Quakers in Britain submission to Department for Education's Curriculum and Assessment Review, 2024

This is a collation of answers from the Quakers in Britain Peace Education team, submitted to the Department for Education Curriculum and Assessment Review in 2024.

Section 1: About you

Type of organisation

Charity/NPO

Organisation name

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), known as Quakers in Britain.

Role in the organisation

Quakers in Britain is a faith group committed to working for equality and peace.

Building on an historic commitment to peace, many Quakers have worked locally, nationally and internationally to develop and share peace education.

This empowers children and young people with the peacebuilding knowledge, skills and attributes needed to thrive and supports schools to build a culture of peace and nonviolence.

Section 2: General views on curriculum, assessment and qualifications pathways

10. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are working well to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

10.A.1) The curriculum

The curriculum in England should integrate peace education for all learners. In a violent and unstable world, peace education is the cornerstone on which a more just, resilient and harmonious society can be built.

Peace education represents an overarching commitment to relationships at every level from the intrapersonal to the global, drawing on a body of proven approaches that address essential education needs. These practices cultivate empathy and compassion, critical thinking and communication and social skills.

'As a school culture of peacebuilding grows, the principles and practices of good relationships become the norm' (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart*, 2022).

As a recent Open University report on innovating pedagogy concludes, 'while often undervalued or relegated to enrichment, pedagogies of peace are most impactful when they are foregrounded as a foundation on which other learning occurs.' (Kukulska-Hulme et al, 2024).

Peace is a national responsibility, mandated by the UK's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 29), Sustainable Development Goal 4 (target 7), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 26.2), and notably UNESCO's recent recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

More immediately, peace education addresses challenges young people face including mental wellbeing, social exclusion, conflict, new technology and the climate emergency.

UNICEF provides a helpful summary of how education should be contributing to peace:

> "Peace Education is the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level." (Fountain, 1999).

As a minimum, the DFE should be able to show how the curriculum guarantees all learners peace education by this definition.

We do not propose a new school subject, but rather ask the review team to address the need to educate for peace across the curriculum, drawing on a corpus of practices.

> 'This is not an objective for a course called 'Peace' on the timetable. It must permeate all our teaching.' - Janet Gilbraith, Quaker Faith & Practice (1986)

With this is mind, and review hope for evolution rather than revolution, we will highlight ways the curriculum can be adjusted to address that intention.

10.A.2) Teach peacemaking (conflict resolution)

Equipping learners to respond non-violently to conflict has a clear benefit for both wellbeing and learning.

Quaker educators wrote in 1990:

> *Conflict is a part of life, a necessary result of the varying needs, aims and perspectives of individuals and communities. It is part of our daily experience, both directly and through television and other news media. The ethos of the*

> *home, school or workplace will provide some rules (spoken and unspoken) for handling conflict situations. However, these often contradict each other and the pressures from friends and peer groups can work against the 'official' ways of handling conflict. Society educates young people at best haphazardly and at worst quite destructively as far as conflict is concerned. From an early age, people are led to think that conflicts should be settled by someone in authority: the parent, the teacher, the headteacher, the gang leader, the policeman, the judge, the boss, the president. If there is nobody to arbitrate, then the 'strongest' will 'win' and the 'weaker' will 'lose'. Traditionally, little encouragement has been given to young people to take responsibility for resolving conflicts, to look for 'win-win' solutions. Yet **the way in which young people learn to respond to conflict will have a pervasive effect both on the quality of their personal lives and on the prospects for society as a whole.** Affirming the personal value of each individual, encouraging mutual respect and consciously developing the skills and attitudes involved in **creative conflict resolution must be regarded as an important educational priority.'** -Sue Bowers and Tom Leimdorfer, 1990, Quaker Faith and Practice 24:54*

This analysis is equally apt today. According to recent analysis, 'The manifestation of conflict within educational establishments exacts a high price from young people and the teachers who support them.' (Mediation Hertfordshire, 2024)

Through Quaker work in schools, we know children and young people can be effective peacemakers given training and support. The curriculum is however largely silent on this question- 'managing conflict' is a fleeting reference in primary Relationships Education, but hardly commensurate with its relevance to everyday life and society.

