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Submitted to Curriculum and Assessment Review
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Foreword from the Review Chair

Background to the Review

Why does the Review matter?

What is in scope of the Review?

About this call for evidence

Who is this call for evidence for?

Section 1: About you

1 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Section 1: About you

3 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the below best describes which part of the sector your organisation represents?
[If more than one applies, please select the one that you think is most important to understanding your consultation response.]

Professional association

Please describe:

4 What is the name of your organisation?

Organisation name:

The Schools History Project

5 What is your role within the organisation?

Job role:

Director of the Schools History Project

Section 1: About you

6 What is your name?

Name:

Dan Lyndon-Cohen

7 What is your email address?[Please note: If you are willing to be contacted about your submission, please provide your email address. You do not have to give your email address, and your views will be considered whether or not you provide this.]

Email address:

d.lyndon-cohen@leedstrinity.ac.uk

8 Are you happy to be contacted directly about your response?[Please note: The Review may wish to contact you directly about your responses to help our understanding of the issues. If we do, we will use the email address you have given above.]

Yes

9 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Definitions

Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment, and qualifications pathways

10 What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are working well to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

What is working well?:

The absence of required content in the National Curriculum over the past decade has enabled really creative and fertile developments, with teachers sharing good practice and continued rethinking about what to include, often driven by new scholarship – for example in local histories, environmental history, previously excluded histories (Black, queer, indigenous etc), global histories including empire and migration, and what modern science-driven archaeology keeps revealing.

The Schools History Project believes that we should retain the current model of overarching headings, mainly chronological, with suggested (but not required) 'these could include' lists. However, the overarching headings should all be inclusive of British AND world history, as should the suggestions. British history has never been detached from the wider world. The current requirement to bring in Europe and the world only at the start of the 20th century is deeply unhistorical.

The introduction of migration histories across the GCSE specifications has been a positive development and should be maintained. This has enabled a more diverse specification and represents an effective way of integrating British, European and World history throughout the courses.

11 What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be targeted for improvements to better support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

What should be improved?:

The Schools History Project believe that any changes to the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways should require schools to choose their curriculum content following certain principles, and be accountable to students, parents and the wider community. They should be able to explain how their curriculum choices – whatever they are - uphold those principles. These are the principles that we suggest:

Historical themes

All school courses should have a largely equal balance of certain key themes, to be agreed (in alphabetical order, not order of preference!):

- cultural history including religion, arts and sciences
- economic history
- environmental history
- movement of peoples including migration and empire
- political history including conflict
- social history

History for life

- The curriculum should be chosen to meet the perceived needs of the students
- Students should learn to see the applicability of history to their lives and its centrality in shaping who they are and will become, and in how they interact with the world
- Students should be encouraged to explore personal, family, community and local histories
- Students should know how to use consciousness of the past to make sense of their world

History for humanity

- The curriculum should generate respect for people in other periods and cultures and recognition of our common humanity
- Students' understanding of the past should embrace the complexity of real life - that there have always been multiple experiences and opinions – and question reductive accounts that assume a binary world (eg 'the Royalist view/ the Parliamentarian view') or are driven only by dominant narratives
- When handling difficult histories such as examples of racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination against disabled people and other minoritised groups, history teachers have a responsibility to find the balance between evidence-based, accurate accounts of the past and enabling students to see that such discrimination can and has been challenged and overcome

History as scholarship

- In an interconnected world, school history should be global history, with British history seen alongside and in the context of world history
- Schools should keep abreast of developments in current scholarship and update courses accordingly
- Students should become familiar with historians' work and accustomed to using it in the classroom

History from sources, perspectives and interpretations

- The curriculum should refer to a full range of sources – visual, physical, oral, documentary, digital etc – to help make sense of the past
- Students should be made aware of how and why there are and have always been dominant narratives; how the voices and experiences of groups and individuals have been excluded; and the effect this has on our understanding of the past.
- The range of evidence should always be as inclusive as possible, to include the historically marginalised – eg working-class, women's, disabled, Black, queer and indigenous histories ...
- Students should be trained in how to handle sources of information and make evidence-based judgements, not only about the past but also about current events. This should include how to navigate news media, including social media.

