



**NEW DEAL
FOR
TEACHERS**

POLITICAL BRIEFING

**Briefing on the Curriculum
and Assessment Review**

Introduction

NASUWT welcomes the Department for Education's review of curriculum, assessment and qualification pathways. While many children benefit from high-quality education and transition successfully into employment or further study, significant systemic barriers impede equitable outcomes for all learners.

Teachers and leaders deliver exceptional results despite these barriers, but comprehensive reform is necessary to address the challenges inherent in the current framework.

Key Issues and Recommendations

Curriculum and Qualifications: Fit for Purpose

- Current frameworks are overly content-heavy, limiting depth and breadth in teaching and learning.
- Vocational pathways have been undermined by a narrow academic focus, which fails to meet the needs of all learners.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a balanced curriculum with equitable weight given to vocational and academic subjects.
- Ensure curriculum design allows flexibility for tailoring content to local contexts and learner needs.

Social Justice and Inclusion

- Socioeconomic disadvantage, gender and race create barriers to achievement.
- Evidence highlights inequities, such as curriculum biases and limited access to diverse opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that the curriculum can take account of the incorporation of social class into the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Develop inclusive curricula that reflect diverse authors, cultures and perspectives.
- Embed anti-racist and decolonised approaches in mandatory frameworks.

SEND and Alternative Provision

- The current curriculum lacks inclusivity for learners with SEND.
- Schools struggle to meet diverse needs due to rigid frameworks and insufficient flexibility.

Recommendations:

- Recast the National Curriculum as a flexible entitlement for all learners, including those in alternative provision.
- Align reforms with workforce strategies to address recruitment and retention issues affecting SEND provision.

Teacher Engagement and Workforce Support

- Previous reforms excluded meaningful engagement with teachers, undermining their effectiveness.
- Teachers face unsustainable workloads and accountability pressures, contributing to recruitment and retention crises.

Recommendations:

- Establish structures for co-production of policy with teachers and unions.
- Implement a national workforce plan to support reform and secure adequate teacher supply.

Accountability and High-stakes Assessment

- Current accountability measures distort curricular focus and increase pressure on schools.
- Statutory assessments disproportionately impact curricular breadth and teaching practices.

Recommendations:

- Remove high-stakes performance indicators linked to assessments.
- Develop holistic accountability measures, such as school report cards, that recognise broader contributions to education.

Post-16 Qualifications and Pathways

- The narrow focus of T-levels and planned withdrawal of applied general qualifications limits opportunities.
- Vocational and technical pathways need to align with employment demands and learner aspirations.

Recommendations:

- Retain and expand applied general qualifications alongside T-levels.
- Foster collaboration between providers and employers to ensure robust vocational opportunities.

Conclusion

The review presents an opportunity to establish a balanced, inclusive and future-focused curriculum and assessment system. By addressing these key issues, the Government can ensure equitable outcomes for all learners, support teacher development and secure a world-class education system for the future.

For further information, please contact: campaigns@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

About Us

NASUWT is The Teachers' Union and is the voice of the teaching profession.

Our aim is to improve and protect the status, morale and working conditions of the teaching profession so that teachers and headteachers can provide the best education and support to children and young people.

We are committed to ensuring that teachers and headteachers are recognised and rewarded as highly skilled professionals with working conditions that enable them to focus on their core role of leading teaching and learning.

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