



~~with a~~
This will do

at all. Better not
have a core curriculum
than one based on
this.

Prime Minister

Policy Unit have important
reservations on these proposals.
Agree Mr Baker be asked to
look again at some aspects,
even at cost of delay until
after Christmas?

called? B

PRIME MINISTER

NATIONAL CURRICULUM HISTORY WORKING GROUP: ANNOUNCEMENT

Put Alan Beattie
and Shirley
Letwin in charge of them

BT 16/12

We had a brief word on 26 October and I agreed to bring forward
my proposals for the establishment of a History Working Group to
make recommendations on attainment targets and programmes of the
study.

core curriculum
Ask Brian to talk to

Proposed terms of reference and supplementary guidance for a
Working Group covering history in England and Wales are attached
at Annexes A and B. These are agreed with Peter Walker. They
follow closely those agreed with colleagues for the earlier
Curriculum Working Groups. You will see that we have set British
history at the core of what is to be recommended. But we also
need to reflect the special position of history in Wales. Peter
Walker is minuting you separately on his proposal to set up a
History Committee for Wales.

Angela and I have interviewed a number of potential candidates
for membership of the History Working Group and I should like
formally to offer appointments to the Chairman and Members as set
out in Annex C. I set particular store by the appointment of
Commander Saunders Watson as an independent and strong Chairman
and have kept the size of the Group to the minimum necessary
satisfactorily to undertake the task I have set within an
exacting timetable.

If you are content, Peter Walker and I should like to announce
the establishment of a Working Group on History and a History
Committee for Wales, by arranged PQs, before the Christmas
Recess. The Group and Committee would be expected to report in
time to enable first implementation in schools in Autumn 1991.

An announcement about a History Working Group will certainly
raise questions about our intentions for other foundation

subjects and the overall timetable for implementation. I believe that we must say when we intend to start action on geography, which many people - rightly in my view - believe needs to be considered alongside history. We also need to make clear that we are taking action on modern foreign languages in time to start influencing the standards of language teaching in our schools in 1992. But if we announce forward plans on these subjects, we can expect considerable pressure to declare our intentions on music, art and physical education also - and I know that Richard Luce and Colin Moynihan are anxious that we should be seen to be giving these subjects due attention. I think that we must outline when we intend to act, though not how we shall take work forward to produce guidelines, on those three subjects also.

I am statutorily obliged to establish a complete National Curriculum - ie one which states our expectations for all the foundation subjects - as soon as is reasonably practicable. We have given the new National Curriculum Council the task of considering the whole curriculum and the way in which the National Curriculum fits into it, and in order to do that they need to know our intentions. Above all, I am anxious to keep up the momentum of implementation and to make clear to schools what they may expect to happen over the next few years, so that they can plan ahead effectively in their organisation of the curriculum and in considering their staffing requirements.

I should therefore like to announce, at the same time as we announce the setting up of a History Working Group, that our outline timetable for the establishment of future Groups and for implementation of new requirements in schools is:

Geography - establish Working Group Easter
1989
- first implementation in schools
Autumn 1991;

Modern Foreign - establish Working Group July 1989

Languages - first implementation in schools Autumn 1992
at the latest;

Music, Art and - set in place arrangements for considering the
Physical content of guidelines in June 1990

Education - first implementation in schools Autumn 1992.

I believe that this timetable is realistic and will be generally welcomed by most people in the education service, who are now anxious to make progress in planning for implementation of the full National Curriculum. It will ensure that the intended substance of the entire National Curriculum is public by mid-1991. The timetable has been agreed with Peter Walker and there should be no differences in the timing of implementation in Wales.

I should be grateful to know whether you or colleagues see any difficulty in my making such an announcement. You should be aware that Geoffrey Dickens has already tabled a PQ on this subject for oral answer on 20 December.

