

Welcome to the latest edition. In this issue there are 2 articles as follows

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The new National Curriculum for England: understanding the changes

Introduction

In the June 2015 edition of Educare we included an article on changes to the U.S. Education system, most notably the introduction of the Common Core National Standards. In October we published a follow-up article, partly in response to feedback that we received, pointing out that the Common Core had received a very mixed reception across the U.S. The second article therefore focused on describing the reactions to the new standards and the reason for these responses.

Also in the October 2015 edition, we began to explore the changes to the National Curriculum in England, beginning with an article by Rebecca de Vos written from the point of view of a parent and a primary school governor. The article reflected on the changes to the primary school curriculum, many of which were already either in place or in progress at the time of writing.

It is hoped that the information below will be helpful for teachers in international schools who are seeking to meet the needs of students from the UK, amongst other national groups. We also trust that it will be a good resource for parents contemplating moving their family back to the UK.

The education scene in the U.K.

The education landscape in the UK has been changing in recent years, and these changes affect both the types of schools available and the National Curriculum or programme of study that is taught in schools. Curriculum reform has been undertaken recently in all four nations of the UK. This article will focus on England, but further information may be found for the other three nations as follows:

Wales

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/everything-you-need-know-wales-9556772>

Scotland

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/>

Northern Ireland

<http://ccea.org.uk/curriculum>

An overview on the types of school available in the UK and an explanation as to the meaning of different terms such as 'local authority maintained' and 'academy' can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/overview>

England

The National Curriculum in England has been undergoing complete revision, the first phases of which were introduced in September 2014, and which continue to be implemented in further phases in each new academic year

The quotation below comes from the UK government website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum>

It concerns changes to schools in England for students aged 4 to 16, who are taught in 4 key stages.

- *The national curriculum sets out the programmes of study and attainment targets for all subjects.*
- *All local-authority-maintained schools in England must teach these programmes of study. [In practice, other types of school such as academies will also follow much of the guidance]*
- *The majority of this national curriculum was introduced in September 2014. The exceptions are English, mathematics and science.*
- *English and mathematics came into force for pupils in years 2 [age 6-7], 6 [age 10 – 11] and 10 [age 14-15] in September 2015, and will apply to pupils in year 11 [age 15-16] from September 2016.*
- *The science curriculum will come into force for year 10 pupils in September 2016, and year 11 pupils in September 2017.*

The government's aim is

.....to raise standards.....and to produce productive, creative and well educated students.

[<http://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-national-curriculum-2014>]

Primary education

An overview of the main changes to the primary curriculum may be accessed from numerous sources. We recommend the following:

1. *Primary National Curriculum 2014: what is the same and what is different?*

This is a 6 page guide for parents, produced by William Morris School in Banbury, Oxfordshire. It summarises the changes to the entire primary curriculum, and can be read or downloaded at

<http://www.william-morris.oxon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/changes-in-curr-14.pdf>

2. *The 2014 National Curriculum: what primary school parents need to know*

This article contains a short summary of the main changes to the core subjects in the curriculum, and gives brief answers to frequently asked questions. It can be found on The School Run website at

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-national-curriculum-2014>

The School Run

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/>

This website is aimed at the parents of primary-age children and provides many resources designed to supplement learning, including access to the new sample test papers. Some of the resources, such as worksheets for English and mathematics, are free, and others are available on subscription. Home schooling parents may find this a very helpful resource.

There are links to detailed primary-level curriculum documents at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

Secondary education

Secondary education is divided into Key Stage 3 (KS3) for years 7=9 [age 11-14], Key Stage 4 to years 10-11 [age 14-16], and Key Stage 5 (KS5) for the final 2 years of school usually studying A Levels. GCSE examinations are normally taken in Year 11.

Some general features of the new system include the following:

- curriculum levels have been abandoned.
- schools have to devise their own assessment methods.
- there is much more emphasis on British history, especially at KS3
- there is translation in both directions in Modern Foreign Language courses
- there is more emphasis on grammar in English
- science is more demanding with a higher proportion of mathematics, some new subject areas, and some subject matter drawn down from the previous KS4.

