alternative options;
- Defining the curriculum in Areas might diminish the distinct skills unique to individual subjects;
- 'Core' subjects might be diluted in order to suit certain 'groupings';
- There should be opportunity for other cross-curricular links, for example:
 - The Creative and Expressive Area with Science & Technology;
 - Personal Development & Environment & Society;
 - Language & Literacy & Creative & Expressive.

It was felt that further work was needed to explore:

- a) Existing links between specific subject areas;
- b) How to promote new links;
- c) Specify designed units where such links are promoted.

1.2.3 Opposition to the curriculum areas proposed at Key Stage 3

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 46.2% of respondents opposing the curriculum areas proposed, those most frequently cited related to specific points of detail:

- The Creative and Expressive area must include art, music, drama and media studies.
- Within Environment and Society, the environment needs to be highlighted more strongly. In particular the curriculum proposals should reflect the level of government and civil society's support for Sustainable Development throughout the world.
- Sustainable Development should be offered as a broader and more balanced profile in the new proposals reflecting its relevance to all of the curriculum areas rather than within Environment and Society alone.
- English is more than language and literacy and this narrows the subject into a description, which is not wholly appropriate. Several respondents recommended that language and literacy become English and literacy.
- Modern languages should not be grouped with language and literacy and many felt that foreign languages should remain a separate entitlement.
- Personal Development is a confusing title because it has existing connotations. Others felt that rather than being within Personal development, Home Economics as well as employability and careers should be within the Environment and Society area.

- Important elements of home economics appear to be left out, in particular childcare, home management, basic cookery and food hygiene.
- A clearer definition is needed of what Scientific and Technological Development means, with more emphasis on links between the two.
- Business Studies, Drama and ICT were not mentioned specifically.
- PE must be a discrete area, compulsory for every pupil as it gives pupils a unique opportunity to develop personal qualities through physical activity.
- RE should remain a core subject and a legal requirement. Citizenship is a poor second best. More detail should be given to comparative religions.
- Education by its very nature must include moral / spiritual development. It must be included as one of the key areas and not simply squeezed in somewhere if it fits.

1.3 PROPOSAL: THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS SHOULD CONSIST OF STATEMENTS OF ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL

Statements of entitlement					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	749	9.0	10.0	10.0
	Agree	4583	54.9	61.0	71.0
	Disagree	1086	13.0	14.5	85.4
	Strongly Disagree	1095	13.1	14.6	100.0
	Total	7513	90.00	100.0	
Missing	Missing	840	10.0		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.3.1 Outcomes

71% of respondents agree with the proposal that the curriculum should be set out in statements of entitlement as opposed to detailed programmes of study, whereas 29% of respondents oppose the idea.

1.3.2 Support for the statutory requirements being specified as statements of entitlement for all

Among the wide-ranging views expressed by the 71% in support of the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Common Entitlement and Equality**

The majority of respondents agreed that the statutory requirements at Key Stage 3 should be limited to a common entitlement for every pupil, ensuring that each child is provided with an education suited to their needs, irrespective of future intentions. Some respondents felt this was essential in order to deal with equality issues because, at present, some young people are excluded from their right to statutory requirement. Some were concerned with the legal status of "entitlement". Others highlighted that, although flexibility in the curriculum is essential, it is important that crucial aspects of this statutory entitlement are not sacrificed to flexibility, and were concerned about ambiguity in the documentation and potential discrepancies between schools.

The case of deaf pupils and the entitlement for every child to receive 2 hours of PE per week were highlighted in particular.

- **More detail needed**

Many respondents welcomed the principle while still having concerns regarding the detail and felt that further discussion and consultation is needed to agree a common minimum common entitlement. *'There needs to be more elaboration as to what is being proposed, such as clear examples of statements of entitlement. We are assuming that statements of entitlement are almost the same as attainment targets, but*

- *Who draws up the intended outcomes?*
- *In some cases we feel that they need to be subject based.*
- *Will they be content based or skills based?*
- *How much detail/ guidance will be given?*

The need for clear communication with parents about curriculum requirements was also highlighted. One parent remarked that *'I have found it frustrating as to what the intended aims and outcomes even in Primary years are to be. I did not know how to help set targets or help to reinforce the teaching'*.

- **Flexibility**

Many respondents welcomed the potential for greater flexibility, provided this enabled schools to develop in their own way and to customise the curriculum according to the needs of their school, providing enrichment as appropriate. Others hoped that the added flexibility would ensure the widest choice of pathways following on from Key Stage 3. A few respondents stressed the need to encourage more able students to take academic studies to a level that allows them to reach their full potential.

1.3.3 **Opposition to the statutory requirements being specified as statements of entitlement**

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 29% opposing the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Insufficient detail**

Many respondents opposing the proposals indicated that they did so because there was insufficient detail to allow them to make an informed judgement. Many felt they would be in a better position to comment at the next stage of consultation.

- **Subject concerns**

Many respondents were concerned that education will be watered down within a more skills-based approach. *'They may achieve skills but will have no adequate knowledge and understanding of what they have completed'*. Others stressed the need for clarity in relation to specific subject skills so that these do not lose their identity within a more general area of study.

While some respondents felt that each subject should have equal status and time allocation, the specific cases for PE and RE were highlighted, for example, *'the*

programme of study for Religious Education should remain with a strong emphasis on Christian education.

'The programme of study for PE provides an excellent basis for the development (physical, emotional, social) of pupils. We feel that all pupils at this KS3 should be asked to select a sport and endeavour to improve their skills. Once young people get involved in a sport on a regular basis there is more chance they will continue in that sport'.

1.4 PROPOSAL: THE STATEMENTS OF ENTITLEMENT SHOULD INCLUDE DESIRABLE OUTCOMES

desirable outcomes					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1670	20.0	23.8	23.8
	Agree	4131	49.5	58.9	82.7
	Disagree	593	7.1	8.5	91.2
	Strongly Disagree	619	7.4	8.8	100.0
	Total	7013	84.0	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1340	16.0		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.4.1 Outcome

82.7% of respondents agree that statements of entitlement should include desirable outcomes, whereas 17.3% of respondents oppose the idea.

1.4.2 Support for the proposal that the statements of entitlement should include desirable outcomes

Among the wide-ranging views expressed by the 82.7% supporting the proposals, those most frequently cited related to:

- **Flexibility**

Many respondents indicated that they would welcome broadly based, rather than prescribed, learning outcomes linking curriculum areas to skills so that departments can decide on the content to be covered.

- **The nature of the desirable outcomes**

Some respondents felt that the statements should reflect the knowledge, understanding and skills that all young people should have (including subject-specific skills) and also the type of contexts that pupils should investigate and the nature of the learning experience. Others felt the programme of study should be used as the statements of entitlement and that the level descriptors could be used as desirable outcomes. A few felt that, to assist assessment, the desirable outcomes should be level related. A few respondents also highlighted the need for the statements to take account of pupils with special needs. In order to ensure equality for pupils in rural or single sex schools it was felt that guidance should be provided on the minimum entitlement and expected outcomes.

1.4.3 Opposition to the proposal that the statements of entitlement should include desirable outcomes

Among the views expressed by the 17.3% opposing the proposal, those most frequently cited related to:

- The need for more information including exemplar materials;
- Concerns over re-emergence of distinctive league tables; and
- The incongruity of **desirable** outcomes in a legally binding document.

1.5 PROPOSAL: A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PUPILS SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETE KEY STAGE 3 IN TWO YEARS

Key Stage 3 in 2 years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	195	2.3	2.6	2.6
	Agree	1560	18.7	20.5	23.0
	Disagree	3489	41.8	45.8	68.8
	Strongly Disagree	2381	28.5	31.1	100.0
	Total	7625	91.3	100.0	
Missing	Missing	728	8.7		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.5.1 Outcome

77% of respondents **oppose** the proposal that a significant proportion of pupils should be able to complete Key Stage 3 in two years, with only 23% of respondents supporting the idea.

1.5.2 Opposition to the proposal that a significant proportion of pupils should be able to complete key Stage 3 in two years.

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 77% opposing the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **The need for more detail**

Many respondents expressed the view that the proposed provision suggested for Year 10 was too vague. They found it difficult to make an informed comment, in the absence of a model of what the Key Stage 3 Curriculum would be like.

