

A new approach to Curriculum and Assessment 11–16

April 2002



Curriculum Review

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PART A – FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The statutory curriculum in Northern Ireland began with the Education Reform Order in 1989. The curriculum itself was introduced into schools from 1991 on. In 1996 it was slimmed down.
- 1.2 Shortly after the curriculum was introduced, statutory assessment began. In Northern Ireland this takes the form of tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science along with teacher assessment in these subjects. Irish is also included in Irish-medium schools.
- 1.3 Since the introduction of the current curriculum in 1996, CCEA has undertaken a programme of monitoring and research. One of the most important research projects (carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research) was designed to discover the views of pupils and their teachers about the curriculum. Mostly it focused on Key Stage 3, but the work has now continued into Key Stage 4.
- 1.4 In 1998/9 CCEA held a major series of conferences on important issues connected with the curriculum. In early 1999, the then Minister of Education was advised that the curriculum and the assessment arrangements should be reviewed. In the autumn of that year the review began.
- 1.5 The first phase, from autumn 1999, was concerned with broad issues about the overall shape of the curriculum. Working groups, widely representative of the education service, provided advice. Proposals were published in the Spring of 2000 and were the subject of widespread consultation before the detailed work of the second phase began.
- 1.6 For Key Stage 3 those broad proposals included:
 - a new aim and objectives for the curriculum;
 - reduced content in individual subjects;
 - greater emphasis on skills and, in particular, transferable skills;
 - addition of personal social and health education into the formal curriculum; together with citizenship and employability.
- 1.7 The feedback from the consultation, both within education and outside, was largely positive. There was a high level of acceptance that the principles set out by CCEA and the type of approach taken created a good basis for the second, more detailed, phase. However, we were asked to review the assessment arrangements at the same time as the curriculum arrangements and not, as planned, afterwards.
- 1.8 One major aspect of the proposals received a negative response. Many disliked the idea of suggested time allocations for subjects and were worried about the potential impact of adding to an already extensive list of subjects.
- 1.9 Following this first consultation possible programmes of study were drafted. In these drafts, content was slimmed and greater emphasis given to transferable skills. As the work went on, however, it became increasingly clear that an overcrowded and fragmented curriculum at Key Stage 3 was emerging.

- 1.10 At the same time, in the wider UK context, research evidence was highlighting the relatively slow progress made by many pupils in Key Stage 3. This is supported by evidence from our own Key Stage 3 Cohort Study. In addition, questions were increasingly being asked of the need for the key stages and public examinations to be so rigidly related to age.
- 1.11 CCEA had consulted separately in 2001 on proposals for a statutory core at Key Stage 4 based largely on key transferable skills and personal development. These were well received, with some reservations on the omission of a modern language requirement and of detailed requirements for physical education. The proposals have now been modified and more detail has been added. They are presented later in this document and views are sought in conjunction with new ideas about arrangements for 11–16 year olds.
- 1.12 CCEA has now decided that a more radical approach to the 11–16 age range is required in order to:
- make change more gradual for children moving from primary to post-primary education;
 - create scope for more flexibility by schools to adapt the content and pace of education to suit the needs and aptitudes of different pupils;
 - maintain an entitlement for all young people to a curriculum that is relevant and likely to be enjoyable;
 - lay the best possible foundation for lifelong learning.
- 1.13 Further consultation is, therefore, being carried out on this more radical approach. Recently, the DfES published the Green Paper for England entitled '14–19 Extending Opportunities'. There is much in common in the proposals in the Green Paper for greater freedom at Key Stage 4 and more diversity of routes through examinations with what is proposed in this document. The Green paper also proposes changes for the 16–19 age range, primarily through creation of the 'Matriculation Diploma'. CCEA has set up an advisory group to look at longer term changes of this nature. It is intended that, by September, views about the best way forward for Northern Ireland will be available.
- 1.14 This further consultation on Key Stages 3 and 4 is timed to overlap with the consultation on the report of the Post-Primary Review Body published in October 2001. CCEA believes that it is important to have a debate on the form of the curriculum as well as one on the structure of post-primary education. Structures ought to be based on agreement as to what we expect young people to gain from their experiences in school.
- 1.15 When the present consultation is complete and the results evaluated towards the end of this year, CCEA will put together the detail of the advice needed by the Minister in making changes to the current legislation. That detailed advice will also be subject to consultation in the course of 2003.
- 1.16 The process of implementing changes to the curriculum is to begin in September 2004. It will not, however, be an overnight change. It is likely to take a number of years of gradual change, carefully phased to ensure that it is manageable.
- 1.17 CCEA has identified a number of projects through which new ideas can be tried out before introduction. For example, CCEA and the University of Ulster have jointly initiated a pilot citizenship programme in twenty five schools. The Minister has already decided that numbers taking part should grow rapidly over the next three years.