History as exploration

- Just as historical research is a continual uncovering of new evidence-based understanding leading us closer to truth about the past without ever being able to establish certainty, so school history should feel for students like a journey of exploration, with questioning and investigation central to how

students 'do' history in the classroom

• In line with research that shows we learn best through 'doing', collaborative activity-based learning should be an important part of what happens in a history classroom

Section 3: Social justice and inclusion

12 In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation (class ceilings) for learners experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?

Barriers for socioeconomically disadvantaged:

13 In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation which may disproportionately impact pupils based on other characteristics (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or belief etc.)

Barriers based on protected characteristics:

14 In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

Barriers based on SEND:

15 In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any enablers that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above? [e.g. socioeconomically disadvantaged young people, pupils with SEND, pupils who are otherwise vulnerable, and young people with protected characteristics]

Enablers:

Section 4: Ensuring an excellent foundation in maths and English

16 To what extent does the content of the national curriculum at primary level (key stages 1 and 2) enable pupils to gain an excellent foundation in a) English and b) maths? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim? [Please note, we invite views specifically on transitions between key stages in section 9.]

English and maths - primary content:

17 To what extent do the English and maths primary assessments* support pupils to gain an excellent foundation in these key subjects? Are there any changes you would suggest that would support this aim? *These include SATs at the end of key stage 2, the phonics screening check and the multiplication tables check.

English and maths - primary assessment:

18 To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim?

English and maths - secondary content:

19 To what extent do the current maths and English qualifications at a) pre-16 and b) 16-19 support pupils and learners to gain, and adequately demonstrate that they have achieved, the skills and knowledge they need? Are there any changes you would suggest that would support these outcomes?

English and maths - qualifications:

20 How can we better support learners who do not achieve level 2 in English and maths by 16 to learn what they need to thrive as citizens in work and life? In particular, do we have the right qualifications at level 2 for these 16-19 learners (including the maths and English study requirement)?

Support for learners who do not achieve level 2 by 16:

21 Are there any particular challenges with regard to the English and maths a) curricula and b) assessment for learners in need of additional support (e.g. learners with SEND, socioeconomic disadvantage, English as an additional language (EAL))? Are there any changes you would suggest to overcome these challenges?

Challenges with curricula and assessment - changes to overcome these:

Section 5: Curriculum and qualification content

22 Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects* where: a) there is too much content; not enough content; or content is missing; b) the content is out-of-date; c) the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good curriculum design or pedagogy); d) there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for teachers to develop and adapt content)? Please provide detail on specific key stages where appropriate. *This includes both qualifications where the government sets content nationally, and anywhere the content is currently set by awarding organisations.

Subject content:

Primary History

The inclusion of non-statutory suggestions in the National Curriculum for KS1 and 2 can result in teachers limiting their curriculum unnecessarily. For example, in history where there are non-statutory lists of significant people or events this has led to the majority of schools teaching about Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. It would be better for individual schools to consider which significant people or events would be most meaningful to their own school context. It would also support schools in considering a more diverse range of individuals.

The history curriculum content for primary is outdated and has not kept up with demands both within and outside of education, to teach about the diverse past. Its reliance on ancient history at KS2 has led to confusion for both teachers and children, between the roles of archaeologists and historians and has also led to some children (and staff) disengaging with the subject due to not being able to 'imagine' the worlds being considered. It is hard for children to access the written word from the periods being covered (if there is any- such as in the Stone Age in Britain which is actually pre-history) and also hard to find and share with them objects and artefacts from the period. The lack of modern history in the KS2 NC for history is therefore problematic in engaging children with the past through both written sources and objects, as well as spoken accounts, film and photographs. A huge amount of the content is too abstract and distant from their lives. This is also an issue for teacher subject knowledge and resourcing- most teachers followed a history curriculum in their own education which centred upon the Tudors, WW2 and the Victorians- removing all of them has created huge issues with both subject knowledge and engagement.