The Oxford University Press website provides a short summary of the main changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum and answers some frequently asked questions. It is particularly aimed at teachers.

For **science**, go to

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/key-issues/ks3-curriculum/sci-ks3-faqs/?region=uk>

For **mathematics**, go to

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/key-issues/ks3-curriculum/geography-ks3-curriculum>

For **English**, go to

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/secondary/key-issues/ks3-curriculum/eng-ks3-faqs/?region=uk>

For the detailed curriculum documents, including links to subject-specific requirements, go to

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-secondary-curriculum>

GCSEs and A levels

Again, the above web link provides access to detailed government documents and subject-specific curriculum requirements.

The new GCSEs are being introduced gradually over a 3 year period, 2015 to 2017. A useful summary of the changes can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-changes-a-summary/summary-of-changes-to-gcse-from-2015>

This article lists the subjects that will be introduced in each phase, and provides detailed information on subject content and assessment methods for each subject area. In general there is much more emphasis on exams and much less assessment by other means such as projects or course work.

A helpful timeline for parents can be seen at the following link. It details the changes that will affect each school year group.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timeline-of-changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels/changes-to-gcse-as-and-a-levels-that-will-affect-each-current-school-year-group>

The AQA website contains pages giving summaries of the changes in each subject area for GCSEs and A levels. At the following link, select a subject area. For each subject, there are links providing information on the timeline of the changes, the key differences with the previous curriculum and the new assessment methods.

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/policy/gcse-and-a-level-changes>

The GCSE grading system is being reformed, in that the current system using letters A* to G will be replaced by numbers 1-9 where 9 is the highest grade. Some subjects will carry more marks than previously for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

One of the main changes in A levels is the assessment system. The AS qualifications, which are normally gained after one or more sets of exams in the first

year of A levels (year 12) will be stand-alone qualifications, but will no longer count towards the final A level result.

“Assessment will be mainly by exam, with other types of assessment used only where they are needed to test essential skills.”

[Reference <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform/get-the-facts-as-and-a-level-reform>]

Measuring progress

The preoccupation with progress statistics is a growing feature in the backdrop to British education. While all teachers wish to see their students making progress, critics have commented that the assessment methods and calculations involved are one-dimensional and take little account of individual differences and anomalies.

For example, from 2016, secondary schools will be judged not on how many students get a certain grade, but how many make sufficient progress from KS2. This new measure is called the *Progress 8* or *P8 measure*. Detailed information about this can be found in the government document, *Progress 8 measure in 2016, 2017 and 2018* (January 2016), at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497937/Progress-8-school-performance-measure.pdf

How is the new curriculum working?

We sent a questionnaire to some local secondary English and mathematics teachers. We have kept them anonymous, but we gratefully acknowledge their valuable contributions to this article.

English

In my school, we've concentrated so far on implementing new KS4 (GCSE) and KS5 AS and A Level) changes to the English curriculum; our next job is to adapt the KS3 English curriculum so that it is more rigorous, with inclusion of pre 19th century novels for each year group.

We are nervous that weaker students who do not read for pleasure at home (or who rarely ever have done so) will not be able to access some of the exam texts.

Removal of controlled assessments:

[This] is positive: staff hated them as we constantly had to give up our time to ensure that pupils completed these to a decent standard, but as re-drafting wasn't allowed, our labour rarely yielded results.

Removal of speaking and listening weighting:

[Staff were angry] when this was pulled mid-exam cycle after time was spent teaching and assessing this

Pupils results are poorer (this was an area where high marks were fairly easy to attain)

Weaker pupils often shone in this area; now that this component isn't assessed, their grades are weaker.

Studying unseen texts:

AQA (our exam board) have produced a textbook which helps pupils to practise the skills necessary to respond to an unseen text.

We plan all lessons around each exam component's assessment objectives so for the unseen poetry section for example, unseen poems are taught skill-by-skill rather than via poetry content.

How the changes have affected one English teacher:

There's been so much change in one go that it's hard to stay on top of everything and to feel confident of my understanding of each course, particularly in terms of the course overview. There simply wasn't enough time to digest all information before teaching it.

Poor recruitment nationally has meant that some teaching posts haven't been filled or were filled unsatisfactorily. This put undue pressure on more established staff, who have had to mop-up the messes of others.

[There is] a greater emphasis on wider reading, particularly on Greek/Roman mythology, and Biblical references etc [which] is taken more seriously by pupils as this is now expected to gain a level 8/9.

*The speed of change in all 3 Key Stages in English has been rather overwhelming, but I think that the change at KS3 and 4 has been for the better. To succeed well in English now requires learners to **read widely** and to have **cultural capital**, something which I'm sure most diligent missionary children will already be encouraged to possess in daily life.*

Mathematics

Some students are struggling while others are coping:

The very weakest, who have gaps in their knowledge anyway, are tending to find it a bit of a struggle as there is much more stress on solving a problem rather than on a short "do this" sort of question. The rest are finding some things a struggle but rising to the challenge.

There are plus and minus points for the staff.

Staff [are] tending to find [the new system] a challenge as we have lost a bit of our expertise/experience of having worked in a well-known system until we get to know this one better.

Many of us prefer [the new GCSE exam system] as students are older and more experienced when sitting their exams, rather than having to rush elements in year 10 by the end of November. It gives a better reflection of their attainment.

The new maths A level has not been implemented yet.

As there will not be any modules, and there will be more questions linking topics it is going to be harder to divide up the content. Also, all teachers will need to be experts in all the areas - pure maths, statistics, decision maths and mechanics.

Teachers are using an online teaching, learning and assessment service called Kerboodle, to help them to deliver the curriculum. They are adapting the Kerboodle mark scheme for KS3 to be more in line with marking at KS4.

Kerboodle is available for many different subject areas - see

<https://global.oup.com/education/secondary/kerboodle/?region=uk>

It contains resources to help both teachers and students - for example:

- *a range of assessment materials including auto-marked tests, self-assessment checklists and a variety of support materials.*
- *an extensive bank of learning resources including videos, animations, podcasts and worksheets as well as digital versions of the textbooks.*

Feedback

If you have experience of the new National Curriculum which would benefit our readers, or other comments or questions, please let us know.

Gill Bryant April 2016

Re-entry to church in the passport culture: the youth scene

Two new resources

At this time of the year, many families are preparing for re-entry to the passport country, so we have included two resources that may be useful. Much has been written about re-entry shock, including adjustment to the school scene and social culture for teenagers. Most families are less prepared to experience 'church shock', particularly when teenagers find it difficult to adjust to the different expectations and practice of church in their passport country.

We are happy for these resources to be copied, adapted and used as needed, as long as the source is acknowledged.

1. Re-entry Drama - Chugford youth group

We recommend that the first resource be used with groups of parents, to help them understand the challenges that their children may face at church. We have used this short play many times in our training course for new MK staff. It is one of a series of three, also featuring supermarket shopping and the first day at a new school. The aim is to raise awareness of the challenge of re-entry in its various aspects, and to provoke thought and discussion as to how these challenges may be addressed. Each year numerous suggestions are proposed by members of the group.

We would welcome feedback and suggestions as to how the parents in the drama can help their children. We will include these ideas in a future issue of Educare, along with those which we have compiled ourselves over the years.

2. Getting to know you - Chugford youth group

The second resource is designed for the teenagers themselves, and could be used with a small or large group. The aim is to enable TCKs to consider the different circumstances of other members of the group in a way that helps to understand them better. It also provides an opportunity to compare lifestyles and experiences. This activity was first used at a the Global Connections TCK Forum day conference in Birmingham, U.K. in October 2013. Thanks are due to Rachel Cason for her suggestions and improvements.

In this resource, information is provided about a fictional church youth group and its individual members. Instructions are provided.

Again, feedback and ideas are welcome.

Gill Bryant

Resource 1

The youth group

Choose individuals to read the drama script aloud.

(Dad looks up from his i-pad as Chris and Mark come in from the youth group. It was their first time.)

Dad – Hi, lads – how was it?

Chris – Awful. They just played silly games.

Mark – They don't pray or anything. The boys are into gaming and the girls just talk about the latest fashion.

Dad – Surely it wasn't that bad. Did the youth leader explain that you'd just come from Thailand?

Mark – Yes, but we didn't get much chance to talk about it.

Dad – Didn't anyone ask you anything?

Chris – Well, one girl said that she liked Thai cooking.

Mark – And a boy said that he thought Thailand was a holiday place.

Chris – Some people didn't even know where it was. One girl thought it was in South America!

Mark – They don't think of anything beyond what goes on in Chugford. They just aren't interested.

Dad – Well, you've only been once. Give it another try next week.

What can Chris and Mark do? What can their mum and dad do?

Write your ideas here and on the back of the sheet.

Resource 2

Chugford Community Church

Instructions for leader

Read the profiles of the youth group members in advance. Assign a member of the youth group to each participant or small group of students. Give them the profile of their person and the questions. Include information as to whether their individual attends the Wednesday Bible study. At this stage the participants do not need access to the information about the other youth group members.

Ask the participants to imagine that they are TCKs recently returned to the passport country and that they have been encouraged to join the youth group.

Ask them to think about the factors that have made their lives 'different' - high mobility, crossing cultures, behavioural expectations, life in the missions community, etc.

They then consider the questions, discussing them and writing notes.

Each group appoints a spokesperson to give feedback to the entire group. The spokesperson should begin the feedback by giving information about the individual assigned to them.

Hopefully lots of discussion will be generated!

Group profile

The older teens' youth group meets on Sunday evenings for fun activities, and on Wednesdays for group Bible study. They don't all attend the Bible study - from those who do come, the regulars are Bex, Sam, Claire, Jake, Charlotte and Matthew.

There are ten teenagers aged 14 - 17

Bex (17)

from a non-Christian home - was invited to the youth group by her friend Rachel. Parents are divorced, she sees dad at weekends. Dad is a company director and very wealthy. Mum is a teacher. Bex is an only child and moved to Chugford from Scotland when she was 14.

Dan (16)

from a Christian home but sadly his parents are also divorced. He has three younger sisters. He moved around a lot until recently as his dad is in the army - he now lives with mum.

Sam (16)

from a Christian home. Both parents attend church. He has a brother with cerebral palsy who needs a lot of care. Sam has always lived in Chugford, and has a girlfriend, Claire (see below).

Jake (15)

from a non-Christian home. His dad was made redundant recently and the family regularly receive hampers from the local food bank. Mum knows some women from church but so far is not really interested in God. His sister is Amy. The family has always lived in Chugford.

Rachel (17)

lives with dad, who is a Christian. Mum died from cancer when Rachel was 12. She has two younger sisters and an older brother. She has to help a lot at home. She has lived in Chugford since she was 3.

Claire (15)

her mum has ME and is in bed for much of the time. This has been the case since Claire was 7, and mum never seems to get any better. She has a brother who doesn't come to church. He says that he is not a Christian because God hasn't healed his mum. Dad works part time because of the need to care for his wife.

Amy (14)

Jake's sister.

Charlotte (16)

from a stable Christian home, dad is the pastor, she has only moved once about 5 years ago, when her dad took over the church.

Josh (14)

Charlotte's brother

Matthew (16)

has spent three years living in an Asian country where his dad worked as a dentist for a charity. He came back to the UK last year, and the family are new to Chugford. Both parents are Christians and he has an older sister who is on a gap year in Tanzania.

(Note, Matthew is not the TCK who has just joined the group!)

Questions

- Who are the significant people in this person's life? Family members? Friends? How does this compare with your situation?
- What experiences of loss are familiar to this person? How do these connect with my own experience?
- Has this person experienced mobility, within the passport country or overseas?
- What experiences has this person had that I haven't? What experiences have I had that they haven't?
- What challenges has this person faced? How are these different to the challenges you have faced?
- What can you learn from this person?

Gill Bryant (WEC International) and Rachel Cason 2013

Educare is a ministry of WEC International produced for cross-cultural families, their supporters and sending agencies without charge as an e-magazine. Educare may be freely distributed and forwarded to anyone who would benefit from it. Direct subscription from mk_tck@yahoo.co.uk