

Pathways – how your feedback shaped our advice

During the Autumn of 2003 CCEA carried out its biggest and most widespread consultation with schools and the wider community on future curriculum and assessment arrangements for Key Stage 3.

This document outlines how your views on the 'Pathways' consultation shaped our advice to the Minister for Education, submitted in December 2004.

We asked you about	You welcomed:	You were concerned:	How your views have influenced decisions
<p>The Minimum Entitlement and the flexibility to devise appropriate courses for pupils</p>	<p>the proposal to replace the current very detailed Programmes of Study with a much reduced list of legal requirements,</p> <p>the increased pupil-centred approach</p> <p>the opportunities this gave teachers to use their professional judgement to devise courses appropriate for pupils.</p> <p>The pupil-centred approach, autonomy for teachers and</p>	<p>that flexibility might result in pupils in different schools receiving a wide disparity of provision. resulting in possible inequality and lack of standardisation between schools</p> <p>about adequate preparation for courses at Key Stage 4.</p> <p>about the potential to further widen the gap between academic and non-academic pupils;</p> <p>about the availability of resources needed to implement change;</p>	<p>Schools ultimately have the power and discretion to plan an appropriate curriculum for Key Stage 3 pupils that will keep their options open and provide a sufficient basis of learning in each subject strand to allow progression to Key Stage 4.and beyond.</p> <p>CCEA will produce whole school guidance, including models of implementation and case studies from pilots schools.</p> <p>Guidance for each learning area will assist teachers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret the minimum entitlement to promote parity of provision; for all pupils • enhance the minimum entitlement to meet the needs and interests of their individual pupils and to allow for differentiation • exemplify possible provision, with detailed suggestions for planning in each Learning Area/subject strand (see below) <p>Guidance will also inform INSET</p>
<p>Skills and Capabilities</p>	<p>the increased emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities</p> <p>the appropriateness of the skills highlighted</p>	<p>about an over emphasis on skills and capabilities at the expense of knowledge and understanding.</p>	<p>CCEA will work collaboratively with other education partners to provide guidance and exemplar materials to help teachers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote a better balance between knowledge, understanding and skills • plan and infuse skills in the classroom • define, monitor and record progress • support the pupil as a learner • identify progression in skills to Key Stage 4 and beyond; <p>These materials will inform initial and in-service continuous professional development.</p>

<p>Learning for Life and Work</p>	<p>the introduction of the Learning for Life and Work area.</p> <p>the recognition that education was fundamentally about preparing young people for later life.</p>	<p>that Learning for Life and Work should be an integral part of every course and not a separate area.</p> <p>that, in some cases, the content included in the proposals was more suitable for pupils at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3.</p> <p>the place and status of Home Economics.</p>	<p>Learning for Life and Work is an integral part of every Area and strand of the curriculum. There are, however, aspects which do not fit comfortably within the General Learning Areas and require discrete provision. How that provision is made is up to the discretion of individual schools.</p> <p>CCEA will offer different models for implementing the discrete and key element components of Learning for Life and Work, drawn from the current pilot projects.</p> <p>The minimum entitlement statements have been refined to take account of concerns and to ensure appropriate progression to Key Stage 4.</p> <p>Home Economics has been designated as a separate strand within Learning for Life and Work.</p> <p>A range of materials is being developed to provide more detail about Learning for Life and Work and this will inform initial and in-service Training.</p>
<p>General Learning Areas</p>	<p>8 general learning areas</p>	<p>about the potential 'downgrading' of existing subjects. and a possible loss of content and knowledge across all subject areas leading to concerns about providing an adequate grounding for further study at KS4 and GCSE</p>	<p>CCEA will be providing guidance and resources across the Learning Areas to support the interpretation of the revised curriculum and to ensure that it provides adequate preparation for Key Stage 4. The guidance for each Learning Area and strand will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed recommendations as to how the statements of minimum entitlement might be interpreted and enhanced; • illustrations of key stage, yearly and termly planning • exemplar teaching and learning plans within and across Learning Areas • sample schemes and units of work with integrated opportunities for assessment

<p>Assessment</p>	<p>the aspirations behind the assessment proposals and the proposed move from assessment of learning to assessment for learning</p> <p>moderating assessment on a 3 yearly cycle to ensure consistency and standardisation</p> <p>a voluntary scheme of accreditation, provided the scheme remained voluntary and did not become compulsory</p> <p>the use of ICT based assessment to support recording, standardisation and monitoring of assessment</p>	<p>About the manageability and feasibility of the assessment proposals in practice and the continued use of levels</p> <p>about the co-ordination and management of the cross-curricular assessment of communication, applying mathematics and ICT across the curriculum and the possible extra burden and workload for teachers</p> <p>About how to ensure the validity and standardisation of assessment</p> <p>about school autonomy in the production of annual reports</p> <p>that the provision of information such as class, school and Northern Ireland averages on the annual report might be another method of league tables</p> <p>About how to make reporting meaningful for parents</p> <p>About the practicality of ICT based tasks and recording facilities</p>	<p>No alternative suggestions about how to meet the information needs of the various stakeholders (pupils, parents, teachers, government) were put forward.</p> <p>It is therefore not expected that the final form which the proposals will take will be fully settled until their workability is demonstrated through piloting.</p> <p>CCEA will provide practical guidance and examples on how the assessment arrangements could be implemented. This will be informed by wide-spread piloting of the assessment proposals, some of which is already under way to ensure that the final arrangements are manageable.</p>
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What has happened since the end of consultation?

The views of focus groups, together with the quantitative and qualitative views of other respondents, have been closely analysed and have been used by revision groups (involving randomly selected teachers who sent in detailed responses) to improve the detailed proposals. The revised proposals were then submitted to the CCEA Council and the Department of Education for further consideration before being approved by the Minister.