- 1.18 The purpose of the pilots is to test proposals in the classroom. Teachers also develop expertise through the pilots that can help in preparing others for the new approach. Finally, pilots are test beds for new materials designed to help teachers. By gradually opening the pilots up to more and more schools the change gradually becomes established across Northern Ireland in a manageable way.
- 1.19 Providing support for teachers is vital. Sample teaching plans and teaching and assessment materials will make a big contribution. CCEA plans to create a comprehensive range of materials of this type. Advantage will be taken of new technology in the way these materials are made available and link together.
- 1.20 Some aspects of the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements will require careful preparation through teacher training, both initial training and inservice. CCEA intends to work closely with the universities and with the Education and Library Boards to ensure a co-ordinated approach to this training across Northern Ireland.

2 REASONS FOR CHANGE

- 2.1 From monitoring and research it became clear that teachers feel that the present Key Stage 3 curriculum still has too much content. Also, the programme for each subject was laid out separately by a group of subject experts and links among subjects are not made clear.
- 2.2 The rapid changes in society impact on the curriculum, and have increased the demands on schools. Schools have, to some extent, been unsure as to how far they ought to respond to these new pressures. We hope that these proposals will help to make the position clearer.
- 2.3 In addition, patterns of employment are changing and, consequently, the needs of employers. Feedback from employers' organisations indicates concern about levels of literacy and numeracy in the workforce, but there is also a feeling that those leaving schools and colleges should be better equipped for the world of work. This means better able to work with other people, better self-management and better problem solving. These are skills that schools help to develop in young people, not just as preparation for working, but preparation for the whole of life.
- 2.4 The other important change in society is the development of new technologies. These are having an ever-increasing effect in the classroom and need to be reflected in the curriculum. Information is easy to find now and knowledge for its own sake is less important than it once was. It is more important that we know how to make use of information, how to evaluate its usefulness, to sort out patterns and to solve problems with it.
- 2.5 Science has also provided new insights into the way we learn when young. In particular we know more about the structure of the brain and how it changes as young children develop. The curriculum must reflect these new insights.
- 2.6 In the research conducted by NFER, evidence emerged that many pupils lack enthusiasm about the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In the initial stages it is felt to repeat too much of what is learned in primary schools. A number of pupils feel insufficiently challenged and motivated. Pupils frequently fail to see the relevance of what they do in school to the world outside school or to their future lives. Even taking into account the immaturity of adolescents, these comments are important. Research clearly shows the link between motivation and learning. Anything we can do to improve the attitudes of pupils to learning is likely to have benefits.

- 2.7 Research has also indicated that many pupils make only slow progress in the first two years in post-primary school. In some measure this may be due to the sudden nature of the change they experience on transfer. One teacher and one classroom become many teachers, many classrooms and many subjects delivered in isolation from each other. CCEA believes that the curriculum and assessment arrangements ought to help schools to make the transition more gradual.
- 2.8 Many schools find the current restrictions associated with the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4 lead to problems in providing real choice and diversity for pupils. CCEA has already consulted widely on the framework for the curriculum for this age group. The outcome was near unanimous support for the easing of these restrictions. While the present consultation draws together issues relating to both Key Stage 3 and 4, CCEA has already decided to advise the Minister to proceed with plans for creating more flexibility at Key Stage 4 from September 2003.
- 2.9 The proposals for the statutory curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 which are set out later will provide a coherent programme which dovetails at one end with the proposed primary curriculum (also now out for consultation) and with 16–19 provision at the other. The proposals include the suggestion that, for most pupils, there should be some period of time within the 7-year post-primary phase that is available for a variety of activities, not limited to specific courses or outcomes.

3 FORM OF THE KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM

- 3.1 In the earlier consultation on the post-primary curriculum, there was a very positive response to the revised aim and new objectives for the curriculum. These highlight the development of young people as individuals and as contributors to society, the economy and environment. There was considerable support for making subject contributions to these objectives more explicit. There was also significant support for a greater emphasis on transferable skills and for introducing personal development into the curriculum for all pupils at Key Stage 3. Support for the inclusion of citizenship and employability was not quite so strong, possibly because some schools felt that the curriculum at Key Stage 3 was already overcrowded.
- 3.2 In the second phase of the review, working groups were asked to:
- set out the detail of the areas of personal development, citizenship and employability as an entitlement for all young people at Key Stage 3;
 - slim subject content to make time and space for these new areas;
 - show how each subject can help to develop transferable skills.
- 3.3 This work has been useful and some subject groups have managed to slim the content of their area significantly. Nevertheless, CCEA's view is that the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is still overcrowded and disjointed and there is a need for a more radical approach. When compared to the integrated cross-curricular model now proposed for primary schools and the skills-based core set out later as the basis for Key Stage 4, a curriculum arranged in the form of 13 or 14 subjects at Key Stage 3 would be a restrictive strait-jacket.

