Ref: PS

✓ MS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 March 1981

BF

Dear Peter

We spoke about your Secretary of State's minute of 2 March, covering the draft of a guidance paper on the curriculum in schools.

As I told you, the Prime Minister is concerned to find no reference to computer science and information technology. You may be aware of dicussions about information technology which have been taking place within the E framework. The Prime Minister held a meeting of Ministers here earlier in the week, which had before it a CPRS paper circulated by Mr. Ibbs to the Ministers concerned on 16 February. The annex, entitled "Elements of a Government Action Plan for IT", includes as point 4:-

> "To install a micro computer in every secondary school by the end of 1982. This scheme is well advanced. It will include procurement from a British company; training for teachers and specially designed software. Local businessmen will be involved in the programme."

I understand that Mr. Baker said in the course of the meeting that this proposition had been cleared with your Ministers. The Prime Minister regards this work as the key growth area of the future. She therefore considers that we must be seen to be dealing with it in schools.

We agreed that you would let me have your Secretary of State's reaction to this point as soon as possible.

I am sending copies of this letter to Jonathan Hudson (Department of Industry), Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office), Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office, Treasury) Gerry Spence (CPRS) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever

Mike Pattison

Peter Shaw, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

VB

cc Press

1

PRIME MINISTER

Following the consultation papers on the curriculum, Messrs Carlisle and Edwards are now ready to issue a guidance paper to LEAs and schools.

The first 13 pages of the paper set the background. The guidance itself, broad as it is, begins at paragraph 33 on page 14. The key passages are probably the specific areas of the primary school curriculum discussed in paragraph 38 on page 18 (Flag A), the theme for the secondary phase in paragraph 39 on page 20 (Flag B) and the specific areas in the secondary curriculum from paragraph 44 onwards (Flag C).

Content that the Secretaries of State should publish as proposed?

MT

N.B. - I can find nothing about computer science and "information technology". You remember that Kenneth Baker's paper yesterday made a point that every secondary school would have the relevant equipment by 1982 and this had been cleared with Mark Carlisle. It is the wave of the future and we must be seen to be dealing with it - at school. - Have I missed a reference to it?

3 March 1981

010

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PRIME MINISTER

Mr Carlisle stands ready to amend his curriculum document to meet your points. Happy to let it go ahead with these amendments, subject to any further comments from colleagues?

MS
6/3

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mike Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

6 March 1981

Thankyou - Yes
MT

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 4 March about the paper on the school curriculum.

My Secretary of State agrees that this paper should make a substantial explicit reference to computer science and information technology. He will introduce the subject very early in the paper by amending the second sentence of paragraph 4 as follows:-

> "In an increasingly competitive world economy, and with the prospect of ever more rapid changes arising from technological developments, especially in computer science and information technology, the quality of school education will become even more important than it already is."

This will ensure that the subsequent discussion of what pupils need to learn carries an even clearer implication that new computer and information technologies have to be taken into account in many areas and aspects of the school curriculum. To ram the point home explicitly, Mr Carlisle will add the following new paragraph 50.A.

> "Microelectronics
>
> 50.A. The use of computers and other microelectronics-based devices in schools is of growing importance not only in computer studies but also in mathematics, science and other areas of the curriculum. Many aspects of adult life and work are likely to be transformed by developments in computer science and in information and control technology. The Secretaries of State consider it important that pupils should become familiar with the use and application of computers, particularly through direct experience in the course of their studies. The Government is supporting the use and application of microelectronics in secondary schools through a programme of curriculum development and in-service training."

The paper will thus fit in very well with the scheme for putting more micro-computers into our secondary schools which DES Ministers have been discussing with DOI Ministers (although they were not aware of what was said at the meeting you refer to, which they were not invited to attend). That scheme is now being worked on in consultation with the local education authorities, whose cooperation is essential, with a view to ironing out the very considerable practical problems which need to be overcome to ensure its success.

they feel a bit left out.. MS

I am sending copies of this letter to Jonathan Hudson (Department of Industry), Richard Dykes (Department of Employment, Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office), Francis Richards, (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Terry Mathews (Chief Secretary's Office, Treasury), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Peter Shaw

P A SHAW
Private Secretary

Cir

Education

ELIZABETH HOUSE,
YORK ROAD,
LONDON SE1 7PH
01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mike Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

NJS/to see
1a

24 March 1981

MP

Dear Mike

See front of file (cover)

'THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM'

I enclose a copy of the paper 'The School Curriculum' which is to be published at noon tomorrow, 25 March.

detail
MJ

Copies of the paper are being sent to the Private Secretaries to the Secretaries of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Industry, Employment, Scotland, Social Services, Mr Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours ever

Chris Eagles

MISS C M EAGLES

Education

NYB for interest
MS 1a
MAP.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH

TELEPHONE 01-928 9222

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

J R Ibbs Esq
Central Policy Review Staff
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1

17 MAR 1981

Dear Mr Ibbs.

Thank you for your letter of 11 March about my forthcoming policy document on the School Curriculum.

As regards the important subject of preparation for working life, I think there may be a misunderstanding about paragraph 42 of the document. This is concerned with the subjects which should be common throughout the first five secondary years; but it is not intended to cover everything of importance which I believe should be included in the curriculum for every pupil, and in particular it does not deal with transcurricular aspects of secondary education. It is important, as is indicated in paragraph 53(11), that careers education should often be given under different subject headings and by other teachers as well as specialist careers teachers. Preparation for working life is, of course, a vital and wholly general function of secondary schools. I therefore think it right to state the objective clearly in paragraph 39(3), at the beginning of the section about secondary education, and then to have an extended section (paragraphs 53-55) on the general matter of preparation for working life, including careers education.

I am grateful to you for your suggestion that the paper should include a reference to some important attributes which cannot readily be examined. I accept what you say and am proposing to add to paragraph 15 the point that examination courses "do not, for example, always develop the pupil's ability to get things done or to work as a member of a team."

Your third point is, I believe, based upon a misunderstanding. I am not asking schools to have a written statement of their curricula: such a requirement would indeed be impracticable because of constraints on staffing in particular areas of the curriculum at different times. Nor would such a requirement be appropriate; what is needed, and what I am

asking for, is that schools should analyse their aims and set these down in writing. It is not for me to guide schools on how they should set out their aims which are bound to vary and to be, to some extent, subjective. But I shall want, through HM Inspectorate, to inform myself of what schools are doing.

