

Curriculum and Assessment Review

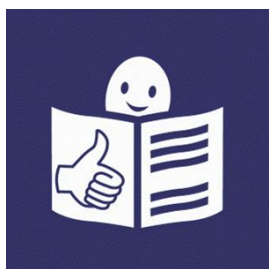
Making education better for everyone

November 2025



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This is the **Easy Read** booklet of the Final Report of the Curriculum and Assessment Review.



Hard words are in **bold**.

We tell you what they mean on page 37.

Summary



We looked at the **curriculum** and **assessment** in a report called 'Building a world-class curriculum for all'



Curriculum means what children and young people learn at school.

Assessments are tests and exams.

We found that a lot works well. But some things need to change.



For example, to help pupils:

- from homes with less money
- with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)



Some of these changes are for all subjects.

Other changes are only for some subjects and ages.

1. Who we are



We are a group of 12 experts.

We help the Government make education better.



The Government asked us to find out:

- what works well in the curriculum
- how to make it better



Curriculum means what pupils learn. It tells schools:

- the subjects they should teach
- what pupils need to learn in each subject



We also said what we think needs to change in **assessments**.

This means tests and exams.

2. What we did



We wanted to find out about:

- primary education
- secondary education
- 16-19 education

We did this by:



- reading reports and research about schools and colleges
- doing a survey with thousands of people to find out what they think



We heard from:

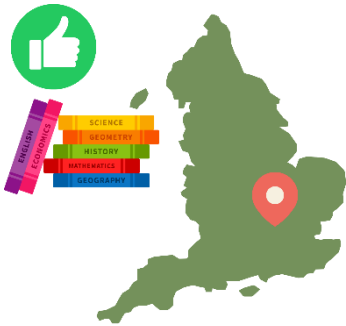
- children and young people
- parents and carers
- teachers
- people who work in education



This Easy Read booklet tells you our ideas to make the **curriculum** and **assessment** better. It is a summary of a longer report.

You do not need to read it all at once. You could take a break or just read the part you're interested in.

3. What works well



Children and young people learn a lot of subjects in primary and secondary schools.

Our pupils do well compared to pupils in other countries.



Some tests work very well – for example:

- reading tests in Year 1
- times tables in Year 4



Most **qualifications** work well – for example:

- **GCSEs**
- **A Levels**



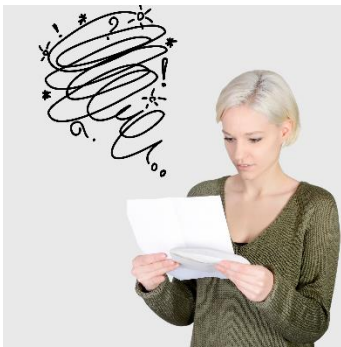
We think the Government does not need to make big changes to these. They already work well.

4. What does not work well

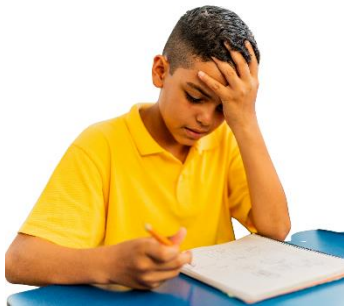


Some things do not work well in primary, secondary and 16-19 education.

We think these things must change:



- parts of the **curriculum** that are out of date and confusing



- tests that some pupils – for example, those with SEND – cannot do because the tests are not accessible



- **qualifications** for young people in 16-19 education

Students need more choice to show what they are good at.

5. Our ideas for change: A curriculum for all pupils



The **curriculum** does not work well for:

- pupils from homes with less money
- pupils with SEND

They do less well in school.



We think the Government should:

- help pupils more when they move from primary to secondary school
- use English and maths tests to find out what help pupils need



- give pupils more choice of courses in **level 2**, but make sure they all learn important subjects



- start a new **level 3** qualification to give more students a chance to study

6. Ideas for change:

Teach new topics for a changing world

We think the Government should teach these in the curriculum:



- Money
Learn how to look after money, like saving and spending.