- **Equality**

The main concern expressed by the majority of respondents was in relation to equality of opportunity for all pupils and the disparity of provision between schools that might result from too much flexibility. Some respondents felt that the proposal did not cater for secondary school pupils, who they felt would need three years to complete the Key Stage 3 Curriculum. Others were of the view that it would only serve to widen the gap between able and less able pupils and might lead to further negative “labelling” and loss of self-esteem for less able pupils. There was concern also that lower ability pupils, not able to complete the basics in two years, might lose out on curriculum enrichment. The proposal was entirely unrealistic for children with special needs.

- **Time to develop skills**

Many respondents were concerned about the ultimate benefit to pupils of completing KS3 in two years and their readiness to progress at a faster pace. These respondents were of the view that it takes three full years to develop skills. They felt that:

- *The amount of knowledge might be reduced but not the learning of basic skills.*
- *Two years is too short to develop maturity before GCSE.*
- *It is unlikely that pupils of average ability would take GCSE at 15 unless curriculum is dramatically changed.*

- **Pupil maturity**

Other respondents were concerned about pupil maturity to cope with too much variety and flexibility and there was a concern that if Year 10 came to be viewed as a 'gap' year with no recognised target to meet, it might lead to, rather than counter, pupil drift.

- *This is a vital time and the introduction of a transition year could interrupt the natural progression and development in a pupil's life.*
- *Are pupils at KS3 mature enough to make use of this time in the way that it is being suggested?*
- *How practical is a transition year in Year 10 when pupils are too young for work experience?*
- *Might young people lose the ability to conform to a more formal school curriculum afterwards?*

- **Manageability**

Although some respondents welcomed the potential of a more flexible approach their enthusiasm was outweighed by concern about managing the practicalities of curriculum enrichment, definition of content, moderation procedures and the motivation of low achievers at the bottom of the ability range. Concerns were also expressed about staffing, timetable provision and finance. A few respondents declared themselves 'baffled' by the practical implications of developing a curriculum to suit everyone's needs.

- **Specific subject concerns**

As in other proposals, specific subject specialists raised concerns, in particular, concern that completing Key Stage 3 in two years would limit:

- Second language learning.
- The number of activities the children could do considerably. Numerous findings report on the importance of physical activity through PE for young people. Reducing the opportunities to do this will result in an inactive population in a few years time.
- The range of knowledge and skills making up the statutory core of Science.

1.5.3 Support for the proposal that a significant proportion of pupils should be able to complete Key Stage 3 in two years.

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 23% supporting the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Flexibility**

Some respondents welcomed the opportunity for greater flexibility on the basis that schools know their pupils best and can provide enrichment and tasters to suit various needs. *‘Schools should be enabled to use a “Years worth” of time to explore new areas of study that would enhance pupil development’*. Although concerned that the flexibility might not necessarily be offered to all pupils, the potential ‘social stigma’ and the danger of a two tier system at Key Stage 3, nevertheless these respondents felt that, if properly managed, this initiative could result in greater motivation and enjoyment on the part of pupils. Some parent respondents felt that it made sense to allow pupils to “sample” courses in order to help them decide what they are good at and what they enjoy. Others supported the proposal with the proviso that it should not be used to put pressure on young people or as a means of moving pupils through to advanced level at an earlier age.

- **Need for careful piloting**

A few respondents stressed the need for careful piloting using a number of different models. The evaluations from these pilots should then be widely discussed, including consideration of the resources needed to cope with it. Only if proven successful and beneficial to pupils’ learning should the proposal be implemented?

1.6 PROPOSAL: SCHOOLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE USE OF ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN THE WAYS SUGGESTED

Added flexibility

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1222	14.6	16.3	16.3
	Agree	3396	40.7	45.2	61.5
	Disagree	1833	21.9	24.4	85.8
	Strongly Disagree	1064	12.7	14.1	100.0
	Total	7515	90.0	100.0	
Missing	Missing	838	10.0		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.6.1 Outcome

Although 77% of respondents **oppose** the proposal that a significant proportion of pupils should be able to complete Key Stage 3 in two years, nevertheless 61.5% of respondents **agree** with the proposal that schools should be able to make use of additional flexibility in the ways suggested. 38.6% oppose the idea of flexibility as suggested.

1.6.2 Support for making use of flexible timing in the ways suggested

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 61.5% supporting the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Improved transition from primary school**

Many respondents welcomed the potential for Year 8 pupils to have a smaller number of teachers, with one teacher teaching a number of subjects and thus building up a better relationship with pupils. The potential for team building activities in the first term of Year 8 was highlighted specifically. A few respondents stressed that the transition from primary to post primary also needs closer pastoral and curriculum links between primary and post primary schools before Year 8.

- **Flexibility**

Many respondents expressed the view that schools know their own pupils best and strongly agreed that this approach could greatly enhance the learning experience for all pupils at Key Stage 3. The flexibility of being able to offer options or modules, specific to the type of school and the particular needs of pupils was warmly welcomed. Many felt that giving pupils the opportunity to sample courses alongside a statutory curriculum would give pupils an insight into subjects they are unfamiliar with e.g. business studies. Some respondents specifically mentioned how collaboration with the voluntary sector could help in expanding the range of experiences and the vision of pupils. Others hoped that learning experiences with civil society groups should be incorporated into student assessment. While in favour of flexibility some felt that this should not be for a whole year.

- **Improved vocational opportunities**

Many respondents welcomed the potential for Year 10 pupils to sample a range of 'vocational' options with the proviso that pathways are kept open.

- **Year 12 Transition Year**

Quite a few respondents agreed that a 'gap' year would be more beneficial to more mature students and were in favour of a transition year in Year 12, including work experience and key skills.

- **Manageability and equality issues**

While agreeing in theory, many were concerned about how it might work out in practice in terms of management, impact upon timetable construction and staffing, with provision limited by the expertise of staff and the facilities available. While agreeing with the idea, some were concerned about the design and content of the curriculum in a flexible year and also that differences in practice might lead to inequality, making it difficult for pupils to transfer from one school to another.

- **Need for piloting**

Some felt that, although a sound idea in principle, the proposals require much more thought and piloting. A few highlighted the need for further work to be done to ensure that any such time is not used to provide "more of the same".

1.6.3 Opposition to making use of flexible timing in the ways suggested

Among the wide ranging views expressed by the 38.6% opposing the proposal, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

- **Inequality**

Most respondents had serious concerns about the inequality issues that could arise from this, in particular reservations that this proposal may lead to the development of a two-tier system based on ability. There was a fear among many respondents that flexibility such as fast tracking would accentuate inequality. At the same time, there was an acceptance by many that the curriculum for weaker pupils should be more flexible, and should include provision such as a school to work programme. A few respondents indicated that it should be up to schools to decide how to make use of additional flexibility (if any) rather than “in the ways” suggested. One respondent felt that the proposals was too vague a concept and had unease at the problems, which could be created by a GNVQ type structure.

- **Specific subject concerns**

- PE was highlighted should be given adequate time during any transitional year, particularly as it is identified as the most enjoyable subject for Key Stage 3 pupils.
- Concern was expressed that a significant proportion of pupils would have only two years of language study.

1.7 IMPLEMENTATION SHOULD BE PHASED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME

Implementation over time					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6215	74.4	78.3	78.3
	Agree	1332	15.9	16.8	95.1
	Disagree	60	.8	.8	95.9
	Strongly Disagree	326	3.9	4.1	100.0
	Total	7933	95.0	100.0	
Missing	Missing	420	5.0		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.7.1 Outcome

The overwhelmingly majority of respondents (95.1%) agree that implementation should be phased over a period of time, whereas only 4.9% disagree.

1.7.2 Support for phased implementation over a period of time

Most respondents believe that it is important to allow sufficient time to ensure that new proposals actually work and that care is taken not to repeat the mistakes of the past. Many highlight the need to create a sense of ownership. It is felt that teachers and all education partners across Northern Ireland need to be consulted and kept informed of all developments and time scales throughout. It is also vitally important that there is an effective programme of public awareness of the changes being introduced. The process should be supported with adequate in-service training

provision and the introduction of appropriate courses in initial teacher education as well as tailored resources and support where needed.

1.7.3 Opposition to phased implementation over a period of time

Of the 4.9% who disagree with this proposal, the main concern seemed to be that the programme for development was not outlined and therefore they felt they couldn't be expected to endorse a timetable without substance.

