

Evidence contribution to the Primary Review

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Contributions

<p><u>Aspect 1: Curriculum design and content</u></p> <p>In relation to the curriculum what is it reasonable to expect schools to provide and manage within the statutory time requirements of the primary school day?</p> <p>Should primary pupils continue to be introduced to all the subjects of the National Curriculum from Year 1?</p> <p>What should be the position of science and ICT within the primary curriculum?</p> <p>Should some of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development, and pedagogy, be extended into the primary curriculum?</p> <p>What is case and scope for reducing prescription and content in the programmes of study?</p>	<p>Schooling must be informed by contemporary understandings of childhood. Children, from the youngest age, need to have opportunities to have, and enjoy, a childhood – a world of make-believe and fantasy, of play and stimulation. These experiences themselves express key values which are crucial for children’s development in primary schools, within the community and within life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Should primary pupils continue to be introduced to all the subjects of the National Curriculum from Year 1?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Should some of the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development, and pedagogy, be extended into the primary curriculum?</p> <p>UKLA considers that all pupils from Year 1 onwards should still be introduced to all the subjects of the NC, but that these could valuably be encountered through diverse, imaginative and integrated curriculum experiences (Year 1- Year 6). Such ‘critical events’ as Woods (2001) describes them, are extended learning opportunities which have real relevance and purpose for young people. Holistic projects in which external specialists often play a part, projects which have ambitious long term goals - the production of a film or play for example. In such projects, children are encouraged to initiate activities and direct more of their own work; this can nurture interest and commitment and enable them to learn subject knowledge in context. Such extended and integrated units of work developed with the young learners, not delivered to them, also nurture children’s creativity and ability to apply their developing skills in engaging and motivating contexts.</p>
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Children's abilities and interests are best served by a flexible curriculum with scope for pupil choice. Skilled and adaptable teachers (and support staff) are needed. More flexible patterns of organization should be trialled and evaluated. Recent curriculum changes have led to the strengthening of segregation by age and an increase in grouping by ability. Whilst age and ability can be useful ways of organising learners, they are not appropriate for all kinds of learning. Developing the idea of the 'extended school' could allow our primary education system to be more diverse and more learner-centred whilst dissolving some of the arbitrary boundaries between formal and informal learning. In some curriculum areas the possibilities of using VLEs and online social networking can help to extend children's learning beyond the classroom.

UKLA considers that the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage would provide a comprehensive but more flexible and open ended framework to enable teachers and practitioners to develop curriculum and pedagogy that is adapted to local circumstances and builds on the cultural experiences, expertise and personal interests that children bring with them to school. This would also enrich the personalisation agenda.

What is case and scope for reducing prescription and content in the programmes of study?

There is a strong argument for reducing the degree of prescription and level of detail offered within the PoS, as such detail tends to prompt teachers to cover the curriculum without any thoughtful variation according to context and circumstance, may foster inappropriate levels of pace (Burns and Myhill, 2004), and focus on transmission, perhaps short-changing pedagogical principles in the process (English et al, 2002). To foster children's capacity to live with complexity and uncertainty, to respond to problems creatively and to show empathy and understanding is of critical importance in 21st century. Such capacities are difficult to nurture in educational communities where conformity to specified and delineated curriculum content is rewarded, assessments is too closely tied to these and risks are avoided.

UKLA envisions a substantial part of the primary curriculum as shaped and developed through extended units of cross curricular work. These would seek to engage and involve the learners creatively and enable them to learn, use and transfer their growing body of skills and widening

knowledge and understanding in motivating and inspiring contexts. In this way the curriculum would be increasingly co-constructed and teachers, whilst cognizant of National Curriculum subject requirements, would plan each term's learning intentions based on the pupils' existing experience, questions and areas of interest within an overall focus, reshaping this as work develops and in response to formative assessment. Reducing the prescription and content of the PoS would support such a rich vision of motivating and involving primary practice, which seeks to balance the development of children's knowledge and creativity.