This last point bears on your fourth suggestion. Published material based on the kind of work referred to in paragraph 61 will help to promulgate good practice in authorities and schools. I shall, in my Circular, tell authorities that I shall want to be informed, after two years, of the steps that they and the schools have taken in the light of the guidance given in the paper. From the Government's point of view, the most important point for the future is that our policy statement will inform all aspects of education policy which bear on the school curriculum, and I propose to make this clear in the Circular.

Yours sincerely

Mark Carlisle

MARK CARLISLE

P.S. Copies of this letter go to the recipients of yours.

Education

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB
TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 3301
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

Secretary of State for Industry

11 March 1981

Peter Shaw Esq
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for Education
and Science
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
York Road
London SE1

Dear Peter

SCHOOL CURRICULUM

My Secretary of State has seen your Secretary of State's letter of 2 March in response to his earlier letter of 20 February about the curriculum document. He has also seen the amendments proposed to meet the Prime Minister's wish to emphasise in the document the importance of computer science and information technology. He notes that the Prime Minister is content with the revised document and has asked me to say that he too is content.

NT copied Tories

I am copying this letter to Nick Sanders, Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office) John Craig (Welsh Office), Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Terry Matthews (Chief Secretary's Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Catherine Bell

CATHERINE BELL
Private Secretary

NJS – to see.
The four-up may be of interest to you!

MAP

CABINET OFFICE

Central Policy Review Staff

With the compliments of

J. R. Ibbs

✓ MS

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS

Telephone 01-233 7765

CABINET OFFICE
Central Policy Review Staff
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7765

From: J. R. Ibbs

Qa 05281

11 March 1981

Dear Secretary of State,

The School Curriculum

Thank you for copying to me your minute of 2 March to the Prime Minister on this important subject.

Unfortunately, a copy of the policy document was not attached and your Department was unable to get one to this office until 10 March. I hope you will therefore forgive me if I raise at this rather late stage one or two points which the CPRS raised in discussion of an earlier draft but which are not reflected in the final document. (A number of our points have already been taken on board and for this I am grateful.)

First, in view of the importance (reflected in the foreword and in paragraph 39(3)) which the Government attaches to preparation for working life, we find it surprising that paragraph 42, which recommends - in effect - a core of subjects for the secondary curriculum, should make no mention of careers education and preparation for working life. I suggest that this key paragraph should recommend the inclusion of careers education and preparation for working life in the curriculum for every pupil. This could be linked with a reference to the useful discussion later in the document (paragraphs 52-55).

Secondly, we believe the Government could usefully give a boost to the 'education for capability' movement, by mentioning, in paragraph 15 or 16, the importance of attributes which cannot readily be tested by examinations, notably the ability to get things done and to work as a team.

The Rt Hon Mark Carlisle QC MP
Department of Education and Science
Elizabeth House
S E 1

Thirdly, while we welcome the intention that schools should have a written statement of the curriculum and that LEAs should have a curiculum policy, the document gives no indication of how specific these statements should be. I gather that you are considering giving fuller guidance on these matters in the circular which will accompany the document. We think it will be important to do so. It would be helpful if the draft circular could be seen by interested Departments.

Finally, it seems desirable that either the document or the circular should say how your Department intends to use the proposed curriculum statements in monitoring and influencing curricular developments in individual institutions and LEAs.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of State for Industry, Employment, Social Services, Scotland, Wales, the Foreign Secretary, the Chief Secretary, and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours sincerely,

J R Ibbs

Jmp

Education.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 March 1981

NJS in dealing
BF 25.3. or to check
OK SP 19.3.

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 6 March to Mike Pattison. She was grateful to your Secretary of State for making the changes proposed in that letter, and is now content - subject to any further comments from colleagues - for publication to go ahead.

No doubt you will be in touch with us again in the usual way to clear the exact timing of publication.

I am copying this letter to Jonathan Hudson (Department of Industry), Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), Godfrey Robson (Scottish Office), John Craig (Welsh Office), Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Terry Matthews (Chief Secretary's Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

N. J. SANDERS

Peter Shaw, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

VCB

PRIME MINISTER

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

1. The thrust of our educational policy is towards quality. I have therefore given high priority to the curriculum in the schools. The problem here is urgent. But we have first to assert the Government's locus and then to secure our objectives through others.

2. After sustained efforts over nearly two years Janet Young and I, with the help of the Secretary of State for Wales, have cleared the ground for a major statement of guidance to local education authorities and schools on our policy for the school curriculum. It builds on the constitutional position of the Secretaries of State and the established responsibilities of our partners in the education service. The Secretary of State for Wales and I now propose to issue the enclosed paper and personal foreword.

3. The objective of the paper is to secure, over the coming years, on the basis of the existing statutory division of responsibilities and within the resources available, a better curriculum in the majority of our schools. To this end we need to enlist both the co-operation of the education service and the support of those whom it serves and who pay for it - parents, industry and commerce, and the public at large. To do its job, the paper has to convince two audiences - the mainly well-informed and professional one in local education authorities and schools and the lay one outside. Both have to be clear that we mean business. Our message will be unpalatable to some local authority and teacher interests, but I believe that our supporters in and outside the education world will welcome it.

4. The paper has been seen in draft by the Secretaries of State for Industry, Employment, Social Services and Scotland, as well as by the Treasury, the FCO and the CPRS. We have sought to take account of their comments in the paper and the foreword.

5. The Secretary of State for Wales and I are now ready to send the paper to the printers, for publication in a few weeks' time. I thought that you would wish to see it before we do.

12

6. I am sending copies of this minute for information to the Secretaries of State for Industry, Employment, Social Services, Scotland and Wales, and to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Chief Secretary, Mr Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

M.C.

MARK CARLISLE
2 March 1981

FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARIES OF STATE

Early in 1980 the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office published "A Framework for the School Curriculum", setting out a number of proposals. At the same time HM Inspectorate published "A View of the Curriculum" as a discussion document.

Wide-ranging consultations ensued. We are grateful for the many detailed and thought-provoking comments we have received.

We now issue this paper. A paper on the Welsh language in schools will follow later this year.

The present paper offers guidance to the local education authorities and schools in England and Wales on how the school curriculum can be further improved. We shall shortly issue a Circular to the authorities calling the paper formally to their attention.

Parents, employers and many others also care about our schools. The paper explains to them where the Government stands on a matter which lastingly affects our national prosperity and the whole nature of our society. Technological and other changes require an urgent response from our schools.

This paper covers the whole period of compulsory education. What is taught at school should be adapted to the needs of every pupil, including the gifted, and those with special educational needs, so that everyone is appropriately prepared for the practical demands of adult and working life.