1.8 PROPOSAL: IT IS GOOD POLICY TO PILOT NEW ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRIOR TO STATUTORY INTRODUCTION

pilot new aspects of curriculum

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6293	75.3	79.9	79.9
	Agree	1391	16.7	17.7	97.5
	Disagree	105	1.3	1.3	98.8
	Strongly Disagree	92	1.2	1.1	100.0
	Total	7881	94.3	100.0	
Missing	Missing	472	5.7		
Total		8353	100.0		

1.8.1 Outcome

An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.5%) agree that it is good policy to pilot new aspects of curriculum and assessment prior to statutory introduction. Only 2.5% of respondents disagree.

1.8.2 Support for piloting new aspects of the curriculum

The majority of respondents felt it was good policy to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate pilot programmes with other professional and educational partners in order to maximise the impact on learning and teaching. They endorsed the need to pilot carefully with teachers and schools with ongoing evaluation a major priority at each stage but cautioned that there should be a limit on the number of pilots in which any individual school shall be involved. The results of research and piloting need to be available to all schools and teachers before implementation. A few respondents voiced concern about the true consultative nature of this document given the fact that piloting is currently taking place. Others were concerned about whether or not schools would be free to volunteer to participate or be allocated to pilots.

1.8.3 Opposition to piloting new aspects of the curriculum

Of the 2.5% of respondents who disagree with piloting the main view expressed was that '*Piloting and statutory requirements do not go together*'. In their view, '*the point of piloting is to have evidence for evaluation and it's from that position that a decision should be made on whether something becomes statutory or not*'.

Section 2: Proposals for Assessment Arrangements at Key Stage 3

2.1 ANNUAL REPORTS AND KEY STAGE ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A SINGLE SYSTEM OF STANDARDISED ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual reports					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1478	17.7	20.5	20.5
	Agree	3290	39.4	45.5	66.0
	Disagree	1469	17.6	20.3	86.3
	Strongly Disagree	990	11.8	13.7	100.0
	Total	7227	86.5	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1126	13.5		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.1.1 Outcome

66% of responses supported the proposal for standardised annual reports while 29.5% were opposed.

2.1.2 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

- Many expressed the view that a standardised report would enable consistent and meaningful information to follow the pupil throughout his/her career. The proposal reflects good practice which already exists in schools and should help counter the proliferation of bureaucracy and enable more time to be spent on effective teaching.
- Respondents emphasised as vital the need for clear communication to parents. They cited the need for an easily understood report which would include individual comments on pupils' attainment. Some respondents laid particular emphasis on the need for uniformity across all schools.
- Some respondents felt that such a system would provide useful information for benchmarking schools.

2.1.3 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

- The process would produce a highly uniform approach to reporting which would not allow schools to use or develop their own styles of reporting. Some respondents cited the need for more individual commentary on the achievement of pupils. Others felt that the process would be bureaucratic.
- One set of respondents commented that there was a need for positive reporting while a second set insisted that weaknesses should be highlighted.
- Concerns were also expressed regarding the use of Northern Ireland averages as benchmarks as this would reinforce a sense of failure in underachieving pupils.
- Other comments focused on the difficulties or impossibility of standardising assessments.

2.1.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

- Percentages would be a more useful and understandable measure than levels.
- Schools have a freedom and flexibility to report more frequently.
- Schools should have the flexibility to reflect their own character.

2.2 THE 8-LEVEL SCALE SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR THE STANDARD REPORTING SCALE - RATHER THAN GRADES OR MARKS

8 level scale basis

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	392	4.7	5.2	5.2
	Agree	2616	31.3	34.4	39.6
	Disagree	2143	25.7	28.2	67.8
	Strongly Disagree	2446	29.3	32.2	100.0
	Total	7597	90.0	100.0	
Missing	Missing	756	10.0		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.2.1 Outcome

The majority of responses (60.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal for an 8-level scale. Just under 40% supported the idea.

2.2.2 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

Many respondents felt that many parents did not understand the 8 level scale and could not see how it related to the grades used in KS4. Some teachers believed that the use of the 8 level scale was limiting and depersonalised reporting. Others felt that the scale was unmanageable and would lead to endless ticking of boxes.

Some respondents made the point that this approach to assessment was not in keeping with the flexibility being advocated elsewhere in the proposals. Not all curriculum areas are appropriate for reporting using an 8 level scale.

Some cited the use of a minus as a very negative concept that would de-motivate pupils.

Others commented that it would be better to report in a qualitative manner to parents while another set of responses advocated the use of grades in KS3.

2.2.3 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

Some respondents supported the 8 scale citing the need for a consistent and uniform approach to assessment through Key Stage 3. Others saw subjects as being disadvantaged or devalued if they were not assessed from Key Stage 1 onwards.

Some teachers saw it as a useful standard for benchmarking in schools and providing useful information to parents.

2.2.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

They advocated that whatever system is developed it needs to be consistent throughout all key stages and would need close moderation to ensure confidence.

For these proposals to succeed they will need to have the full confidence of teachers, parents and pupils alike.

Others felt that 8 level scale should only be used to report at end of key stage 3 and not used for informal assessments.

Some respondents would like to see this system piloted and reviewed before being implemented by all schools and indicated that teachers will require training in the use of sub-divided scales.

2.3 EACH LEVEL SHOULD BE DIVIDED INTO 3 TO IDENTIFY PROGRESS WITHIN A LEVEL

level divided into 3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	482	5.8	6.6	6.6
	Agree	1984	23.8	27.2	33.8
	Disagree	2049	24.5	28.1	61.8
	Strongly Disagree	2789	33.4	38.1	100.0
	Total	7304	87.4	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1049	12.6		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.3.1 Outcome and comments

The majority of responses did not support this proposal (66.3%). Many responses simply reinforced the comments in the previous section, with the additional emphasis on the unmanageability of a 24 point scale.

2.4 REPORTS SHOULD BE BASED ON PROPOSED CURRICULUM AREAS, RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS

reports on areas not subjects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	108	1.3	1.4	1.4
	Agree	900	10.8	11.9	13.3
	Disagree	2867	34.3	37.9	51.2
	Strongly Disagree	3686	44.1	48.8	100.0
	Total	7561	90.5	100.0	
Missing	Missing	792	9.5		
	Total	792	9.5		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.4.1 Outcome

The overwhelming majority are opposed to this proposal (86.7%). Only 13.3% support the reporting on curriculum areas rather than individual subjects.

2.4.2 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

Some respondents commented on the fact that parents would expect reports in traditional subject areas and that reporting in curricular areas was too broad to enable effective differentiation of achievement.

Others commented that teachers need to report on individual subjects even though it is being taught within a curriculum certain area. Each subject has its own distinct and unique skills and knowledge that cannot be reported holistically. One parent commented that a pupil's aptitude for a particular subject could be overlooked if taught within a curricular area.

Concerns were also expressed about particular subjects eg Home Economics could lose its identity, PE did not lend itself to this type of reporting and that modern languages needed to be included in some meaningful way.

Some teachers commented that working in curricular areas could prove to be a hindrance to choosing subjects for GCSE in KS4.

2.4.3 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

Some teachers agree with the principle and cited the need for assessment in specific skills such as literacy and numeracy. They felt that curricular areas would provide a consistent framework for reporting.

However others indicated that assessment information from individual subject areas would need to be collated to provide a complete report on each curriculum area and to provide comprehensive information for parents and pupils.

Many indicated the need to educate parents in the changes to curriculum, its objectives and methods of assessment.

2.4.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

It is important that assessment procedures are consistent with the new proposals, the statements of entitlement and the curriculum areas.

2.5 REPORTING ON THE SKILLS PUPILS HAVE DEVELOPED SHOULD BE A MAJOR COMPONENT OF ALL REPORTS

Reports on developed skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1023	12.2	13.3	13.3
	Agree	3323	39.8	43.3	56.6
	Disagree	2539	30.4	33.0	89.6
	Strongly Disagree	798	9.6	10.4	100.0
	Total	7683	92.0	100.0	
Missing	Missing	670	8.0		
Total		8353	100		

2.5.1 Outcome

Over half of the responses are supportive of this proposal (56.6%).

2.5.2 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

Many commented that skills are reflected in all subject/curriculum areas and by focusing in on skills it gave the opportunity to report on more than the academic and advocated that reporting must be done in a manner that promotes self-esteem.

Others commented that a robust assessment tool will need to be developed if this is to be done in a consistent manner across the province.

2.5.3 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

Reporting on skills is important but employers will focus on academic ability.

Some teachers commented that while they recognised the importance of skills they did not believe that they should be a major focus for assessment – rather they should be at the discretion of the teacher. Others stated that due recognition must be given to subject knowledge and content.