'Initially I was really sceptical of it; I thought, No, this is not going to work with seven- and eight-year-olds, talking about peace! But actually, just within the space of a few weeks [of] regular circle times… they were able to discuss what their conflict was, what their arguments were, and they had some strategies to be able to solve those. They are going to be our citizens of the future and they will need to know how to manage conflicts, how to work together, how to be resilient, how to support and listen, and actually, teaching them from an early age, really does do that.' –

Samantha Duda-Spencer, teacher at John of Rolleston Primary School, 'Peace=Kind, Building Peace in Schools' [video], 2022, https://www.youtube.com/channel/ UCFYNMKOTteu83oVQiiiPcSA

Teaching peace and conflict resolution can take the form of a spiral curriculum throughout compulsory education, building up the knowledge and skills of conflict resolution from an early age as exemplified in the successful *Learning for Peace* book, used in many primary schools. Many school students also take on the more formal role of peer mediator, providing conflict resolution to other young people and

developing powerful life skills. This has the benefit of making the school safer for learning.

> "We bring people together to reconcile and make the world a better place" – Kezia, peer mediator and now a teacher running a peer mediation programme.

A school community's ethos, competency and culture for responding to conflict also have profound consequences related to social inclusion and life chances.

> 'In English schools, the proliferation of punitive responses to student disaffection has coincided with a steep rise in permanent exclusions, degrading the life-chances of many young people and exacting multiple secondary costs on society at large.' (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart*, 2022, p5)

Under question 12, we will elaborate on how punitive responses represent a barrier to equitable attainment.

There are excellent organisations like Leap Confronting Conflict, CRESST, Behaviour Matters, Wandsworth Mediation, Peacemakers and RJ Working, supporting conflict education in English schools, but provision is unequal. There are also schools that serve as exemplars like Carr Manor Community School in Leeds, which has embedded restorative practice in multiple ways.

> 'Carr Manor Community School is committed to a relational approach to a child's education and building resource and capacity to develop their character and skills for life….'

> 'When children are happy and comfortable they learn more quickly and they attend school more. They learn how to self-regulate their own behaviours. They learn how to support each other's behaviours' - Simon Flowers, Headteacher, Carr Manor Community School

> 'The good thing about RP (Restorative Practice) reps is they are student to student so they can empathise a bit more.' – Leon, Year 9, Carr Manor Community School ('A Relational Approach, Building Peace in Schools' [video]www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education-case))

Conflict is also a lens through which content across the curriculum can be better understood. Understanding conflict in history, in works of fiction, in faith traditions, in a democratic society can help students understand their capacities as a peacebuilder, building a culture of nonviolence.

10.A.3 | Support Citizenship

Citizenship education is crucial to building a culture of peace and nonviolence. Currently, there is a shortage of subject specialists and teaching time. The subject's beleaguered status in schools does not match Citizenship's centrality to preparing young people for a changing world.

As the Crick report argued in 1998, 'citizenship and the teaching of democracy… is so important both for schools and the life of the nation that there must be a statutory requirement on schools to ensure that it is part of the entitlement of all pupils' (Crick et al, *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools*, 1998).

This is no less true today as young people can be directly or indirectly exposed to international conflict, the climate emergency, violent ideologies and cultural violence.

We are concerned about the resilience of our democracy and have witnessed the erosion of truth and integrity in public life. Greater media literacy is necessary to equip citizens with the skills they need to participate fully in our democracy.

The problem is not the content of the Citizenship curriculum but its marginal status relative to other subject areas. The lack of grants for Citizenship trainee teachers compared with many other subject areas exacerbates the shortage.

The review process is concerned with the effective teaching of English, and we would note many aspects of the English curriculum such as writing with purpose and speaking and listening are developed in Citizenship.

We recommend the government, and the Department for Education strengthen the status and material support for Citizenship education.

Organisations like the Association of Citizenship Teachers, Young Citizens, and the Institute of Education, already provide strong benchmarking and pedagogical guidance that can be built upon.

10.A.4 | Rethink 'Fundamental British Values'

Schools in England are currently required to actively promote the Fundamental British Values of:

- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- democracy

Ironically, the process for identifying these values did not involve democratic public consultation.

