



... children, their world, their education

Network News

From the Cambridge Primary Review

February 2011

WELCOME TO NETWORK NEWS

This first issue of *Network News* marks the launch of the Cambridge Primary Review's national primary network with its nine regional centres. It's your network so we want to hear about activities in your schools and communities that build on the work of the Review, extend its evidence base or take advantage of the current climate of greater professional freedom. We also welcome your comments and suggestions. *Network News* will appear twice a term: you'll find contact information at the end of this issue. We begin with a reminder of why the network was set up and what it stands for, before turning the spotlight on three recently-announced government reviews. We then give details of the regional centres and their launch events and other forthcoming activities in which the Review is involved.

THE STORY SO FAR

The Cambridge Primary Review was launched in October 2006. Supported since then by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, it is the most comprehensive enquiry into English primary education since the 1960s and is independent of political, professional and commercial interests. The Review has collected a vast array of evidence from inside and outside education, and has drawn on over 4000 published sources as well as written submissions and face-to-face soundings. 31 interim reports, released between 2007 and 2009, were followed in October 2009 by our 600-page final report.

The coalition government was – and is – much more receptive to the report than its Labour predecessor, and has already taken initiatives on many of the policy priorities that we distilled from the 2009-10 dissemination conferences, though it's too early to tell where such initiatives will lead. Meanwhile, responding to requests from teachers at our dissemination conferences, we have set up the Cambridge Primary Review Network. It aims to re-empower primary teachers and heads after 13 years of prescription and micro-management, and to replace compliance and dependency by independent but informed judgement grounded in professional collaboration and the best available evidence. Above all, the Network stands for a new deal for the nation's children: a primary education which combines a broad and rich curriculum, close attention to the needs of every child, but especially those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, the highest possible standards of teaching and learning, partnership between schools and with local communities, effective school leadership - all underpinned by well-argued aims and values and a clear vision for the future. Hence the network's watchwords: *empowerment, equity, expertise, excellence*.

Just five months after Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's offer of further support allowed us to make the network a reality, we are pleased to report that its structure is in place, its membership is expanding fast and the Review's tally of events organised or contributed to is well over 200. Working with Robin Alexander, who has directed the CPR since its launch in 2006, Alison Peacock combines her role of leading the network with headship of an outstanding primary school, thus keeping the network's feet firmly on the ground. Each of the network's nine regional centres (details below) has a co-ordinator, and during the next few weeks most are holding events which will in part focus on what schools want from the network and the aspects of school life where partnership and support are most needed.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM REVIEW

In sharp contrast to Labour's attempt to exclude the Cambridge Primary Review from the curriculum debate, we now have regular liaison meetings with DfE and two of the four members of the Expert Panel

for the new national curriculum review are also members of the CPR, having served on its implementation team and produced one of its interim reports. We expect a fair and serious hearing for the wealth of evidence which the Cambridge team has assembled about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing primary curriculum, and a willingness to discuss our proposals for reform. We shall also strive to ensure that DfE heeds the experience of the fast-growing body of teachers who have joined the network.

We had our first oral evidence session with the NC Review on 25 February and will also be submitting written evidence. **We urge all network members to do likewise.** Phase 1 concentrates on the four core subjects (English, maths, science, PE) but also on the vital question of what else the curriculum should include and how much of it should be statutory. The Cambridge Primary Review has consistently argued that a broad and rich curriculum in the primary phase should be a statutory entitlement. It both provides an essential foundation for future learning and choice and is vital to the pursuit of standards, for Ofsted inspection evidence shows that curriculum breadth and high standards in the ‘basics’ are interdependent.

Even though the CPR’s curriculum framework has been enthusiastically welcomed in many quarters, it is not the last word. We offered it for discussion, not unquestioning adoption. But the framework is grounded in extensive evidence from research and practice, international as well as national, and unlike recent official curriculum specifications (including the remit of the current NC review) it starts from first principles. It asks what primary education is for, what aims it should pursue, what children most need from their primary education in order to lead fulfilling and productive lives, and what kind of a world we want them to inherit. The network and its nine regional centres provide an ideal forum for exploring such matters, and for the partnership and localism which we hope will now begin to replace imposition from the centre.

If you have any suggestions about curriculum-related activities that the network might support, contact Alison Peacock or your nearest regional centre co-ordinator (contact list below). To find out more about the national curriculum review, and to submit evidence (the closing date for phase 1 is 14 April 2011):

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum>

ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Following strong criticism of the current testing regime from the Cambridge Primary Review, the unions, the House of Commons Education Select Committee, the Assessment Reform Group and many others, the coalition government has launched a review of KS2 assessment under the chairmanship of Lord Bew:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0066609/lord-bew-appointed-to-chair-external-review-of-testing> . The CPR has given both oral and written evidence, and you can download the latter at

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/PDFs/Assessment_review_submission.pdf . The deadline for submitting written evidence has now passed, but look out for the review’s interim report and then join in the debate. The final report is due in June 2011.

REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS’ CURRICULUM CAPACITY

Attracting somewhat less publicity than the curriculum and assessment reviews is the Secretary of State’s positive response to the recommendation in the Cambridge Primary Review final report that there should be an enquiry into primary schools’ capacity to teach the whole curriculum to which children are statutorily entitled – not just the core subjects – to the highest possible standard. For us this was a key recommendation, because the reality of ‘entitlement’ can be so dispiriting: a two-tier curriculum which too often attends to ‘the basics’ and leaves the rest to chance; assessment procedures which signal that only literacy and numeracy matter and indeed often squeeze the rest beyond the point of no return; and arrangements for initial teacher training, CPD and inspection which aggravate the problem by not attending to the full range of expertise which teaching a modern curriculum requires.

CPR argues that if children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, which educationally and in law they are by virtue of the requirement to teach the specified subjects, then every aspect of that curriculum should be taught to the highest possible standard, regardless of how much or little time is allocated to it. It follows that ‘standards’ should be redefined as the quality of teaching and learning across the board. Fundamental though literacy and numeracy are, it is no longer acceptable to treat KS2 test scores in English and mathematics as proxies for the standard of children’s primary education as a whole.

We followed up CPR’s final report by meeting ministers and officials to discuss this. We are delighted that Michael Gove has now agreed to set up the additional review that the CPR report recommended, covering

schools' curriculum capacity and how well it is supported by initial training, CPD, inspection and school leadership. The review is being undertaken internally at DfE and the CPR is closely involved. Watch this space, but meanwhile read our briefing paper for the Secretary of State: primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/home/DfE_SoS_curriculum_capacity_101025.pdf.

OTHER GOVERNMENT REVIEWS

Curriculum content, curriculum capacity, assessment ... What else? Well, many other established policies bearing on primary education are now under scrutiny. For example, the report from Dame Clare Tickell's EYFS review is due shortly, and those of its recommended changes that the government accepts will come into force in September 2012; we await Ofsted's draft new inspection framework, again imminent; and the Training and Development Agency (TDA) is currently looking at the professional standards which frame teachers' professional development and career advancement from induction to retirement. We'll publish news of these on the website www.primaryreview.org.uk as soon as we receive it.

FORTHCOMING NETWORK EVENTS

Following last term's preliminary events in various parts of the country, regional centres are mounting launch conferences for teachers and other primary professionals as follows:

Monday 28 February 2011, Ormskirk. Network North West. *Shaping the Future: regional primary and early years teachers' conference.* Contact Teach@edgehill.ac.uk

Monday 7 March 2011, Walsall. Network West Midlands www.wlv.ac.uk/sed/cambridgereview
Exploring collaboration: regional network meeting for schools and local authorities.
Contact dianeswift@primaryreview.org.uk

Tuesday 8 March 2011, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Network North East www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/cpr .*Regional conference for teachers and others involved in primary education.* Contact Vivienne.Moffett@ncl.ac.uk

Thursday 10 March 2011, Brighton. Network South Central
<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/education/research/cpr/index.php>. *Cambridge Primary Review South Central Regional Conference.* Contact carolrobinson@primaryreview.org.uk

Wednesday 6 April 2011, Duxford. Network East. *Regional conference for teachers and others involved in primary education.* Contact pennycoltman@primaryreview.org.uk

Tuesday 17 May 2011, Exeter. Network South West. *Regional conference for teachers and others involved in primary education.* Contact anthonywilson@primaryreview.org.uk

Tuesday 12 July 2011, Lincoln. Network East Midlands. *Regional conference for teachers and others involved in primary education.* Contact janejohnston@primaryreview.org.uk

OTHER OPEN EVENTS

A network works both ways. We organise events to which others contribute. Others organise events to which we contribute. Here are some of the latter. We assume that those run by local authorities are open only to schools in those areas (though it's worth asking). Others are open to all. Contact details are provided. If in doubt, get in touch with the institution or local authority concerned.