The current history NC does also not include recent advances in considering environmental history within the NC for history- work done at UCL's Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability Education should be considered here- they have done exceptional work in developing CPD for both primary and secondary history teachers: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/ucl-centre-climate-change-and-sustainability-education>

There is no research to suggest that teaching history in chronological order supports children in developing their historical thinking therefore the ordering and choice of content in the current NC is potentially problematic. This is exacerbated when children's mathematical attainment is also considered alongside the tendency to teach the stone age in Y3- children have not yet encountered negative numbers.

Increasingly, because of Ofsted deep dives demanding that schools outline the knowledge children will know and remember throughout a curriculum, schools are buying in commercial schemes and asking teachers to adhere to them. The commercial schemes are not always fit for purpose and are sometimes written by non- age phase specialists. There needs to be much greater flexibility within this as teachers are losing all sense of agency and that is part of the reason for the mass-exodus from the profession, that we are currently experiencing. Teachers want to have the time, space and knowledge to be curriculum makers rather than someone who stands at the front and delivers pre-existing PowerPoints, booklets and pre-made curriculum content. Finally, the focus on schemes has led to teachers not being able to access wider CPD opportunities in subjects as adherence to a particular scheme and the costs involved have made it even more difficult for them to access quality CPD than it was before.

KS3 History

The absence of required content in the National Curriculum over the past decade has enabled really creative and fertile developments, with teachers sharing good practice and continued rethinking about what to include, often driven by new scholarship – for example in local histories, environmental history, previously excluded histories (Black, queer, indigenous etc), global histories including empire and migration, and what modern science-driven archaeology keeps revealing.

The Schools History Project believes that we should retain the current model of overarching headings, mainly chronological, with suggested (but not required) 'these could include' lists. However, the overarching headings should all be inclusive of British AND world history, as should the suggestions. British history has never been detached from the wider world. The current requirement to bring in Europe and the world only at the start of the 20th century is deeply unhistorical.

GCSE History

History GCSE courses have far too much content and are inaccessible to a significant number of students. The Striking the Balance Review of the 11-16 Curriculum states that the content "is most commonly described as excessive" (<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/717919-striking-the-balance.pdf>). Teacher response to a survey for the Schools History Project showed that over 90% of respondents believed there was too much content. Qualitative responses also showed significant concerns about content overload:

It is impossible to teach content thoroughly in the time available and embed exam skills. Every year is a rush to the end and results suffer because of the rush.

Far too much content. Can hardly get through the course in time for exams let alone embed knowledge and skills.

Less content, we have so much to get through, and time allocation is so different and much less than core subjects but the demands are just as high. Cutting some content will allow flexibility to do more with less.

Over 80% of the respondents believed that the question stems at GCSE should be reduced and adapted to help students move away from formulaic responses.:

"We must get away from predictable question stems which are frankly stopping history teachers from teaching 'history' at all (in the sense of both content and proper historical argument). Teachers are forced to teach weird formulae in these strange exam proxy genres."

"Help students with fewer but straightforward question stems. If you want 2 factors explained- tell them directly (don't imply it in mark schemes). Use unambiguous questions that specify what they want."

"Question stems at GCSE are very confusing! There should be a standardised approach regardless of board."

Just under 90% disagreed with the statement that the GCSE exams were accessible to all students:

"Accessibility of sources, accessibility of questions, sources with a reading age of 16 mean that those student with a lower reading ability cannot access those marks."

"Can hardly get through the course in time for exams let alone embed knowledge and skills. This makes it hideously difficult for weaker students to access."

There are also concerns about the content of the GCSE course needing revision to reflect the latest scholarship and recognise the importance of a more diverse and representative curriculum. For example, the need to bring in communities and voices that have been historically underserved is limited under the current specifications. In a recent survey undertaken by Teaching Medieval Women (<https://teachingmedievalwomen.org/reports/>) there is massive under representation of women in GCSE and A Level exams relating to the Middle Ages. Out of the 253 sources that were used in the 2023 exams, only 10 named women. Of the 374 questions examined, only 7% were directed at women's experiences and not a single female historian was cited. In the markschemes men appear 10 times more than women. There is a similar lack of representation of people from minoritised groups, LGBTQ+ communities and people with disabilities. This has been compounded by the 2016 reforms that increased the amount of British History that had to be taught and led to a narrowing of the GCSE specifications. It is unhistorical to separate British history from European and World History, particularly with respect to the expansion and impact of the British Empire.