Some respondents insisted that reports should not be exclusively about skills as this presented too narrow a view of education and puts excessive pressure on the teacher to comment on what may be quite subjective.

Others questioned how skills should be assessed and suggested that it would be extremely difficult to assess tangible progress in some areas, for example, Religious Education.

2.5.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

Some teachers expressed concerns that while reporting on skills is very useful it may prove difficult and limit teaching. It seemed that everyone has a different opinion on what is to be recorded and how measurable it is.

Others while agreeing with the approach were concerned that the workload would be excessive on teachers or were worried about the problem of “labelling” and the depersonalising of the teacher/pupil relationship.

2.6 IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR REPORTS TO INCLUDE CLASS/YEAR GROUP AND NORTHERN IRELAND AVERAGES, WHERE APPROPRIATE

reports include class/year and NI averages

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	463	5.5	6.2	6.2
	Agree	2260	27.1	30.1	36.3
	Disagree	2980	35.7	39.7	76.0
	Strongly Disagree	1803	21.6	24.0	100.0
	Total	7506	89.9	100.0	
Missing	Missing	847	10.1		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.6.1 Outcome

The majority do not agree with the proposal to include class/year and Northern Ireland averages in the report, (63.7%). 36.3% support the proposal

2.6.2 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

Some respondents expressed concerns that the inclusion of Northern Ireland averages was not keeping with the spirit of the proposed curriculum. It was felt that it could create a feeling of failure in the pupil and reduce their ego or self-esteem. This proposal may be de-motivating and counterproductive.

If comparisons with other schools and Northern Ireland averages are so important, then why were school performance tables abandoned? There is a danger of league tables entering by the back door. There is a danger that like schools will not be compared 'like with like'.

For parents this is good but as teachers we can see that this would be open to malpractice as the emphasis is placed on teaching for results. It could result on putting too much pressure on children as they will compare themselves with Northern Ireland averages, and is the new curriculum not focusing on the individual?

Others expressed doubts about material on which averages would be based and questioned when such reports would be made available.

2.6.3 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

Respondents supported the proposal in order for comparisons and informed judgements to be made, important that comparisons are fair e.g., similar schools, population, social mix, curriculum etc.

Under the new system this would be helpful to provide benchmarks. Such information should be used sensitively with the pupil as the primary beneficiary of assessment. There would also be a need for moderation in all subjects in Years 8, 9 and 10.

Web based materials would be essential for support for teachers and would need to be available in good time.

2.6.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

Some respondents agreed as long as teachers do not become compilers of statistical information and that the information generated was not used to label teachers or schools, or for league tables.

Other respondents suggested that only the class/year group average was provided as the Northern Ireland averages could be misleading.

2.7 THE PROPOSED COMPUTER ASSISTANCE IS LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING TEACHER WORKLOAD

Computer assistance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	610	7.3	8.7	8.7
	Agree	2989	35.8	42.5	51.1
	Disagree	2410	28.9	34.2	85.4
	Strongly Disagree	1029	12.3	14.6	100.0
	Total	7038	84.3	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1315	15.7		
Total		8353	100.0		

2.7.1 Outcome

Just over half of the responses support the idea of computer assistance reducing teacher workload, 48.8% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal.

2.7.2 Those in favour of the proposal made the following points

Many responses supported the proposal provided teachers are given adequate training and resources before implementation. For many equality in access to IT resources was paramount. DE must ensure that all schools have the same level of equipment/facilities e.g. will all teachers have their own laptops?

Others supported the development but indicated that it should only be introduced providing the necessary software has been developed, tested and piloted.

2.7.3 Those opposed to the proposal raised the following issues

Some expressed grave concerns that the proposed ICT systems are unproven, untried and untested and that there is no hard evidence to date that computer assistance actually reduces teacher workload. Indeed one teacher's practical experiences in Canada showed an overall increase in workload.

Others commented that teaching should be child-centred, with the emphasis on personal relationships and the uniqueness of the individual and ICT based assessment could prevent such interaction.

There were worries that increased input of ICT will cause further stress for teachers, especially older members of the profession.

One comment expressed the fear that assessment would degenerate into computer-generated comments and vague platitudes (which are repeated from year to year) which have little meaning.

2.7.4 Some respondents expressed the following reservations

Although supportive, I can foresee resistance to this proposal as I expect initially it will increase teacher workload until it is fully integrated and accepted.

Success of this proposal depends on the format of the report, if teachers are expected to key in data it will be difficult for those with limited ICT skills.

The approach needs to be treated with caution as it could take away the personalised response which can be so important for pupils in raising self-esteem and confidence.

One teacher commented that classroom assistants could be of benefit in this area.

SECTION 3: THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

3.1 THE STATUTORY CURRICULUM FOR KEY STAGE 4 SHOULD CONSIST OF THE KEY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS PLUS PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Key Transferable skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	679	8.1	8.5	8.5
	Agree	3525	42.2	44.2	52.7
	Disagree	1798	21.5	22.5	75.2
	Strongly Disagree	1976	23.7	24.8	100.0
	Total	7978	95.5	100.0	
Missing	Missing	375	4.5		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.1.1 Outcome

52.7% of respondents support the proposal, whereas 47.3% of respondents oppose it.

3.1.2 Support for statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 comprising key transferable skills, plus personal, social and health education, citizenship and employability

Of the 52.7% of respondents supporting this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- **Relevance and continuity**

Some respondents welcomed the opportunity for schools to be able to teach courses which they consider are relevant to their pupils. They also welcomed the continuity from primary through Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. A few were particularly supportive of this proposal for employability, feeling that these areas *'have been neglected in the past with a detrimental effect on many people in their personal, social and vocational lives'*.

- **The detail of the proposals**

While agreeing with the proposals, a few respondents felt there needed to be further development for Key Stage 4 in order to ensure breadth within the curriculum. Others were not confident that the definitions recognise the important aspects of knowledge and understanding needed for modern living. Questions of detail were raised, for example, whether or not:

- The components PSHE, Citizenship & Employability were to be taught as discrete subjects or across the curriculum?
- Health education included the emotional and spiritual well being of pupils?
- The key transferable skills allow for the inclusion of sign language within the communication area?

- **The implementation of the proposals**

While agreeing with the proposals, some respondents raised concerns about the training of staff and the allocation of time etc. It was felt that shortage of time to deal with these areas could lead to a narrowing of the curriculum for some pupils. Others felt that the proposals needed to be trialled carefully to see how they would work in practice. Some stressed the need to inform and educate employers and parents about these changes.

3.1.3 **Opposition for statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 comprising key transferable skills, plus personal, social and health education, citizenship and employability**

Of the 47.3% of respondents opposing this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- **Insufficient detail**

Some respondents felt that the proposals needed further clarification.

- **The balance between knowledge and skills**

Some respondents were concerned that knowledge was being downgraded in favour of skills, and that this was not an either/or situation. Some highlighted that the introduction of key skills at A level has posed problems and has not been a satisfactory delivery model. Others were of the view that schools are not training agencies and that employers should be responsible for training.

- **Continuity and Progression and the needs of all pupils**

Some respondents were concerned about the implications of the core being taught alongside eight GCSE subjects, in particular the core eating into other areas of the curriculum. They were of the view that the proposals might discriminate against more able pupils while not doing enough for the less able. It was recommended that the curriculum specifications should ensure that *'no pupil will be deprived'*. A few felt that there was no continuum of thought from the three previous Key Stages, nor to the principles of continuity and progression.

- **Specific concerns**

A number of respondents were disappointed that Sustainable Development is not included as one of the four key components of the statutory curriculum. **Others felt that the** importance of creative ability is being diluted. Concerns were expressed in relation to specific subjects, in particular:

- The need for PE to be a subject in its own right at Key Stage 4 because of the alarming increase in obesity among young people within Northern Ireland and the increase in coronary disease. It was felt that to reduce the amount of time devoted to PE would only exacerbate this problem.
- The place of history.
- The retention of science as a statutory part of the curriculum.

3.2 IT IS UNNECESSARY TO INCLUDE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TO STUDY PARTICULAR SUBJECTS AT KEY STAGE 4

Legal requirements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	933	11.2	12.3	12.3
	Agree	2706	32.4	35.6	47.8
	Disagree	1688	20.2	22.2	70.0
	Strongly Disagree	2280	27.3	30.0	100.0
	Total	7607	91.1	100.0	
Missing	Missing	746	8.9		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.2.1 Outcome

52.2% of respondents oppose the proposal that it is unnecessary to include legal requirements to study particular subjects at this stage, whereas 47.8% of respondents support the idea.