What should be the position of ICT be within the primary curriculum?

ICT should be central to learning and teaching in the twenty-first century, given the pervasive use of ICT in employment and social life and its pedagogical potential. The use of ICT should be informed by an understanding of how it can enhance teaching and learning and how it can be used purposefully to enrich social interaction both between pupils and between pupils and experts. The literacy curriculum should encompass the literacy practices embedded within new technologies and enable children to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to access, understand and create texts on range of platforms. However, ICT within this context should be used in a way that transforms curriculum and pedagogy rather than simply extends it (Burnett et al., 2006). Since online practices generate a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding which are increasingly important for both employment and leisure in an information economy (Davies,2005) and the enhance learner autonomy, such skills need to be at the centre of future developments.

There is ample evidence, as noted in the recent Byron Review (2008) that computer games can make a significant contribution to children's cognitive development (Gee, 2003 ; Mackey, 2004; Marsh, 2004). Research carried out by UKLA members for QCA supports this and provides additional evidence of increased ability to read for inference from experience of playing video games (Bearne et al, 2007). Equally, there is evidence of improvements in speaking and listening and writing after classroom activities involving video games (Bearne and Wolstencroft, 2005). All the research evidence from UKLA sources indicates increases in motivation and engagement.

Literacy is deeply embedded into the virtual worlds which children engage in, as they have opportunities to write online messages, read others' messages, read catalogues, magazines, newspapers and instructions. The literacy skills, knowledge and understanding these virtual worlds can foster include:

reading skills and strategies including: word recognition (e.g. the vocabulary choices offered in 'safe chat' mode, in which children can chat to others using a set of already defined words and phrases; instructions; in-world environmental text), comprehension, scanning text in order to retrieve appropriate information, familiarity with how different texts are structured and organised, understanding of authors' viewpoint, purposes and overall effect of the text on the reader;

writing skills and strategies including: spelling, punctuation, syntax, writing using and adapting a range of forms appropriate for purpose and audience, using language for particular effect;

writing for known and unknown audiences;

using text to negotiate, collaborate and evaluate.

In addition, children develop skills across the visual, gestural and aural modes as they juxtapose words with image, move avatars across the screen and listen to in-world oral texts.

Both for children and young people, the web allows a broad range of interactions and relationships to develop on-line and it needs to be further tapped as a literacy resource across the curriculum. For example, wikis are sites of collaborative reading and writing, providing the genuine audiences and purposes for literacy aimed at by the National Curriculum, and engaging young people more intensely than school-based literacy. However, the ability to change, update, edit and debate information on these sites requires a rethinking of information and expertise. Members of the UKLA Digital Literacies Special Interest Group (SIG) emphasise that the development of critical literacy is essential to support children and young people as empowered and safe users of social internet sites (Carrington & Robinson, 2008 forthcoming).

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UKLA Recommendations:

The Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning and development should be extended into the primary curriculum

The prescribed PoS should be reduced to enable integrated and creative co-constructed units of work to offer learners the chance to use and apply their developing knowledge in literacy and across the curriculum

ICT and the development of digital literacies should have a central place in the primary curriculum

Contributions

Aspect 2: Reading, writing and numeracy

How might schools be enabled to strengthen their focus on raising attainment in reading, writing and numeracy?

What can be done to ensure that these vital subjects are taught thoroughly and systematically, and fully integrated within

UKLA considers that the purposes and values of the subject English centre on the need to develop children's abilities to read, respond to, interpret, analyse and produce a wide range of texts, literary and non-literary, multimodal in nature and accessed both on-screen and off screen. Teaching in this subject should develop children's abilities to engage in critical thinking and evaluative judgement and should foster enjoyment and engagement with a wide range of different kinds of 21st century texts.