- 3.4 CCEA therefore wishes to consult widely on the best way to:
- help primary pupils make a more gradual transition from primary to post-primary education;
 - make it easier for 11–14 year olds to see the connections between what they do in different classes;
 - make the curriculum more manageable;
 - prepare pupils to make informed choices.
- 3.5 CCEA, proposes that:
- **the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 3 should be specified in terms of curriculum areas and not individual subjects;**
 - **the statutory requirements at Key Stage 3 should be limited to a common entitlement for every pupil, irrespective of future intentions;**
 - **the Key Stage 3 curriculum should be such that a significant proportion of children (but not all) will be able to complete it in two years.**
- 3.6 Setting out the curriculum in this way will make it easier for schools to limit the number of teachers teaching a Year 8 or 9 class, if they wish to do so. They should also be able to make links between subjects clearer to pupils. On the other hand, schools would also be able to meet the statutory requirements through a traditional subject approach.
- 3.7 The intention is that statements of entitlement will replace the current programmes of study. Each statement of entitlement would specify the skills, content and intended outcomes for virtually all pupils. Exceptions, where necessary, would be for pupils with special educational needs. Schools would then build on the statements in ways that suit the needs and aspirations of their pupils.
- 3.8 The nature of the statements of entitlement and options regarding the areas of study are considered in more detail in Section 8.
- 3.9 CCEA will be developing a comprehensive range of support materials to help create programmes based on the entitlement statements. Schools will be able to vary the programmes they offer to different groups of pupils. The wider the range of children within the school, the greater the variety will be.
- 3.10 CCEA also intends to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning based around the idea of curriculum areas as opposed to subjects. These will investigate the merits of integration through an issues or themes-based style of learning. Where judged to be of value, they will be subject to piloting and refining before being made available to schools as examples of good practice.
- 3.11 Limiting the statutory curriculum in this way takes account of the fact that different children will require different experiences and those differences will increase as the pupils get older. CCEA believes that the current arrangements at Key Stage 3 should be changed to allow also for the fact that different pupils progress at different speeds. Hence the suggestion that a significant number of pupils will move on from Key Stage 3 after two years.

- 3.12 The benefit of this proposal will be to free up a maximum of a 'year's worth' of time which schools could use in a variety of ways. Some of the possibilities which would be opened up are explored in more detail in Section 5.
- 3.13 The proposals set out above are not linked to any view of educational structure. The flexibility to provide different curricular experiences to different children which they will create can be exploited within a single institution or provision may vary across institutions. CCEA will be submitting its own response to the proposals of the Post-Primary Review Body in due course.

Questions

Do you agree that the statutory curriculum for Key Stage 3 should be set out in curriculum areas rather than individual subjects?

Do you agree that the statutory requirements should consist of statements of entitlement for all?

Do you think that it should be possible for a significant proportion of pupils to complete Key Stage 3 in two years?

4 FORM OF THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

- 4.1 Initial proposals for a revised Key Stage 4 curriculum framework were set out in the publication 'Their Future in Our Hands'. This consultation document, was issued in the early part of 2001. Face-to-face meetings were held with teachers and representatives of colleges and with employers in a number of different places across Northern Ireland.
- 4.2 The proposals were for a statutory CORE that included the following elements:
- Key Skills (Application of Number, Communication, Information Technology, Problem-solving, Managing One's Own Learning, and Working with Others);
 - Personal Development (Personal, Social and Health Education, Citizenship, and Employability, which includes Career Management);
 - Scientific or Technological Component;
 - Creative Component;
 - Work-related Component.
- 4.3 It was made clear in the proposals that, both within and beyond the minimum requirements, individual schools would have the flexibility to offer courses that met the needs of their pupils. The content of these courses would be approved through accreditation of the qualifications to which they lead.
- 4.4 There was strong support for the main elements of the proposed compulsory entitlement, particularly Key Skills and Personal Development.
- The proposals were regarded as having the potential to bring about greater parity of esteem between different types of qualifications.

- While most respondents supported the inclusion of Personal Development within the statutory entitlement, some schools, particularly grammar schools, expressed concerns about the amount of time this aspect of the curriculum might require.
- Respondents asked that all programmes offered at Key Stage 4 should lead to a recognised qualification.
- While there was some comment about the dropping of the requirement for the study of a modern foreign language by all pupils, the strongest reaction was against the exclusion of detailed requirements at Key Stage 4 for physical education.
- A substantial number of people felt that it was wrong to single out science and technology as the only subject area for inclusion in the core.

4.5 In the light of the views expressed in the consultation it is now proposed that the statutory curriculum should be set out in just four components. The components are:

- key transferable skills;
- personal, social and health education;
- citizenship;
- education for employability.

4.6 A modular GCSE course covering the last three elements, called *Learning for Life and Work* will be available to schools for first teaching from September 2003.

4.7 It is also proposed that the statutory curriculum for Key Stage 4 should be specified in terms of desired outcomes that are easily understood by pupils and parents. These would replace the existing mixture of full and outline Programmes of Study for different subjects. Details are set out in **Section 9** and views are sought on the effectiveness of this approach to specifying the statutory core of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

4.8 All pupils should have the opportunity of a short period of good quality work experience at Key Stage 4. This is difficult to legislate for as a statutory entitlement, but should receive strong encouragement both from education and employers. CCEA has already produced guidelines on work placements for school pupils and intends to support quality work experience with additional materials.