3.2.2 Opposition to the proposal that it is unnecessary to include legal requirements to study particular subjects at Key Stage 4

Of the slight majority of 52.2% opposing this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- **The need for a broader core**

Many respondents felt that the core should retain academic subjects otherwise some schools may limit pupils' experiences because of budgetary considerations. Others feared that pupils will drop out of academic subjects and opt for what they see as the easy option and therefore stressed the need to make sure that there are legal requirements. Some respondents were concerned about how the proposals would fit in with required subjects for University entrance.

- **The inclusion of specific subjects in the core**

A variety of cases were made for the inclusion of specific subjects as legal requirements. These included: English, Maths and Science, Languages, PE and RE. Others felt that every subject should have equal status. A few respondents felt that the proposals will place the learning of the Irish language at a distinct disadvantage.

3.2.3 Support for the proposal that it is unnecessary to include legal requirements to study particular subjects at Key Stage 4

Of the 47.3% of respondents supporting this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- **Flexibility and key skills**

Many respondents agree with this proposal as long as the curriculum is sufficiently flexible and meaningful and the key skills can be guaranteed.

- **Breadth and specific subject concerns**

Although agreeing with the proposals for the core, many respondents stressed that the breadth of the curriculum needed to be preserved. Some highlighted the need to ensure:

- access to modern languages;
- the position of Religious Education;
- that Sustainable Development issues permeate all of the key components at Key Stage 4.

3.3 THERE SHOULD BE A NEW APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING STARTING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Language learning approach

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3597	43.1	47.5	47.5
	Agree	3683	44.1	48.7	96.2
	Disagree	232	2.8	3.1	99.2
	Strongly Disagree	57	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	7569	90.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	784	9.4		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.3.1 Outcome

An overwhelming 96.2% of respondents agree with the proposal that language learning should begin in the primary school, with only 3.8% of respondents opposing the idea.

3.3.2 Support for a new approach to language learning starting in primary schools

Of the 96.2% of respondents supporting this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- **Relevance and enjoyment**

Many respondents felt that this was very important in order that we are able to compete with other European countries. It was felt that younger children are more receptive to language learning but it was stressed that the “new approach” should include interesting, relevant and enjoyable experiences and must be delivered in the spirit of the Primary curriculum, for example through songs, games etc. A few felt that this is a logical extension of the education for mutual understanding concept.

- **Training implications**

Many respondents highlighted the need for primary school children to be taught by specialist staff and the implications for Teacher Training.

3.3.3 Opposition to a new approach to language learning starting in primary schools

Of the very small number of respondents, (3.8%), opposed to this proposal, the main issues raised related to:

- Primary schools already having too many areas of study within the curriculum to address;
- The danger of damage being done if not taught by specialists;
- Concern about the negative impact of less academic pupils reaching their ceiling of achievable progress earlier; and
- Questions about which languages would be taught or whether primary schools would all teach the same modern language(s).

3.4 THE REQUIREMENT FOR HEALTHY EXERCISE SHOULD FORM PART OF THE PSHE PROGRAMME

Healthy Exercise

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	3377	40.4	42.7	42.7
	Agree	2846	34.1	36.0	78.7
	Disagree	784	9.4	9.9	88.7
	Strongly Disagree	896	10.7	11.3	100.0
	Total	7903	94.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	450	5.4		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.4.1 Outcome

78.7% of respondents agree with the proposal that healthy exercise should form part of the PSHE programme at Key Stage 4, whereas 21.3% oppose the idea.

3.4.2 Support for healthy exercise being part of the PSHE programme

Of the 78.7% of respondents agreeing with this proposal, the main points were in relation to:

- **Health concerns**

Many respondents considered this very appropriate given the Northern Ireland health record. They agreed that healthy exercise is essential as it may be the only exercise that pupils get. Some felt that more time should be allocated in the curriculum. Others felt that more information was required on what the statutory essential should be and that this should also include an emphasis on healthy eating.

3.4.3 Opposition to healthy exercise being part of the PSHE programme

Of the 21.3% of respondents opposing this proposal virtually all felt that, given Northern Ireland's health record, PE should remain a core part of the curriculum. They expressed concern that removing PE as a discrete subject will put Northern Ireland behind other European countries.

3.5 THE KEY STAGE 4 REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE SET OUT IN THE FORM OF DESIRABLE OUTCOMES AS ILLUSTRATED

KS4 form set out

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	415	5.0	5.6	5.6
	Agree	2549	30.5	34.4	40.0
	Disagree	2217	26.5	29.9	69.9
	Strongly Disagree	2229	26.7	30.1	100.0
	Total	7410	88.7	100.0	
Missing	Missing	943	11.3		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.5.1 Outcome

A majority of respondents (60%) oppose the proposal that the Key Stage 4 requirements should be set in the form used in paragraphs 9.1-9.3 of the consultation paper, whereas 40% of respondents support the idea.

3.5.2 Opposition to the Key Stage 4 requirements being set out in the form of desirable outcomes as illustrated

Of the 60% of respondents opposing this proposal, the main points raised were in relation to the need for:

- **Management implications**

Very many respondents were unclear as to how these proposals are to be managed and felt that much more detail is required.

- **Preference for discrete subjects**

Discrete subjects were preferred by many respondents who feel that key skills do not cover all the areas of discrete subjects and many valuable topics will be lost. There were strong lobbies particularly for Languages, Science, PE and RE. Others felt that there should be a distinction between academic and vocational routes.

3.5.3 Support for the Key Stage 4 requirements being set out in the form of desirable outcomes as illustrated

Of the 40% of respondents supporting this proposal, the main points raised were in relation to the need for:

- The pupil's experience to take place in a rich and varied environment.
- Continuity in the terminology used across the Key Stages.
- Corresponding structural changes to support the implementation of this curriculum.

3.6 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR APPLICATION OF NUMBER

AON desired outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1097	13.1	15.6	15.6
	Agree	4603	55.1	65.5	81.1
	Disagree	805	9.6	11.5	92.5
	Strongly Disagree	525	6.3	7.5	100.0
	Total	7030	84.2	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1323	15.8		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.6.1 Outcomes

81.1% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Application of Number, whereas 19.9% of respondents disagree.

3.6.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for application of number

Of the 81.1% in favour of the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- That statements needed to be more specific and that further development was required for example, the inclusion of statements on the use of ICT the stipulation of levels of attainment.
- The need to be aware of children with special needs and differing abilities.
- Concern about the implication of the wording “ *Pupils should have the opportunity*”.

3.6.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for application of number

Of the 19.9% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Many pupils could achieve these outcomes at Key Stage 2.
- The proposals are too vague.
- Entire statement reflects a narrow utilisation and outdated perspective of numeracy.

3.7 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNICATION

Communication outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1317	15.8	18.5	18.5
	Agree	4491	53.8	63.0	81.5
	Disagree	676	8.1	9.5	91.0
	Strongly Disagree	640	7.7	9.0	100.0
	Total	7124	85.3	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1229	14.7		
	Total	1229	14.7		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.7.1 Outcome

81.5% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Communication, whereas 18.5% of respondents disagree.

3.7.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for communication

Of the 81.5% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- These proposals should help develop vocational skills more efficiently.
- One deficiency is the lack of emphasis on the skill of listening and understanding.
- Modern languages should be able to make a contribution to this proposal.
- Practical skills would address the problem of boys under performance.
- Concerned about the wording “aim to” rather than “should be able to”.
- Consideration and more detailed proposals need to be given to the pupils of ethnic minority groups where English is not the first language, and for those pupils who require an alternative such as Braille, signing etc.

3.7.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for communication

Of the 18.5% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Lack of creativity in these statements.
- These proposals are dull and unexciting.
- What is the role of literature? How do we promote reading?
- We are disappointed that there is no specific reference to Modern Languages in the communication section.
- These outcomes will be very difficult to assess.
- Much of this is already being covered.

3.8 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ICT outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1424	17.0	20.6	20.6
	Agree	4562	54.6	65.9	86.4
	Disagree	510	6.1	7.4	93.8
	Strongly Disagree	429	5.1	6.2	100.0
	Total	6925	82.9	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1428	17.1		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.8.1 Outcome

86.4% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Information and Communications Technology, whereas 13.6% of respondents disagree.