- Using technology
Learn how to use things like smartphones, computers and the internet.



- Using information online
Learn how to safely use information from TV, websites and social media.



- Environment
Learn how we can care for our planet and why its temperature is changing. This is called **climate change**.

7. Ideas for change: Help pupils to share their ideas



Learning to speak clearly and listen well are important skills.

We call these **oracy** skills.

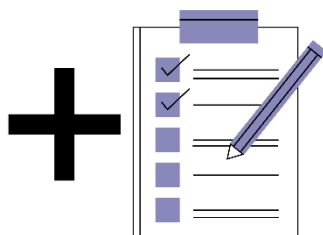


For pupils with SEND, **oracy** skills can mean using sign languages or Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).



Schools do not get enough time to teach these skills.

We think the Government should:



- add **oracy** to subject plans for English, Drama and **Citizenship**
- help schools teach **oracy** as a skill, like reading and writing

8. Ideas for change: Special schools and alternative provision



Mainstream school means the kind of school that most children go to.



Alternative provision is education for children and young people who struggle in **mainstream schools**.

They learn in a different place.



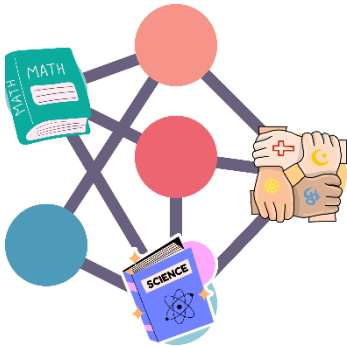
We think the Government should:

- help teachers make changes to the **curriculum** for all their pupils

9. Ideas for change: A curriculum that is easy to use



The **curriculum** should be easy for teachers and leaders to use.



We think the Government should:

- make the **curriculum** easier to use so teachers can see how topics connect across subjects and years



- write a guide to help teachers teach the **curriculum** for pupils with SEND



- try out new subject plans with teachers to make sure they have time to teach them.

10. Ideas for change: Curriculum changes for all subjects



We made a list of rules for all subjects in the **curriculum** to make sure that:

- it has people with different backgrounds, ages and ideas
- pupils learn things in the order that helps them best
- teachers have time to teach well



We think the Government should follow our 7 rules for all subjects:

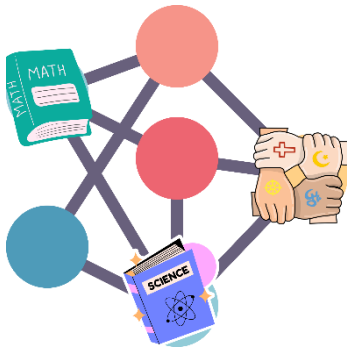
1. All pupils have the right to an education with an interesting and good **curriculum**.



2. In all subjects, the **curriculum** must help pupils learn skills for life and work, and important facts and ideas.



3. The **curriculum** must give pupils time to understand things properly.



4. Subjects and skills must work well together. For example, skills that pupils learn in Maths help them in Science.



5. The **curriculum** should explain **foundation subjects** like Music and Computing to help teachers know what to teach and when.



6. Teachers must have time to teach things not in the **curriculum**.



7. The **curriculum** must have knowledge from different backgrounds, so it works for all pupils.

11. Ideas for change: Art and Design

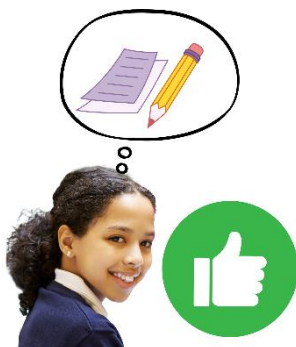
We think the Government should:



- help pupils aged 5 to 14 understand how to get more skills in Art and Design



- help pupils try out different kinds of art, not only drawing and painting



- help pupils understand what coursework they need to do for **GCSE** Art and Design

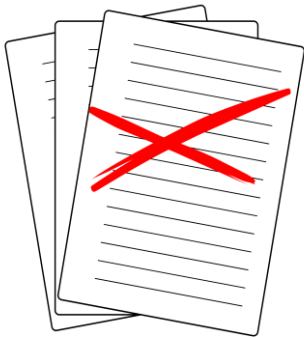
12. Ideas for change: Citizenship



We think the Government should:

- make it the law that all children in primary school learn **Citizenship** as soon as possible

Citizenship is learning to be a good community member and learning about online information, equality, money, rights and the environment.