A Level History

There are similar concerns in relation to A Level History:

The requirement to cover both breadth and depth feels unnecessarily challenging, requiring a vast amount of content that needs to be covered and understood in depth, in order for students to be able to write in depth essays and tackle source questions to a high level of detail.

Across the board the focus is on political, religious and economic history and this is reflected in the aspects of the discipline that the students are exposed to - historical work involving oral histories, artefacts and objects, scientific techniques, environmental analysis does not feature. Likewise, new historical debates emerging out of environmental history, social and cultural history, postcolonial history and queer history are not made visible to students. This potentially narrows their sense of what the current discipline is. Teachers have had to engage in a large amount of work to ensure representation of the voices and stories of colonised peoples. The OCR A Level exam units appear to avoid this problem by reducing the time-scale and taking a more global approach in their unit on exploration and empire. However, when looking at the British units that cover the same period of the late 16th to the mid-18th century, Britain's role as an imperial power does not seem to consistently be engaged with in the specification.

Representation of Irish, Scottish and Welsh history in British history units is often very limited and presented in way that leads these regions to only become visible when in conflict with authorities in England. In general, the focus on high politics in lots of these units ensures that the political centre tends to be prioritised at the expense of the regions.

23 Are there particular changes that could be made to ensure the curriculum (including qualification content) is more diverse and representative of society?

Changes to ensure curriculum is more diverse and representative of society:

The introduction at GCSE of courses focusing on Migration histories has had a positive impact on widening representation in History classrooms, and there has been some trickle down at KS3 with the Historical Association reporting in 2021 (<https://www.history.org.uk/secondary/categories/409/news/4014/historical-association-secondary-survey-2021>) that "nearly three-quarters of the schools represented (72.8%), teachers reported teaching the history of migration in some way within their Key Stage 3 curriculum, most of them for more than just one or two lessons." However, this means that nearly a third of all students across the UK are learning no migration history at all. Similarly, when asked about teaching non-European history the survey revealed "only 42% of schools allocate a series of lessons or a short unit to teaching about the history of a non-European nation. While 30% of schools claim to devote one or two lessons to such teaching, 28% of respondents reported that their schools did not teach about the history of a non-European society at all within Key Stage 3". When asked specifically about the teaching of Black and Asian British history "Only 23% of schools reported devoting a series of lessons to teaching an aspect of Black or Asian British History ..., most schools (57%) reported devoting just one or two lessons to such history." As for other marginalised and historically underserved communities "the history of people with disabilities and of those who identify as LGBTQ+ that tend most often to be absent from the curriculum, with 55% of schools acknowledging that they made no mention of the former and 41% of schools that they made no mention of the latter. Where the experiences of such people are included, it tends to be as individual stories or as a defined theme within a particular unit." This data clearly recognises the need for substantive change in the history curriculum across all key stages to address the continued under representation of significant groups in the UK. The Runnymede report on Teaching Migration, Belonging and Empire in Secondary Schools (<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/teaching-migration-belonging-and-empire-in-secondary-schools>) identified that over 70% of teachers wanted more training on teaching migration and empire histories.

At A Level all three main exam boards have a preponderance of British and European history, with OCR having the greatest number of courses that could allow students to engage with a broader geographical scope. However, the presence of a course option does not necessarily mean that teachers will select it. Here, the focus on chronological breadth imposed by Ofqual (the 200-year rule) rather than geographical or thematic breadth could perhaps be re-thought.

What is perhaps even more important is the content included within the courses. Where women are represented in flagship courses like the AQA ones on the French Revolution or the Cold War, they are often mentioned as asides, with no opportunity given to students to consider their contribution seriously and in-depth. The AQA French Revolution course also provides a good example where opportunities to engage with the experience of people in France's colonies has been missed. In the vast majority of courses, opportunities to consider the histories of the LGBTQ+ community, the GRT community, disabled people or children and young people. It is very important that the drive for representation does not merely result in increased presence of hitherto marginalised groups, but requires students to apply the same rigorous historical thinking to the stories of these groups as they would to other topics.