3.8.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for ICT

Of the 86.4% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Must take into account that many pupils need tutoring on basic skills. It's assumed that pupils are IT literate on basic skills.
- Reference needs to be made to rapidly changing communications technology. Need to introduce the concept of on-line learning and on-line co-operation.
- All schools must be properly equipped with sufficient hardware to ensure equality of opportunity and access. Key stage 4 teachers should be ICT proficient.
- We have concerns regarding flexibility.

3.8.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for ICT

Of the 13.6% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Statements are restrictive in their understanding of ICT. No mention made of the influence of IT on our lives, education and in the workplace.
- These ideas are lacklustre and not appropriate for children with special needs.
- How can these proposals be assessed and delivered.

3.9 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR WORKING WITH OTHERS

Working with others

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1251	15.0	17.6	17.6
	Agree	4671	55.9	65.9	83.5
	Disagree	812	9.7	11.4	94.9
	Strongly Disagree	359	4.3	5.1	100.0
	Total	7093	84.9	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1260	15.1		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.9.1 Outcome

83.5% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Working with Others, whereas 16.5% of respondents disagree.

3.9.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for working with others

Of the 83.5% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Welcome this proposal with reservations. How can these proposals be assessed?
- Need to review the possible overlap with the outcomes of communication.
- Emphasis needs to be on dependent and inter-dependent skills.
- We feel that this is a priority as some pupils will never be able to fulfil these skills. Education system needs to make provision for these pupils through support and alternative provision.
- Specialists may be required for this field.

3.9.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for working with others

Of the 16.5% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Lack of statements which encourage collaboration, leadership and motivating others. Common comment.
- All the statements are simply good classroom practice which is already happening.
- How is this different from personal development?
- How can these proposals be delivered and assessed?

3.10 THE PROPOSED STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self - Management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1166	14.0	16.7	16.7
	Agree	4657	55.8	66.8	83.6
	Disagree	600	7.2	8.6	92.2
	Strongly Disagree	545	6.5	7.8	100.0
	Total	6968	83.4	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1385	16.6		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.10.1 Outcome

83.6% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Self-Management, whereas 16.4% of respondents disagree.

3.10.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for self-management

Of the 83.6% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Young people will find these concepts difficult and will need a lot of guidance. Perhaps this should be integrated into subject areas.
- Would recommend that self-evaluation is written into the revised proposals.
- These statements have considerable relevance for the concept of lifelong learning.
- Reservations about less able pupils achieving all these elements.
- A lot of this is already being done in pastoral care.

3.10.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for self management

Of the 16.4% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Need to promote the development of autonomous learners and more reference needs to be made to the development and recognition of emotional intelligence.
- Concern that this requires a level of self-evaluation which many pupils have not developed at this age.
- We feel that self-review and self-evaluation should be included.
- No account of the individual circumstances of pupils.
- How are these proposals to be delivered and assessed?

3.11 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING

Problem solving

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1158	13.9	16.7	16.7
	Agree	4611	55.2	66.6	83.3
	Disagree	684	8.2	9.9	93.1
	Strongly Disagree	475	5.7	6.9	100.0
	Total	6928	82.9	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1425	17.1		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.11.1 Outcome

83.3% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for problem-solving, whereas 16.7% of respondents disagree.

3.11.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for problem-solving

Of the 83.3% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Agree but would ask that the overlap between key skills is addressed before future proposals are made.
- Emphasis must be on a positive approach.
- Additional discussion and guidance is required on how these proposals are to be delivered and assessed.
- We agree with the proposals but feel that a lot of this is already being done in Maths, Science, and Technology etc.

3.11.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for problem-solving

Of the 16.7% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- No human factor, plus the proposals are too general and vague.
- How is this different from personal development?
- There is no methodology or appreciation of the process.
- How can these proposals be delivered and assessed?

3.12 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Local and Global Citizenship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1134	13.6	15.9	15.9
	Agree	4001	47.9	56.0	71.9
	Disagree	1476	17.7	20.7	92.6
	Strongly Disagree	530	6.3	7.4	100.0
	Total	7141	85.5	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1212	14.5		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.12.1 Outcome

71.9% of respondents agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Local and Global Citizenship, whereas 28.1% disagree.

3.12.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for Local and Global Citizenship

Of the 71.9% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Agree but citizenship to have a more rounded and social perspective than that afforded in these proposals.
- These proposals are very ambitious and we have concerns with regard to training of teachers.
- I particularly welcome these statements and feel that they will enable young people to view society more critically and become engaged in promoting human rights and becoming active citizens. I feel that this ties in well with other transferable skills such as self-management, personal development, working with others and problem solving.
- Would welcome the inclusion of a stronger focus on the environment.
- Clarity is needed on the progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.
- Needs to be elements relating to the environment and sustainable development.
- There needs to be a reference to cater for an understanding of the needs of minority groups.
- This is a new area and would need to be treated as a separate subject.
- We agree with the proposals but feel that there is too much expected in content and outcome.

3.12.3 Opposition to the statements of desired outcomes for Local and Global Citizenship

Of the 28.1% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Represents too narrow a view on local and global citizenship. No reference to environmental responsibility, social justice, underdevelopment, poverty and inequality.
- This may be worthy and relevant but could prove to be heavy going for our pupils.
- This is the job of parents not teachers.
- Who is trained to deliver this programme?
- I have serious concerns about politicising the curriculum. This is very political and could be open to government/educational propaganda.

3.13 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Personal, Social and Health Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1010	12.1	13.8	13.8
	Agree	4619	55.3	63.3	77.2
	Disagree	1145	13.7	15.7	92.9
	Strongly Disagree	519	6.2	7.1	100.0
	Total	7293	87.3	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1060	12.7		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.13.1 Outcome

77.2% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Personal, Social and Health Education, whereas 22.8% of respondents disagree.

3.13.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for Personal, Social and Health Education

Of the 77.2% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- I think by addressing these vital issues we will ultimately see great improvements in other areas of the curriculum, especially in schools situated in areas of greater social need where pupils' self-esteem can often be detrimentally affected.
- We agree with the proposals but feel that they are very ambitious and assume a lot of pupil knowledge.
- Getting parents involved will be critical.
- RE has a major contribution to make to the desired outcomes outlined here.
- There is no explicit reference to sex education here.

3.13.3 Opposition for the statements of desired outcomes for Personal, Social and Health Education

Of the 22.8% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Does not fully address the issue of PE. Must be presented as a discreet subject and not diluted within PSHE.
- There should be a reference to environmental responsibility.
- Too much emphasis on health education while the personal and social are minimal.
- Unrealistic. How can we help students to manage their emotions and exercise self-control?
- Difficult to implement due to a wide range of depth and content.
- How can these proposals be assessed and delivered?

3.14 THE STATEMENTS OF DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Employability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1146	13.7	16.8	16.8
	Agree	4422	52.9	64.9	81.7
	Disagree	524	6.3	7.7	89.4
	Strongly Disagree	723	8.7	10.6	100.0
	Total	6815	81.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	1538	18.4		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.14.1 Outcome

81.7% agree that the proposed statements set out the desired outcomes for Employability, whereas 18.3% of respondents disagree.

3.14.2 Support for the statements of desired outcomes for Employability

Of the 81.7% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- This format proposal will prevent future career options being curtailed by following a narrow range of subjects.
- We agree with these proposals as there is a need for more work related experiences.
- The proposals should include an understanding of the role of the Trade Unions.
- These outcomes will need to be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties. There also needs to be greater collaboration with the Training and Employment Agency, the vocational sector and other statutory agencies to ensure a coherent delivery of the services to such pupils.
- Agree with the proposals, but employers will still want academic proficiency.

- Concerned that the examination proposed could be seen as the only type of careers provision.
- Parents are crucial for this to succeed. They must not condone absences and must support the school.

3.14.3 Opposition for the statements of desired outcomes for Employability

Of the 18.3% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Who will co-ordinate and deliver this?
- Is there a need for more work related experience?
- Many of the aspects are already taken care of in Business Studies.
- More details are required with regard to this proposal.
- Concerned about work experience occurring too early in a pupil's career. How relevant might this be to highly academic students?

3.15 PUPILS SHOULD **NOT** BE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLETE THEIR ADVANCED QUALIFICATIONS AT 17

Encouragement at 17

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4361	52.2	57.0	57.0
	Agree	2544	30.5	33.3	90.3
	Disagree	422	5.1	5.5	95.8
	Strongly Disagree	321	3.8	4.2	100.0
	Total	7648	91.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	705	8.4		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.15.1 Outcome

An overwhelming majority of respondents (90.3%) agree that pupils should **not** be encouraged to complete their advanced qualifications at 17, with only 9.7% of respondents disagreeing.