- take out topics from primary **Citizenship** that pupils will learn in other subjects



- make sure the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 teaches about online information, equality, money, rights and the environment, and fits with **GCSE Citizenship**

13. Ideas for change: Computing



We think the Government should:

- make the **curriculum** clearer to help pupils learn important digital skills, like online safety and web design



- change **GCSE** Computer Science to **GCSE** Computing
- add topics, so pupils get the right skills for life and work



- check what digital skills other subjects teach and find out if those skills should be part of the Computing **curriculum**

14. Ideas for change

Design and Technology (D&T)



We think the Government should:

- set high goals for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to get D&T skills



- make it clear what pupils learn in each school year for D&T



- update **curriculum** and **GCSE** subject plans with ways of working that look after the planet



- make sure pupils try out and test their designs, not just plan them

15. Ideas for change

Cooking and Nutrition

We think the Government should:



- change the subject name to Food and Nutrition
- make Food and Nutrition separate from Design and Technology (D&T)



- make it clear what pupils will learn in Food and Nutrition in each school year



- make sure students can get the skills and knowledge they need for **level 3** food science or the workplace

16. Ideas for change: English

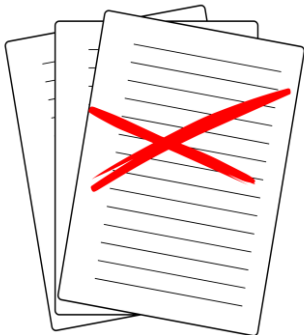


We think the Government should:

- make the English goals for each year group clearer and add a new section on speaking and listening
- make it clear how English Language and English Literature are different



- create a new English test for Year 8, so teachers can see what help their pupils need



- change the **grammar** test in primary, so it is a better test of writing

Grammar means language rules.



- make sure pupils study diverse books and poems

Diverse means writing about different people, cultures and lives.

17. Ideas for change: Drama

We think the Government should:



- add a new section for Drama in English for Years 7 to 9 to explain what pupils need to know



- make sure the **curriculum** is clear about how to teach Drama in primary school



- help pupils build strong skills in Drama, so they are ready for Year 7



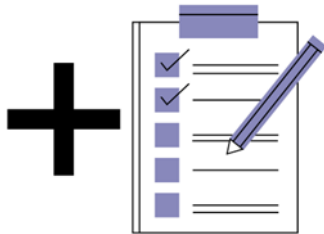
- check that **GCSE** Drama teaching and exams are up to date
- help pupils with their next steps

18. Ideas for change: Geography

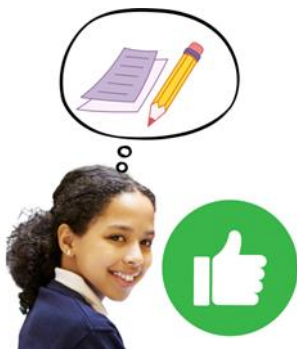


We think the Government should:

- update the **curriculum** and **GCSE** by checking that topics are useful



- add more geography skills to Years 7 to 9 – for example, digital maps



- make sure teachers understand geography fieldwork plans and show how they can help pupils learn



- Improve **sustainability** and **climate change** in the Geography curriculum

19. Ideas for change: History



We think the Government should:

- update the **curriculum** and **GCSE** to help pupils understand and use history facts and skills



- make it clear in the **curriculum** what pupils must learn in History in Years 1 to 9



- support schools to teach History from **diverse** people and places, as well as local history



- check that the History curriculum does not cover too many things to teach

20. Ideas for change: Languages



We think the Government should:

- make it clear in the **curriculum** what primary pupils need to learn in French, German and Spanish



