

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny	Date: 30 th Sept 2014	Classification: Unrestricted or Exempt (To be completed by author)	Report No:
Report of: Corporate Director ESCW Originating officer(s) Di Warne Head of Secondary Learning and Achievement		Title: Curriculum Reforms Wards Affected: All	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Overview and scrutiny about the radical changes which are being implemented by the current government to “reform” the education curriculum, especially at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on:-

- 2.1 The actions being taken through the Learning and Achievement services in the Local Authority to ensure the schools in all phases are aware of, understand and are prepared for the changes to the national curriculum and examinations regimes over the next five years.
- 2.2 The need to encourage parents and carers to engage with the changes and find out from schools their curriculum offer and how they, as parents/carers, can support their children.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The government agenda for education has been expressed as a drive to :
- raise standards, currently perceived as too low in relation to international comparisons;
 - provide better preparation for: University; apprenticeships; further training and; employment;
- 3.2 Education is being created as a market with competing forces from maintained,

free schools and academies. Only maintained schools are required to teach a national curriculum. Schools are expected to develop their curriculum offer without the support of nationally agreed centrally provided training so that there is choice and variety from the open market.

- 3.3 In addition statutory testing and assessment at year 9, end of Key Stage 3, has been abolished.
- 3.4 As the curriculum changes so do the examination specifications and the marking schemes.
- 3.5 As the examinations change so do the reporting measures and consequently the information in the league tables. (See Appendix B)
- 3.6 The timetable for reform has been set out but initial changes have been implemented already. (See Appendices C & F) For example, Primary schools have already been teaching to new revised programmes and study from 2013; speaking and listening is no longer a component of the English examinations; coursework has been reduced and is now delivered through controlled assessments; the grade boundaries have been raised; BTecs (vocational subjects often equivalent to two or more GCSE grades A* -C) no longer count or are reduced to the equivalent of one GCSE, in the performance tables at GCSE.
- 3.7 Other elements are also changing such as the introduction of a Technical Baccalaureate measure; timing of the offer of information advice and guidance; development of apprenticeships and internships; and the way funding is allocated post 16. (See appendix D)
- 3.8 The Key Stage 3 curriculum offer years 7-9 remains substantially the same including the requirement to teach religious education and sex education.
- 3.9 Statutory assessment at Key Stage three has already been abolished.
- 3.10 At Key Stage 4 the main changes take place encouraging schools to offer students a suite of at least 8 subjects.
- 3.11 The relationship between the examination reporting system and the curriculum is inextricably linked. The eight subjects will be reported as “attainment and progress eight”, most likely replacing the current common measure %5+A*-C with English and Mathematics. The outcome measure will be an aggregation of attainment 8 expressed as an Average Points Score (APS),per student, similar to post 16.
- 3.12 The individual examination marking system is also changing so that A-E grades will disappear and be replaced by a numbering system 1-9, with 9 as the best grade.

4. BODY OF REPORT

- 4.1. Pupils of compulsory school age in community and foundation schools, including community special schools and foundation special schools, and in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools, must follow the national curriculum. It is organised on the basis of four key stages and twelve subjects, classified in legal terms as 'core' and 'other foundation' subjects.
- 4.2. The national curriculum for England is to be taught in all maintained primary schools from September 2014.
- 4.3. However, the National Curriculum only forms a part of a school education. A whole education comprises: provision for personal, social, health and economic education; the national curriculum; any other subjects or topics; a daily collective act of worship and religious education.
- 4.4. From September 2012, all schools must publish their school curriculum by subject and academic year online.
- 4.5. All schools are required to provide details about how additional information relating to the curriculum may be obtained:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1124/made>
- 4.6. Academies are also required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with Section 1 of the 2010 Academies Act:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/32/section/1>
- 4.7. Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but children will still be assessed using the new statutory end of Key Stage assessments.
- 4.8. The government carried comparisons with other national measures as follows:
English : New South Wales, Alberta, New Zealand, Singapore, Massachusetts;
Mathematics : Finland, Flemish Belgium, Hong Kong, Singapore, Massachusetts;
Science: Victoria, Alberta, Hong Kong, Singapore, Massachusetts.
- 4.9. The national curriculum comprises Core Subjects : English, mathematics and science, and Foundation subjects : History, Computing, Physical Education, Languages (from KS2), Design and Technology, Art & Design, Geography, music.

