

Draft response:

- 22. Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects¹ where:
there is too much content; not enough content, or content is missing;
the content is out-of-date;
the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good
curriculum design or pedagogy);
there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for
teachers to develop and adapt content)?**

The North London Waste Authority (NLWA) identifies a significant gap in the curriculum regarding education on waste, recycling, and resource management, which are critical for fostering environmental responsibility and meeting future sustainability challenges. Embedding environmental awareness into core subjects such as Science and Maths, is essential for cultivating a holistic understanding of both local and global environmental issues among students.

For example, in Science and Geography, lessons on waste management and recycling could deepen students' understanding of the human impact on ecosystems, natural resource distribution, and climate change. In Maths, real-world data on waste production and recycling rates could be used to teach statistical analysis and problem-solving, making the subject more relevant and engaging. Integrating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, would also offer a comprehensive framework for these topics, connecting students' learning to broader global priorities. The Wales Curriculum Framework ensures that teachers, when designing the curriculum, look for opportunities to support students to understand sustainable development and sustainable citizenship. This example could be used as a method of best practice to apply to the English National Curriculum.

To support this integration, NLWA is developing an education programme for primary schools focused on waste reduction and the principles of circular economy. This programme directly connects with the national curriculum areas such as geography (human impact on the environment), science (properties of materials and energy production), and PSHE (community responsibility). This initiative demonstrates how environmental education can enrich the curriculum and contribute to students' understanding of sustainability as part of their everyday lives. The programme also seeks opportunities to develop oracy skills by encouraging discussions around the impact of waste and waste management.

Finally, we believe greater curriculum flexibility would allow teachers to incorporate programs like NLWA's and adapt content to reflect current environmental priorities and local issues, making learning more dynamic and meaningful.

- 23. Are there any particular challenges that could be made to ensure the curriculum (including qualification content) is more diverse and representative of society?**

Integrating sustainability and environmental stewardship into the curriculum would enhance its diversity and relevance to society. Embedding practical education on reducing, reusing, and recycling materials within personal, social, health education (PSHE) would not only address environmental issues but also provide students with essential skills for daily life. Hands-on activities – such as repurposing materials, learning basic repair skills, and growing food – can foster a sense of responsibility and adaptability, equipping students with practical skills for both personal life and future employment.

Incorporating pathways to careers in waste management, environmental science, and sustainability would help broaden students' understanding of diverse career opportunities, especially those addressing urgent societal needs. By showcasing these careers, the curriculum can inspire students from varied backgrounds to pursue fields that contribute to environmental health and community well-being, ultimately supporting a more inclusive and forward-looking curriculum.

24. To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about and respect others? Are there elements that could be improved?

The promotion of fundamental British Values within schools allows students to engage with discussions around tolerance and individual liberty. However, the current curriculum could better support students' positive engagement and respect for others by embedding sustainability and environmental education across all subjects, particularly within PSHE. Doing so would deepen students' understanding of global environmental challenges and encourage a respect for the planet's resources. Integrating digital skills to track and manage personal or community waste, for instance, would allow students to see the direct impact of their actions and develop a more active, positive relationship with their environment.

Additionally, equipping students with skills to critically research and verify information on climate and sustainability issues would help them better understand the nuances of global climate action efforts. This approach would not only build environmental literacy but also cultivate respect for the diverse ways communities around the world contribute to sustainability and resilience.

25. In which ways does the current *primary* curriculum support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for life and further study and what could we change to better support this?

The primary curriculum could more effectively equip pupils with essential life skills by incorporating practical education on reducing, reusing, and recycling materials, alongside hands-on activities such as growing and cooking food. These activities not only teach environmental responsibility but also support the development of practical problem-solving skills, patience, and resilience.

Introducing sustainability education at the primary level could further strengthen foundational skills in science, maths, and social responsibility, fostering an early understanding of resource management and the impact of individual actions. Through activities like sewing and basic repair skills, pupils would also develop problem solving and critical thinking skills, both of which are essential for further study and everyday life.

By embedding these practical life skills into the curriculum, we can help young students develop a sense of responsibility, preparing them for the complexities of future learning and encouraging a proactive attitude towards both personal and community wellbeing.

26. In which ways do the current *secondary* curriculum and qualification pathways support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work and what could we change to better support this?

The secondary curriculum could more effectively prepare students for future study, life, and work by incorporating vocational pathways in high-demand fields such as waste management, environmental science, and sustainability. Modules dedicated to these sectors, including case studies and profiles of influential figures in green skills, would give students insight into a wide range of career paths that are essential for addressing environmental challenges and achieving sustainability goals. This would enable students to explore interests in fields that directly impact community wellbeing and global sustainability.

Furthermore, addressing the skills shortage in construction and other trades by integrating relevant training opportunities into the curriculum could equip students with practical skills that align with current labour market demands. By combining theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, the curriculum can provide a balanced approach that meets both academic and vocational aspirations, better preparing students to transition smoothly into further study or employment.

28. To what extent does the current *primary* curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

The primary curriculum could better support a broad and balanced education by incorporating community-centred projects that address local waste and sustainability issues. Localising content, in line with the British Values, encourages students to engage actively with their communities, fostering a sense of responsibility and citizenship while building practical problem-solving skills. For example, projects focused on reducing waste or recycling can illustrate the impact of individual actions on the environment and promote teamwork and critical thinking.

Additionally, integrating sustainability practices within schools—such as waste reduction initiatives and composting schemes—would allow pupils to see sustainability in action. These activities not only provide hands-on learning experiences but also help to cultivate environmental awareness and life skills from an early age. Together, these changes would contribute to a more comprehensive

and balanced primary education that supports both academic and personal development.

29. To what extent do the current *secondary* curriculum and qualifications pathways support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

The secondary curriculum can be broadened by incorporating environmental education into core subjects. This includes integrating topics on waste management, recycling, and sustainability into Science, Geography, and Maths.

54. Do you have any further views on anything else associated with the Curriculum and Assessment Review not covered in the questions throughout the call for evidence?

It is essential to advocate for the inclusion of a sustainability and climate change strategy within the curriculum. This strategy should support the development of sustainable practices within schools and ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges. Collaborations with DEFRA and the Environment Agency, as well as local authorities could provide valuable resources and support for integrating these topics into the curriculum.

Producing frameworks or a model curriculum will best support teachers to provide guidance on how to teach on the broad elements of the curriculum effectively. Utilising best practice, such as the Wales National Curriculum or the Sustainable Development Goals – clearly indicated where the links to learning are, and opportunities that could be explored in line with that.