Key features of a new primary curriculum

Making the primary curriculum more manageable without loss of challenge will bring important benefits for children. The key features of the primary curriculum put forward by this review:

- **recognise the continuing importance of subjects and the essential knowledge, skills and understanding they represent.** As indicated in the interim report, the essential knowledge and skills all children should be taught, particularly in the middle and later phases of primary education, can be organised through clearly visible subject disciplines, such as history, geography and physical education. Subjects will be complemented by worthwhile and challenging cross-curricular studies that provide ample opportunities for children to use and apply their subject knowledge and skills to deepen understanding (see Chapter 2).

- **provide a stronger focus on curriculum progression.** The review sets great store on securing children’s unbroken progress throughout the primary years. The revisions will strengthen considerably the continuity and progress in learning between the EYFS and Key Stage 1 and from primary to secondary education (see Chapter 4). In the draft programmes of learning the statutory content that all children should be taught is set out in three phases. The three phases show explicitly how the curriculum broadens and deepens to reflect children’s different but developing abilities between the ages of 5 and 11. Setting out curricular progression in three phases will help schools to match curriculum content with the progress expected of children as set out in the National Curriculum attainment targets and level descriptors (Chapter 2);

- **strengthen the focus on ensuring, that by the age of 7, children have a secure grasp of the literacy and numeracy skills they need to make good progress thereafter.** The revised primary curriculum increases opportunities for teachers to teach thoroughly and enrich all four strands of language – speaking; listening; reading; and writing – and equally valuable aspects of numeracy (Chapter 3);

- **strengthen the teaching and learning of information and communication technology (ICT) to enable children to be independent and confident users of technology by the end of primary education.** Used well, technology strongly develops the study and learning skills children need now and in the future, including the fundamentals of ‘e-safety’. Embedding ICT throughout the primary curriculum and giving it greater prominence within the core of ‘Essentials for Learning and Life’ will provide children with more opportunities to harness the potential of technology to enhance learning. Specific requirements for ICT are set out in each area of learning where it directly contributes to the essential knowledge, key skills and understanding within that area (Chapter 3);

- **provide a greater emphasis on personal development through a more integrated and simpler framework for schools.** Each child’s wellbeing is underpinned by the skills and dispositions that support their learning and development. The review proposes an overarching framework through which to develop these key skills as well as acquire essential knowledge, for example of nutrition, food preparation and healthy living. The new framework will allow schools to use programmes such as the popular Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) but cover important elements not within that programme (Chapter 3);
• **Build stronger links between the EYFS and Key Stage 1, and between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.** In the early primary stage the proposed curriculum dovetails easily with the six broad areas of learning and development in the EYFS. This allows more opportunities for extending and building upon active, play-based learning across the transition to primary education, particularly for ‘summer-born’ children and those still working towards the early learning goals. In the middle and later primary years, the curriculum content can easily be increasingly configured as subjects to help transition into Key Stage 3 (Chapter 4); and

• **Offer exciting opportunities for learning languages for 7–11-year-olds.** During Key Stage 2 children will have every opportunity to learn one or more languages at an appropriate pace and depth. Language teaching will recognise the importance of supporting opportunities and celebrating the languages of the school community (Chapter 5).