- wait until 2026 to make any changes to **GCSE** French, German and Spanish



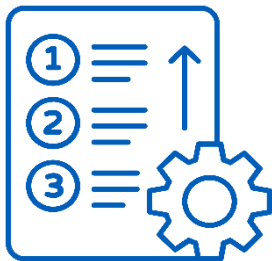
- help councils and schools to work together to decide what languages pupils should learn

21. Ideas for change: Maths



We think the Government should:

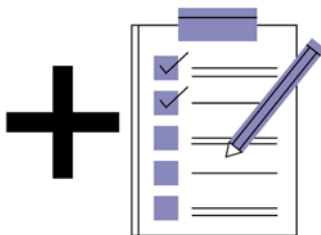
- keep the Maths **curriculum** content the same for Years 1 to 9



- help children learn by teaching maths topics in a different order
- make sure pupils learn important maths ideas in maths lessons first, not in other subjects like science



- update the maths test in Year 2, so more schools use it



- update maths tests in Year 6 and add more mental maths questions



- create a new maths test in Year 8 so teachers can see what help their pupils need

22. Ideas for change: Music



We think the Government should:

- update the **curriculum** for Years 1 to 9, so all pupils get a strong music education



- make sure **GCSE** Music goals are clear and exams work well



- check that changes to Music Technical Awards work well

23. Ideas for change: Physical Education (PE)

We think the Government should:



- make sure the goals of PE and of Dance are clear
- make sure the subject plans for sports like dance and swimming are clear to help teachers give good lessons



- show how PE helps children in other parts of school, not just PE



- make sure the PE that all pupils do in Years 10 and 11 is about movement, not about sports science
- make sure **GCSE** PE is about sports science



- make sure pupils with SEND can join in **GCSE** PE and do well – for example, **GCSE** Dance

24. Ideas for change: Religious Education (RE)



We think the Government should:

- add RE to the **curriculum** in two steps



Step 1:

The Government should work with faith groups, teachers and others to write subject plans for RE.



Step 2:

If these people agree with the subject plans, the Government should ask the public what they think about any new subject plans.

25. Ideas for change: Science



We think the Government should:

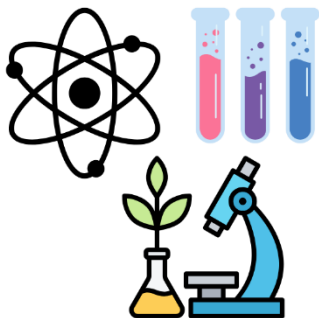
- make sure there are clear plans for teaching Science in the same way across primary classes



- make sure the **curriculum** is based on ideas from each Science, so pupils get strong skills and knowledge – for example, in doing experiments



- make sure the **curriculum** teaches pupils the science about the environment, like **climate change**



- give pupils the chance to study all three sciences: **Biology, Chemistry and Physics**

26. Ideas for change: Technical Awards for Years 10 and 11



Technical Awards are **qualifications** that are more about work skills than **GCSEs** are.



We think the Government should:

- keep Technical Awards the same
- in 2027, check that Technical Awards are working as planned



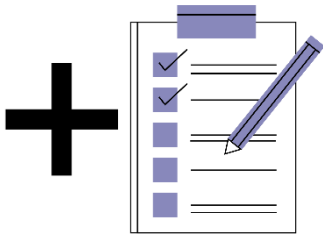
- not start new **Technical Awards** unless we need a new subject or it is urgent

27. Ideas for change: Primary tests



We think the Government should:

- find a way to do **phonics** tests for primary school children who do not speak



- look at ways to help primary schools do Year 2 tests
- help teachers use test results to support pupils to learn



- give teachers a clear guide for marking writing in Year 6 tests
- help schools work together, so teachers can get better at marking



- in the Year 6 English test, add questions on language rules, writing and punctuation – for example, full stops and commas

28. Ideas for change: Secondary tests



We think the Government should:

- make new tests for English and Maths for Year 8 pupils, so that teachers can see what help they need



- keep exams as the main way to test students
- make sure tests only test what is most important to learn



- work with others to understand how **AI** could change testing

AI means **artificial intelligence**.
AI is when a computer can learn and make decisions like a person.



