



Rt. Hon. Michael Gove, MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith St.
Westminster
London SW1P 3BT

31st May 2013

Dear Mr Gove

I am writing on behalf of The Mathematical Association to register our disappointment with the recent announcement that the Government is to go ahead and dis-apply aspects of the existing programmes of study, attainment targets and statutory assessment arrangements with effect from September 2013.

In our submission to the National Curriculum Consultation, made jointly with the Association of Teachers of Mathematics, we explained that we consider disapplication to be an unnecessary and retrograde step that will create an entitlement void until the new curriculum is introduced. The current curriculum provides a safety net of a minimum entitlement for pupils and schools are already able to enhance this basic provision.

It is true that schools will need time to implement curriculum changes but, until the final curriculum is published, no meaningful preparation can be made. The creation of a free-for-all will damage the credibility and status of the school curriculum, encourage poor practices such as Performance Table 'gaming' and teaching-to-the-test, and disadvantage vulnerable learners who frequently change schools.

The recent consultation showed that only 23% of respondents (DfE 2013: 1) including many with considerable expertise in mathematics education, supported disapplication. In going against this clear and well-founded message, the Government is adopting a high-risk policy and doing so in a way that is likely to undermine the conviction, and hence the effectiveness, with which it will be implemented by teachers.

Cont.../

The Mathematical Association would like to work with the Government in developing the highest quality of teaching and learning. To this end, we point out that attempts by schools to prepare for the proposed new curriculum during any period of disapplication will clarify both curriculum themes where serious teacher support is needed, and any aspects of the new proposals that appear unworkable. Hence we would like to know what support and guidance might be available to schools and what Professional Development opportunities will be offered to individual teachers as a result of what emerges from any period of disapplication to enable them to prepare for the changes ahead

We look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Ransom
President 2013-2014

Copy to:

Elizabeth Truss MP - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare
Stefano Pozzi - Assistant Director at Department for Education

Reference:

DfE (Department for Education) (2013) *Consultation Report: Disapplication of Aspects of the existing National Curriculum from September 2013*. London : DfE.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/193837/CONSULTATION_REPORT__DISAPPLICATION_OF_ASPECTS_OF_THE_EXISTING_NATIONAL_CURRICULUM_FROM_SEPTEMBER_2013.pdf