3.15.2 Support for the proposal that pupils should **not** be encouraged to complete their advanced qualifications at 17

Of the 90.3% agreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Pupils need time to mature emotionally and socially.
- No point in going to Higher Education at age 17.
- There should be a wider choice of subjects available with more vocational elements.
- Shouldn't necessarily be encouraged but rather allowed.

- At 17 most people have enough pressure to deal with without the added pressure of accelerated progress towards further education.

3.15.3 Opposition to the proposal that pupils should not be encouraged to complete their advanced qualifications at 17

Of the 9.7% disagreeing with the proposed statements, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- This statement does not cater for the “Very Able” pupils. There should be an accepted norm, but this should not preclude very able pupils from reaching their full potential.

3.16 WE SHOULD BE AIMING TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF EXAMINATION SUBJECTS TAKEN BY SOME PUPILS

Reduce number of exam subjects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2719	32.6	35.6	35.6
	Agree	3830	45.9	50.2	85.8
	Disagree	795	9.5	10.4	96.2
	Strongly Disagree	291	3.5	3.8	100.0
	Total	7635	91.4	100.0	
Missing	Missing	718	8.6		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.16.1 Outcome

A large majority of respondents (85.8%) agree that we should be aiming to reduce the number of examination subjects taken by some pupils, whereas 14.2% of respondents disagree.

3.16.2 Support for the proposal that we should be aiming to reduce the number of examination subjects taken by some pupils

Of the 85.8% agreeing with the proposal, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Pupils don't need 10/11 GCSE subjects.
- Pupils should take the number of examinations they can cope with.
- Should be determined by ability, capacity and aspirations.
- This proposal offers great flexibility. We should see education in its widest sense.
- Decisions should be taken only after discussions with pupil and parents.
- Agree with the proposal but would be concerned that due to the competitive nature of the education system, students may be disadvantaged if there is a reduction in the number of subjects taken.

3.16.3 Opposition to the proposal that we should be aiming to reduce the number of examination subjects taken by some pupils

Of the 14.2% disagreeing with the proposal, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- I believe that a reduction in number of subjects taken can limit people in later life. Many more subjects are taken in Europe leading to a broader knowledge and skills base.
- Issue of suitability rather than number of examinations taken. Pupils of higher ability should not be prevented from realising their potential.
- Need to ensure that a credible examinations system is in place, which enables all students to perform to their full potential.

3.17 DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ALL PUPILS

Different qualifications should be available to all

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	4129	49.4	53.8	53.8
	Agree	3158	37.8	41.2	95.0
	Disagree	264	3.2	3.4	98.5
	Strongly Disagree	117	1.4	1.5	100.0
	Total	7668	91.8	100.0	
Missing	Missing	685	8.2		
Total		8353	100.0		

3.17.1 Outcome

An overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) agree that different types of qualifications should be available to all pupils, whereas just 5% of respondents support the idea.

3.17.2 Support for different types of qualifications being available to all pupils

Of the 95% agreeing with the proposal, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Qualifications should have a common title.
- Before age 16 smaller units of vocational GCSEs should be offered. Schools could select units as appropriate in a modular GCSE providing the widest range for all pupils. However, this could prove difficult for a small secondary school.
- Pupils should be able to do vocational qualifications and GCSEs.
- There should be a parity of esteem for all qualifications.
- All pupils of differing abilities should be offered a range of qualifications irrespective of school type.
- We believe this proposal is indispensable if we are to achieve genuine equality of status and value for academic and vocational qualifications.
- These qualifications need to be valued by schools, parents and pupils.

3.17.3 Opposition to different types of qualifications being available to all pupils

Of the 5% disagreeing with the proposal, most of the qualitative comments related to matters of detail, for example, that:

- Should have access to different types of qualifications but not necessarily in the same school.
- Pupils, parents or employers do not value different types of qualifications.
- Qualifications other than GCSEs would have to gain greater acceptance in the workplace.

Section 4: Responses from the Irish Medium Sector

4 Irish Medium Education responses were received in the Post Primary Consultation. These responses generally mirrored those of the English Medium sector. However, there were concerns/issues specific to this sector.

The main overall issues raised were:

Resources

There needs to be a huge investment in resources, particularly in Irish Medium to enable teachers to teach the revised curriculum. Specific resources are required for Irish Medium education e.g. ICT resources and a wide range of reading materials to ensure that the curriculum can be delivered. All teaching and assessment resources must be available in Irish for Irish Medium schools.

Equality

It was recommended that Irish Medium Education must be taken into consideration at every step in curriculum review, and that the curriculum documents should be available in Irish for Irish Medium schools.

Implementation

Changes should not be implemented without pilot schemes, and Irish Medium schools should be included in every pilot as a matter of policy by CCEA.

Languages

The introduction of a second language in Primary schools was recommended. In particular, it was felt that Irish Medium children should have an advantage and should be able to learn a third language with ease. However, the need for adequate resources was also highlighted. If areas of study are to replace subjects, it was suggested that the future of modern languages at Key Stage 3 would be in danger. In particular, this may have implications for the teaching of Irish in English Medium Post-Primary schools.

Reporting Pupil Progress

ICT will be a useful resource for teachers reporting pupils' progress as long as the assessment instruments and software are developed in parallel for Irish Medium education. Levels of achievement are recommended instead of grades. Levels will be problematic if they are too complicated, and therefore parents may not understand the levels of achievement.

Section 5: Responses from the Special Educational Needs Sector

23 responses were received from this sector, representing the views of 149 individuals. Overall, the majority of the proposals were strongly supported. In particular, respondents welcomed the child-centred nature of the proposals:

“The content of the curriculum needs to be tailored to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils and to have relevance. A more child centred approach is required with plenty of room for flexibility to meet the complex and varied learning needs of our pupils.”

Although the majority of proposals were strongly supported, several reservations were highlighted. These reflect the opinions of the mainstream sector and include the following:

- Concerns were expressed regarding the threat to subject areas e.g. PE and Home Economics etc.
- There was uncertainty as to how reporting on the skills areas would work in practice.
- There is no need for reports to include averages. Pupils should be measured against themselves and not compared with others in different situations and from a multitude of varying social conditions.
- Any computer assistance has to be supported, effectively managed and widely available.

Concerns/issues specific to this sector are reported below.

Flexibility

The need for specific flexibility for special needs schools was emphasised across all of the proposals. In particular the proposed increased flexibility was welcomed. It was felt that increased flexibility would assist pupils with special educational needs in their transition from primary to secondary school. It was affirmed that pupils with special educational needs would be unlikely to complete Key Stage 3 in 2 years, as many require the 3 years currently available. Concerns were raised as to the degree of flexibility likely to be afforded in the future.

Assessment and Reporting

There was most opposition to the proposals for assessment and reporting of progress. In particular, respondents were concerned that the standardised annual report would be totally inappropriate in meeting individual needs. The need for a specific standardised report for children with statements was highlighted by several respondents, and concern was expressed over whether the current system of individual education plans, annual reviews and annual reports would change.

The proposals to report on skills was welcomed as it was felt that this would be of greater relevance to pupils with special educational needs. However, it was argued that the skills areas needed to be broken down into more specific detailed components, as skills which are learned incidentally by most mainstream students must be actively taught to students with special educational needs.

There was very little support for the use of levels. The majority of respondents highlighted that the current system of levels do not reflect achievement and progress for children with special educational needs as they are too broad. If the current system of levels is to remain, special schools need a system with more divisions, particularly at the lower levels in order to reflect attainment and progress. In addition, a significant majority of respondents highlighted the inappropriateness of reporting class/NI averages: *“statistical comparisons of pupils across*

NI would be of minimal interest in our setting. They should not be included in reporting systems to parents where such information would be unhelpful and problematic.”

Resources

Concerns were expressed in relation to inclusion. It was felt that mainstream teachers are not currently given enough training to cope with the variety of disabilities that they might face in an inclusive environment. Many respondents mentioned that implementation of the proposals would have many resource implications, in particular relating to ICT.

Consultation and Involvement

Respondents in the special needs education sector emphasised the need for detailed consultation with and involvement in the process of developing detailed outcomes for the subject areas. Curriculum planners must have an awareness and knowledge of the uniqueness of each area within special education. In addition special schools need to be involved in any pilots.