This may be connected to a broader tendency to focus on political history (and high politics at that) across the board. A greater range of courses that

focused on social or cultural history, for example, would allow for a wider range of groups to be represented and their experience made the focus of serious historical enquiry.

The Schools History Project recommends that

- The curriculum should generate respect for people in other periods and cultures and recognition of our common humanity
- Students' understanding of the past should embrace the complexity of real life - that there have always been multiple experiences and opinions - and question reductive accounts that assume a binary world or are driven only by dominant narratives
- When handling difficult histories such as examples of racism, gender-based violence, homophobia, discrimination against disabled people and other minoritised groups, history teachers have a responsibility to find the balance between evidence-based, accurate accounts of the past and enabling students to see that such discrimination can and has been challenged and overcome
- Students should be made aware of how and why there are and have always been dominant narratives; how the voices and experiences of groups and individuals have been excluded; and the effect this has on our understanding of the past.
- The range of evidence should always be as inclusive as possible, to include the historically marginalised - eg working-class, women's, disabled, Black, queer and indigenous histories ...
- More gender neutral language should be used in textbooks and teaching materials, for example referring to monarchs rather than kings/queens. There are also suggestions here about using appropriate language when teaching about the history of enslavement:
<https://nottinghammuseums.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/3a.-Slavery-and-Racial-Terminology-Glossary-Omitted-Terms.pdf>
- More attention should be given to the specifications and exam content for GCSE and A Level history to ensure wider representation in the source materials and questions that are being set, and the markschemes that are written.
- Local History can play a significant role in delivering diverse histories that are reflective of the communities that schools serve. This could be made a mandatory part of the National Curriculum and GCSE history courses.
- Training courses and materials should be made accessible to history teachers to support the teaching of more diverse histories including histories that are on sensitive/challenging topics.

24 To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about, and respect, others? Are there elements that could be improved?

Respect for others:

25 In which ways does the current primary curriculum support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for life and further study, and what could we change to better support this?

Primary - skills and knowledge needed for life and further study:

The RHS reported in 2018 that historians in UK universities are overwhelmingly white:

https://files.royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/17205337/RHS_race_report_EMBARGO_0001_18Oct.pdf

Only 11% of history students were reported to be from Global Majority backgrounds. This data suggests that we need to work to make the history curriculum more relevant and interesting to ensure that Global Majority students take the subject up and stay with it through university and beyond. The history NC therefore needs to be considered and developed in light of this.

The new Reading Framework does go some way to supporting schools to develop a love of reading.

In an age of social media, fake news and influencers it is more important than ever that our children understand how knowledge is created and presented, so a real understanding of sources of information is vital. Knowing facts is important but not to the exclusion of understanding where they came from and the implications of this knowledge.

26 In which ways do the current secondary curriculum and qualification pathways support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work, and what could we change to better support this?

Secondary - skills and knowledge for life and further study:

The inclusion of local history or History Around Us units for GCSE History has the potential to engage students in histories that are meaningful and inspiring for their future study, life and work. It creates in pupils an interest in the historical exploration of the environment which they will find a rewarding leisure pursuit both outside school time and beyond the years of schooling and as such the Schools History Project recommends that local history becomes a mandatory part of the curriculum from KS1 to KS4.

27 In which ways do the current qualification pathways and content at 16-19 support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work, and what could we change to better support this?

16-19 - skills and knowledge for life and further study:

One of the most useful aspects of the history course in this respect is the Non-Examined Assessment. While there are undoubtedly concerns about maintaining this with the increased use of AI, the experience of devising and conducting independent research is still a good preparation for the kinds of work that students will be required to complete at university and in the workplace.

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

28 To what extent does the current primary curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

primary - broad and balanced:

29 To what extent do the current secondary curriculum and, qualifications pathways support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

secondary - broad and balanced:

30 To what extent do the current qualifications pathways at 16-19 support learners to study a broad curriculum which gives them the right knowledge and skills to progress? Should anything change to better support this?

16-19 - broad and balanced:

31 To what extent do the current curriculum (at primary and secondary) and qualifications pathways (at secondary and 16-19) ensure that pupils and learners are able to develop creative skills and have access to creative subjects?

support for creative skills and access to creative subjects:

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

32 Do you have any explanations for the trends outlined in the analysis and/or suggestions to address any that might be of concern?