- make sure everyone can take part in tests
- look into how pupils with SEND can do exams on screen

29. Ideas for change:

Check how well schools and colleges do



Schools and colleges check how well they are doing by looking at how well their pupils learn.

We think the Government should:



- stop using the EBacc measure to check how students are doing, as it does not work well



- keep checking how well pupils do from Years 7 to 9, before they start their **GCSEs**

30. Ideas for change: 16-19 education



We think the Government should:

- start a new qualification: **V Levels**
- help students understand their choices and what **V Levels**, **T Levels** and **A Levels** are



- make sure **V Levels** are accessible for students with SEND



- link **V Levels** to areas of work and give students work experience

31. Ideas for change: 16-19 education



We think the Government should:

- start two new pathways to help students do well at **level 2**



- make clearer plans for subjects that do not have exams, so students get the skills they need



- start new **level 1** courses in Maths and English for students who need more help to do well

These can help students to get more skills and confidence, and give them the chance to do well in **GCSEs**.

32. What next?



We listened carefully to what people said about education.

We know we cannot fix everything.



We think our ideas for change will help **all** children and young people get:

- a great education
- the knowledge and skills they need for life



We have shared these ideas for change with the Government.



The Government wrote a report to say what they think of our ideas and what will happen next.

You can see their report on their website.

33. Hard words

A Levels

A Levels are courses you take after age 16 which are academic and help prepare you for further academic study.

Alternative provision

Alternative provision is education for children and young people who struggle in mainstream schools.

Artificial intelligence (AI)

AI is when a computer can learn and make decisions like a person.

Assessments

Assessments are tests and exams.

Biology, Chemistry and Physics

These are known as the three sciences.

Biology is the study of living things like people, animals and plants.

Chemistry is the study of what things are made of and how they change.

Physics is the study of how things move, and of energy, light and sound.

Citizenship

Citizenship is being a good community member and looking after people and the place where you live.

Climate change

Climate change happens when the planet gets hotter because of pollution from things like cars and factories.

Climate change can harm people, animals, plants and the environment.

Curriculum

Curriculum means what children and young people learn at school.

Diverse

Diverse means a mix of different people, cultures and lives.

EBacc

A way that the Government checks how well secondary schools are doing and which subjects students are learning.

Foundation subjects

Foundation subjects are the extra subjects you learn at school, like Art, Computing, Design, Geography, History, Music, PE and Languages.

GCSEs

GCSEs are exams you take at school when you are about 16. They show what you have learnt in different subjects.

Grammar

Grammar means the rules for how we use words in a language.

Level 1, level 2, level 3

We use levels to talk about the different stages of school education.

Level 1 is for basic learning, like simple reading, writing and number skills.

Level 2 is for GCSEs.

Level 3 is for A Levels and some college courses.

Mainstream school

Mainstream school means the kind of school that most children go to.

Oracy

Oracy means being able to talk to people clearly, so they understand you.

Phonics

Phonics is learning to read and write by listening to the sounds in words and matching them to letters.

Qualifications

Qualifications are awards you get when you finish a course or pass an exam. They show what you have learnt and what you can do.

Sustainability

Sustainability means looking after the planet, so that people, animals and nature can live well now and in the future.

Technical Awards

Technical Awards are courses that teach work skills. Students usually do Technical Awards at age 16, along with GCSEs. There are level 1 or 2 Technical Awards in lots of different subjects.

T Levels

T Levels are courses for students aged 16 and over who know what sort of job or industry they want to work in.

V Levels

V Levels are new courses for students aged 16 and over. They are for students who want to explore lots of different industries in a practical way to help prepare them for further study.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

For more information, you can:

- contact the [Department for Education](#)
- see the full report on [our website](#)
- follow the Department for Education on:
X [@educationgovuk](#) and [Facebook](#)

Thank you to all our checking groups for your expert feedback and ideas.

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