I am sending copies of this letter to Peter Walker, Douglas Hurd, Norman Fowler, David Young, Malcolm Rifkind, Tom King, Richard Luce, Colin Moynihan and to Sir Robin Butler.

K.B.

KB

Department of Education and Science

December 1988

NATIONAL CURRICULUM HISTORY WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

1. The Education Reform Act 1988 provides for the establishment of a National Curriculum of core and other foundation subjects for pupils of compulsory school age in England and Wales. The Act empowers the Secretary of State to specify, as he considers appropriate for each foundation subject, including history, that there should be clear objectives - attainment targets - for the knowledge, skills, and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities should be expected to have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16; and to promote them, programmes of study describing the content, skills and processes which need to be covered during each key stage of compulsory education. Taken together, the attainment targets and programmes of study will provide the basis for assessing a pupil's performance, in relation both to expected attainment and to the next steps needed for the pupil's development.

2. Both the objectives (attainment targets) and means of achieving them (programmes of study) should leave scope for teachers to use their professional talents and skills to develop their own schemes of work, within a statutory framework which is known to all. It is the task of the Working Group on History to advise on that framework for history.

The Task

3. The Working Group is asked to submit an interim report to the Secretaries of State by 30 June 1989 outlining and, as far as possible, exemplifying:

- i) the contribution which history should make to the overall school curriculum and how that will inform the Group's thinking about attainment targets and programmes of study;
- ii) its provisional thinking about the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of different abilities and maturities should be expected to have attained and be able to demonstrate at key ages; and the profile components into which attainment targets should be grouped; 7.7
- iii) its thinking about the programmes of study which would be consistent with the attainment targets provisionally identified; and
- iv) the key elements within those programmes of study that it considers to be essential at each key stage for children throughout England and Wales, bearing in mind the need for a balanced history curriculum for all pupils and, in Wales, the need to allow room within that curriculum for appropriate attention to the History of Wales.

4. By Christmas 1989 the Working Group is to submit a final report to the Secretaries of State setting out and justifying its final recommendations on attainment targets and the programmes of study for history.

Approach

5. In carrying out its task the Group should consult informally and selectively with relevant interests and have regard to the work of other subject groups, in particular those on English, Welsh and, in due course, on geography. Additionally the Group should take account of:

- i) the broad framework for assessment and testing announced by the Government on 7 June 1988 and subsequent development of it in the light of advice from the School Examinations and Assessment Council;
- ii) the contributions which history can make to learning about other subjects and cross-curricular themes, and which they in turn can make to learning in history;
- iii) best practice and the results of any relevant research and development;
- iv) the work of the History Committee for Wales (HCW); and
- v) the issues covered in the supplementary guidance to the Group's Chairman.

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HISTORY WORKING GROUP

1. This note amplifies some of the points outlined in the Working Group's terms of reference.

Attainment Targets and differentiation

2. The attainment targets are expected to provide specific objectives so that pupils, teachers, parents and others have a clear idea of what is expected and to provide a sound basis for assessment and testing. They should allow scope for the very able, those of average ability, and the less able to show what they know and can do. It should not be necessary, particularly for pupils in the first two key stages, to have different attainment targets for children of different abilities. The targets should be capable of assessment at a range of levels and challenge each child to do the best that he or she can. They should raise expectations, particularly of pupils of middling and lower ability, as well as stretching and stimulating the most able. The Working Group should give particular thought to the application of attainment targets to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In advising on attainment targets, the Working Group should attempt to cover all areas of history and justify fully any recommendation that specific targets are not appropriate for particular aspects.

Programmes of Study

3. The programmes of study should provide a detailed description of the content, skills and processes which all pupils need to be taught so that they can develop the knowledge and understanding they will need to progress through school and eventually to adult life and employment. This detailed description needs to be set within an outline or overall map of the history curriculum which takes account of what may be expected of pupils of different abilities.