Explanations of trends or suggestions to address:

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

33 To what extent and how do pupils benefit from being able to take vocational or applied qualifications in secondary schools alongside more academically focused GCSEs?

secondary - benefit from vocational qualifications:

34 To what extent does the current pre-16 vocational offer equip pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills and prepare them for further study options, including 16-19 technical pathways and/or A levels? Could the pre-16 vocational offer be improved?

vocational offer - equip for further study and improvement suggestions:

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

35 Is the volume of statutory assessment at key stage 1 and 2 right for the purposes set out above?

volume of assessment at key stage 1 and 2:

There is a huge amount of statutory assessment at KS1 and 2 and it isn't always appropriate for the purpose. As an example, the phonics test in Y1 gives a baseline of children's ability to decode however, this is not the only measure of reading that needs to be undertaken. Recent research also suggests it has no impact on later attainment in reading:

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/what-can-quantitative-analyses-tell-us-about-the-national-impact-of-the-phonics-screening-check/>

It could be argued, particularly with recent figures emerging,

(<https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2024/>) that reading for pleasure is the most important indicator of children's academic success. Whether this can be measured is debatable but perhaps the absolute focus on decoding which has become embedded in children's early school reading experiences does nothing to help it. We need our children to love reading but increasingly they do not. How do the tests we are doing measure and develop that?

Statutory tests in primary focus the school's curricula attention upon those subjects being tested. Secondary schools do not use the assessments as they feel they do not reflect children's real attainment in the subject due to hothousing- therefore what purpose do these tests have? Is it to measure the school's attainment? That is immediately difficult due to different schools having different intakes of pupils. The whole system therefore needs to be reconsidered alongside a why this, why now- what is the long-term impact and how useful are these results and for what (and who)? We have a chance to reconsider the damaging impact of testing in core subjects and reconfigure so that assessments are useful and purposeful.

Writing assessments at the end of KS2 are also difficult for schools. Whilst they use teacher assessment, schools are generally moderated after SATs which creates increased workload and pressure for both staff and pupils at a time when they really don't need it. This needs to be looked at.

36 Are there any changes that could be made to improve efficacy without having a negative impact on pupils' learning or the wider education system?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment improvements:

37 Are there other changes to the statutory assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 that could be made to improve pupils' experience of assessment, without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment improvements to experience:

The focus on decoding alone at KS1 needs to be changed or removed.

The KS2 tests cause undue stress and pressure on children which comes from some parents and some schools. This pressure happens at a time when children are beginning to undergo hormonal changes and are about to transition to secondary education- it does nothing for their emotional wellbeing

and mental health.

KS1 children could still have a 1-1 with their teacher who can ask questions relating to both decoding and comprehension and also about children's enjoyment of reading.

At KS2, the tests are far too all-encompassing and this has become embedded in school culture. It needs to be reset. Perhaps a similar reading test to Y1 could be introduced.

The grammar test is only useful if the children are able to use what they are taught. As a test, it is potentially easy to just teach children how to respond to each question type as they cannot change too much because of grammar conventions. This makes it almost worthless, so whilst grammar is undoubtedly important, the focus perhaps needs to be on children's writing. It should also note that the creative and imaginative elements of children's writing should also be assessed- not just grammar and text type conventions.

38 What can we do to ensure the assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 works well for all learners, including learners in need of additional support in their education (for example SEND, disadvantage, EAL)?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment works for ALL learners:

The assessment system needs to be rooted in formative rather than summative assessment. It needs to allow the children to speak and have their thinking measured that way rather than purely through the written word (or numbers).

To make the assessment system work, we need to ensure that it is fit for purpose- and to be fair, it has become unclear what the purpose actually is- lots of work needs to be done around that.

