

**NALDIC Conference**  
**16<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**The New National Curriculum for  
English:  
A NATE Perspective**

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# The Curriculum Rewrite

- Gove's views on English

'We need to reform English. The great tradition of our literature - Dryden, Pope, Swift, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Austen, Dickens and Hardy - should be at the heart of school life. Our literature is the best in the world – it is every child's birthright and we should be proud to teach it in every school.

- And, more than that, it is every child's right to be taught how to communicate clearly. Thousands of children – including some of our very brightest – leave school unable to compose a proper sentence, ignorant of basic grammar, incapable of writing a clear and accurate letter.
- And it's not surprising when the last Government explicitly removed the requirement to award a set number of marks for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in examinations. The basic building blocks of English were demolished by those who should have been giving our children a solid foundation in learning. Well – let me be clear. Under this Government we will insist that our exams, once more, take proper account of the need to spell, punctuate and write a grammatical sentence.'
  - Michael Gove, Speech to Conservative Party Conference, Oct 2010

# The Review of the Expert Panel - Evidence

- International comparison: Alberta, Massachusetts, NSW, NZ, Singapore and Hirsch Core Knowledge Curriculum\*
- Former NCs, National Strategies and APP

\*7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Gerunds and gerund phrases

- Identify and tell its use in the sentence (subject, direct object, indirect object, appositive, predicate nominative, object of preposition)

# Call for Evidence

- Reading

- Children should be read stories
- Children need to understand what they are reading
- More genres for reading than writing

- Writing

- More focus on non fiction writing
- Focus needed on SPAG
- Reduced number of genre

- Speaking and Listening

- Critical at every stage

# Oracy across the curriculum

- Referencing Bullock and the NOP, centrality of oracy across the curriculum is reaffirmed
- Oracy will be in PoS for core and foundation subjects
- Recommends professional development and support

# Assessment

- Concern with current levelling obsession ('exacerbating social differentiation'; 'pupils become more concerned for 'what level they are' than for the substance of what they know, can do and understand')
- Advocates a 'high expectations for all' approach; expecting all students to have secure understanding before moving on

# Primary Programme of Study

- Key Stage 1 yearly; Key Stage 2 – 2 yearly
- A page to cover spoken English
- Reading – Word reading and comprehension
- Writing – Transcription and Composition

# Primary Programme of Study - Concerns

- Almost exclusive emphasis on systematic synthetic phonics in reading at KS1
- Over emphasis on grammatical forms and terminology in KS2 and appendices
- Lack of breadth – media, drama, ICT, creativity
- Woeful underplaying of importance of oracy

# Secondary Programme of Study – Key Stage 3

- Relatively slim
- Purpose and aims
- Allowing schools and teachers freedom?
- It's not the primary English curriculum
  
- Concerns
  - Narrow range of reading
  - Limited definition of writing
  - Neglect of speaking and listening
  - What is missing

# Whither?/Wither?

- Media, film, multimodal texts
- ICT
- Drama
- Creativity
- Speaking and listening/oracy as process rather than product

- ‘Although the partial attempt to implement the seminar’s recommendation of ‘talk across the curriculum’ is a small step forward, it is not convincingly pursued in the mathematics and science drafts, or even in the reading and writing components of the English draft, where the relationship between spoken and written language is of critical importance. As to the removal of the spoken language strand from English, this is an error which in my judgement cannot be allowed to stand.’

Professor Robin Alexander

- ‘If the draft Programmes of Study for English are implemented in their current form, there is a danger that talk will be devalued, regarded as just a lower order servant to the higher valued skills in reading and writing. Given that talk is so fundamental to overall language development, this backward move will disadvantage a whole generation of children.’

Alan Howe, *Meeting High Expectations*

# Assessment Arrangements

- Y1 Phonics Screening Test
  - Doesn't tell teachers anything new
  - Problems for fluent readers
  - Undermines confidence
  - Costly
- Y6 Grammar Test
  - A 'naming of parts' approach
  - Risks an approach to teaching of grammar that does nothing to improve reading or writing

# Assessment arrangements

- GCSE
- Entirely separate Language and Literature
- Language – ‘The assessment of GCSE English language will be designed on the basis that students should have read high-quality, challenging texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The number and types of text are not prescribed. All texts studied must make significant demands on students. The texts may include literature, extended literary non-fiction, and other writing such as essays and journalism. Digital texts must not be included’. No weighting for spoken English. 20% marks for SPaG.
- Literature – at least one play by Shakespeare; a selection of representative Romantic poetry; at least one nineteenth-century novel; a selection of poetry since 1850; British fiction or drama since the First World War. Assessment will include unseen texts.
- Grading?

# Exercising Freedom

- Support for implementation
- Future of initial teacher education and continuing professional development