At Key Stage 1 and 2

- 4.10. New statutory programmes of study will be introduced for all subjects from 2014 with the addition of foreign languages at Key Stage 2.

- 4.11 ICT will be renamed computing and the course content will change significantly.
- 4.12. The curriculum contains the programmes of study and attainment targets for all subjects.
- 4.13. In the 2013-14 to 2014-15 academic year, pupils in years 2 and 6 should be taught the current programmes of study in English, mathematics and science. These pupils will sit the current key stage 1 and 2 tests respectively. New tests will be available from 2016.
- 4.14. The timetable for implementation of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1&2 spans 2013-16 (See appendix F).
- 4.15. Primary schools will begin the National Curriculum from September 2014. Year 2 and 6 are exempt until September 2015.
- 4.16. Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum, but children will still be assessed using the new statutory end of Key Stage assessments.
- 4.17. The introduction of the National Curriculum does not mean that schools need to completely re-write their curriculum. However, there are some differences in some subjects which will need to be taken into account, for example what is taught in English, mathematics, science and ICT. (See appendix G)
- 4.18. There are changes to assessments. National Curriculum levels have been removed and not replaced
- 4.19. Schools determine their own approach to formative assessment and progress tracking.
- 4.20. The end of KS2 SATS will be more demanding with an expectation that 85% pupils achieve and are considered "*secondary ready*." 85% will be a floor standard.
- 4.21. The establishment of a baseline to measure progress maybe from YR or from KS1 is dependent on the outcome of consultation

At Key stage 3

- 4.22. The national curriculum comprises:
 - English
 - mathematics
 - science

- history
- geography
- modern foreign languages (MFL)
- design and technology
- art and design
- music
- physical education
- citizenship
- information and communication technology (ICT)

4.23. Schools can develop their own ICT curricula or follow the programmes of study.

4.24. They must also provide religious education (RE) and sex education from key stage 3 but parents can ask for their children to be taken out of the whole lesson or part of it.

4.25 The tendency is for schools to offer French and Spanish MFL and with heritage languages taught outside of statutory curriculum time. This is because the currency of some heritage languages is not as strong as that of European languages.

4.26 The proportion of time spent on each subject is within the remit of the school, in relation to DFE guidelines. Most schools will give substantially more time to core subjects English, mathematics and science. All schools in Tower Hamlets set students for English and mathematics and often for science .

At Key Stage 4:

4.27 Most pupils work towards national qualifications - usually GCSEs. The compulsory national curriculum subjects are the 'core' and 'foundation' subjects.

Core subjects are:

- English
- mathematics
- science

Foundation subjects are:

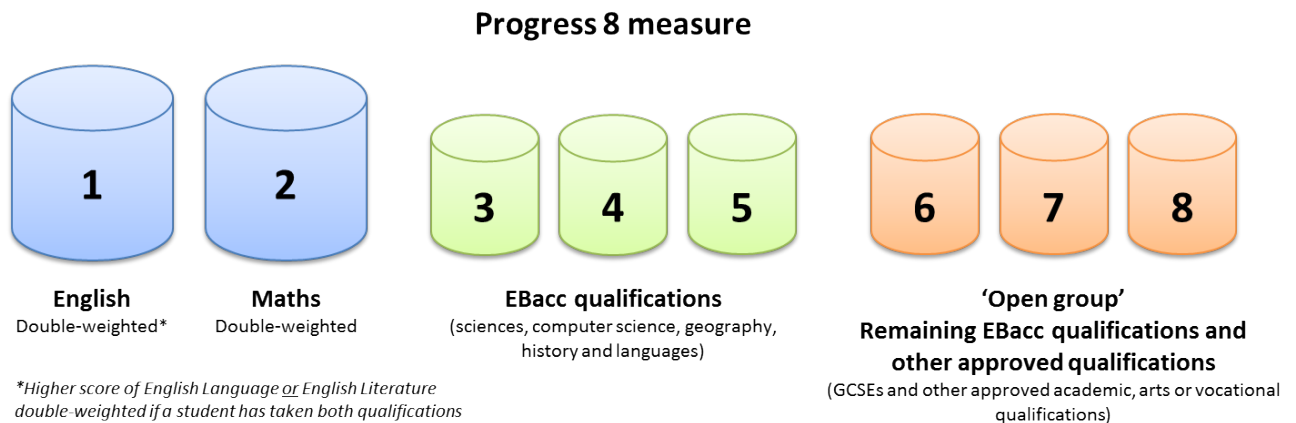
- information and communication technology (ICT)
- physical education
- citizenship