4.9 The core does not contain any academic subjects. Removing them from the statutory curriculum does not mean removing them from the experience of most young people. It is expected that the great majority of young people will continue to follow a balanced science course, to study their own and a second language, to take an appropriate mathematics programme etc. No pupil should be deprived of the opportunity to do so. Limiting the statutory curriculum, however, means that it will not be necessary to go through an exemption process for some students who will not be doing one or more of these.

4.10 On the question of the second language, CCEA believes that language learning is too important to be left to age eleven as the age when teaching begins. The inclusion of some language learning in primary schools should be encouraged as soon as it is feasible to do so. There is ample evidence that younger children are much more receptive. CCEA also believes that alternative strategies (including a different approach to

timetabling) for language learning in post-primary schools should be explored as a matter of urgency. Improvement in these areas would be likely to increase the numbers of pupils achieving the sort of success that is taken for granted in many other European countries.

- 4.11 Physical education is also not included as a subject in the proposed Key Stage 4 curriculum. As part of the PSHE provision, however, schools will be **required** to make sure that pupils experience a programme of physical activity (with access to fitness suites where possible) and to be taught about the links between exercise, diet and health. Healthy exercise will be part of the statutory entitlement of every young person.
- 4.12 There will shortly be a greater range of options in terms of qualifications, including the newly announced GCSEs in vocationally related areas. These GCSEs in 'Applied' subjects will allow pupils to give to studies in science, art and design and business, for example, a vocational slant not available previously. This is in addition to courses in manufacturing, engineering, health and social care and leisure and tourism that are more focused on particular vocational areas. Advanced courses in these areas already exist in the AVCEs and it is hoped that the variety of courses available will increase rapidly.
- 4.13 It is important to note that the content of all courses offered to 14–16 year olds, leading to qualifications, will be controlled through the approval process which all qualifications must go through.
- 4.14 CCEA intends to provide advice in the form of some possible curriculum models that schools might use at Key Stage 4, making use of the additional flexibility that would be available under these proposed new arrangements.

Questions

Do you agree that the statutory Key Stage 4 Curriculum should consist of the key transferable skills plus personal, social and health education, citizenship and education for employability?

Do you agree that it is unnecessary to include legal requirements to study particular subjects at this stage?

Do you think that there should be a new approach to language learning starting in primary schools?

Do you consider the requirement for healthy exercise to be sufficient?

5 MAKING USE OF FLEXIBLE TIMING

- 5.1 Perhaps the most radical proposal contained above is that Key Stage 3 should be completed by a significant proportion of pupils in two years. This would, as suggested, free up to a year's worth of time in post-primary education to be used flexibly in different ways to suit the needs of different children.
- 5.2 Some possible options for use of the available time would be:
- using Year 8 (age twelve) to aid transition between primary and post-primary styles of learning;
 - in Year 10 (age fourteen) pupils might 'sample' courses, including vocational courses, before making choices in Key Stage 4;
 - pupils who take GCSE at fifteen might then spend time on project/community work or on work-related learning/experience before beginning academic or vocational courses (or a mixture) in sixth form or at FE College;

- for some pupils only a limited amount of time would be available, as a significant number will continue to take all or most of the three years available for Key Stage 3. The flexibility in the curriculum requirements, however, should still enable them to experience some of the above, particularly aspects relating to work-related learning and experience.
- 5.3 CCEA would not favour accelerated progress of pupils through to complete advanced courses at seventeen with the prospect of beginning third-level education at that stage. Nor does CCEA believe that the time should be used to increase the number of examination subjects taken. Indeed, for some pupils who currently take ten or eleven subjects, there would be merit in reducing that number in favour of more varied and open-ended challenges.
- 5.4 CCEA believes it to be vital, in the changing world of the 21st century, that a full range of choices is available to all of our young people. The proposals set out above are intended to create the flexibility for schools to expand that range within a framework that safeguards the basic entitlement of all. There are two issues that need to be considered.
- 5.5 The first is to highlight the need for a variety of qualifications, both academic and vocational, to be available to **all** students. Success in academic studies, for example, *should not limit choice to further academic study*. Only by opening up choice in this way will parity of esteem be achieved for different routes in the way that is the case in many other countries.
- 5.6 Providing choice and diversity is difficult in the context of a small school. CCEA does not believe that the proposals set out above either point to or require a particular type of structure in post-primary education. It will be submitting its own response to the proposals of the Post-Primary Review Body in due course. However, CCEA does consider that this issue of the relationship between size and the range of choice that can be offered is one that needs to be dealt with in any changes that are made.

Questions

Do you agree that schools should be able to make use of additional flexibility in the ways suggested?

Are there other options that should be considered?

Do you agree that pupils should not be encouraged to complete advanced qualifications at 17?

Should we be looking to reduce the number of examination subjects taken by some students?

Should choice of different types of qualifications be available to all pupils?

6 PROPOSALS FOR ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 At present assessment is age-related. All pupils sit tests at age fourteen after three years of secondary education. In the situation where Key Stage 3 is two years for some and three years for others, this is no longer feasible. The proposals set out below, therefore, are such that a flexible approach can be accommodated.
- 6.2 **Principles of Assessment.** The key principles of assessment at Key Stage 3 are set out below.
- Planned assessments should be undertaken through observation and interaction with the pupils and evaluation of their work.