4. The study of history in schools should help pupils come to understand how a free and democratic society has developed over the centuries. The programmes of study should have at the core the history of Britain, in particular its political, constitutional and cultural heritage. They should take account of Britain's evolution and its changing role as a European, Commonwealth and world power influencing and being influenced by ideas, movements and events elsewhere in the world. They should also recognise and develop an awareness of the impact of classical civilisations. Overall, they should help pupils to acquire and develop values based on objective analysis of evidence while remaining consistent with Sections 44 and 45 of the Education (No 2) Act 1986 which prohibits political indoctrination and requires balanced presentation of opposing views.

↳ very important
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and people

This is
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of mind

5. Bearing in mind the general objectives described in paragraph 4 above, the programmes of study should give proper emphasis at each key stage to the content of historical knowledge and lay the foundation for the progressive development of the processes and skills of historical inquiry. They should foster: a sense of place and time and a grasp of chronology and historical terminology; an awareness of political, economic, social and other influences; and the capacity for historical understanding based on sound evidence. They should assist the progressive acquisition of skills in the collection, objective analysis, interpretation, discriminating use and reporting of evidence from a variety of sources. Above all, the programmes of study should seek to reveal to pupils that history is interesting, exciting and enjoyable, enabling teachers to draw imaginatively on a wide variety of teaching materials and historical sources, including appropriate local sources.

6. The development of attainment targets and programmes of study is likely to be an iterative process. Some consideration of content will probably come into the Working Group's thinking about attainment targets. It will also be necessary to take into account the general objectives and the contribution of history to the overall curriculum.

Special Needs

7. The Education Reform Act 1988 provides that where a pupil has a statement of special needs under the 1981 Education Act, the statement should specify any national curriculum requirements which should not apply or should be modified for that individual pupil. In addition, Orders or regulations under the 1988 Act can define the cases or circumstances in which the application of the national curriculum provisions may be modified or disapplied for any foundation subject. The Working Group should consider and advise on whether any such adaptations would be appropriate and justified in the case of history.

Links with other subjects

8. By its nature, history has links with many subjects across the curriculum. It both contributes to learning in other areas and is itself promoted by work in those fields. It helps in developing economic understanding, political and civic education, participation in a multi-ethnic society, European and wider awareness of the world, aesthetic and creative capacities, and personal and social education generally. It can benefit from knowledge and skills related to, for example, mathematics, information technology, statistics and economics. There are clear links, particularly with English and Welsh, science, geography and technology; with art, music and foreign languages and with areas such as classical studies. The Working Group should take these and any other reciprocal connections into account in its recommendations for attainment targets, programmes of study and related assessment arrangements for history, bearing in mind in particular that all subjects should promote the development of good written English and numeracy. Whilst there should be no presumption that history must be taught as a separate subject, the overriding consideration should be that clear attainment targets and programmes of study that ensure continuity and coherence in what is taught and learnt are set for history, however it is organised within the curriculum.

Ages and Stages; Time Allocations

9. The Working Group should assume that all pupils, other than those few whose statements of special educational need under the Education Act 1981 specify otherwise, will study history throughout their compulsory schooling and many are likely to take a GCSE in history or a subject which will involve a substantial element of history approved against relevant GCSE criteria.

10. In framing its recommendations the Working Group should assume that in England normally the equivalent of some 3-4 periods of a 40 period weekly timetable, or the equivalent of that in eg primary schools which do not organise a timetable in periods, will be available for history, during primary schooling and for years 1-3 of secondary school. Beyond that stage the amount of time required will depend upon whether a GCSE or equivalent examination course in history is being followed. Where it is, the Group should assume, for a pupil in years 4 and 5 of secondary school, on average 4 periods. For other courses, including non-examination courses, the Group should assume that on average 2 periods a week will be available for history, and that history may be studied as part of a wider course or on its own; but the essential requirement is that the history studied should provide for worthwhile progress beyond what has already been achieved at the end of key stage three.

