



**The Primary
Core
National
Curriculum**

CASELL
EDUCATION

*Policy into
Practice*



**edited by David Coulby
and Stephen Ward**



THE PRIMARY CORE NATIONAL CURRICULUM
Second Edition

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Policy into Practice

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David Coulby and Stephen Ward



This book is dedicated to Jacquie and Heather

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David Coulby is Dean of the Faculty of Education and Human Sciences at Bath College of Higher Education. His most recent book is (with Crispin Jones) *Postmodernism and European Education Systems*.

Howard Gibson taught at the University of Hull and in primary schools and worked as an advisory teacher for English in East Sussex. He is a Senior Lecturer in Language in Primary Education at Bath College of Higher Education. His research interests include the study of texts and the use of non-Standard English.

Ron Ritchie is Head of Department for Professional Development at Bath College of Higher Education where he is responsible for in-service courses and consultancy activities. Prior to working in higher education he was an advisory teacher for science in Avon. He has taught in secondary and primary schools. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the teaching of science and technology, including *Primary Science: Making it Work* (with Chris Ollerenshaw, 1993) and *Primary Design and Technology: a Process for Learning* (1995).

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Preface to the Second Edition

The evolution of the National Curriculum for England and Wales has been complex and controversial. The first edition of this book appeared in 1990 shortly after the introduction of the core subjects – English, mathematics and science – in schools. Since then the other subjects have appeared and there have been six years of teachers' efforts to implement the orders. As was predicted in Chapter 1 of the first edition, the statutory curriculum proved to be overloaded and the ambitious standardized assessment schedule impossible to implement. The much publicized conflict between politicians and professionals came to a head in 1993 with the government's capitulation over testing, the agreement to slim down the statutory curriculum and the return of some control of the curriculum to teachers. One result of this process of reduction has been a return to the salience of the core subjects, which makes a second edition of this book timely.

The first edition told of the development of English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum: the controversies and the conflicts which had occurred in devising the content of each subject. Suggestions for the implementation of the core subjects were also given, together with a discussion of curriculum integration.

In this edition, Chapter 1 reviews the years of conflict between politicians and professionals and sets the scene for the next three chapters. These take up the stories of each of the subjects, examining the twists and turns of proposals, orders and revisions, and show how the original debates of 1989 have been followed through. Chapter 5 continues the discussion of the integration of the core curriculum in the light of current thinking about primary teaching methods.

A second result of the thinning of the National Curriculum documents in 1995 was the lack of the type of non-statutory guidance which accompanied the orders in 1989. This makes the need for guidance on implementation of the curriculum orders even more important. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 review the ways in which teachers are implementing the statutory orders for English, mathematics and science. These are not comprehensive guides on how to teach each of the subjects. Instead, they offer examples of the policies and practice which schools have employed, the way they have formed and

managed curriculum policies and the role of subject co-ordinators together. There is also commentary on the development of teaching methods.

Since 1989 the role of information technology (IT) has become even more urgent in primary schools and can now be said to be a *core subject*: 'As in all key stages, basic skills in information technology should form part of the core' (Dearing, 1993, p.30, para. 3.20). For this reason an additional chapter on information technology in the primary curriculum has been included in the present volume. It stresses the need for skills in information technology and provides a perspective on the curriculum for the twenty-first century.

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Dearing, R. (1993) *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: An Interim Report*. London: SCAA.

Abbreviations

APU	Assessment of Performance Unit
ASE	Association for Science Education
AT	attainment target
CIP	Classroom Interaction Project
CLIS	Children Learning in Science (project)
CTC	City Technology College
DES	Department of Education and Science
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
ESG	education support grant
INSET	in-service education of teachers
IPSE	Initiatives in Primary Science: an Evaluation
IT	information technology
LEA	Local Education Authority
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NSG	non-statutory guidance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PC	profile component
SAT	standard assessment task
SCAA	Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SCDC	School Curriculum Development Committee
SE	Standard English
SEAC	School Examinations and Assessment Council
SPACE	Science Processes and Concept Exploration
TA	teacher assessment
TGAT	Task Group on Assessment and Testing