

# CONSULTATION REPORT: DISAPPLICATION OF ASPECTS OF THE EXISTING NATIONAL CURRICULUM FROM SEPTEMBER 2013

## Introduction

On 7 February 2013 the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, launched a public consultation on the Government's proposal to disapply certain aspects of the existing national curriculum for a limited period from September 2013, to give schools greater flexibility to prepare to teach the new national curriculum. This consultation formed part of a wider consultation on proposals to reform the national curriculum and closed on 16 April 2013.

This report summarises the responses to Question 13 of the national curriculum consultation which sought views on the proposal to disapply certain aspects of the existing national curriculum. It is being published now in order to enable the legislative change necessary to effect the disapplication to take place before the beginning of the next academic year. A full report of the wider consultation findings will be published in the summer.

## Headline findings

The consultation on the reform of the national curriculum has received over 17,000 responses. Over 10,000 of these responses were in relation to specific campaigns.

The Department received **2,627** responses to Question 13 on the proposal to disapply certain aspects of the existing national curriculum. The headline breakdown of responses is:

**614 (23%) Yes   1,108 (43%) No   905 (34%) Not sure**

## Next steps

Having carefully considered the responses to this consultation, as well as a range of other relevant factors, the Government has decided to proceed to make the regulations to disapply the programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements from September 2013 for:

- English, mathematics and science for pupils in year 3 and year 4
- all foundation subjects for pupils at key stages 1 and 2
- all subjects for pupils at key stages 3 and 4.

Disapplication will have effect for the school year 2013/14, except in relation to English, mathematics and science for pupils at key stage 4 where it will have effect for the two years 2013/14 and 2014/15, because the new key stage 4 programmes of study for these subjects will not be introduced until September 2015. The reason why disapplication will not apply to English, mathematics and science for pupils in years 1, 2, 5 and 6 is to retain the statutory underpinning for statutory assessment at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 for those cohorts of pupils in summer 2014.

We want to ensure that schools are able to prepare for a smooth transition to the new national curriculum which will be introduced from September 2014. Disapplication of the current national curriculum in this way means that schools will still be required to teach the statutory subjects but will not have to follow the centrally prescribed programmes of study (and associated attainment targets and assessment arrangements) from September 2013. They can choose to continue teaching the current programmes of study if they wish but will have the freedom to use the flexibility that disapplication offers to plan and prepare for the introduction of the new programmes of study from September 2014.

Under the legislation which governs the national curriculum, the Secretary of State is required to consult on a draft of the regulations necessary to effect these changes. This consultation was launched on 3 May 2013 and closes on 3 June 2013. It can be accessed at <https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/>

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, a final set of regulations will be laid before Parliament with a commencement date of 2 September 2013.

## **Summary of responses**

The public consultation on the reform of the national curriculum in England sought views on the proposal to disapply elements of the existing national curriculum from September 2013.

It was proposed that from September 2013 that we would disapply the programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements for English, mathematics and science for pupils in year 3 and year 4, and all foundation subjects at key stages 1 and 2, along with the existing programmes of study for all subjects at key stage 3 and key stage 4. The intention was that this would provide schools and their pupils with a smoother transition to the new curriculum being introduced from September 2014.

Question 13 in the consultation document therefore asked whether respondents agreed that we should amend the legislation to disapply the national curriculum programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements, as set out above. There were 2,627 responses to this question, and an organisational breakdown of respondents is at Annex A. Throughout this report, percentages are expressed as a proportion of these 2,627 respondents, and not as a proportion of all respondents to the overarching national curriculum consultation.

Overall, 23% of respondents supported the proposal, 43% disagreed and 34% were not sure.

Respondents who agreed with the proposal believed that disapplication of the elements set out in the consultation would allow schools more time to prepare for the introduction of the new curriculum and that this was necessary for such a substantial change. They also felt that the freedom to teach what they wish for the subjects of the national curriculum would allow schools to choose to continue with their existing

schemes of work or to introduce improvements which may be able to assist with the introduction of the new programmes of study within schools. However, some of these respondents also suggested that disapplication should be for a longer period and implementation of the new curriculum phased in more gradually.

Respondents who disagreed with the proposal expressed the view that this would lead to schools reducing teaching time on non-core subjects. There was also a view expressed that disapplying elements of the curriculum would lead to an increased argument for there being no prescribed curriculum in schools. It was also suggested that as schools had already planned their teaching for 2013/14, a decision to disapply programmes of study at this point was coming too late. Concerns were also raised as to how disapplication will be reflected in Ofsted's inspection process.

In contrast with other consultation questions, only a small percentage of respondents went on to provide a rationale for their answer. Of those that did, the majority used this question to register concerns about the timetable of the implementation of the new national curriculum as a whole, rather than addressing the issue of disapplication specifically.

Whilst the responses to the consultation showed higher numbers of respondents either unsure or disagreeing with the proposals to disapply elements of the current national curriculum, the responses and comments mentioned above indicate that there is uncertainty as to what disapplication will actually mean for schools. Also, many respondents took the opportunity to express their views around the timescales involved in the introduction of the new curriculum, rather than the issue of disapplication itself. In light of this, and given that a proportion of respondents did consider that disapplication would be useful to schools in preparing to teach the new curriculum and that the proposed change is permissive rather than prescriptive, the Government considers that it is right to go ahead with the proposals as originally set out.

## Overview of responses

Throughout the report, percentages are expressed as a proportion of those answering Question 13, not as a proportion of all respondents to the overarching national curriculum consultation.

The organisational breakdown of respondents was as follows:

Teacher	680
Primary school	604
Secondary school	282
Individual	136
Parent	120
Higher education	110
Local authority	103
Consultant	44
Subject Association	41
Academy/Free School	39
Employer/business sector	37
Organisations representing school teachers	24
Heritage/cultural	23
Special school	21
Further education	17
Young person	12
Other	334
<b>Total</b>	<b>2627</b>