These themes are not inherently problematic and can be used as a "jumping off point" for more rigorous critical and ethical reflection. Some schools do this well. However teaching these four values as 'fundamental' and particularly British has always been problematic. Using adherence to them as a test for extremism, with all the fear and stigma that implies, is more troubling still, and can lead to discrimination. In conjunction with the Prevent Duty, which can subject students to reporting and police referral, Fundamental British Values represent an impediment to the curriculum and a chilling factor for teachers.

We recommend moving away from this narrow definition of values to encouraging students engage with the question of their values, practising empathy, ethical and analytical reasoning and discussion.

Additional values that could be usefully explored and evaluated without being prescribed include nonviolence, truth and honesty, equality, fairness and compassion.

10.A.5 | Climate justice and teaching the future

The Department for Education has shown a welcome new emphasis on more climate change and sustainability education with the 2022 strategy.

Despite this, curriculum guidance continues to mute key questions and approaches. Young people from across the UK have selected climate change as the Children's Word of the Year for 2023, but the curriculum does not match this urgency.

During the 2022 consultation on the draft strategy, Quakers in Britain advised the DFE not to sanitise climate breakdown. While young people's climate anxiety is not to be underestimated, circumspection is not the solution.

> '[In the media] I've seen flooding in India - I saw a documentary – destroying land and livelihood. It's not fair on those people. And I've seen maps of erosion of inhabited land. By 2040 lots will be cut away. We don't get told.' – Quaker young person

> 'Teachers tend to say what they think we can handle but I'm more scared not knowing the truth and how to deal with it.' – Quaker young person

UNESCO's World in 2030 survey of 5,226 respondents under 25 showed by 71% that climate change and the loss of biodiversity was the highest concern followed by violence and armed conflict. This was echoed by the Oxford Children's Word of the Year 2023, in which a third of children chose "climate change" as their word, narrowly followed by "war".

We advised the DFE to provide explicit guidance on how to engage with the concept of 'climate justice', a term which does not currently appear in the strategy, even to evaluate.

> '*Teachers just talk about recycling – but there's more to it.*' – a Quaker young person

Given the DFE's guidance on impartiality states, 'Teaching about political issues and the different views held on these is an essential part of a broad and balanced curriculum', the curriculum should provide concrete opportunities for this.

The youth-led movement Teach the Future has shown how the legacy of colonialism and the link between racial disparities and vulnerability to climate breakdown can be integrated in the curriculum. The current curriculum does not encourage schools to host antiracist civil society speakers, who are often marginalised by government

discourse and even formal guidance. Explicit encouragement should be given to this kind of enrichment.

We also encourage the reviewers to look at the work of Teach the Future, which has coordinated a detailed "tracked-changes" approach across the current curriculum.

10.A.6) War, disarmament and peace

War and armed conflict loom large for many young people, particularly the violence in the Middle East and Eastern Europe which has dominated both legacy and social media. Many young people will also have a familial connection to the experience of war, or in some case direct experience.

Juxtaposed with this, young people are also exposed to extracurricular glamourisation of war through cadet forces, STEM workshops and resources provided by arms companies and educational engagement and recruitment by the armed forces themselves, but without accountability or educational criticality.

As noted above, evidence shows children and young people are concerned about international armed conflict, and we know many teachers would like to address this, but they are not confident the curriculum enables them.

Where the curriculum does address war, it can risk a shallow and even jingoistic presentation, minimising the impact and ignoring the role of peace campaigns and nonviolent movements in national and international history. The combination of these factors can amount to a failure of impartiality by schools on the controversial theme of war.

We know lots of young people are concerned about the violence in places such as Israel and Palestine, but that their desire to understand and explore such issues is often unaddressed. Organisations such as Solutions not Sides are able to create brave spaces for young people to explore this issue whilst explicitly working to reduce hateful narratives.

The curriculum should empower teachers for disarmament education. Most teachers surveyed by the Nuclear Education Trust (NET) think more information debate and education is needed on nuclear disarmament. Multiple UN General Assembly resolutions have called for education for disarmament (resolutions 44/123, 46/27, 48/64).