The following specific comments were noted:

5.1 Key Stage 3 - Curriculum and Assessment Proposals

- There was concern that under the proposals for language and literacy, a second language would appear to still be a requirement or statement of entitlement for pupils with special educational needs. This burden should be removed from the special school setting.
- There was a call for the statements of entitlement to be sufficiently broad to include pupils with severe learning difficulties, and that teachers would be given the flexibility to interpret this. Area boards should retain the right to disapply and modify the curriculum for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

5.2 Key Stage 4 Curriculum Proposals

- The proposed statutory core and its presentation in terms of outcomes reflects current good practice in many schools.
- Provision for post 16 pupils with special educational needs must be addressed urgently. At present it is virtually non-existent.
- Increased flexibility with regard to the area of healthy exercise would permit pupils greater opportunities to develop their motor skills and positive attitudes to exercise.
- Self-management is an extremely time consuming activity which is meaningless for many pupils with special educational needs.
- The proposed outcomes for local and global citizenship are inaccessible to many pupils due to the need for a high level of abstract thinking.

Appendix 1: Post-Primary Respondents

Post Primary Schools:

Abbey Grammar School
Antrim Grammar
Aquinas Grammar
Ashfield Boys School
Ashfield Girls' School
Assumption Grammar
Aughnacloy College
Ballee Community High School
Ballyclare High School
Ballyclare Secondary School
Ballymena Academy
Ballymoney High School
Ballynahinch High School
Banbridge Academy
Banbridge High School
Bangor Academy
Bangor Grammar School
Belfast Boys' Model School
Belfast High School
Belfast Model School for Girls
Belfast Royal Academy
Bloomfield Collegiate
Cambridge House School
Campbell College
Carrickfergus College
Carrickfergus Grammar
Castle High School
Castledearg High School
Christian Brothers Grammar Omagh
City of Armagh High School
Clondermot High School
Clounagh Junior High School
Colaiste Bhríde
Coleraine Academical Institution
Coleraine High School
Comber High School
Convent Grammar School
Cookstown High School
Cross and Passion College
Crumlin High School
Cullybackey High School
Dalriada School
Dean Brian Maguire College
Dominican College Portstewart
Donaghadee High School
Down Academy
Down High School
Dromore High School
Drumglass High School
Drumragh College

Duke of Westminster High School
Dunclug College
Dundonald High School
Dungannon Integrated School
Dunluce School
Dunmurry High School
East Antrim Institute of FE
Edmund Rice College
Enniskillen Collegiate Grammar
Enniskillen High School
Erne Integrated College
Faughan Valley High School
Fort Hill College
Foyle and Londonderry College
Friends' School
Garvagh High School
Glastry College
Glengormley High School
Glenlola Collegiate
Grosvenor Grammar
Hazlewood Integrated College
Holy Trinity College
Holywood Rudolf Steiner
Hunterhouse College
Kilkeel High School
Killicomaine Junior High School
Knockbreda High School
La Salle Boys School
Lagan College
Larne Grammar School
Laurelhill Community College
Limavady Grammar School
Limavady High School
Lismore Comprehensive School
Lisnasharragh High School
Lisnaskea High School
Little Flower Girls School
Loreto College Omagh
Loreto College Coleraine
Lumen Christi College
Maghera High School
Magherafelt High School
Malone College
Markethill High School
Massereene Community College
Methodist College
Monkstown Community School
Mount Gilbert Community College
Mount Lourdes Enniskillen
Mourne Independent Christian School
Movilla High School
Newbridge Integrated College
Newry High School
Newtownhamilton High School
North Coast Integrated College
NWIFHE

Oakgrove Integrated College
Omagh Academy
Omagh High School
Orangefield High School
Our Lady and St Patrick's College
Our Lady Grammar
Our Lady Of Lourdes
Our Lady of Mercy Girls School Belfast
Our Lady of Mercy High School Strabane
Parkhall College
Portadown College
Portora Royal School
Rainey Endowed School
Rathmore Grammar School
Rathyfriland High School
Regent House School
Royal School Armagh
Sacred Heart College Omagh
Sacred Heart Grammar Newry
Saintfield High School
Shimna Integrated College
Slemish College
Sperrin Integrated College
St Aloysius High School
St Breacan's High School
St Brigid's High School
St Catherine's College
St Ciaran's High School
St Colman's College Newry
St Colman's High School Ballynahinch
St Colman's High School Strabane
St Colmcille's High School
St Colm's High School
St Columban's College Kilkeel
St Columbanus' College Bangor
St Columba's College
St Columb's College
St Comgall's College
St Comhghall's High School
St Dominic's High School
St Eugene's High Castlederg
St Gabriel's College
St Gemma's High School
St Genevieve's High School
St John's High School
St Joseph's Boys
St Joseph's College Belfast
St Joseph's Grammar
St Joseph's High School Coalisland
St Joseph's High School Coleraine
St Joseph's High School Crossmaglen
St Joseph's High School Omagh
St Louis Grammar Ballymena
St Louis Grammar Kilkeel
St Louise's College
St Macnissi's College

St Malachy's High School
St Mark's High School
St Mary's College Derry
St Mary's College Irvinestown
St Mary's C.B.S.
St Mary's Grammar Magherafelt
St Mary's High School Downpatrick
St Mary's High School Limavady
St Mary's High School Lurgan
St Mary's High School Newry
St Michael's College Enniskillen
St Michael's Grammar School
St Michael's Grammar School
St Olcan's High School
St Patrick's College Dungiven
St Patrick's College Ballymena
St Patrick's College Maghera
St Patrick's Grammar School
St Patrick's & St Brigid's College
St Patrick's College Belfast
St Patrick's Girls' Academy
St Patrick's High School Banbridge
St Patrick's High School Keady
St Patrick's High School Lisburn
St Paul's Junior High School
St Paul's College
St Paul's Junior High
St Peter's High School
St Rose's High School
Strabane Grammar
Strangford College
Strathearn School
Tandragee Junior High
Templemore Secondary School
The Wallace High School
Thornhill College
Victoria College
Wellington College

Special Schools:

Belfast Hospital School
Belmont House School
Cedar Lodge School
Dunfane School
Elmbrook Special School
Erne Special School
Fleming Fulton School
Heatherbank Special School
Jordanstown Special School
Killard House Special School
Limegrove School
Longstone Special School
Loughan Special School
Mitchell House Special School
Parkview School

Rathfriland Hill Special School
Riverside School
Rosstulla Special School
The Lindsay School
Thornfield Special School
Tor Bank School

Organisations:

Archdiocese of Armagh
Art & Design Inter Board Panel
Association for Science Education N.I
BELB
BELB Interboard Advisers - Technology & Design
Caleb Foundation
Care for Northern Ireland
CBA
CBI Voice of Business
Coaching N.I
Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies
Comhairle Gaelscolaíochta
Comhar na Muinteoiri Gaeilge
Council for British Archaeology
Council for Catholic Controlled Schools
ELB Religious Advisers
Environmental Education Forum
European Studies Office
Foyle Friends
General Consumer Council N.I
Hands that Talk Community Group
Health Promotion Agency for NI
H M Young Offenders Centre
Institute of Directors
Interboard Art and Design Panel
Inter-board EMU and CH Forum NEELB
Interboard Home Economics Forum
Interboard Language Studies Group
Interboard P.E panel
Interboard RE Advisory Group
Interboard Science Advisory Group
INTO
Juvenile Justice Centre
N.I.A.C.T
NASUWT
National Society for Education in Art and Design
NEELB
NEELB Curriculum Advisory and Support
NEELB English & Literacy
NEELB PE Department
NI Council for Integrated Education
NIBEP
NICILT
Northern Ireland Science Education
One World Centre
QUB, Graduate School of Education
Queen's University Belfast
Queen's University Modern Languages

RSPB
SELB
SELB Creative & Expressive Team
Simon Community NI
St Mary's University College
Stranmillis University College
The Association for Science Education
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The Royal National Institute for the Blind
Tidy Northern Ireland
Transferor Representatives Council
Trocaire
Ulster American Folk Park
Ulster Wildlife Trust
University of Ulster
University of Ulster Vice Chancellor
WELB
Whowhatwherewhenwhy-W5
Wildlife Trust Environmental Education Officer
Women's Forum Northern Ireland

Individuals:

Catherine McCormack – Parent
Dr. A. R. Nicholson - Retired Teacher
Gillian Stewart
Heather Lowry - Head of Music
Louise
Martin Brown
Nicola Burry
Paul Kerr – Parent

74 Anonymous Responses

Numerous respondents who attended the seminars and meetings