- Assessments should focus on positive aspects of pupils' development as well as setting targets for the future.
- Pupils should be told about what is being assessed and what it means for them.
- Pupils should also make a significant contribution to the assessment process.
- All areas of the curriculum should be covered.
- Parents should be closely involved.
- Information from assessment should be carried through from year to year and information from the primary school should provide the initial input.

6.3 At present schools are required to:

- keep a record of the progress of each pupil;
- report annually to parents;
- carry out Key Stage 3 assessment in English, mathematics and science (and Irish in Irish-medium schools) at the end of Year 10.

6.4 **CCEA proposes that:**

- **a single standardised annual report should replace the existing requirements;**
- **recording information on pupils and producing reports should be computer-assisted within the new Classroom 2000 provision;**
- **CCEA should provide a large range of optional assessment material, also computer-assisted.**

6.5 The standardised annual report would be used throughout Key Stage 3. When pupils moved beyond Key Stage 3, there would continue to be a requirement for an annual report, but it would not be in a standard form. CCEA believes that the process of formal written report should be supplemented by at least one meeting between parents and teachers each year. It would be of particular importance to include discussion on the choices that would be available in terms of the duration of Key Stage 3 and the options afterwards.

6.6 Currently, pupils receive a record of achievement at the end of Key Stage 4. At present there are plans to develop this record so that it becomes an ongoing file that is the basis for future CVs. CCEA believes that the style of comprehensive annual reports that it is proposing will naturally lead into such a long-term personal file.

6.7 Under the proposed arrangements, teachers would continue, as at present, to evaluate the work of pupils on a day-to-day basis, in order to:

- record pupils' attainment and progress during the key stage;
- help pupils understand what they have achieved and to plan next steps;
- report to parents in a way that gives a rounded view of the progress made.

- 6.8 What is to be assessed and reported? The annual reports on pupils that schools provide at present are generally comprehensive and reflect the current statutory curriculum. Each school devises its own report format.
- 6.9 The standard format that is now proposed would help to ensure consistency in the information supplied by different schools, but it would also be of great assistance in developing computer-support in order to reduce teacher workload. This would not preclude some customisation by schools to suit their own needs.
- 6.10 In most reports provided currently by schools, a mark or grade (or both) is given for each subject. If this process is now to be computer-assisted in terms of assessment tasks, recording pupil information and generating reports, there needs to be a standard system of marks or grades. CCEA proposes that this should be the 8-level scale, currently used in Key Stage assessment in both primary and post-primary schools.
- 6.11 The advantages of using the 8-level scale would be:
- a single system for primary and post-primary would help the transfer of information from one phase to the other;
 - there is already familiarity on the part of some teachers with the use of the scale;
 - a standard system would aid benchmarking among schools;
 - the scale can be linked to progression in different areas of the curriculum in a way that can be made meaningful to parents.
- 6.12 The drawbacks with the 8-level scale are that:
- each of the levels is so broad that it covers a wide range of attainment;
 - in the limited way it has been used so far, it has not been made meaningful to parents;
 - its use has been not been closely linked to day-to-day professional judgment in the classroom;
 - as used at present, parents get little information about how their own child is getting on compared to others.
- 6.13 CCEA seeks views on the proposed use of the scale in these new arrangements. It is believed that the drawbacks can be overcome by:
- splitting each level into three as described below;
 - using levels in all curriculum areas in all years through Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, with effective information provided to parents;
 - linking the levels to the teacher support materials that CCEA will be providing to make the connections with day-to-day processes in the classroom;
 - using computer support to generate average levels for class or year groups that would also be reported to parents, in addition to information about all pupils in Northern Ireland.

6.14 The proposed division of the levels into three would work as follows. Teachers would use the information about pupils from day-to-day class activities, homeworks, tests etc, to arrive at levels based on the criteria provided. Having done so, they would then be able to use a system (possibly based on superscripts, eg ‘-’ and ‘+’) to describe progress within the level. This would work as follows:

- if, for example, a teacher has to decide between Level 3 and Level 4, and, on balance, settles on Level 4, the superscript would be ‘-’;
- if a teacher is quite definite that the level is 4, there would be no superscript;
- if a teacher has to decide between Level 4 and Level 5 and, on balance, settles on Level 4, the superscript would be ‘+’.

This is not the same as having a twenty four level scale, in that there would not need to be twenty four sets of criteria.

6.15 It is intended that reporting in levels would refer to the curriculum areas discussed in **Section 8** rather than to attainment in individual subjects. This would reduce the number of numerical assessments. Where a school continues a traditional subject-based approach to Key Stage 3, arrangements would be required to combine subject assessments into areas, again within the computer-based system.

6.16 The annual report would also have space available for comments on all of the curriculum areas. In addition, comments (but not levels) would be included on progress in relation to:

- personal and interpersonal skills;
- creative and thinking skills;
- attitudes, interests and aptitude for learning.