Disarmament education should also address urgent ethical questions about the global arms trade, new technology such as AI and armed drones, and nuclear weapons. Quakers have developed resources on these themes with partners in the Peace Education Network, combining intellectual rigour, emotional engagement and ethical reflection. These resources are popular downloads, speaking to a demand amongst teachers.

The DFE should ensure a curriculum that does not glorify war and does not sanitise the role of armed violence. The curriculum should empower teachers to engender hope by exploring the ways peace is developed.

Sensitivity and judgement are important in exploring these topics as young citizens grow-up. There is a need to address anxiety that comes from encountering questions of global crisis, and for cultivating hope.

> 'Educationalists have a responsibility to promote a sense of hope, to challenge helplessness, and give learners the knowledge, skills and values base to engage in making the world a better place. One of the tasks of the educator should be to unveil the opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be.' – (Bourn & Hatley, 2022, *Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Evidence in Schools in England*)

10.A.7) Peacebuilding

We have already discussed the role of young people as peacemakers, able to understand their own relationship with conflict, negotiate and take on roles such as peer mediators and restorative practice reps.

Peacebuilding goes beyond the reaction to conflict to ask, how can learners effect a fair and just world? UNESCO's recommendation, which the UK affirmed, emphasises 'the ability to act as agents of change.' Likewise, the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires schools to ensure that every student enjoys their right to be heard in all matters that affect them, whether local or global, like the questions of the climate emergency and armed conflict discussed above.

In essence, children and young people should be given the space to develop as peacebuilders. The curriculum should not seek to neuter this impulse, but help teachers put in place support to ensure students' wellbeing and learning as they engage with these questions.

The curriculum should provide opportunities to unpack the concept of indirect violence, that is of cultural and structural violence, in order to understand issues.

The curriculum should also feature models of peacebuilding in practice, exploring how just outcomes have been brought about either locally or globally. Civil society educators such as Facing History & Ourselves, Journey to Justice, Amnesty International UK, DECSY, Scientists for Global Responsibility, Pax Christi, and many more, can help enrich this area of the curriculum. We recommend the Peace Education Network's Teach Peace packs to explore this further (https://www.peace-education.org.uk/teach-peace).

We would also recommend more explicit emphasis in the curriculum on the Convention on the rights of the Child, building on the work of UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Programme.

10.B) Qualification pathways

10.B.1 | Demilitarise education pathways

In the area of qualification pathways, Quakers, as well as UK's Children's Commissioners, the National Education Union, children's organisations and health professionals are distressed about ongoing military recruitment for 16-18 year olds. (see 'Responding to Military Engagement in Schools' https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/responding-to-military-engagement-schools), This has proven harmful to young people's wellbeing, safety and the quality of their education. Advertising targets young people from poorer backgrounds (Child Rights International Network, 2019, 'Conscription by poverty? Deprivation and army recruitment in the UK').

As discussed above, the current curriculum can fail students in providing appropriate impartiality on the issue of war. While the Ministry of Defence policy of recruiting children is beyond the scope and power of this review, the military influence on the curriculum is not.

16-18 year olds face appalling risks at the Army Foundation College before they are even deployed in combat roles (CRIN, 2021, 'Parents of under-18 recruits speak out about abuse at army training centre') as well as the educational failures of that institution, with 30% of army recruits under 18 leaving or being dismissed before they finish training. This leaves them immediately unemployed and out of education ('British armed forces: Why raising the recruitment age would benefit everyone').

The United Kingdom exercises an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in order to recruit under 18 year olds to its armed forces, making it the only country in Europe which routinely does so.

Qualification pathways should exclude military recruitment before 18, and afford the young people traditionally targeted by the military with excellent options and incentives, including equivalent financial support to the pay received by military recruits.

11. What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be targeted for improvements to better support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

11.1 Recognise successful peacemakers

Education policymakers can be pre-occupied with what the school and staff do to regulate students, not noticing the peacemaking young people do themselves informally and formally.

Our partner, the Civil Mediation Council, is developing standards and systems to affirm children and young people who demonstrate mediation skills. National recognition of these competences would underscore how important these skills are to life in England today. This would complement the professionalisation of mediation and the increasing use of mediation through the Ministry of Justice.

