

Curriculum reform consultation

30 April – 24 July 2009

Subject level descriptions questionnaire

Thank you for your participation.

When you have completed this survey, please email it to info@qca.org.uk, or post to:
Simon Watmough, Ipsos MORI House, 79-81 Borough Road, London, SE1 1FY.

QCA is managing this consultation, on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families



Thank you for your interest in participating in the curriculum reform consultation.

We will now ask you for some contact information and personal data (ethnicity, disability, belief etc) to meet our legal requirement to monitor equalities.

We may use the information collected here to contact you:

- with further questions about the consultation
- if we need to clarify your responses
- to tell you about the findings of the consultation
- about similar consultation exercises in the future, and
- to give you information about other QCA activities such as conferences.

We will also use this information to check that the consultation is representative.

This information will be kept strictly confidential. The analysis of responses will be carried out by an external organisation. This organisation must comply with the Data Protection Act in its handling of personal data and will only process personal data on instructions from QCA.

QCA is managing this consultation, on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families

Your name and contact details:

First name: David	Last name: Montagu
Email address: david.montagu@royalsociety.org	
Postal address: The Royal Society, 6–9 Carlton House Terrace, London	
Postcode: SW1Y 5AG	
Phone no: Daytime 020 7451 2580	
Phone no: Mobile	

Who you represent:

In which capacity are you responding to this consultation? Please tick one box only:

Learner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local authority representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headteacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of the wider education community	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of the wider school workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Learned Society	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are a teacher or headteacher, governor or member of the wider school workforce, what is the name and postcode of your school?

School	Postcode
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If you are a local authority representative, what is the name of your local authority?

Local Authority	
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Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or as an organisation?

Please tick one box only:

As an individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	As an organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If an organisation, approximately how many people are in the organisation?	135
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If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?

The Royal Society

Equality monitoring:

What is your gender? Please tick one box only:

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
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What is your ethnic origin? Please tick one box only:

White		Asian/Asian British	
White British	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background, write in	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Any other Asian background, write in	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups			
White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>		
White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black/Black British	
White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Mixed background, write in	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Any other Black background, write in	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>		
		Other ethnic group	
		Any other ethnic group, write in	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have a disability or longstanding illness? Please tick one box only:

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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What is your religion? Please tick one box only:

No religion	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Any other religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Write in	<input type="text"/>

Prefer not to say	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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What is your sexual orientation? Please tick one box only:

Bisexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian/Gay woman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexual/Gay man	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/straight	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prefer not to say	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Proposals to change the subject level descriptions

This consultation, offers all those involved in education, including teachers, governors, parents, employers and young people the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. The feedback you provide will be used by the government to inform final decisions about final level descriptions.

The survey is seven questions long, and could take up to 15 minutes to complete, depending on how detailed your responses are.

When considering your response to each question please try and think about all learners including those with special educational needs, disabled learners, the gifted and talented, children from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language.

Before starting the questionnaire you may find it useful read the draft level descriptions for each subject. These are available at www.qca.org.uk/curriculumconsultation, or can be obtained by calling the QCA Enquiry line on 020 7509 5556 or by emailing info@qca.org.uk.

If you have any queries about this consultation, or the questionnaire, please email info@qca.org.uk or call QCA's Enquiry line on 020 7509 5556.

Your personal information, and the data collected in this survey, will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for your participation.

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The subject level descriptions

Which subject level descriptions do you want to comment on?

You may pick one or more than one.

Art and design	
Citizenship	
Design and technology	
English	
Geography	
History	
Information communication technology	
Mathematics	✓
Modern foreign languages	
Music	
Physical education	
Religious education	
Science	✓

The proposed level descriptions from levels 1 to exceptional performance maintain standards

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					✓
Modern foreign languages					
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

The proposed level descriptions from levels 1 to exceptional performance provide appropriate progression

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					✓
Modern foreign languages					
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

The expectations set out in the proposed level descriptions from levels 1 to exceptional performance are appropriate for children

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					
Modern foreign languages					✓
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

The proposed level descriptions are an appropriate basis for National Curriculum assessment requirements of relevant aspects of the proposed new primary curriculum

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					✓
Modern foreign languages					
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

The proposed level descriptions are an appropriate basis for assessment of secondary National Curriculum subjects

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					✓
Modern foreign languages					
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

The proposed level descriptions from levels 1 to exceptional performance can be used and applied to assess children’s work

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Art and design					
Citizenship					
Design and technology					
English					
Geography					
History					
Information and communication technology					
Mathematics					✓
Modern foreign languages					
Music					
Physical education					
Religious education					
Science					✓

If you would like, please give reasons for your responses given above

(please limit your answer to around 200 words)

We consider that the statement-question ‘The proposed level descriptions from levels 1 to exceptional performance maintain standards’ is complacent and misguided.

It is complacent because it suggests that maintaining current standards (ie narrowly interpreted here as levels of performance) is sufficient. However, performance trends indicate that standards have reached a plateau in recent years. Maintaining the *status quo* is unambitious and seems to be at odds with the Government’s stated objective (in its most recent White Paper) to have ‘the best school system in the world’ (*Your child, your schools, our future*, June 2009, p. 1).

It is misguided because Level descriptions should not be equated to standards (ie performance in the narrow sense). Standards are merely the measured extent to which pupils’ are assessed as having mastered certain knowledge and skills.

Moreover, there appears to be no evidence base to support the setting of the current Level descriptions. Consequently, it is difficult to judge whether the proposed new set of arbitrarily chosen descriptions are better or worse than those currently in use.

In general, the proposed new Level descriptions are highly prescriptive and mechanistic. It is regrettable that there is nothing in them to suggest that pupils’ own ideas should be encouraged and developed. Further, there needs to be clearly demonstrable progression in these ‘areas of learning’, and this is lacking currently.

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