The association takes the view that English should continue to be a central core of the curriculum, for oracy and literacy underpin learning across all subjects. However, there needs to be greater clarity with regard to the relationship between 'English' and 'literacy', as at present the different

all areas of the curriculum?

terminology used in the National Curriculum and the Primary Strategy is not helpful. UKLA would recommend that more encompassing terminology should be used for this strand of the curriculum and recommend the use of the phrase ‘Communication, language and literacy’. This would provide greater continuity with the Birth to Five Framework and signal that literacy in a new media age is multimodal in nature.

How might schools be enabled to strengthen their focus on raising attainment in reading, writing and numeracy?

Given the above, we are concerned by the framing of this question. The complexity and developing nature of what it means to be literate in the 21st century needs to be reflected in any renewed curriculum and its related assessment systems.

The National Literacy Strategy, re-conceptualised English as ‘literacy’, back in 1998 and delineated an apparently fixed and inflexible (Marshall, 2001) core of knowledge and skills to be taught and tested. This led to a somewhat instrumental approach to teaching and learning literacy in England. Whilst there have been benefits, notably the establishment of a wider subject knowledge base, the boundaries imposed upon the profession and the focus on tests and targets have, we believe, limited both teachers’ and children’s experience of alternative ways of seeing and doing, of knowing and being. National initiatives which seek to raise standards and the support offered to the profession with regard the new primary curriculum, need to involve teachers and researchers more from the outset, not seeking to impose but to involve and empower teachers, fostering the educational growth of the profession.

Whilst we welcome the greater emphasis on multimodality in the recently revised Primary Strategy, UKLA feels that in order to raise standards there needs to be greater clarity with regard to the relationship between literacy and other modes of communication. Drawing on Kress’s emphasis on ‘literacy’ as referring to lettered representation (Kress, 2003), UKLA believes that teachers need to understand the nature and affordances of the different modes of communication –

literacy, oracy, visual, movement/ gesture – and be familiar with the way in which these modes interact in different texts. In addition, teachers should understand how texts work when operating in different media. For example there are many similarities, but also differences, in on- and off-screen reading and writing, which need to be attended to by educators. In doing so, teachers can ensure that children develop the key skills, knowledge and understanding relevant in twenty-first century England.

All the evidence shows (Bearne in Warrington and Younger, 2006) that the highest attainment is achieved in classrooms and schools where the English/literacy curriculum is organised holistically, **integrating all the modes of reading, writing, speaking and listening** and where teachers take a creative approach to longer term units of planning for literacy and numeracy rather than attempting to develop skills in a fragmented way.

In addition in order to raise standards still further, UKLA feels there is a need **to recognise the wider set of texts and practices that children encounter in their engagement with the media**. Children are engaged in a wide range of literacy practices outside of school that need to be acknowledged and built upon within the school curriculum (Marsh and Millard, 2006; Demos, 2007). These everyday practices lead to the development of a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding which are not sufficiently recognized or built upon effectively in schools. Curricula and pedagogy *have* to be rooted in the everyday if they are to offer pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for the cultural, social, political and economic milieu in which they are located. It is thus necessary, we feel, to create a curriculum strand in the primary phase that is focused on the media i.e. Media Studies.

Given the central role that the media play in children's lives and the urgent need to develop a curriculum that will enable children to engage critically with this media, then the **introduction of Media Studies in the primary curriculum** is a necessity not an option. The subject of English is at a crossroads in its relatively short history. Its introduction in the late nineteenth century was predicated on the need to introduce citizens to a body of work that construed our cultural heritage and to foster the skills necessary for a changing work environment. Over 100 years later, the social

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and cultural context is very different. The textual practices in which pupils engage outside of school are changing rapidly due to new technologies and the media are integral to these practices. Pupils need to be able to understand, analyse, create and critically review media texts if they are to function well in both employment and leisure the future. It is therefore important to introduce Media Studies as a distinct subject in the primary curriculum, although it is recognised that the study of media will also be integrated across the curriculum.