Assessment

11. Attainment targets will provide objectives against which pupils' progress and performance can be assessed. The main purpose of such assessment will be to show what a pupil has learnt and mastered, so as to enable teachers and parents to

ensure that he or she is making adequate progress and to inform decisions about the next steps. The targets, and the associated criteria for successive levels of attainment within them, should therefore be sufficiently clearly specified so that they are capable of assessment and each conveys a unique description of the required performance, regardless of the age at which it is reached.

12. The main focus of the Group's work will be on attainment targets and programmes of study. However, it should take account of the broad framework for assessment and testing announced by the Government on 7 June 1988 in response to the reports of the Task Group on Assessment and Testing which included recommendations for the work of subject groups. In particular the Working Group should offer advice in broad terms about assessment and testing in relation to the attainment targets recommended, the grouping of those targets for purposes of reporting the results of assessment, and in particular what might appropriately be measured by nationally prescribed tests.

GCSE

13. Not all pupils will take GCSE examinations in history as such. However, in defining attainment targets and programmes of study the Working Group should take account of the GCSE National Criteria for history and other subjects with a history element - including in particular classical studies - so far as these are consistent with the approach in the terms of reference. The School Examinations and Assessment Council will be asked to advise on whether, and if so how, the GCSE criteria need to be revised to reflect the national curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study for ages 14-16, and to approve syllabuses accordingly.

General Principles

14. Generally in framing recommendations, the Group should consider the need for

- continuity and progression throughout the period of compulsory schooling and beyond
- breadth and balance
- relevance: the content and teaching of the various elements of the national curriculum should bring out their relevance to and links with pupils' own experience and background and their practical application and continuing value to adult and working life
- all elements of the curriculum to contribute to the development of general personal qualities and competences in young people which will be of value to them in adult and working life - for example, self-reliance, self-discipline, a spirit of enterprise, a sense of social responsibility, the ability to work harmoniously with others, an ability to apply knowledge and use it to solve practical real life problems

15. It will be important to bear in mind that the curriculum should provide equal opportunities for boys and girls. The Group should also take account of the ethnic diversity of the school population and society at large. Further guidance will be given on particular points to be considered in order to avoid unnecessary difficulties for children with special educational needs.

Wales

16. The Group will need to bear in mind that the Secretary of State for Wales wishes them to produce a framework of profile components, attainment targets and programmes of study which would be usable, with the necessary adaptation, in Wales. He has established a History Committee for Wales which is asked to take account of that framework in its work. Initially it is to produce advice, by 30 June 1989, giving outline recommendations for the content of Welsh history and its views on the extent to which Welsh perspectives should influence the wider study of history. For its final report, due by the end of March 1990, the Committee is asked to recommend a balanced overall curriculum for history in Wales, in the light of the final recommendations of the History Working Group. The History Working Group will need from the outset to liaise closely with the Committee on History for Wales. The Committee's final report is intended to form the basis of the Secretary of State for Wales' consultations and draft Orders.

Implementation

17. The Government intends to make orders under the 1988 Act requiring the core and foundation subjects to be taught from September 1989 to all pupils for a reasonable time in each of the first three key stages (i.e. ages 5-14): this will include history. Pupils who will then be in the fourth key stage (14-16) will already have made GCSE course choices, and the requirement will not therefore be extended to them until a later date, probably Autumn 1990 for those in the fourth year and Autumn 1991 for those in the fifth year.

18. No decisions have yet been taken on when attainment targets and programmes of study should be introduced for history: these will be influenced by the Working Group's advice.

PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM HISTORY WORKING GROUP

Chairman: Cdr L M M Saunders Watson,
Vice-Chairman of the Heritage Education Trust
Former President of the Historic Houses Association

Members: Mr R M Guyver,
Wembury Primary School,
Plymouth,
Devon

Mrs C White,
Garth Hill Comprehensive School,
Bracknell,
Berkshire

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