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

39 Is the volume of assessment required for GCSEs right for the purposes set out above? Are there any changes that could be made without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

volume of assessment at GCSEs:

The volume of assessment required for the GCSE History courses is too much and as a consequence student engagement with the exam papers and subsequent outcomes show that the courses have become inaccessible. Removing the flexibility to examine modules over the two year course and replacing it with a linear exam system has been overwhelming for many students who typically face 31.5 hours of exams for their GCSEs. This has contributed to a significant rise in poor mental health for many students

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/aug/21/gcse-England-high-absence-levels-mental-ill-health-heads>. In the History GCSE specifically there are far too many question stems that each require different historical skills to be taught, for example on the Edexcel exam course there are 9 different historical skills being tested

(<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/History/2016/Teaching-and-learning-materials/gcse-9-1-history-assessment-guide.pdf>). This is compounded by the excessive content on the GCSE courses which makes it impossible to teach both skills and knowledge in meaningful and engaging ways. The OCR B History GCSE specification, designed by the Schools History Project, is a model of how to deliver content and skills that are at the same time rigorous, accessible and achievable (<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/207164-specification-accredited-gcse-history-b-.pdf>) The course is underpinned by the SHP principles of making history meaningful, engaging in historical enquiry, History Around Us and historical diversity. Feedback on the course has been very positive:

"praise for the range and diversity of topics available, as well as the structure and clarity of the specification. Some also appreciate the focus on historical concepts and skills." (OCR GCSE History teacher survey, March 2023)

40 What more can we do to ensure that: a) the assessment requirements for GCSEs capture and support the development of knowledge and skills of every young person; and b) young people's wellbeing is effectively considered when assessments are developed, giving pupils the best chance to show what they can do to support their progression?

GCSE assessments - support development of knowledge and skills and considers wellbeing:

41 Are there particular GCSE subjects where changes could be made to the qualification content and/or assessment that would be beneficial for pupils' learning?

changes to GCSE qualification content or assessment:

See previous answers for recommendations for the History GCSE courses, however the Schools History Project specifically recommends the OCR B History GCSE course as a model of good practice that addresses many of the challenges of the current model.

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/207164-specification-accredited-gcse-history-b-.pdf>

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

42 Are there ways in which we could support improvement in pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 3?

support pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 3:

43 Are there ways in which we could support pupils who do not meet the expected standard at key stage 2?

support pupils who do not meet expected standard at key stage 2:

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

44 To what extent, and in what ways, does the accountability system influence curriculum and assessment decisions in schools and colleges?

accountability system influence curriculum and assessment decisions:

45 How well does the current accountability system support and recognise progress for all pupils and learners? What works well and what could be improved?

accountability system support and recognise progress for ALL pupils:

46 Should there be any changes to the current accountability system in order to better support progress and incentivise inclusion for young people with SEND and/or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds? If so, what should those changes be?

accountability system changes to support SEND or socio-economically disadvantaged:

Section 8: Qualification pathways 16-19

47 To what extent does the range of programmes and qualifications on offer at each level meet the needs and aspirations of learners? a) Level 3 b) Level 2 c) Level 1 and entry level

extent to which programmes and qualifications meet needs and aspirations of learners:

48 Are there particular changes that could be made to the following programmes and qualifications, and/or their assessment that would be beneficial to learners: a) AS/A level qualifications b) T Level and T Level Foundation Year programmes c) Other applied or vocational qualifications at level 3 d) Other applied or vocational qualifications at level 2 and below

changes to programmes and qualifications:

49 How can we improve learners' understanding of how the different programmes and qualifications on offer will prepare them for university, employment (including apprenticeships) and/or further technical study?

improve understanding on how programmes and qualifications will prepare them for future:

50 To what extent is there enough scope and flexibility in the system to support learners who may need to change course?

scope and flexibility to support learners changing course:

51 Are there additional skills, subjects, or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19 education, regardless of their chosen programmes and qualifications, to support them to be prepared for life and work?

skills, subjects or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19:

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

52 How can the curriculum, assessment and wraparound support better enable transitions between key stages to ensure continuous learning and support attainment?

wraparound support enabling transitions between key stages:

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

53 How could technology be used to improve how we deliver the curriculum, assessment and qualifications in England?

how can technology be used to improve delivery of curriculum, assessment and qualifications :

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

54 Do you have any further views on anything else associated with the Curriculum and Assessment Review not covered in the questions throughout the call for evidence?

Any further views: