

# Key ideas for primary schools

Amanda Spielman's report contains numerous key messages and ideas that are interesting to consider in isolation. Why not use the points below as a starting point for debate about curriculum in your school?

## Amanda Spielman's curriculum commentary – a summary



- Exams should exist in the service of the curriculum rather than the other way round.
- Any test can only ever sample the knowledge that has been gained. It is the whole domain that is of matter to the pupil. A good school achieves a careful balance.
- Choices need to be made about what to do when, how much depth to pursue, which ideas to link together, what resources to draw on, which way to teach, and how to make sure all pupils are able to benefit.
- For those schools setting their own curriculum, important ongoing decisions must still be made about how the curriculum will be implemented.
- A good curriculum should lead to good results.
- Good examination results in and of themselves don't always mean that the pupil received rich and full knowledge from the curriculum.
- In the worst cases, teaching to the test, rather than teaching the full curriculum, leaves a pupil with a hollowed out and flimsy understanding.
- Despite the fact that the curriculum is what is taught, there is little debate or reflection about it.
- The timetable is important. It is, however, not the curriculum.
- School leaders and teachers have to be supported... Ofsted has a role to play here.
- Primary school leaders reported that recruiting staff who could design a curriculum was becoming increasingly difficult.
- The primary curriculum is narrowing in some schools as a consequence of too great a focus on preparing for Key Stage 2 tests.
- The regular taking of test papers does little to increase a child's ability to comprehend. A much better use of time is to teach and help children to read and read more.
- A small proportion of parents suggested that... the focus on past papers, booster sessions and test-related homework... demotivated their child.
- It is a risk to social mobility if pupils miss out on opportunities to study subjects and gain knowledge that could be valuable in subsequent stages of education or in later life.
- We need... different ways of sequencing and organising subject content to take account of different starting points.