- Tuesday 1 March, Surrey: Surrey LA Curriculum Development Network
Jonathan.Roddick@babcock.co.uk
- Wednesday 2 March, Oxford: Oxford Brookes Partnership conference h.wilson@brookes.ac.uk
- Friday 4 March, Reading: NAHT workshop barbarap@naht.org.uk
- Wednesday 9 March, London: Islington SEN group seminar Sean.McDonald@ssatrust.org.uk
- Friday 11 March, Potters Bar: St Helens primary heads seminar alisonpeacock@primaryreview.org.uk
- Thursday 17 March, Reading: NAACE conference office@naace.co.uk
- Friday 18 March, London: Conference on Radical Education and the Common School
j.hogg@ioe.ac.uk
- Thursday 24 March, Potters Bar: SCITT conference on curriculum
alisonpeacock@primaryreview.org.uk

- Thursday 24 March, Barnet: Barnet Headteachers' Network simonputman@aol.com
- Friday 25 March, Leeds: NAHT workshop barbarap@naht.org.uk
- Wednesday 30 March, London: 'Quality, Teaching and Learning' – conference for Surrey schools Robyn.Ellis@babcock.co.uk
- Thursday 31 March, London: SSAT conference rina.JainNaha@ssatrust.org.uk
- Tuesday 5 April: Barking and Dagenham LA conference 'Empowering Voices' David.Reedy@lbbd.gov.uk
- Saturday 9 April, Manchester TES conference curriculum seminar melanie.duck@tsleducation.com
- Monday 18 April, Nottingham: SCITT conference philip.hood@nottingham.ac.uk
- Tuesday 4 May, Dublin: conference of National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Sarah.Fitzpatrick@ncca.ie
- Tuesday 10 May, London: Westminster Education Forum on the national curriculum sean.cudmore.education@westminsterforumprojects.co.uk
- Monday 16 May, Norwich: Norfolk Headteachers' Conference gill.seaton@norfolk.gov.uk
- Monday 23 May, Somerset: North Somerset Primary Heads' Conference helen.bath@staff.st-marks.n-somerset.sch.uk
- Tuesday 24 May, London: Capita conference annette.purcell@capita.co.uk
- Thursday 26 May, London: Primary Curriculum Conference for teachers in London schools: Robyn.Ellis@babcock.co.uk

WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING?

We have set up liaison groups with local authorities and subject associations and CPR itself is a member of bodies such as the Primary Umbrella Group (PUG), on which the unions and many other professional associations are represented. We also discuss developments, share ideas and seek to influence policy through our meetings with DfE, Ofsted, TDA, GTCE, the National College, SSAT and Teach First. Here are some of our recent and forthcoming meetings in this category of 'networking networks'.

- 10 January, London: CPR Local Authorities Liaison Group
- 12 January, London: Whole Education steering group
- 13 January, London: SSAT Primary Network
- 15 January, London: Teach First Working Party
- 17 January, London: CPR Regional Centres Co-ordinators Group
- 17 January, London: CPR Network Steering Committee
- 24 January, London: CPR Subject Associations Liaison Group
- 24 January, London: CPR meeting with OFSTED about primary schools' curriculum capacity
- 27 January, London: CPR gives evidence to the Government's KS2 assessment review
- 27 January, London: CPR / DfE Liaison Meeting 6
- 27 January, London: Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts
- 1 February, London: CentreForum invitational round table on the Pupil Premium
- 8 February, London: Teach First Primary Advisory Group
- 25 February, London: CPR gives evidence to the National Curriculum Review Expert Panel
- 1 March, London: GTCE invitational seminar on entry to teaching
- 3 March, London: CPR / National College Liaison Meeting 1
- 11 March, London: CPR's subject associations liaison group gives evidence to the DfE review of primary schools' curriculum capacity
- 15 March, London: Primary Umbrella Group
- 15 March, London: CPR's local authorities liaison group gives evidence to the DfE review of primary schools' curriculum capacity
- 16 March, Cambridge: delegation from India
- 28 March, London: Teach First Primary Advisory Group
- 31 March, Northallerton: North Yorkshire LA curriculum scoping meeting and primary heads' seminar
- 1 April, London: Council for Subject Associations AGM
- 12 April, Manchester: CPR meets TDA about primary curriculum capacity and professional standards
- 13 April, London: Whole Education steering group
- 18 April, Nottingham: CPR / National College Liaison Meeting 2
- 16 May, London: Teach First Primary Advisory Group

CONTACTS

National office

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Regional centres

London: Dr Anne Robertson, Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London, WC1H 0AL. 0207 612 6235 annerobertson@primaryreview.org.uk

North East (Tyneside, Wearside, Durham, Northumberland, Cumbria, North Yorkshire) www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/cpr: Dr Kate Wall and Elaine Hall, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, King George VI Building, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU. 0191 222 8453 katewall@primaryreview.org.uk elaine.hall@ncl.ac.uk

North West (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Lancashire, Cheshire, West Yorkshire) www.wlv.ac.uk/sed/cambridgereview .Nadine Baker, Faculty of Education, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, Lancs, L39 4QP. 01695 584336. nadinebaker@primaryreview.org.uk

East Midlands (Lincolnshire, East Midlands, Humberside, East Yorkshire, South Yorkshire): Jane Johnston, School of Teacher Development, Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln, LN1 3DY. 01522 583746 janejohnston@primaryreview.org.uk