We believe the paper to have lasting importance for the quality of education in England and Wales.

Mark Carlisle

Nicholas Edwards

Draft 2/3/1981

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Table of Contents

THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

1. The school curriculum is at the heart of education. In this paper, which comes at the end of several years of public discussion and Government consultation with its education partners, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales set out their views on the way forward and the action they believe is now needed on the part of the Education Departments, local education authorities, teachers and schools in relation to the school curriculum for the 5-16 age range.

2. The schools of England and Wales have, as does the national education system, the fundamental aim that education should serve the individual needs of every pupil and student. This aim, which is embodied in the 1944 Education Act's reference to the duty to secure education suited to each pupil's age, ability and aptitude, means that what is taught in schools, and the way it is taught, should help all children to realise their potential to the fullest possible extent.

3. Since school education prepares the child for adult life, the way in which the school helps him to develop his potential must also be related to his subsequent needs and responsibilities as an active member of our society. Parents, employers and the public rightly expect the school curriculum to pay proper regard to what the pupils will later want and be called upon to do. It helps neither the children, nor the nation, if the schools do not prepare them for the realities of the adult world.

4. Indeed, the future of the children in the schools and of the country depends heavily on what the schools have been able to do for them. In an increasingly competitive world economy, and with the prospect of ever more rapid changes arising from technological developments, the quality of school education will become even more important than it already is. As far as the schools are concerned, the quality of a pupil's education depends mainly on three factors: the quality of teaching, the resources available, and the curriculum. All three factors are connected: this paper concentrates on the curriculum, but keeps the other two factors in view.

5. The 5-16 curriculum cannot, and should not, remain static, but must respond to the changing demands made by the world outside the school. This sets the schools a challenging task. Many schools are tackling it with success, as HM Inspectors' national surveys of primary and secondary schools* have shown. But the evidence from those surveys also reveals some serious weaknesses which require present practice to be substantially modified.

6. This calls not for a change in the statutory framework of the education service but for a reappraisal of how each partner in the service should now discharge those responsibilities assigned to him by law. The Secretaries of State consider that curriculum policies should be developed and implemented on the basis of the existing statutory relationship between the partners and that this process must be based upon a clear understanding of, and must pay proper regard to, the responsibilities and interests of each partner and the contribution that each can make.

7. The Education Act 1944 lays upon the Secretaries of State the duty to "promote the education of the people of England and Wales". This requires them to take an overall view of the content and quality of education, and of the resources devoted to it, in the light of national policies and national needs. For example, every school should seek to give every child an adequate grounding in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills needed in our increasingly complex and technological society. The Secretaries of State have an inescapable duty to satisfy themselves that the work of the schools matches such needs. They must work with their partners in the education service so that their combined efforts secure a school curriculum which measures up to the whole range of national needs and also takes account of the range of local needs, allows for local developments, and draws on the varied skills and experience which all those concerned with the service can contribute.

8. The Education Acts lay on local education authorities the responsibility of securing the provision of efficient and sufficient primary and secondary education to meet the needs of their areas. As with central Government, this implies a concern by authorities with the content and quality of education as well as with the facilities provided. To fulfil their responsibilities effectively within a national framework, authorities have to exercise leadership for their areas and interpret national policies and objectives in the

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* Primary Education in England (HMSO, September 1978); Aspects of Secondary Education in England (HMSO, December 1979)

light of local needs and circumstances. Moreover, local authorities are concerned (in both county and voluntary schools) with policies for the level, distribution and development of resources - staff, buildings, equipment and materials - which bear on the curriculum and standards of achievement. They also foster cooperation and complementary provision among their schools, and between schools and further education colleges.

9. Local authorities thus have a responsibility to formulate curricular policies and objectives which meet national policies and objectives, command local assent, and can be applied by each school to its own circumstances. The Secretaries of State believe that the formulation of local policies, and decisions concerning their implementation, would be improved if all local authorities were fully informed about the curricular practices and aims of both county and voluntary schools in their areas and the extent to which the schools are successful in achieving these aims; the Secretaries of State believe that those governors of voluntary secondary schools who are statutorily responsible for the secular curriculum should be ready to assist the local authority in this task.

10. It is the individual schools that shape the curriculum for each pupil. Neither the Government nor the local authorities should specify in detail what the schools should teach. This is for the schools themselves to determine. Existing articles of government commonly give to the governors the general direction and oversight of the conduct and curriculum of the school, although curricular matters are often in practice devolved upon the head teacher and staff. Whatever the formal responsibilities of governing bodies, they can provide a forum for bringing together teachers, parents and the local community. There should always be the closest consultation and cooperation between the governors, head teacher and staff. The teachers

provide their professional skills and experience and the fullest knowledge of opportunities and constraints and of individual pupils' capabilities and expectations. What schools teach and achieve is largely a measure of the dedication and competence of the head teacher and the whole staff and of the interest and support of the governing body.

EDUCATIONAL AIMS

11. The school curriculum needs to be rooted in educational aims which are accepted within and outside the education service. In "A Framework for the School Curriculum" the Secretaries of State offered the following list of broad educational aims to which individual authorities and schools might refer in drawing up their own lists:

(i) to help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks, and physical skills;

(ii) to help pupils acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast-changing world;

(iii) to help pupils to use language and number effectively;

(iv) to instil respect for religious and moral values, and tolerance of other races, religions, and ways of life;

(v) to help pupils understand the world in which they live, and the inter-dependence of individuals, groups and nations;

(vi) to help pupils appreciate human achievements and aspirations.

12. This statement was widely accepted, although some variations of detail were suggested in the consultations. The Secretaries of State accordingly commend it, without further refinements, as a checklist against which local authorities and schools can test their curricular policies and their application to individual schools.

13. What each school teaches cannot be determined in isolation. The school itself contributes to the formulation of its authority's policies on the curriculum. It has to apply these policies to its own work in the way best suited to it and to its pupils' particular needs and circumstances. It has to judge how it should best respond to parents' hopes and aspirations for their children and to the expectations of employers and of the higher and further education system. It must have regard to the evolution of educational thinking, which is itself often the product of economic and social changes.

There are frequently demands, for which a good case can be made, for new subjects to be taught in schools and for new areas to be covered within the rubric of traditional subjects. New claims are always being made - for example, for the development of economic understanding, environmental education, preparation for parenthood, education for international understanding, political and social education, and consumer affairs.

