

Disapplication of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, Attainment Targets and statutory assessment arrangements for ICT from September 2012

Overview

Introduction

This report summarises the responses received to our recent consultation on draft regulations to be laid under Section 91 of the Education Act 2002 relating to the Government's decision to remove the duty on maintained schools to teach and apply the existing information and communication technology (ICT) Programmes of Study, and the associated Attainment Targets and statutory assessment arrangements, in school years 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Background

On 11 January 2012 the Secretary of State for Education announced proposals to remove the duty on maintained schools to follow the existing ICT Programmes of Study, the associated Attainment Targets, and the statutory assessment arrangements at Key Stage 3, from September 2012. A formal public consultation on the proposals was carried out between January and April. On 11 June 2012 a decision to implement the proposals was announced and a report of the responses to the consultation was published. At the same time a consultation on a draft of the regulations that will give effect to the removal of the duty was launched. That consultation ended on 16 July, with 48 responses having been received.

By removing this requirement, maintained schools will continue to be under a duty to teach ICT as part of the National Curriculum, but teachers will have the freedom to determine ICT curricula that best meet the needs of their pupils.

Findings

Five respondents commented on the appropriateness of the draft regulations. They were of the view that the proposed regulations would achieve the desired policy intention, but one respondent felt that the disapplication period should not be time-limited to 2014. Their view was that if new regulations were not brought in to implement new ICT Programmes of Study from 2014, the previous ICT National Curriculum would again apply from 2014 and this could present a significant problem for schools that might have to reconstruct curricular systems and staffing structures which had been amended during the period of disapplication. They argued that the Government should work to issue new regulations in good time for schools to plan for September 2014.

Other respondents tended to respond in more general terms on the principle of disapplication and its effects, reiterating a number of the arguments put forward during the public consultation earlier this year. They said, for example, that:

- the freedom afforded by disapplication will allow schools to make the subject more enjoyable for students and staff;

- following disapplication schools should be reminded that ICT remains a compulsory element of pupils' education;
- the disapplication will allow schools to teach ICT in the way that is most appropriate for children until new Programmes of Study are introduced in 2014;
- children are competent in ICT and generally have good skills;
- there will be a risk that some teachers will ignore areas of ICT that they find difficult to teach;
- Ofsted should take account of the disapplication in their inspection arrangements; and
- schools will require an element of guidance to ensure that required skills are not lost.

Next Steps

The Government believes that those schools wishing to deliver more demanding ICT provision should have the freedom to do so. Between 2012 and 2014 schools will not be required to change their ICT curricula, but disapplication of the existing statutory requirements will allow them to do so if they wish. The regulations have therefore now been laid to allow them to come into force from 1 September 2012.

It is the Government's intention to produce new, slimmer, Programmes of Study for ICT in good time for first teaching from 2014.

Overview of responses

The organisational breakdown of respondents was as follows:

Secondary School	9
Primary School	7
Other ¹	8
Local Authority	2
Consultants/Advisers	5
Teacher	9
Academy	2
Parent	2
Organisation Representing School Teachers	2
Further Education	1
Special School	1
Total	48

¹ Those which fell into the 'other' category included ICT specialists, IT professionals, school governors, and those respondents who did not specify a type.