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South Central (West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, Hants, Wilts, Oxon) <http://www.brighton.ac.uk/education/research/cpr/index.php> :Dr Carol Robinson, School of Education, Checkland Building, University of Brighton, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9PH. 01273 644568. carol.robinson@primaryreview.org.uk

South East (Kent, East Sussex, Surrey, Berks, Bucks, South Essex). Sue Kendall-Seatter, Department of Primary Education, Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road, Canterbury, CT1 1QU. 01227 782086/8. suekendall-seatter@primaryreview.org.uk catriona.nicholson@canterbury.ac.uk

West Midlands (Birmingham and West Midlands, Staffs, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire), Diane Swift, School of Education, University of Wolverhampton, Walsall Campus, Gorway Road, Walsall, WS1 3BD . 01902 323575. dianeswift@primaryreview.org.uk

Note. Further changes are expected between now and the next newsletter. By April/May, the north east centre will be run jointly by Newcastle and Durham universities; the south central centre may have a base in Oxford as well as Brighton; and we hope there will be web pages or links for each centre.

RESOURCES

Our website www.primaryreview.org.uk contains a large and expanding collection of material to inform the primary debate and support professional and school development. Its contents are grouped thematically for ease of use at <http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/themes/overview.php> . The materials range from interim reports to short and easily-digestible four-page briefings (41 of them to date) and resources (including

Powerpoint presentations) which we hope schools and regional centres will start adding to the website once each centre is fully operational.

The final report – which is not really final at all since it sets the scene for a new era for primary education – is the key resource. Its 600 pages summarise the evidence and arguments, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the way things currently are, and offer an alternative vision for the future. Published by Routledge, *Children, their World, their Education* is available through bookshops, libraries and online retailers (www.amazon.co.uk offers the book at less than cover price). A substantial discount is available on bulk orders, for example from schools or in connection with conferences: contact Christina Lindeholm at Routledge Christina.Lindeholm@informa.com. Royalties from the final report are being placed in trust to support the education of some of the country's most marginalised and vulnerable children.

Children, their World, their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review, 608 pp, Routledge, October 2009. ISBN 978-0-415-54871-7 (pb), 978-0-415-54870-0 (hb). Editor: Robin Alexander. Authorial team: Robin Alexander, Michael Armstrong, Julia Flutter, Linda Hargreaves, Wynne Harlen, David Harrison, Elizabeth-Hartley-Brewer, Ruth Kershner, John MacBeath, Berry Mayall, Stephanie Northen, Gillian Pugh, Colin Richards and David Utting. <http://www.routledge.com/9780415548717>.

The Cambridge Primary Review Research Surveys, 850 pp, Routledge, October 2009. ISBN 978-0-415-54869-4 (hb only). Editors: Robin Alexander, with Christine Doddington, John Gray, Linda Hargreaves and Ruth Kershner. Revised versions of the 28 specially-commissioned research surveys originally published between November 2007 and February 2009, together with linking chapters and an introductory essay. 71 contributors authors from 21 university departments. The most comprehensive survey of published research on primary education yet published. <http://www.routledge.com/9780415548717>.

Introducing the Cambridge Primary Review, 42pp, October 2009 (revised 2010), ISBN 978-1-906478-9-9. Edited by Diane Hofkins and Stephanie Northen. Download at http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/CPR_revised_booklet.pdf

Cambridge Primary Review Briefings. All 41 briefings so far published can be downloaded from the CPR website. The 13 synoptic briefings offer a concise yet comprehensive round-up of research and policy on childhood and primary education - http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/publications/synoptic_briefings.php - while the 28 research briefings go into a little more detail: http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/publications/research_briefings.php. The four below are particularly relevant to current debates.

Briefing: The Final Report

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/revised_2011-02/FINAL_REPORT_BRIEFING_REVISIED_2_11.pdf

Briefing: Towards a New Curriculum

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/revised_2011-02/CURRICULUM_BRIEFING_REVISIED_2_11.pdf

Briefing: Policy Priorities for Primary Education

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/revised_2011-02/POLICY_PRIORITIES_BRIEFING_REVISIED_2_11.pdf

Briefing: The Network

http://www.primaryreview.org.uk/downloads/network/NETWORK_BRIEFING_2_11.pdf

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU

This first issue of *Network News* has been compiled by Robin Alexander to mark the network's launch. Please let us have information about recent or future events and activities which you would like to publicise, and accounts of interesting developments. Our email addresses are at 'CPR contacts' above. For the April/May issue contact Julia Flutter.

WEBSITE

Please visit www.primaryreview.org.uk for up-to-date information about network news, events and resources, Cambridge Primary Review publications, policy developments and media coverage.