14. But the time available to schools is limited. They have to devise priorities and to do so in a way which ensures that each pupil can be offered a broad programme, but one that includes what is essential and is coherent and balanced and properly suited to his needs. Provided that they fully discharge this overriding responsibility - and this is a major challenge - the schools can legitimately look to the further and higher sectors of education, and to parents and employers, to cover, or supplement, those elements in the curriculum which they have not been able to include for the pupil concerned, and which others can provide as well or better.

15. For a majority of pupils the period of compulsory education culminates in public examinations. These exert a particularly important influence on the school curriculum, an influence which extends to age ranges well below the 4th and 5th secondary years. For many pupils examination results are an essential means of assessing academic achievement. Examinations serve as a useful stimulus to good performance, and parents and employers set great store by them. Examination syllabuses are not, however, intended to be teaching syllabuses; nor can a combination of examination courses always provide a complete and balanced programme for an individual pupil. Schools are under considerable pressure to increase the number of pupils on examination courses and the number of subjects taken by individual pupils; but it is important not to overload pupils with too many examination subjects, or to pursue unrealistic examination targets, practices which harmfully restrict learning opportunities. Examinations must be designed and used to serve the educational process. This is one of the Government's objectives in promoting a single system of examinations at 16+ to replace the existing dual system of GCE O levels and CSE examinations.

16. Examination certificates do not purport fully to describe achievements at school even for those pupils who obtain high grades in many subjects. Moreover many pupils leave school with no written record of their work and achievements. The Secretaries of State believe that this is a weakness in the education system which should be remedied. Local experiments with records for school leavers have illustrated the issue's difficulty and complexity. But the Secretaries of State consider that it merits not only further local experiment but also study at a national level. They have therefore invited the Schools Council to accelerate and expand the research and development work in this area on which it has already embarked.

RESOURCES

17. The school curriculum, like other aspects of education, will be constrained over the next few years by pressures on resources. Local education authorities and schools will continue to contend with the long-standing shortage of well-qualified teachers in such subjects as mathematics, the physical sciences and craft, design and technology, which the measures already taken, and now under consideration, by the Secretaries of State will seek to mitigate, but are unlikely to remedy for some time. Financial restrictions are bound, at least in some areas, to constrain the efforts of authorities and schools to improve the school curriculum and to give teachers such further training as they may need for that purpose. Coinciding as they will with falling pupil numbers, they will test to the limit the commitment and resourcefulness of elected members and officers of local authorities and of all those who work in the schools. The Secretaries of State believe that authorities and schools will wish to take a long view of the importance of the school curriculum to the quality of education, and, in spite of the difficulties, to give priority to the objective of an effective curriculum.

THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH

18. Against this background, and with a view to their statutory obligations in relation to the national education system, the Secretaries of State have decided to set out in some detail the approach to the school curriculum which they consider should now be followed in the years ahead. Many authorities and schools are already acting in accordance with this approach. In the light of the general guidance in this paper the Secretaries of State now believe that every local education authority should frame policies for the school curriculum and plan the deployment of the available resources to that end; and that every school should analyse its aims, set these out in writing, and regularly assess how far the curriculum within the school as a whole and for individual pupils measures up to those aims. They recognise that work on many aspects of the curriculum will continue to be undertaken by the schools, the associations of subject teachers and the local authorities, a process in which the Schools Council plays a substantial part. They consider that for the next stage of the work on science and modern languages the Education Departments themselves should take the lead.

19. The Secretaries of State recognise that the curriculum can be described and analysed in several ways, each of which has its advantages and limitations. They have thought it most helpful to express much of their guidance in terms of subjects, because secondary school timetables are almost always devised in subject terms, they are readily recognised by parents and employers, and most secondary school teachers are trained in subjects. But a subject title hardly indicates the content or level of study, or the extent to which teaching and learning meet particular objectives. Moreover, many important elements of the curriculum are to be found "across the curriculum" rather than exclusively within any one subject. A subject title is a kind of shorthand, whose real educational meaning depends on the school's definition of what it expects children will learn and be able to do as a result of their studies in the

subject in question. Some subjects contribute to more than one aim of the curriculum; some aims need a contribution from more than one subject. In analysing the curriculum, therefore, other frames of reference are also required. These may be in terms of the skills required at particular stages of a pupil's career; or of areas of experience such as the eight used in HM Inspectors' Working Papers on the Curriculum 11-16: the aesthetic and creative, the ethical, the linguistic, the mathematical, the physical, the scientific, the social and political, and the spiritual. In translating general principles into practice schools need to develop more than one kind of analysis as working tools of curriculum planning.

20. The sections which follow do not cover exhaustively every subject or aspect of the curriculum, but seek rather to focus on certain elements which the Secretaries of State wish to emphasise at the present time. The Secretaries of State stress that these elements, important as they are, represent only a part of the curriculum of a school or pupil, which should be as broad as the practical limitations, outlined in paragraph 14, permit. The curriculum has also to satisfy two other requirements.

21. What is taught in schools, and the way it is taught, must appropriately reflect fundamental values in our society. The schools have long recognised this as one of their important tasks which calls for perceptive and sensitive treatment both within the classroom and outside it. The work of schools has to reflect many issues with which pupils will have to come to terms as they mature, and schools and teachers are familiar with them. Three such issues deserve special mention at the present time. First, our society has become multi-cultural; and there is now among pupils and parents a greater diversity of personal values. Second, the effect of technology on employment patterns sets a new premium on adaptability, self-reliance and other personal qualities. Third, the equal treatment of mean and women embodied in our law needs to be supported in the curriculum. It is essential to ensure that equal curricular opportunity is genuinely available to both boys and girls.

22. The second requirement is for breadth, which is commonly defined in terms of subjects. Virtually all subjects prepare some pupils for subsequent specialisation and can also help to broaden every pupil's education if they are provided in appropriate depth and combinations; but each does so in its own way and emphasises certain ideas, skills, and branches of knowledge. For example history, geography and economics serve to give the pupil an insight into the nature of society (including his own) and man's place in his environment. Classical languages introduce the pupil to aspects of history and culture as well as the disciplines of language and literature. Subjects like art, music and drama are needed to develop sensibilities without which the pupil will not be able to avail himself of many opportunities for enriching his personal experience. Such subjects as physical education, home economics and craft, design and technology make a particular contribution to the acquisition of physical and practical skills which are an essential complement of the pupil's intellectual and personal development.

23. There are also some essential constituents of the school curriculum which are often identified as subjects but which are as likely to feature in a variety of courses and programmes and may be more effectively covered if they are distributed across the curriculum. These concern personal and social development and can conveniently be grouped under the headings of moral education, health education (including sex education) and preparation for parenthood and family life.