6.17 **Using ICT to reduce the administrative burden.** Reference has been made above to the computer assistance that will be made available to support the proposed arrangements. ***It is emphasised that these arrangements should only be introduced provided the necessary software has been developed, has been thoroughly tested and has been shown to work.*** That process has already begun, with preliminary trialling of some software already underway in a small number of schools. It must be clear that the overall effect of moving from the current position to what is proposed, with the ICT dimension in place, will **reduce** the overall workload for teachers and not increase it.

6.18 Over the next five or more years, CCEA proposes to make it possible, through information and communication technology, for:

- teachers to have available a range of high quality assessment tasks, created by CCEA, some assessed by the computer, others by the teacher;
- access to a range of source and stimulus materials for use in assessment tasks, many of them web-based;
- access also to samples of assessed work to aid marking by teachers and to help pupils be clear as to what they are expected to do;

- provision of a computer-based system (effectively replacing the mark book) for storing information about pupils. This could include holding samples of pupils' work, either done on computer or scanned in from paper if there was a reason for doing so;
- easy collation of information as a basis for reports;
- on-screen creation of reports using a standard template and some provision for computer-generated material within the reports;
- creation of summary statistics for evaluation and benchmarking purposes including average year group statistics for the whole of Northern Ireland.

6.19 **Moderation.** Moderation of teacher assessment takes place in primary schools but not, currently, at Key Stage 3. Nonetheless, teachers are accustomed to the process in GCSE and GCE examinations. If there are no longer to be external tests, CCEA proposes that there should instead be moderation of standards of assessment in Key Stage 3.

6.20 The computer support described above will also enable moderation to be carried out using the electronic records maintained by schools. On a rolling programme of schools and curriculum areas, schools would be asked for sample pupil records that they are happy to represent assessment processes and standards in the school. Feedback on these should be rapid and should identify any change of standards required. Use of the superscript system described earlier will make such adjustments easier.

Questions

Do you agree that the present requirements for annual reports and key stage assessment should be replaced by a single system of standardized annual reports?

Do you agree that the 8-level scale, used in the way described, should be the basis for the standard reporting scale – rather than grades or marks?

Do you agree with the suggestion that reports should be based on proposed curriculum areas, rather than on individual subjects?

Do you agree that the standard reports should include comments on the range of skills suggested?

Would it be helpful for reports to include class/year group and Northern Ireland averages?

Do you think the proposed computer assistance is likely to be effective in reducing teacher workload?

7 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 CCEA recognises that these proposals represent a radical shake-up of the statutory curriculum and assessment arrangements.

7.2 CCEA also recognises that schools will be able, if they wish, to meet the new Key Stage 3 requirements with limited change at least for some period of time. Addition of the new elements of PSHE, Citizenship and Education for Employability into programmes and adjustment of content in other subjects will suffice, provided sufficient attention is paid to transferable skills. The assessment changes will require alteration to

the annual report format and process – something that is going to happen any way as a result of increasing use of new technology. This level of change is unlikely to have much impact on the issue of continuity from primary to post-primary education.

- 7.3 There is an opportunity, however, for an entirely new approach, particularly in Key Stage 3 – an integrated approach, less focused on traditional subject content, more outward looking and more concerned with application and with developing learning skills than with memorising factual content. It is this new opportunity that CCEA will be working with schools to exploit because we believe that it will meet the needs of our young people better in the developing conditions of the 21st century than the present subject-orientated approach.
- 7.4 Implementation can be seen as a number of separate, but related development projects. Ones on Citizenship and Employability have already begun. Trialling of assessment methods and materials is also underway. It will also be necessary to pilot other aspects of Personal Development. In addition schools will be invited to pilot one or more models of an integrated approach to Key Stage 3. In each case, the opportunity will be there to roll-out the results in a phased manner to all post-primary schools.
- 7.5 The outcomes of the review may therefore be a radically different expression of the statutory curriculum and assessment methods, but containing the flexibility to allow schools to change gradually on a number of fronts over a period of time. Each development area would be underpinned by a wide range of materials and inservice support, increasingly through the web.
- 7.6 The changes to the statutory curriculum are scheduled to begin to take effect from September 2004. There will need to be careful phasing and the process of change is expected to last for most of the rest of the decade. Indeed, with the emphasis on development projects producing outcomes that are gradually rolled out, a process of organic curriculum development may emerge within a statutory framework.

Questions

Do you agree with the view that implementation should be phased over a period of time?

Do you think that the policy of piloting new aspects of curriculum and assessment prior to statutory introduction is a good one?

PART B – DETAILED PROPOSALS

8 CURRICULUM AREAS AT KEY STAGE 3

- 8.1 There are a number of different ways in which it is possible to group subjects together at Key Stage 3. Consultation will be used to test support for various possibilities.
- 8.2 The revised curriculum in primary schools, now out for consultation in detailed form, is set out in the following areas:
- Expressive and Physical;
 - Language and Literacy;
 - Mathematics and Numeracy;
 - Personal Development;
 - World Around Us.
- 8.3 One option would be to carry those areas through into Key Stage 3, thus ensuring maximum continuity. Alternatively, other possibilities may be more suitable in post-primary schools.
- 8.4 The Areas of Study that underlay the present legislation, although they have had little impact, are:
- English
 - Mathematics
 - Science and Technology
 - Environment and Society
 - Creative and Expressive Studies
 - Language Studies
- 8.5 Subjects are individually specified within these areas by Programmes of Study, but the subjects do not include the new elements of PSHE, Citizenship and Employability.
- 8.6 The present curriculum also includes 6 Educational (Cross-Curricular) Themes. Research evidence indicates that the impact of these has been patchy. It is now intended that the objectives of these themes will be incorporated within the statements of entitlement. One of the themes, ICT, is now seen as a key skill to which many areas of the curriculum will contribute. PSHE will take over from Health Education and Citizenship will incorporate many of the objectives of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage. Education for Employability, including careers guidance, will incorporate the objectives of the Careers Education theme.