Furthermore to support the raising of standards, increased **recognition of oracy as a tool for learning** is needed. Learning in the subject English/ literacy is underpinned by a knowledge of and ability to use and manipulate language and other modes of communication. Oracy should therefore be a cornerstone of the English curriculum, with dialogue underpinning all teaching and learning. Learners need time to revisit concepts and skills, with a spiral curriculum that enables them to return to and build on previous knowledge and understanding. Personalised learning requires teaching that is attuned to individual needs and an approach to learning that recognises the agency of learners in identifying and addressing their own needs in a supportive and enabling context.

UKLA is particularly concerned to ensure that any future developments in the learning and **teaching of reading in the new curriculum are informed by research evidence** as this will help raise standards. Whilst young children need to have knowledge and understanding of the alphabetic principle of our writing system, UKLA considers that the Rose Report (DfES, 2006) was unbalanced in favour of synthetic phonics and that this might not be appropriate for all young children. Young children learn to read and write in many different ways, and not all children learn to read through synthetic phonic instruction. Most importantly, we need to be clear as to whether we are addressing *learning* to read with some agency on the child's part or being *taught* to read. It is possible that children may develop the skills of reading but lack the disposition to use them unless their reading experiences encourage autonomy, enthusiasm, achievement and a sense of enjoyment. UKLA is also concerned about recent developments in relation to a 'simple' view of reading that appear to promote the decoupling of decoding and comprehension in teaching and learning. We consider that there can be no simple view of what is a complex process. UKLA's *Submission to the Rose Review* (UKLA, 2006) stressed the need for the learning and teaching of early reading to be informed by research evidence which suggests that children need a balanced

programme that enables them to develop a range of reading strategies, and that expertise in decoding develops alongside comprehension.

What can be done to ensure that these vital subjects are taught thoroughly and systematically, and fully integrated within all areas of the curriculum?

In general whilst the senior management teams of primary schools are sound, UKLA perceive that too few offer **visionary leadership** which transforms the lives of the learners. Additional support is needed for head teachers to enable them to take increased interest in and responsibility for the curriculum, for collaboratively envisioning, and creatively designing an integrated curriculum as described in response to Aspect 1. At present school leaders are focused almost exclusively on standards and many feel insufficiently confident to take risks with the given curriculum as a consequence, despite the encouragement in *Excellence and Enjoyment* (DfES, 2003). The NPQH for example is insufficiently oriented towards vision, values and innovation and teaching and learning and is, in our view, still somewhat biased towards managerial issues and matters of finance.

Schools which best meet the varied needs of children are those where the leadership has a clear view of how best to develop an environment where teachers can use their own and their pupils' creativity, experience and knowledge to tackle the demands of a renewed national curriculum. Specifically, in terms of literacy teaching this means having an integrated view of reading, writing, speaking and listening; including a balance of texts which are drawn from digital sources and books and which reflect a variety of identities; developing a multimodal pedagogy which acknowledges the different approaches which children bring to learning; encouraging classroom discourse which offers genuine opportunities for children themselves to contribute to learning through extended investigation and research, discussion and composition. These pedagogic matters have to be accompanied by in-service education which develops teachers' own subject knowledge and builds on the cultural strengths of the teachers in the school, a model used in the PNS/ UKLA study on boys and writing (PNS/ UKLA, 2005).

UKLA also believes that to ensure thorough and systematic teaching **the subject knowledge base of primary practitioners with regard to children's literature**, must be widened. Recent

UKLA research (1200 teachers) has shown that teachers' repertoires of authors, poets and picture fiction creators is very limited (Cremin et al. 2008). The lack of professional knowledge and assurance with children's literature which this research reveals and the minimal knowledge of global literature indicated has potentially serious consequences for all learners, and particularly those from linguistic and cultural minority groups who may well be marginalised unless teachers' own knowledge is urgently developed. It could be argued teachers are not currently in a position to plan richly integrated and holistic literacy work, nor extend and develop children as readers who can and do choose to read for purpose and pleasure. Such knowledge is also of critical significance for ITE students.

The role of subject leaders in supporting developments in subject-specific teaching and learning needs to be strengthened. CPD opportunities for subject leaders need to be provided which develop both their subject knowledge and pedagogical-content knowledge. Subject leaders can have a strong role in supporting the work of teaching assistants and learning mentors in relation to their subjects, but need to be given more time in order to do this. This will require additional funding to extend PPD time, but also has ramifications for quality CPD provision which extends beyond support for government strategies or new policies. UKLA firmly believes that a greater degree of teacher autonomy in the context of informed support and guidance will lead to improved standards.

Creating an entitlement for all teachers and children to work with outside agencies on extended work would, we perceive, enable and prompt teaching staff to work more collaboratively with others from the creative and cultural sectors for example, to integrate the curriculum and ensure reading and writing are taught thoroughly, effectively and in a manner which fosters deep learning.

There is considerable scope for more **independent professional support and development** for literacy professionals and all classroom teachers in literacy CPD. Subject associations have a key role to play in this as currently PNS advisors find their workload and course provision is laid down and delineated, which does not always offer sufficient flexibility to be responsive to local needs. Opportunities for multi-agency funding, and making more public the range of initiatives that

already exist, would make a valuable contribution to CPD. The UKLA project *Raising Boys' Achievements in Writing* (PNS/UKLA 2005) is a case in point here, demonstrating the significant literacy advantages which can accrue to young learners when teachers are enabled and empowered to respond creatively, plan holistically and make good use of talk, drama and film in the literacy curriculum.

Building a CPD infrastructure of entitlement to quality research based support and involvement in classroom action research is, we perceive, one of the keys to enabling the growth of high quality literacy professionals and thus raising standards. Those primary teachers who have investigated their own practice as part of a local or national project appear to develop a commitment to life long learning and to working as researcher – practitioners in educational settings. This offers enhanced job satisfaction and increases the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, reducing the assessment pressure or re-balancing the accountability framework is likely to lead to increased job satisfaction since many professionals currently feel weighed down by the tests and targets. Changes in in-service provision away from ‘training’ towards ‘development’ can also make an impact. Current research on a UKLA collaborative critical literacies project strongly suggests the value of supporting teachers in local networks to make links with local communities in projects which contribute to social equity.

UKLA takes the view that that **more vehicles for bridging between academics and professionals** need to be developed, to enable research findings to influence practice, raise standards and ensure effective and thorough teaching. Such partnerships could contribute to the debate and the raising of standards of achievement and attainment. Increasing the number and nature of collaborative forums in which research, both teacher-led and university structured is disseminated and discussed is of critical importance. Additionally, the emergence of new research and development projects, such as those currently initiated by, for example the TDA, and perhaps allied to significant subject associations such as UKLA, would benefit the profession, providing opportunities to involve whole school staff in investigating their practice and working together with other schools (as in some Network Learning communities) to enrich children’s literacy learning.

Building sustainable partnerships between government, local educational institutions and communities is necessary, particularly in working with those who are hardest to reach. The current focus on the Every Child Matters Agenda, and the concomitant multi-agency working, is to be welcomed as an opportunity to support all children and families, including those most at risk in society. Despite its flaws, the policy of appointing ‘community’ or ‘home-school liaison teachers’ should be re-visited. The strengths of inter-agency working should also be built upon here. In terms of ‘hard to reach’ families, there are no easy or comfortable solutions. Evidence from Australia (Comber et al., 2001) indicates that most successful projects are those which are built on partnerships between government, local educational institutions and communities. Critical here, however, is the need for schools to build trust that the participation will be genuinely equitable. It means going beyond the walls of the classroom in various ways to transform practice and attitudes.

Revisiting assessment and focusing more on assessment for learning is another strategy which could help ensure English is taught thoroughly and comprehensively. Teachers should be encouraged to develop and implement tools for summative assessment that meet their needs. UKLA considers that national tests should not be used at the primary stage, as they are damaging to the curriculum, given the tendency of some teachers to teach to the tests. The tension between the performativity and creativity agendas remains problematic. UKLA is not opposed to the use of summative, standardised assessment tools that offer information about children’s progress, but feels that the current system of national tests that are used to inform league tables has proved damaging to children’s education, not least in areas relating to special needs and inclusion. In addition, the current testing agenda has tended to prompt teachers to teach to the test and the backwash of assessment and accountability has curtailed the implementation and development of more meaningful, creative and learner- relevant practice.

Schools need additional funding if the literacy curriculum is to be adequately resourced and standards raised. Hurd et al suggest that current spending on books in primary schools is ‘little more than £16 per pupil’ (2006, p78), despite evidence that there is a relationship between the amount spent on books and attainment. In addition, given the increasing importance of new

technologies in the literacy curriculum, schools need extra resources if they are going to be able to invest in the range of hardware and software needed to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for the new media age.

Recommendations:

The term Communication, language and literacy' should be adopted to replace English as more approximately encompassing

Media studies should be included as a distinct subject in the primary curriculum, building on the skills and expertise which children bring and facilitating their ability to transfer these skills to the more traditional forms of reading and writing

The early reading curriculum should focus on enabling children to develop a range of strategies in order to become competent and enthusiastic readers and not privilege synthetic phonics, nor separate decoding and comprehension

Support for visionary school leadership and the development of a more informed, creative and flexible workforce needs to be offered in ways which develop teacher autonomy and increase retention

Diverse and new forms of partnerships need to be supported and developed to foster teacher autonomy, teacher action research and engagement in shaping the literacy curriculum at the point of engagement

Teachers' knowledge of children's literature needs to be developed to support both literature-based literacy planning (as recommended by PNS) and reader development

Assessment of English needs to be used primarily to identify next steps in learning; national tests of the form currently in place should not be used in the

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primary stage of schooling

Increased funding should be offered to enable schools to update libraries and purchase more 21st century ICT equipment and software

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Contributions	
<p><u>Aspect 3: Modern Foreign Languages</u></p> <p>What are the best ways of introducing a modern foreign language as a compulsory requirement of the curriculum at Key Stage 2 as recommended by Lord Dearing's Languages Review?</p>	<p>More sustained work on 'language awareness' should be complemented by wider choice in language learning at primary level.</p> <p>There is case for introducing MFL much earlier than KS2</p> <p>There needs to be a recognition that community languages are MFL material</p> <p>In addition, a comprehensive review of the provision for first, second language and EAL support should be commissioned. This would need to take into account the importance of community languages for learning and issues of language maintenance for community cohesion, as well as the learning of English. Such a review would need to be sensitive to the diversity of community voices and the varied patterns of language support in families, religious groups and schools</p>

Contributions	
<p><u>Aspect 4: Personal Development</u></p> <p>What are the personal, social and emotional capabilities that children need to develop through their schooling?</p> <p>What is the most appropriate framework for achieving greater integration of these capabilities throughout the curriculum?</p>	<p>What are the personal, social and emotional capabilities that children need to develop through their schooling?</p> <p>As noted earlier the capacity to live with complexity and uncertainty, to respond to problems creatively and to show empathy and understanding is of critical importance and children need opportunities to take risks within the curriculum. Primary education should also enable pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in ways that extend their critical capabilities and should promote critical and creative thinking and a high degree of reflexivity.</p> <p>Learners who can identify and assess their own progress, use their initiative, generate ideas, learn from mistakes and use feedback to improve are effective learners. They need resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity in order to follow tasks through to completion, to plan and use their time effectively and to respond flexibly. Such learners will begin to understand risk and be prepared to take risks and handle the consequences.</p> <p>What is the most appropriate framework for achieving greater integration of these capabilities throughout the curriculum?</p> <p>Through rich collaborative work children should be enabled to develop their autonomy and take risks as well as increased control of their learning, becoming confident and successful learners who are motivated to learn and value lifelong learning. Thus teachers need to profile learner agency, and provide multiple opportunities in which children can initiate their own activities or make their own choices within loosely framed activities in extended units of integrated work. Teachers need to set up a range of individual, pair and small group collaborative opportunities, to help young learners develop their independence and make their own decisions. Children also need to be involved in determining the direction of their work, thus enabling them to exert greater control over their learning and develop personally.</p>

Contributions	
<p><u>Aspect 5: Transition and progression</u></p> <p>How might schools make best use of the information available about prior learning, and information from parents and other professionals working with children, to secure optimum continuity and progression for all children from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, paying particular attention to the key transition points?</p> <p>What are the options for providing more choice and flexibility in start dates for children entering primary school, especially summer-born children?</p>	<p>A safe, secure and loving environment which celebrates children’s learning and achievement are important pre-requisites for primary education. Apart from in exceptional circumstances, parents and carers are interested in the welfare and development of their children and their subsequent life chances. Schools which build mutual understanding, listen to parents’ views and enter into dialogue with them are likely to develop a shared vision of what constitutes success.</p> <p>How might schools make best use of the information available about prior learning, and information from parents and other professionals working with children, to secure optimum continuity and progression for all children from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, paying particular attention to the key transition points?</p> <p>Schools should be prepared to share, communicate and negotiate their vision and educational aims as well as provide advice and support on parenting, learning and early literacy. The importance of home-school relationships should be publicly recognised and appropriately resourced. Additional resources should be targeted on areas where building relationships is challenging and where it is likely that it will have most impact on raising attainment. Family learning programmes need to draw from families’ ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al., 1992) in order to ensure relevance and value.</p> <p>A greater emphasis needs to be placed on creating dialogue between parents, carers and the agencies that support them. Developing a common understanding of what is most important for children is, in the first instance, likely to be locally based. More general priority areas, such as those set out in <i>Every Child Matters</i> would provide a useful framework for agreeing context-specific goals that reflect a common, shared understanding. It should not be assumed that schools are best-placed to either initiate or host such an on-going consultation.</p> <p>Learning mentors and the knowledge and expertise of HLTAs need to be better utilised. Such learning support colleagues need a vocabulary that enables them to take an active role in explaining to staff what they know and can do. Teachers need to be responsive to this approach –</p>

there is a case for more training to enable them to do this.

Children are engaged in a wide range of literacy practices outside of school that need to be acknowledged and built upon within the school curriculum (Marsh and Millard, 2006; Demos, 2007). These everyday practices lead to the development of a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding which are not always recognized or built upon effectively in schools. Curricula and pedagogy *have* to be rooted in the everyday if they are to offer pupils the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for the cultural, social, political and economic milieu in which they are located. This connects vitally to our earlier argument about the relevance of the literacy curriculum to 21st century learners and to individual children.

Recommendations:

The literacy curriculum should reflect the diversity of society and offer opportunities for individuals to construct identities, acknowledging and respecting difference.

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Contributions	
Any other comments or contributions	<p>We are concerned as an Association that the emphasis of the questions as set within this template is upon curriculum organisation issues and that no information is sought regarding the purposes and values underpinning the curriculum. Whilst we appreciate the remit has in large part been set by the Minister, we take the view that that if this to be an Independent Review of the curriculum, a wider brief needs to be encompassed in the final report.</p> <p>We are also concerned because no invitation to comment upon the relationship between raising standards and pedagogy is offered and that English appears to have been reduced to the two language modes of reading and writing. The role of talk in literacy learning is widely recognised (Corden, 2000; Alexander, 2004), it represents a significant part of the current NC and PNS. We assume no reduction in the value afforded this crucial mode of language will be made within the new curriculum.</p> <p>We are also surprised that there are no prompts for re-envisaging areas of new knowledge to be addressed by a 21st century curriculum. We have nonetheless suggested the inclusion of media studies to foster the development of critical literacy and help raise standards.</p> <p><i>UKLA would be pleased to offer further details on any of the points noted within our response and to send representatives to discuss these and other issues should this be seen to be advantageous.</i></p>

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