24. Moral education in schools seeks to promote integrity, considerate behaviour and the pupil's understanding of the relationship between action and beliefs. It has to recognise the critically important influence of the home and society upon children's moral development and the formation of moral attitudes. It is occasionally taught on its own; more often it is most effectively achieved as a significant aspect of other subjects, in particular - but not exclusively - of literature and of religious and health education. Awareness of moral values is also encouraged by appropriate and well planned assemblies, as well as by good pastoral care. The school needs to make explicit to parents, pupils and the local community its aims in moral education; and the head teacher and his staff need to keep curricular, pastoral and other provision under review so as to ensure that these aims are translated into effective practice.

25. Health education, like preparation for parenthood, is part of the preparation of the individual for personal, social and family responsibilities. Health education should give pupils a basic knowledge and understanding of health matters both as they affect themselves and as they affect others, so that they are helped to make informed choices in their daily lives. It should also help them to become aware of those moral issues and value judgements which are inseparable from such choices. Preparation for parenthood and family life should help pupils to recognise the importance of those human relationships which sustain, and are sustained by, family life, and the demands and duties that fall on parents.

26. Schools are responding in a variety of ways to the need for sound sex education. Sex education is one of the most sensitive parts of broad programmes of health education, and the fullest consultation and cooperation with parents are necessary before it is embarked upon. In this area offence can be given if a school is not aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural background of every child. Sex education is not a simple matter and is linked with attitudes and

behaviour. The regulations to be made under Section 8 of the Education Act 1980 will require LEAs to inform parents of the ways and contexts in which sex education is provided.

Religious education

27. The place of religious education in the curriculum and its unique statutory position accord with a widely shared view that the subject has a distinctive contribution to make to a pupil's school education. It provides an introduction to the religious and spiritual areas of experience and particularly to the Christian tradition which has profoundly affected our culture. It forms part of the curriculum's concern with personal and social values, and can help pupils to understand the religious and cultural diversity of contemporary society. The Secretaries of State consider that local education authorities should keep under review the provision made for religious education, bearing in mind the requirements of the Education Act 1944 as regards collective acts of worship and religious instruction; and that they should also reconsider from time to time the appropriateness of the Agreed Syllabus for their area in the light of the needs of particular groups of pupils and changes in the society in which the pupils are growing up.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

28. Throughout primary and secondary education (whether this takes place in "primary", "middle", or "secondary" schools) the curriculum needs to be viewed as a whole and to take account of different needs and abilities: to be concerned not only with what is to be learned but also with how it is to be learned. Each school needs to secure breadth of curriculum for all pupils. Since all will not follow identical programmes of work, each pupil's programme should be balanced and meet his personal needs as he progresses. Authorities and schools need to ensure continuity in pupils' programmes both within and between the primary and secondary phases, whether this involves direct transfer from primary to secondary schools or transition through middle schools. Records should be kept and transmitted with this end in view.

29. Special schools serve children with physical or mental disabilities or emotional disorders or a combination of these. The range of ability and needs varies greatly. Many special schools are small or span a wide age-range. But like all other schools special schools must try to offer a curriculum which fully meets the educational needs of each of their pupils in the way best suited to the pupil. They too need a written statement of their aims and, in the light of it, to appraise regularly the effectiveness of the programme offered to each pupil. Local authorities, therefore, will wish to engage special schools in local discussion on their policy for the curriculum. This will also help to maintain continuity in the programmes of work of pupils who transfer between special and ordinary schools.

30. In the day-to-day work of the schools, what is taught and how it is taught are in practice inseparable in their effect on the pupils. It is well understood that both need to continue to catch the pupils' interest and imagination. The more successfuly these objectives are secured, at every level of ability, the more likely are pupils to feel that what they do at school, particularly

during the last years of compulsory education, has relevance and meaning for their lives. Success here may help with the problem of truancy. But it is important for the education of every pupil.

31. No less important is what teachers expect their pupils to achieve. It is part of the teacher's professional role to recognise and develop the potential of individual pupils. All pupils should be encouraged throughout their school career to reach out to the limit of their capabilities. This is a formidable challenge to any school, since it means that the school's expectations of every pupil must relate to his individual gifts and talents. It is as necessary to meet this challenge for the ablest as for those who learn slowly and with difficulty or who have special educational needs, whether they are in ordinary or special schools: no group's needs should be subordinate.

32. Pupils are most likely to give of their best and to make lasting progress if they are regularly in contact with teachers who are dedicated and well-grounded in their profession. The Secretaries of State believe that professional development throughout a teacher's career, which schools and teachers have long recognised to be necessary, will continue to be essential and will need also to take account of advancing technology. Within the school each teacher should, wherever possible, be deployed where his professional strong points can be fully used to promote the quality of the pupils' education.

THE PRIMARY PHASE

33. Primary schools aim to extend children's knowledge of themselves and of the world in which they live, and through greater knowledge to develop skills and concepts, to help them relate to others, and to encourage a proper self-confidence. These aims cannot be identified with separate subject areas, nor can set amounts of time be assigned to the various elements. Often a single

activity promotes a variety of skills. One teacher is commonly responsible for most of the work of a class: one of the strengths of this form of organisation is the opportunity it gives for skills to be applied and practised in a variety of circumstances - for example, by including calculating and measuring in craft or geographical work; or drama and music in religious education or history; or reading and writing virtually everywhere.

34. Within limits both detailed curricula and the teaching approaches used will properly vary from school to school according to the strengths of the teachers and local circumstances. Within classes, teachers have to be sensitive to the different abilities and interests of children both as a group and as individuals so that the range and pace of the programme are appropriate. An approach which may be suitable for an able child - for example through a relatively sophisticated use of language - may be beyond the understanding of a less able child: to treat both alike would be an injustice to one or both.

35. Primary schools rightly attach high priority to English and mathematics. This is an overriding responsibility: it is essential that the early skills in reading, writing and calculating should be effectively learned in primary schools, since deficiencies at this stage cannot easily be remedied later and children will face the world seriously handicapped. The schools must, however, provide a wide range of experience, in order to stimulate the children's interest and imagination and fully to extend pupils of all abilities. There is no evidence that a narrow curriculum, concentrating only on the basic skills, enables children to do better in these skills: HM Inspectors' survey suggests that competence in reading, writing and mathematics may be improved where pupils are involved in a wider programme of work and if their skills in language and mathematics are applied in a variety of contexts.

36. This wider curriculum should incorporate certain key elements. Children should be encouraged, in the context of the multi-cultural aspects of Britain today and of our membership of the European Communities, to develop an understanding of the world, of their own place in it and of how people live and work. This involves, certainly for the more able children and in a simpler form for many others, an introduction to the concepts of history, such as chronology and cause and effect, and to the weighing of evidence from different sources; opportunity to become acquainted with written material of different types, and to learn to distinguish fact from fiction; some understanding of the geography of their home area and of more distant places; and an appreciation of religious beliefs and practices. In addition, children's curiosity about their physical and natural environment

should be exploited; all pupils should be involved in practical as well as theoretical work in elementary science, to develop skills of observation and recording. These skills can be further enhanced, and children introduced to different ways of recording and interpreting experience, through aesthetic and practical subjects such as art and craft and physical education. Music, both instrumental and vocal, contributes to children's development in a similar way. Finally, schools are concerned with the personal and social development of their pupils in the widest sense; they need to foster, in their approaches to the curriculum, children's developing awareness of themselves as individuals and of the way in which they relate to others.

37. Most primary schools already incorporate most or all of these elements in their curricula; deficiencies occur less often as a matter of policy than where space is short or teaching expertise lacking. What is now needed is to develop a good deal of what is common practice in a more demanding way, particularly in order to ensure that challenging work is provided for the ablest. Schools should stimulate the more able children to acquire and make use of books, other reference sources and original data in ways that suit the occasion: their teachers should more than is now common expect the older pupils to observe and classify, to make simple generalisations, to appreciate inter-relations, and to arrive at and test their own ideas. These aims are relevant not only to science in primary schools, discussed in the next paragraph, but more widely.

38. Certain aspects of the primary school curriculum, about which concern has been expressed in recent years, merit specific mention.

(a) Topic work

History and geography in primary schools are often, and increasingly, taught through the study of selected topics which frequently involve both of these subjects and more. It is important that schools should have a clear overall plan for work of this kind, so that ideas and skills as well as information suitable to the children are extended and developed as the children move through the school. The skills and ideas include not only those associated with the subjects being studied, for example mapping skills in connection with geography, but also those concerned with using and understanding books, with writing and with mathematics.

(b) Science

Primary schools should provide more effective science teaching. Children should be given more opportunities for work which progressively develops their knowledge; it is equally important to introduce them to the skills and processes of science, including observation, experiment and prediction. Considerable efforts have been made over the past few years to stimulate and support science teaching in primary schools, and these efforts have been intensified following the recommendations in HM Inspectors' Survey of Primary Education in England. But more is needed: many primary schools could make more effective use than they do of those teachers who have some specialist knowledge of science. The Secretaries of State intend to take further action in relation to school science (see paragraph 47 below).

(c) Art and Craft

Art and craft are included in the curricula of all primary schools; HM Inspectors' survey found that children would benefit if their work were based more often than it is on direct observation and study. Their work should encourage the development of skills and inventiveness in producing artifacts. More emphasis than at present should be placed on work in three dimensions and some of this might be of a simple technological kind aimed at designing

and making things that work. Art and craft are often usefully associated with other aspects of learning, for example topics in history and geography, but they are also valuable in their own right as a vehicle for individual expression.

(d) French

Experiments in the teaching of a foreign language, usually French, in primary schools have, despite the high hopes entertained in the 1960s, had mixed results. These suggest that primary schools should seek to introduce or maintain the teaching of a modern language only where continuing teaching expertise and coordination with secondary schools are assured and it is clear that pupils' early start will be exploited in their later work. The further study of modern language provision referred to in paragraph 50 below will be relevant.

THE SECONDARY PHASE

39. The Secretaries of State wish to emphasise three propositions about secondary education, which are developed and extended in what follows:

(1) Schools should plan their curriculum as a whole. The curriculum offered by a school, and the curriculum received by individual pupils, should not be simply a collection of separate subjects; nor is it sufficient to transfer, with modifications, the ideas about the curriculum in the separate selective and non-selective schools of an earlier generation into the comprehensive schools attended by most pupils today.

(2) There is an overwhelming case for providing all pupils between 11 and 16 with curricula of a broadly common character, designed so as to ensure a balanced education during this period and in order to prevent subsequent choices being needlessly restricted.

(3) School education needs to equip young people fully for adult and working life in a world which is changing very rapidly indeed, particularly in consequence of new technological developments: they must be able to see where their education has meaning outside school.

40. At present, for the first three years in most secondary schools pupils follow broadly similar programmes. These generally include English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education, art, music, home economics, craft design and technology, physical education and games. Nearly all pupils also embark on a foreign language, usually French. In some schools some form of group studies - 'humanities' or 'environmental studies' or 'design studies' - may replace some of the single subjects, wholly or partly. For a minority of pupils there may be an opportunity to begin a second foreign language, classical or modern, in the second or third year, and science courses may begin to be more sharply differentiated for abler pupils.

41. In the fourth and fifth years, the number of subjects studied by all pupils is much reduced. Some subjects are dropped, others added, with varying degrees of guidance and control. The result is that a balanced curriculum for each individual pupil is not always assured. As a consequence some pupils are deprived of valuable opportunities for employment, for continued education, or for enlarging experience and understanding in ways which could help them as adults and as citizens. Giving up too many subjects at age 14 also has a bad effect on the preceding school years. Motivation and sustained effort in a subject may be at risk if the pupil knows that he will soon abandon it. Some choices have to be made at age 14, especially where 2-year examination courses are to be followed. Moreover it is right that 14-year old pupils should have some freedom to shape their lives; and a freely made choice can improve motivation at school. But the choice must be so managed that pupils' secondary schooling does not suffer. Pupils should not drop potentially valuable subjects before they are mature enough to understand their importance or to have mastered their elementary ideas and skills. Courses should be so designed that pupils who drop a subject for good reason are enabled to achieve something of value.

42. Although choices are made, and have to be made, at the end of the third year, every pupil up to 16 should sustain a broad curriculum. The level, content and emphasis of work will be related to pupils' abilities and aspirations, but there should be substantial common elements. These should include English and mathematics, whose vital importance schools already recognise in the time and attention they devote to them. To these should be added science, religious education and physical education; in addition, pupils should undertake some study of the humanities designed to yield lasting benefit and should retain opportunities for some practical and some aesthetic activity. Most pupils should study a modern language, and many

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should continue to do so through the whole five-year period. Within all this there should still be room for choice, so that all pupils can give expression to their aptitudes and interests in taking up additional subjects or reinforcing their largely common programmes. But it is essential that in the event the programmes offered to each pupil should maintain breadth. The importance of this, together with the significance of any particular choices for future career opportunities, should be explained to pupils and their parents before the end of the third year.

