



Drama and the National Curriculum in England

13 Facts to help you take 7+ Actions **NOW**

At this critical time for the future of Drama in schools, a coherent and thorough response to the draft national curriculum consultation is vital if we are to have any chance of influencing the final version. National Drama has created this fact sheet to help you take action.

Actions we urge you to consider taking:

- Formally respond to the current consultation by April 16th 2013;
- Encourage others to formally respond, i.e. your school, governors, parents, local arts organisations and theatre educators, etc.;
- Write to your MP (email if necessary but letters preferred) and if possible meet with him/her to press the case for Drama being made a subject in the national curriculum, with equal status to Art and Design and Music;
- Write to the Secretary of State for Education, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and put the case for Drama as a subject throughout the curriculum (ideally in 'The Arts' and if not, then within English). Do this in a positive and constructive manner, using the information below. Rants will just be ignored;
- Contact the local and national press and maybe write a letter to the editor about the crisis situation for Drama in schools currently. Raise public awareness;
- Go viral! Use Twitter, Facebook (including the ND pages) and other social media to make others aware of the crisis and urge others to respond to the consultation. Please keep the tone factual, constructive and professional in order to ensure using social media does not become counter-productive to our cause;
- Use the ND Facebook page to tell us any actions you have taken or email us. chair@nationaldrama.org.uk Let us know if you receive responses or not, who they are from and their key content. This helps us gather information and consider 'next steps'.

1. **FACT:** You have until April 16th to respond to the draft national curriculum <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum2014/b00220600/consultation-national-curriculum-pos>

*The number of responses matters. The content of your response will be read. Please consider also contacting **your local MP**, <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk>, press contacts, etc. to ensure that the voice of Drama teachers is heard. Most MPs and the electorate, probably have no idea about the information below.*

2. **FACT: Drama had already been removed by name from the new Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework before the start of the national curriculum review.**
<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/eyfs%20statutory%20framework%20march%202012.pdf>

Role play is included but the last EYFS framework had Drama and role-play.

3. **FACT: Drama has no subject status in KS1 - 3 within the draft national curriculum. Music and Art and Design have subject status and Dance remains minimally within PE. The Drama strand has gone from English. It used to be within 'Speaking and Listening' but 'Spoken English' now has no framework and no Drama strand.**

What is the justification for Music and Art being given higher status than Drama and Dance (other than 'it has always been this way')? Historic inequalities need to be addressed not perpetuated and there is the opportunity to correct this now.

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

4. **FACT: As there is no statutory framework planned for Drama for KS1 to 3, children will have no legal entitlement to be taught Drama at school from 3 to 14 years of age. It may or may not be an arts option available to them at KS4.**

All children should have an entitlement to be taught Drama, just as they do for Music and Art and Design. Learning requires teaching and this requires planning for continuity and progression. With no framework or programme of study for drama, it is highly unlikely that children will have access to good and equitable drama teaching in all schools. Many children will not be taught Drama at all.

5. **FACT: Drama is still recognised as an arts subject at KS4 and an ambiguous statement about the KS4 national curriculum suggests (erroneously) that Drama has been an arts subject throughout KS1 to 3.**

If Drama is a subject at KS4, then why is it not recognised and taught as a subject at KS1-3? It is not an equitable situation to have art, music, dance and drama available for GCSE, when Art and Music have a statutory programme of study before KS4 and Drama does not.

6. **FACT: Drama was not included or even consulted on as part of the national curriculum review?**

Is this legal, when it is a statutory part of English in the current national curriculum that is under review? Is it democratic to decide to review some subjects first and to miss out Drama from the review completely and not ask even one question about it?

7. **FACT: Drama has been defined by the DfE as, 'more a matter of pedagogy'. The DfE says the national curriculum is about subjects and does not include pedagogy.**

What justification can there be for Drama suddenly becoming defined as a subject at KS4? The DfE chooses to define drama as pedagogy and this conveniently places it outside the national curriculum review. Drama is a subject with its own knowledge and skills. Teachers who have learned about Drama, may then use it as a powerful pedagogy. Drama is an arts subject and has

its own knowledge base (e.g. see national curricula of Australia, New Zealand, N.Ireland, Eire, Ontario).

- 8. FACT: National Drama responded fully as a key stakeholder to the national curriculum review and submitted a detailed response. National Drama was not listed as having responded amongst the key stakeholders for English. The DfE report for English did not even specifically mention Drama, except within reading (plays).**

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/NCR%20-%20Call%20for%20Evidence%20Summary%20Report.pdf>

National Drama is concerned that its full and active participation in the stakeholder review and its detailed and documented responses about Drama were not acknowledged in the DfE summary report of the stakeholder consultation. It gave the mistaken impression by omission that we had not responded.

- 9. FACT: Drama was part of the Cultural Education review. Art and Music were part of both the national curriculum review and Henley’s Cultural Education reviews. Music had its own review, led by Henley.**

Why were some arts subjects included in both the national curriculum review and the Henley reviews and other art subjects, e.g. Drama, were only in the Henley review? It can be argued that Drama was statutorily entitled to be part of the national curriculum review.

- 10. FACT: Henley’s remit was to carry out a review of cultural education in order to, ‘realise the ambition for every child to have the chance to experience a wide variety of high quality cultural experiences’. Henley considered:**

- a. What cultural experiences should be included?
- b. How can cultural organisations create an offer that fulfils the needs of schools to provide a broad and truly rounded education for their students?
- c. How can we ensure that all opportunities are as good as the best?

For Drama, experiencing high quality cultural experiences has its main focus on going to the theatre and appreciating the work of past playwrights, e.g. Shakespeare and watching professionals at work. There may be a very limited opportunity to work with theatre professionals and theatre educators, as this is expensive. It is very unlikely that there will be geographical or economic equality of opportunity to access many high quality cultural experiences from cultural organisations. This is not the same as a legal entitlement to learn about Drama and Theatre at school, regularly, from specialist Drama teachers, using a statutory programme of study. Pupils need both experiences. If children were never taught Music but sometimes went to see concerts and maybe talked with musicians about their work, this would clearly be educationally inadequate and children would not be able to systematically develop music knowledge and skills. The same is true for Drama.

- 11. FACT: Darren Henley recommended unequivocally that Drama be made part of the national curriculum, as an arts subject in its own right. His recommendation was selectively ignored by the DfE and has not been acted upon. No official explanation for ignoring his clear recommendation has been given.**

So, Drama was not consulted on in the national curriculum review, (which the education sector would mainly have been responding to) and the recommendations relating to Drama in the

Cultural Education review (which the cultural sector were more likely to respond to) were deliberately ignored. One assumes that Henley's recommendation was not welcome and did not fit in with what is being planned for cultural organisations to deliver as part of the national plan (presumably through Arts Council England's Bridging Organisations and the Music Hubs). Academies do not need to employ teachers with QTS.

- 12. FACT: The DfE response to the Henley Cultural Education review led to some financial investment in initiatives for Music, Art and Dance but nothing at all for Drama.**

- 13. FACT: The impact of the anticipated EBacc led to 23% of schools in a survey, dropping Drama as a subject (Ipsos Mori Poll). Drama was the subject most likely to be dropped from the curriculum.**
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR249.pdf>

**National Drama urges you to join your voice with ours and speak out against
the removal of drama from the curriculum entitlement
of children and young people in England.**