Schools must also offer at least 1 subject from each of these areas:

- arts
- design and technology
- humanities
- modern foreign languages

4.28. They must also provide religious education (RE) and sex education at key stage 4. Pupils don't have to take exams in religious studies but schools must provide at least 1 course where pupils can get a recognised RE qualification at key stage 4 and above.

4.29. The progress 8 measure is the driving force in shaping the new curriculum. (See appendix Ei)



4.30 The content of subjects is changing. New specifications have and are being written for subjects which are now tightly focused on factual learning rather than development of skills. (See appendices A and E for examples) .There is also an emphasis on “Britishness” within the content. As a consequence examinations are also changing, becoming more “challenging, more ambitious and more rigorous”; ensuring GCSEs are universal qualifications with more detailed subject content; reducing variability in the system.

Summary :

Exam reform in England*

	Current GCSE	New GCSE
* WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND ARE KEEPING GCSEs, BUT WILL NOT ADOPT THE CHANGES OUTLINED ABOVE. SCOTLAND HAS ITS OWN SYSTEM.		
Style	Modular courses with coursework plus exams. Exams taken throughout the course as modules are completed. However, from Sep 2012, coursework and modules were reduced or reformed	Modular courses scrapped, new course content, reduced coursework but GCSE brand retained. Controlled assessments scrapped. Most exams taken after two years rather than at the end of modules. More demanding essay-style questions
Exam board	Multiple exam boards	Multiple exam boards
Timeframe	Two year course period; exams can be taken at the end of each module	Exams taken at the end of two year period, with first exams in summer 2017
Subjects	The existing form of GCSE will continue for subjects outside the core group of new GCSEs	Reforms will be applied to core subjects - English, maths, sciences, history and geography - with others to follow.
Grading	A* - G	Numbers 9 (top) to 1 (bottom). Pass mark to be pushed higher
Accountability	Schools judged by pupils achieving five A*-C passes including English and maths	Still under consultation, but under proposals could be based on the number of pupils in a school reaching an attainment threshold in English and maths. Average point score would be based on a range of eight GCSEs

- 4.31 Initially changes are being introduced for the nine core GCSE subjects – English language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, combined science, history and geography. Courses will start in September 2015, with exams sat in the summer 2017. Other subjects, such as languages, will be introduced from autumn 2016. (see appendices A and F)
- 4.32. Modular courses will be dropped; full exams will be taken in the summer at the end of two years of study (excluding November resits in English language and mathematics).
- 4.33. Controlled assessments (coursework done under exam conditions) are abolished.

- 4.34 Grades will be numerical (9-1) rather than the current letter grades A*-G. Recent announcements from OFQUAL indicate that the new Grade 5 would be positioned to cover the top third of marks for a current Grade C and the bottom third of marks for a Grade B. This would mean Grade 5 is set at about half or two-thirds of a grade higher than the current Grade C - which is the standard currently used for school league table measures.
- 4.35 The pass mark is to be pushed higher.
- 4.36 Exams will be based on a more stretching, essay-based system.
- 4.37 Exams will only be taken in the summer, apart from English language and mathematics, where there will also be exams in November for students who were at least 16 on the preceding 31st August. Ofqual is considering whether November exams should be available in other subjects for students of this age. See [Ofqual website](#).

At Key Stage 5 A levels and vocational qualifications

- 4.38. There are significant changes planned in the content, pedagogy and currency of A-level examinations
- 4.39. The value of vocational subjects has been called into question through the Wolf report.
- 4.40. There is to be a much reduced suite of subjects which now count in performance measures and which will be valued by Universities for entrance requirements.
- 4.41 New specifications are being written for subjects on a rolling programme at A-level (see appendix C).
- 4.42. Specifications for the first round of reformed A level in school – Autumn Term 2014 -English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Art and Design, Business Studies, Economics and Computing
- 4.43. First round of teaching begins September 2015
- 4.44. It will not be possible to simply transfer content from the current A-level to the new, as they will have different specifications e.g. History will have a 200 year span, Music will cover “western music” 1700-1900.

- 4.45. AS, taken in year 12 is being decoupled from A-level to become a stand -alone qualification.
- 4.46. Debates are ensuing on teaching of AS alongside A- level or building from AS to A-level; the advice is to keep them separate.
- 4.47. There is a debate about the number of A-levels to be taken from year 12 (3 or 4)
- 4.48. If a student studies three subjects in year 12 the suggestion is to make up the guided learning hours (GLHs) with extended project – much favoured by universities.
- 4.49. Schools also looking at Employability skills programmes, which are sorely needed but few are accredited.
- 4.50. Ofqual consulting on less favoured subjects such as applied business & film studies to see if they will be kept as examination courses.
- 4.51. Examinations will be linear, tested at the end of two years.
- 4.52. Exam content reflects the approach at GCSE in that the emphasis is on applying factual knowledge using higher order thinking skills and considering “Britishness” where appropriate to the subject e.g. History, Literature
- 4.53. There will be a strong emphasis on essay writing with marks for Spelling Punctuation and Grammar.
- 4.54. Writing for purpose will be key; academic English a necessity.
- 4.55. For vocational subjects there is a greatly reduced suite of accepted BTecs and other subjects to align with A-levels
- 4.56. The option of students selecting a mix of A.level and BTecs is becoming less likely.
- 4.57. DfE has published the Applied General and Technical Level 3 approved qualifications list.
- 4.58. From 2013 - 2016 level 3 vocational qualifications will have an ‘interim’ status while awarding bodies work towards new criteria
- 4.59. From Sept 2014 –the first teaching of interim L3 vocational qualifications begins.

4.60. From September 2015 there will be new approved L2 qualifications

Reporting

4.61. The Technical Baccalaureate will be a performance measure for level 3 courses taken by 16-19 year olds. It will have three elements:

1. A high quality level 3 vocational qualification
2. A level 3 core maths qualification, such as an AS in maths
3. The extended project

4.62. From September 2015 the smaller 'Core Maths' qualification will be available that will count towards the Tech Bacc.

4.63. Reporting overall post-16 will be confusing as examinations move through on a rolling programme of implementation. Comparison with previous years will be very difficult as examinations will have changed so much and will not be reflecting like with like.

4.64. The assumption is that the main measures will be based on APS per student/ per subject but this could change.

Apprenticeships:

4.65. Apprenticeships are often regarded as a second best to a degree course. However, for some young people they are ideal entry points into employment.

4.66 There are increasing numbers of Apprenticeships at all levels across all sectors and schools are beginning to consider apprenticeships as a viable and worthwhile alternative route both for higher attaining students and those with basic GCSEs and A-levels.

4.67. Existing apprenticeship frameworks are being replaced by employer designed Apprenticeship Standards.

4.68. All apprenticeships will be for a minimum 12 month period with higher expectations for English and Maths within them.

4.69. All apprenticeships will work towards standards rather than frameworks.

5 Main issues

5.1 The changes to the curriculum in all Key Stages has implications for meeting the priorities in the Strategic and Community plans- namely continuing to raise attainment and increase the rates of employment.

- 5.2 Foremost the changes are far- reaching for schools at every level.
- 5.3 The curriculum offer at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 has the potential to be exclusively driven by examination demands and reporting structures.
- 5.4 Key stakeholders will need to consider: evaluating and defining the core purpose of the school in the context of what sort of learners they want to shape, their cultures, what values the school stands for and the skills in the local area. This includes the views and priorities parents have in complementing the learning offer.
- 5.5 It is therefore important that each school has an explicit published statement about the curriculum on offer. Schools are advised to develop a clear rationale for what they are offering and how they can ensure that breadth and balance can be maintained for all learners. That is ensuring that the wider offer beyond the national curriculum provides the enhancement and enrichment that will ensure young people succeed beyond school.
- 5.6 The content of the examination syllabuses is beyond the control of the schools. However, they have the capacity to shape the curriculum offer overall and the ability to deliver the subject content in innovative and engaging ways. Teachers will need to be aware of changes to the under pinning principles of the National Curriculum; which content has been removed, added or moved.
- 5.7 The schools are very clear that their first priority is to ensure all students are literate and numerate. The pathways they then offer are shaped and tailored to meet the varying needs, abilities and interests of the students.
- 5.8 Schools will also need to train staff systematically over the next five years in the changes and demands in the subject content of the national curriculum and new examinations.
- 5.9 Schools will also need to develop and secure new pedagogies to ensure students are able to complete subject courses and succeed in terminal examinations. Particularly at Key Stage 4 & 5 more emphasis will be required in memorising facts and applying knowledge through extended writing. This will mean considering the quality of teaching
- 5.10 Schools will need to innovate in how they track student progress. National levels have been removed and therefore schools will need to work closely together across phases to ensure there is real understanding of what students know and can do as they move through the system. In Tower Hamlets schools are working together to retain process of levelling between primary and secondary phases.
- 5.11 Much of this training and development will be provided through the teaching profession including local school to school support and networking. This will work

best where it is co-ordinated well; a role the Local Authority improvement officers can fulfil.

- 5.12 Preparation for the changes is already well underway with schools and Local Authority officers working together to ensure schools are ready for the changes. It is imperative that this process is encouraged and enabled to continue.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter relating to Tower Hamlets or its inhabitants. It is consistent with the Committee's functions for it to consider information concerning the Council's response to the proposed curriculum changes.

- 7.2 The general requirements for a balanced curriculum are set out in the Education Act 2002, Part 6 (s.78). Part 6 of this Act gives the government the power to make changes to the national curriculum. The government proposed a review of the national curriculum in England which began in 2011 and the new curriculum was published on 11 September 2013 and is being taught from September 2014. The report outlines the changes that have and are being made to the curriculum and the impact on the schools maintained by the Council.

- 7.3 Maintained schools will be required to follow the national curriculum and the curriculum requirements for each of the key stages are set out at section 4 above. Maintained schools have a duty to publish their curriculum under regulation 10 of The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. This information must be published at least annually and as soon as possible after any change is made to the curriculum. Academies must have a curriculum which satisfies the requirements of s.78 of the Education Act 2002 but are not obliged to follow the national curriculum.

8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Any changes to curriculum have a direct impact on standards across schools and LA officers will work closely with schools over time to ensure that these

changes do not have an adverse impact on any particular group or standards overall, and of course with the aim to raise standards as and where possible.

9. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

9.1 N/A

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 LA officers will work with schools to help support them in preparing for these reforms and to ensure that there is no drop in standards, particularly against national standards. As these reforms introduce assessment processes which are significantly different from the current ones it will not be possible to directly compare future results against the current ones, but over time this comparison will settle down. It will be important that any reporting around results is clear about the relevance of comparisons with previous reporting regimes.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 N/A

12. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

12.1 N/A

13. APPENDICES

Appendix A – GCSE reform 24 07 14 DfE SoS Education

Appendix B – Performance Measures Key Stage 4

Appendix C – Major Reforms 2014 – 2019 Timetable

Appendix D – Education Reforms over the coming years

Appendix E - Changes in subject content at GCSE

Appendix Ei - Progress 8 factsheet

Appendix F – Key Stages 1 and 2 National Curriculum Timeline

Appendix G – Changes in English and maths at Key Stages 1 and 2