Specific areas of the curriculum

43. English, mathematics, science and modern languages are generally treated as separate items in school time-tables. The Secretaries of State consider that their key position makes it appropriate to give each some special consideration here. In their view, it is important that every school should ensure that each pupil's programme includes a substantial and well-distributed time allocation for English, mathematics and science up to age 16, and that those pupils who do take a modern language should devote sufficient time to it to make th study worth while. The Secretaries of State do not suggest minimum times which should be devoted to these subjects. Any suggested minima might too easily become norms, or be interpreted too rigidly. It is for the local education authorities to consider, in consultation with the teachers in their areas, whether to suggest minimum time allocations in these subjects, as broad guidance for schools.

English

44. English is of vital importance in the development of pupils as individual and as members of society: our language is our principal means of making sense

of our experience and communicating with others. The teaching of English is concerned with the essential skills of speech, reading and writing, and with literature. Schools will doubtless continue to give them high priority. As the Bullock Report stressed, language is part of the means of learning in all subjects, so that English is a necessary concern of all teachers and there needs to be an organised policy for English across the curriculum. The Secretaries of State consider it necessary to strengthen the knowledge and expertise of the many teachers who are currently teaching English without being appropriately qualified to do so, and hope that this will be seen as a priority within the in-service training programme.

Mathematics

45. Mathematics rightly forms part of virtually every pupil's curriculum throughout the first five years of secondary education. It is essential for day-to-day living and is the key to much human knowledge and understanding. Mathematics teaching should draw on the content of other parts of the curriculum to demonstrate its applications; and all teachers should seek consistency of approach to the mathematics they use. In particular the work done in mathematics and in science should be brought closer together than it often is at present.

46. Further action will need to be considered in the light of the Cockcroft Committee's recommendations, which are expected later in the year.

Science

47. The increasing importance of science and its applications in the modern world, and the rapid development of technology, reinforce the case for science as an essential component of education for all pupils of 11-16. More science

is now being taught to more pupils. Some fundamental issues must now be faced.

(i) Syllabuses must be designed in such a way as to preserve the high standards of the best science teaching which exists now; and at the same time to take further the ideas which need to be introduced at the primary stage and to meet pupils' different needs and abilities.

(ii) Courses for pupils up to 16 need both to ensure a reasonable balance across the sciences and to maintain depth and rigour. Many examination syllabuses, especially at O level, are overloaded and out of date: this appears to be an important factor which turns pupils away from science. Too many 16+ examinations test mainly the candidates' powers of recall, rather than testing sufficiently their understanding or their ability to think and work scientifically. Any new O level or other 16-plus syllabuses must continue to provide a satisfactory basis for A level courses.

(iii) Usually during their third year, pupils have to choose whether they wish to study one, two or three science subjects or no science at all in the fourth and fifth years. Pupils rarely return to a science subject after dropping it at the end of the third year. Many able pupils, particularly girls, decide at 13 not to aim at a career in science or engineering and make subject choices accordingly; there is evidence that by the age of 16 some of these would like to change their minds but it is then usually too late. These consequences can be avoided only if pupils continue with some work in the three main sciences in the fourth and fifth years, and there are those who argue that for all pupils, including the less able, a scientific education requires a programme of this breadth.

(iv) The education and training of many science teachers in one pure science only do not equip them well for teaching - as many of them have to do - outside their own specialism; nor for relating their science to the needs of the wider world.

(v) The problem is not only one of resources. If there is to be science for all up to age 16, and if the shortage of able scientists and engineers is to be alleviated by attracting more able pupils, particularly girls, to the physical sciences, more teachers and more laboratories are needed; science should command high priority within the in-service training programme; and existing resources need to be deployed to still better effect. But even if these resource difficulties are mitigated, it will be possible to accommodate science in the 11-16 curriculum on the required scale, and at the same time maintain for all pupils a broad programme which adequately covers all the essential elements, only if courses can be developed which meet the requirements in (i) to (iii) above but do so without making unacceptable demands on curriculum time.

The Secretaries of State intend to consider these issues further, in consultation with the interests most directly concerned, and to publish their conclusions.

Modern languages

48. There has been a marked increase in the proportion of pupils studying a foreign language, usually French, in the early years of secondary education. At present over 80% of pupils are studying a language at this stage, compared with no more than about 30% some 20 years ago. However, the very large drop-out from language classes after two or three years of secondary schooling, as well as the shortage in some places of suitably qualified modern language teachers, has had the result that the percentage of young people completing a 5-year course has not significantly increased over the same period.

49. The Secretaries of State believe that, given particularly Britain's place in the European Communities, most pupils should have the opportunity to learn a foreign language; and that at least two or, if possible, three years of language teaching should be provided as a minimum. Wherever

possible pupils should be encouraged to keep up a modern language until the end of the fifth year of secondary education. French is, for various reasons, the dominant foreign language studied; but languages other than French need also to be offered within the area of each local education authority. The Secretaries of State consider that the available language teaching resources can be used to full effect, and the best balance achieved between languages on offer, only if modern language provision as a whole is planned by the local education authority across its area, taking account of the facilities available in both schools and further education. In this connection, authorities may find it necessary to give similar consideration to classical languages.

50. Important questions about modern language provision remain:

a. What foreign languages other than French should be available to secondary school pupils? To what extent should pupils study more than one language? How far should our membership of the European Communities be taken into account in assessing objectives?

b. Far more pupils than in the past now have a first language which is not English or Welsh. This constitutes a valuable resource, for them and for the nation. How should mother tongue teaching for such pupils be accommodated within modern language provision so that this resource does not wither away and the pupils may retain contacts with their own communities?

c. How suitable are present courses for pupils up to the age of 13 or 14? What are their educational and practical linguistic value both in themselves and as a preparation for continued study?

d. What should be the objectives of what is taught and learned, and what should be the balance between the various language skills? What should be the "cultural" element in a course?

e. In the development of modern languages what relative priorities should be given to the length of courses and their extension over the range of ability?

f. Should more pupils be enabled to continue study of a foreign language beyond 16? How might this be secured?

The Secretaries of State intend to consider these questions further, in consultation with the interests most directly concerned, and to publish their conclusions.

Craft, design and technology

51. The Secretaries of State attach special importance to craft, design and technology as a part of the preparation for living and working in modern industrial society. When it is taught imaginatively, this work helps pupils to understand that the practical application of discoveries and inventions is as vital to our society as scientific research. It encourages creative skills and the ability to identify, examine and solve problems, using a variety of materials. The problems tackled by able pupils are intellectually demanding and stretch to the full their inventive and innovative powers. Problems seldom have a single "correct" answer: their resolution requires the gathering of information, the practical application of knowledge and, frequently, cooperation with others both inside and outside school. Craft, design and technology can also enrich and add interest to what is taught in other subjects. It can enable boys and girls to absorb, consolidate and develop the science and mathematics they learn and to give them a practical application, and to develop their language skills in practical situations. Where it is used to demonstrate science and technology in action, it can help pupils to understand the possibilities of technological change and to profit from them later.

Preparation for adult life

52. It is a major function of the schools to prepare children and young people for all aspects of adult life. Secondary schools, building on the foundation laid by primary schools, need to ensure that this function is reflected in the whole of their curriculum. The Secretaries of State attach particular importance to three inter-related ways in which pupils can be so prepared.

(i) The curriculum needs to be related to what happens outside schools. As schools and examination boards have increasingly acknowledged in recent years, the curriculum needs to include more applied and practical work, particularly in science and mathematics; and pupils need to be given a better understanding of the economic base of our society and the importance to Britain of the wealth-creating process.

(ii) Pupils need better and more systematic careers education and guidance. In the earlier secondary years all pupils need a carefully planned programme in good time to prepare them for the subject choices that they will make by the end of the third year. In addition to the contribution made by specialist careers teachers, subject teachers should relate their subjects to the outside world, and those with tutorial responsibility should also play a part. As pupils move through secondary education, the careers service will supplement the continuing careers education and guidance given by the school. The Secretaries of State endorse the recommendation made in "Education for 16-19 Year Olds"* that careers education and guidance should assess personal strengths and weaknesses; impart knowledge about jobs and the qualifications required for them, and the opportunities for post-16 education and training; and develop pupils' skills in taking decisions about these matters.

(iii) An increasing number of local education authorities and schools have recognised the importance of establishing links between the education service and industry: each side has much to contribute to the other. Many different arrangements have developed in recent years, many as a result of local initiatives, and others prompted by the national bodies active in this area. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has accordingly commissioned a study from a senior industrialist of the nature and coverage of these activities, their effectiveness, and ways in which it might be enhanced.

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* Department of Education and Science, January 1981

53. The Secretaries of State consider it essential that career opportunities should be kept equally open to boys and to girls. The obstacles to equal employment opportunities for women are deeply rooted in attitudes in the home and in society. Schools can do much to diminish these obstacles through the content of the curriculum, the way in which the work is organised and the subjects taught, and careers guidance, as has been illustrated in HM Inspectors' recent paper "Girls and Science".*

54. Useful advice is available to schools from two projects sponsored by the Schools Council: the Schools Council Industry Project, which has been working with schools in five local education authorities and has recently extended its coverage; and the Skills for Employment project which is working with schools and industry representatives in schools in five local education authorities to link what is taught in schools with skills needed on the job. A further publication from HM Inspectors, "Schools and Working Life: Some Initiatives", describes aspects of the work in 12 schools aimed at helping pupils to prepare for working life.

55. The present paper is concerned with the curriculum in the period of compulsory education. The review "Education for 16-19 Year Olds" is concerned with the educational provision for that age-group as a whole. The 16-19 phase of education is closely related to what has gone before it. It builds on the foundation which the schools have laid, and its requirements affect what the schools do. Accordingly in considering the curriculum, particularly in the later stages of the compulsory period of education, both local education authorities and schools need to take account of its significance for pupils' subsequent progress, whether in school or in further education. Similarly the authorities and the institutions concerned have a duty to ensure that their post-16 provision, including special education provision, is coherently related to the curriculum provided in schools for pupils up to 16.

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* HMI Series: Matters for Discussion, 13: HMSO 1980

THE WAY FORWARD

56. The guidance given in this paper reflects what many authorities and schools already do, often as the result of sustained effort and experiment over the years. Further progress will similarly be gradual and will be affected by the availability of teachers and other resources. The Secretaries of State believe that all concerned in the education service will wish to maintain momentum in the improvement of the school curriculum and to review progress regularly. The Secretaries of State will themselves be responsible for taking further the work which is now required on science and on modern languages. They will also consider what further action is needed on mathematics in the light of the Cockcroft Committee's report.

57. The improvements in the curriculum sought by the Secretaries of State fall to be achieved mainly by local education authorities and schools within the constraints set by limited resources. The Secretaries of State believe that each authority should have a clear policy for the curriculum in its schools and make it known to all concerned; be aware of the extent to which its schools are able, within the resources available to them, to make curricular provision which is consistent with that policy; and plan future developments accordingly, in consultation with the teachers and others concerned in their areas.

58. The pace and pattern of improvements in the curriculum will depend above all on the energy, imagination and professional skill of the teachers. This paper sets out the key questions, in the view of the Secretaries of State, for each school to pursue, building on what it has already achieved.

59. Schools should, as recommended in paragraph 18 above, analyse and set out their aims in writing, and make it part of their work regularly to assess how far the education they provide matches those aims. Such assessments should apply not only to the school as a whole but also to each individual pupil, and

need to be supported by the keeping of adequate records for each pupil's progress. The assessments will help schools to plan effectively and to give, both to pupils and their parents, a clear account of what the school is offering.

60. The Secretaries of State welcome the work on reappraisal of the curriculum and clarification of objectives which is already in progress in some schools and authorities. For example, for the last three years in five local education authorities schools and senior advisers have been engaged with HM Inspectors on a curriculum enquiry based on the Inspectorate's working papers "Curriculum 11-16".

61. The Secretaries of State will wish to inform themselves in due course about the action which, within the resources available to them, local authorities are taking in the light of the guidance in this paper.

62. HM Inspectors, in the pursuance of their normal duties, will provide the Secretaries of State with information about, and assessments of, the curriculum offered by schools; and offer professional advice to teachers and others concerned. The Assessment of Performance Unit will also continue its programme of monitoring specific aspects of the performance of pupils in schools.

63. The achievements of the education service stem from the contributions of all the partners in it. The Secretaries of State believe that these achievements provide a firm foundation for the further improvement in the school curriculum envisaged in this paper. It is right that the practical difficulties should be acknowledged both within the service and outside it. But the partners in the service, like the nation, are committed to the quality of education. This commitment finds its natural expression in what is taught in our schools.