8.7 The statutory requirement regarding Religious Education is dealt with separately from the other parts of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The Department of Education has indicated that the current programme will be re-considered in parallel with the current CCEA review.

8.8 The following table provides an example of a set of curriculum areas that encompass existing subjects plus the new additions of PSHE, Citizenship and Education for Employability. The description given in each case is intended as a ‘thumbnail sketch’ only for illustrative purposes. This can be seen as exemplifying a second option of creating areas a little different from those in primary schools in order to suit the post-primary context.

Curriculum Area	Description
Language and Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasis on competence in the use of first language in talking and listening, reading and writing, with particular focus on creative use of modern media; a practical approach to learning to communicate in one or more second languages.
Mathematics and Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> those aspects of mathematics that are essential for all young people; emphasis on mathematical process and application in real-life contexts; focus on personal financial capability.
Scientific and Technological Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing an appreciation of scientific thinking and the use of experimentation; understanding how technological design and development takes place with ‘hands-on’ experience; developing skills and creativity in the use of technology; appreciation of the impact of scientific and technological development on the individual and society.
Environment and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing an appreciation of how the world is today as a result of historical and geographical development; aspects of local and global citizenship concerned with understanding of democratic structure and practice and of the balance of rights and responsibilities; developing an appreciation of the inter-dependence of different peoples; enhancing skills in investigating and reporting on issues relating to citizenship, the environment and sustainable development and creative problem solving.
Creative and Expressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing opportunities to develop understanding, appreciation and skills in relation to physical movement, artistic and musical expression; fostering creativity and talent in any of these areas; developing understanding of the impact of sport and the arts on media and commerce.
Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal, social and health and physical education; life skills indicating those required in the home and as a consumer; education for employability; careers guidance.

- 8.9 Underpinning the statements of entitlement in each of these areas would be similar statements about how they would each contribute to development of the key transferable skills of:
- communication;
 - application of number;
 - use of ICT;
 - working with others;
 - self-management;
 - thinking skills, including information handling and problem solving.
- 8.10 CCEA would be interested in views as to the form that the entitlement statements for curriculum areas should take in order for them to be as clear as possible and easy to use. One possibility is that part of them would consist of desired outcomes, in the same way as the proposals set out in the next section for Key Stage 4.
- 8.11 It must be emphasised that the curriculum areas are only a means of specifying entitlement in legislation. They are not intended to prescribe a specific approach to teaching and learning. Schools will remain free (as at present) to use a variety of approaches. They could, for example:
- *develop appropriate links between individual subjects;*
 - *use programmes directly developed from the statutory areas;*
 - *base programmes on subject groups different from the statutory areas;*
 - *develop an integrated approach focusing on a range of themes and issues.*
- 8.12 One message which the use of areas rather than subjects is intended to convey is that timetable planning should be freed up from the constraint of accommodating a large number of subjects continuously throughout the timetable for the full Key Stage. A more innovative approach will be possible, perhaps using the curriculum areas as a framework, possibly with variations on a term by term basis.

Questions

Do you think that the curriculum areas proposed would be a good way of setting out the legal requirements on schools for pupils in the first two or three years of secondary education?

Should the statements of entitlement include desirable outcomes?

Have you any other suggestions as to how curriculum areas might be drawn up?

Have you any other suggestions for the form of statements of entitlement?

9 PROPOSALS FOR THE CONTENT OF THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM

Introduction

- 9.1 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils should have demonstrated knowledge, understanding, skills and creativity in relation to the following areas:
- the six key transferable skills;
 - Local and Global Citizenship;
 - Personal, Social and Health Education;
 - Employability.
- 9.2 Much of what is included in the learning outcomes refers to skills, knowledge and understanding. However, it is recognised that these elements can only be developed in the context of the values and attitudes that underpin the curriculum. These attitudes and values are reflected in all aspects of school life including the school ethos, teacher pupil relationships and in the context of the particular courses studied.
- 9.3 Through or in addition to the qualifications taken at Key Stage 4, pupils should have access to the range of learning experiences which will develop the following outcomes.

KEY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

APPLICATION OF NUMBER

Pupils should be able to:

- interpret information from different sources, for example, *read and understand information from written and graphical sources, including graphs, tables, charts and diagrams*;
- select appropriate methods for obtaining information required, for example, *grouping data when this is appropriate*;
- carry out calculations to do with:
 - amounts and sizes;
 - scale and proportion;
 - handling statistics;
 - using formulae.

In these calculations they should show the methods used and operate at the levels of accuracy required. They should check the methods used to identify/correct errors and:

- interpret the results of the calculations and present the findings using graphical presentations, for example, *pie charts, frequency tables or workshop drawings*.

COMMUNICATION

Pupils should be able to:

- make clear and relevant contributions to discussions, for example, *express ideas or opinions, exchange information or make comments*;
- help move discussions forward, for example, *summarise main points or focus on the purpose*;
- give a short talk using an image, for example, *adapt the language to suit the purpose and situation, provide structure and use images to help others to understand the main points of the talk (picture, sketch, plan or diagram)*;
- select and read relevant material, for example, *articles of more than three pages, reports or text books*;
- identify the main points and summarise the information to suit specific purposes, for example, *a talk or written report*;
- present written information in different forms, for example, *letters, memos, essays, including images (pictures, sketches, charts and diagrams)*;

- use a structure and style of writing to suit specific purposes, for example, *persuasive techniques to present arguments, technical vocabulary, supporting evidence within reports*;
- ensure text is legible and spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that the meaning is clear, for example, *make meaning clear by proof reading and re-drafting documents*.

USE OF ICT

Pupils should be able to:

- search for information for specific purposes, for example, *hand written documents, materials to be scanned, files on disks, CD-ROMs, databases and the Internet*;
- interpret information and decide what is relevant to the purpose, for example, *respond to an enquiry or write a report*;
- enter and bring together information, for example, *copy and paste or import, text images and numbers and using tabs, tables or frames to position information*;
- explore information as needed, for example, *follow lines of enquiry or change information in a spreadsheet*;
- develop information in the form of text, images and numbers, for example, *link information, restructure tables, generate charts and graphs from data or select records or files and prepare records for a database*;
- derive new information, for example, *compare information from different sources or use formulae to calculate information such as a total or average*;
- select and use appropriate layouts for presenting combined information, for example, *margins, columns, headings, borders, record structures, tables and spreadsheets*.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Pupils should be able to:

- plan work with others;
- confirm what needs to be done;
- clarify responsibilities and confirm working arrangements;
- work co-operatively with others towards achieving given objectives;
- organise and carry out individual tasks;
- seek advice from appropriate people when needed;
- exchange information on progress;
- agree ways of improving work with others to help achieve objectives.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Pupils should be able to:

- confirm their short-term targets and plan how these will be met;
- identify clear action points for each target;
- plan how to use time their time well to meet the targets;
- identify when support is needed;
- select and use different ways of learning to improve performance;
- identify what targets have been met;
- identify ways of further improving performance.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Pupils should be able to:

- identify problems accurately;
- identify different ways of solving problems;
- select and try out appropriate options for solving problems;
- check if problems have been solved and describe the results;
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of their approach.

LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Pupils should be able to:

- recognise and address the challenges and opportunities presented by diversity of individual, regional and international identities;
- express informed opinions about human rights;
- appreciate and acknowledge the social responsibilities of individuals, business and of government;
- demonstrate an awareness of the work and structures of government in Northern Ireland;
- demonstrate an understanding of the processes of the criminal and civil legal systems;
- participate in democratic processes, methods of conflict management and explore alternatives to violence;
- demonstrate an awareness of the role and influence of the media in democratic societies.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Pupils should be able to:

- identify their own aptitudes, interest and personal qualities;
- manage their emotions and exercise self control;
- make judgements based on moral principles;
- establish and maintain positive relationships;
- identify the factors involved in maintaining a healthy lifestyle;
- recognise and analyse risk and make safe and healthy choices;
- make responsible choices when planning and managing personal finances;
- undertake, monitor and evaluate their performance across a range of challenging physical activities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle;
- identify the roles and responsibilities of parents and carers;
- analyse and discuss influences and media messages relating to a range of social issues.

EMPLOYABILITY

Pupils should be able to:

- discuss their own personal attributes and aspirations for life and work and show how these impinge on future education, training and employment choices;
- demonstrate a detailed understanding of employment levels and be able to research the entry requirements for each of the levels;
- evaluate the different types of qualifications within the 14–19 qualifications framework;
- use sources of guidance both inside and outside school;
- apply research skills to access relevant careers information, including information available through the use of ICT, and be able to evaluate this information in the context of their personal career planning;
- access and use advice and guidance sources both within and outside school;
- produce a personal career plan and demonstrate an ability to revise and update this when necessary;
- demonstrate the ability to complete the job application process and the techniques for personal effectiveness in interview situations;

- work creatively and flexibly in their approach to challenges and opportunities;
- explain how new technologies and the trend towards globalisation affects individuals, employees, the environment and society;
- demonstrate skills and qualities in a workplace environment and to provide a reflective evaluation of their work experiences;
- identify some of the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers;
- demonstrate the skills and knowledge associated with enterprise and building your own business and express informed opinions on the value of entrepreneurship and enterprise to the economic well being of Northern Ireland.

Questions

Do you agree with setting out the Key Stage 4 requirements in this form?

Do you agree with the outcomes that are proposed?



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