There are thousands of peer mediators across England who demonstrate prowess in their field. Sixth Form Mediators have contributed to community mediation services as well as conflict resolution in their school (Sixth Form Colleges Association, Peer mediation: A way for students to resolve conflict themselves).

We recommend the review team give thought to how these peacemaking skills can be affirmed and recognised during their time in full time education, drawing on the CMC's work.

Some work has already been done by the Peaceful Schools Project (www.peacefulschools.org.uk) to celebrate good practice.National support from the DFE could further this.

12. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation (class ceilings) for learners experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?

An unjust approach to behaviour and relationships in schools is a big barrier to an equitable education. It is entwined with socioeconomic disadvantage. This is a curriculum concern as much as it is a question of "behaviour policy." Seeking to teach positive behaviour while using coercive tools can be counter productive.

> 'We cannot teach one thing and act another.' Janet Gilbraith, Quaker Faith & Practice (1986)

The review authors and the Department for Education will be aware of the range of views and practice among schools in England with respect to restorative practice. Restorative practice avoids the pitfalls of either an authoritarian approach or a permissive approach. It includes practices like regular check-ins and opportunities for dialogue in response to conflict and harmful behaviour. It emphasises communication, responsibility and learning.

It is well-evidenced that punitive responses tend to have unequal outcomes. Punishments like detention, suspension and exclusion can not only disproportionately affect some groups, but magnify existing socioeconomic disadvantage and imperil educational progress. Exclusions in particular further marginalise the marginalised.

'Relative to students in other social groups in England, those eligible for free school meals are four times as likely to suffer exclusion.' (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart*, 2022, p24)

The DFE Review Team will be aware that the academic outcomes for excluded students plunge. Only one per cent of excluded students sent to alternative providers in England gain five standard GCSE passes.45 per cent of those sent to Pupil Referral Units are not in education, employment, or training when they leave. (Laura Partridge, Fran Landreth Strong, Eli Lobley, & Danni Mason, Pinball kids: Preventing school exclusions, London: RSA, 2020).

The problem is not going away. School exclusions and suspensions surged in the last year according to the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), despite the known harms.

This intersects with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Experience of four or more different types of ACEs is associated with a lasting stress response (indicated by chronic overproduction of cortisol), which is associated with various health problems in adulthood. Around one in ten children have experienced this degree of traumatic exposure to adversity, with children from low-income backgrounds being three times "as likely as those from high-income backgrounds to be affected in this way. Significantly for schools, childhood trauma can severely complicate the competence of young people to regulate their behaviour in social settings (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart*, 2022, p14).

Schools will need adequate resources to address this barrier, but also the tools and training. Drawing on the analysis of Professor Hilary Cremin of Cambridge University, we would frame this in terms of how much resource and energy schools put into peacekeeping, peacemaking or peacebuilding. Peacekeeping relies more on coercive power and punishment; peacemaking places the emphasis on dialogue, responsibility and addressing the root of behaviour and conflict; peacebuilding seeks address the underlying systems and structures.

In Question 15, we elaborate on how peacemaking and peacebuilding can challenge barriers to participation.

13. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation which may disproportionately impact pupils based on other protected characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity)?

13.1) Racist behaviour policies

Under Question 12, we discussed the discriminatory barriers presented by punitive behaviour policies, which represent an indictment of current practices.

We would add that, in addition to disproportionately affecting those from socioeconomic disadvantage, Gypsy and Roma students are four times as likely to be excluded and exclusions are also used disproportionately to punish students of colour (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart,* 2022, p25).

13.2) Prevent Policy

The Prevent policy in schools has been shown to be racist, particularly Islamophobic (see Amnesty International, 2024, This is the Thought Police).

In its recent (2023-24) review of the UK, the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination urged the suspension of the "Prevent Duty", noting particular concern about 'the high number of interventions and referrals of persons belonging to Muslim communities, especially children.

As discussed under question 10.A, coupling police referrals with "Fundamental British Values" is harmful, making unjust referrals more likely and undermining learning. It also has a corrosive effect on teachers' confidence and freedoms, especially when the teacher is Muslim or Middle Eastern.

14. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

As with questions 12 and 13, we note that children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities can lose learning through a peacekeeping behaviour paradigm.

Evidence from the Institute for Public Policy Research highlight the amount of "lost learning" resulting from exclusionary approaches in schools and how this magnifies marginalisation and inequities, including for learned with special educational needs.

> 'There is a social case for supporting mainstream schools to reduce the prevalence of lost learning. Across the continuum – from less to more severe forms of exclusion – we see that children facing the most challenges in their lives are disproportionately more likely to be losing learning. New data for this report shows that these inequities are also reflected in the allocation of negative 'behaviour points' in schools. Specifically, we find that across different types of exclusion, lost learning is disproportionately experienced by... Children growing up in poverty... Children in contact with social services...Children with special educational needs... Children facing a mental health crisis...Children experiencing racism" (Institute for Public Policy Research, Who is Losing Learning, p7)

Concordantly, we would argue the DFE cannot realistically hope to reduce these barriers for learners without reducing the amount of exclusionary practices.

15. In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any enablers that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above? [e.g. socioeconomically disadvantaged young people, pupils with SEND, pupils who are otherwise vulnerable, and young people with protected characteristics]

As discussed in questions 12, 13 and 14, a profound barrier to participation and learning is punitive practice, using coercive power for "peacekeeping" A relational approach for all students with a curriculum to support it is needed, valuing peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Peacemakers, a Birmingham-based Quaker project, has developed Learning for Peace, as spiral curriculum primary schools linked to spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. This has been embraced my many schools, equipping them to build a culture of peace. This means that, when students encounter conflict or interact with behaviour policies, they are more likely to have the social and emotional skills to respond responsibly and positively.

As discussed in question 10, there are schools serving as exemplars.

> 'Through prioritising relationships using restorative practice, both student-student and adult-student, and focusing on hope, happiness and social justice, our school has not only increased its achievements, but also over the last two years shows a two-thirds reduction in fixed-term exclusions' - Les Hall, headteacher, Mounts Bay Academy (Quoted by Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart,* 2022, p6).

Key to restorative practice is the precept that solutions are not imposed on people but arrived at together. This means students take responsibility and learn from experiences. We recommend the review team consider how the curriculum can support a relational approach to discipline.

> 'The strongest predictor of reduced disruption was not the threat of punishment at all, but the health of the teacher student relationship, in which students felt their teachers believed in them, supported them, listened to them, and did not demean them.' (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart,* 2022, p25).

This returns us to a key recommendation for the review team: consider how the curriculum can support a school-wide culture of peace.

22. Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects* where: a) there is too much content; not enough content; or content is missing; b) the content is out-of-date; c) the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good curriculum design or pedagogy); d) there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for teachers to develop and adapt content)? Please provide detail on specific key stages where appropriate. *This includes both qualifications where the government sets content nationally, and anywhere the content is currently set by awarding organisations.

22.1 Science

The teaching of science can be enhanced by giving due attention to the moral and societal implications of science and technology. For example, as part of GCSE physics students study the atom and the work of Einstein and Bohr, both of whom grappled with the ethical ramifications of their work when the atom bomb was invented.

Topics like climate change, biodiversity, genetics and artificial intelligence can likewise benefit from this aspect. Students are also interested in this aspect of science and technology, so exploring the issues enhances learning.

We recommend looking at the work of Scientists for Global Responsibility (https://www.sgr.org.uk/) to consider this dimension of the science curriculum.

22.2 History

The History curriculum can still be preoccupied with British wars, and minimises colonial history and the history of other cultures.

There are rich opportunities for peace education within History. We are conscious that not every period and theme can be studied, but we would challenge the Review Team to consider how to diversify history teaching so that it does not become a predictable march through the Romans, Tudors, Industrial Revolution and two World Wars.

One way to do this could be longitudinal thematic studies on the theme of peace and nonviolent change. The social history of the British peace movement including the No conscription Fellowship, Conscience Clause, the Women's Peace Petition, the quadrupling of conscientious objection in World War 2, the women of Greenham Common, resistance to the Iraq War, the arms trade treaty could, for example, involve a wealth of learning. As noted in the DFE's impartiality guidance, historical events can constitute political issue, particularly where they connect to current affairs and conflict. There are useful approaches around teaching "parallel narratives" in history, echoing mediation approaches, which can help address these issues impartially while honouring the way they make people feel today. We would encourage the integration of these in the curriculum so that teachers have the tools to address contested history.

We would also urge that when the Holocaust and other examples of genocide and of mass violence are taught, due depth and attention is given to student-centred teaching strategies that build resilience to hateful narratives. This kind of education is too important to deliver haphazardly. Organisations such as Facing History and Ourselves UK and Parallel Histories have expertise to share here.

22.3 Religious Education

We welcome the World Views Approach that has been developed by RE specialists as it provides a scope for intellectual rigour, wonder and ethical engagement without itemising a compendium of religious lore to convey without context.

Religious Education (RE) is a useful space for education *about* peace, exploring world views about peace and nonviolence, drawing on faith experiences of war, conscientious objection, pacifism and civil resistance and mediation.

RE can also be *for* peace at the level of a school, recognising that interpersonal and intergroup conflict can be linked to political and identity-based issues, such as contemporary violence in the Middle East. RE can draw on peacemaking and peacebuilding from and faith traditions and between faith traditions to enable dialogue and understanding about differences. Organisations like Faith & Belief Forum seek to explicitly address this and challenge hate, or what we might term cultural violence.

We recommend the curriculum enable space for these challenging conversations about world views.

22.4 Citizenship

As noted in Question 10, we hope for renewed emphasis on Citizenship education as a key forum for peace education that enhances English skills.

22.5 Drama, Music, Art and Design and global citizenship

In creative arts subjects, teachers address a range of technical and conceptual competences, and these parts of the curriculum can also be a rich place to explore Global Citizenship issues and inspire creative responses from learners.

Peace education often inspires creative expression and engagement using resources like CND's Sadako's Cranes for peace, kitemaking to explore human rights in Afghanistan, hot seating to explore refugee stories, "Get creative for climate justice" shared with parliamentarians, creating animations to explore refugee stories about human rights and so on (See www.peace-education.org.uk/teach-peace). This can cultivate empathy and Citizenship skills alongside creative skills.

Encountering, telling and retelling stories in creative ways and different media can strengthen learners' intellectual engagement and knowledge. For example, an art teacher might draw on works like Nash's images of No Man's Land, Picasso's Guernica and art from war-affected regions today to explore style and approaches, allowing young people to respond to a contemporary issue.

We recommend the curriculum allow and explicitly encourage for this kind of synthesis of creativity and global citizenship learning.

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

This review could inadvertently be influenced by the most privileged voices. We encourage engagement with antiracist educators like No More Exclusions, Care 2 Liberate and the Black Educators Alliance. The Review team will be aware that people of colour are underrepresented in the teaching profession and academia, so they may need to work harder to hear those voices and take care to give them due weight. We hope the DFE will be able to show how it did this.

Quakers support efforts to decolonise the curriculum. Education can reinforce white supremacy and western cultural chauvinism; it needs to instead consciously seek to dismantle those ideas. This is an ongoing project rather than a single task, but that does not make it less urgent.

We recommend utilising the Peace Studies lens of cultural and structural violence as one way to understand the inequalities past and present, drawing on the research of Johan Galtung, Monisha Bajaj and others.

We hope that the Review team will listen carefully to teachers and young people, mindful that some people have to be louder to be heard.

We support the excellent work of Teach the Future's tracked changes project, which has done so much work already to review the curriculum by these criteria.

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?

We welcome this question as it is a strong mandate for peace education as described in Question 10.

> 'Among the cardinal tasks of education is to support young people to cultivate healthy relationships with one another, such that they learn to discern common needs, navigate divergent wants, and handle conflicts when they arise.' (Gee et al, *Peace at the Heart*, 2022, p18)

There are welcome aspects of the curriculum and school responsibilities including elements of PSHE and Relationships education, but the curriculum opportunities are quite dissipated.

We recommend practices including regular circle time, and working in small groups for check ins, ups and outs as practised by Carr Manor Community School, as well as other ways to link learning and social experience; teaching peacemaking and conflict as discussed under Question 10; emotional learning opportunities to reflect on and affirm identity; activities which cultivate empathy and perspective taking.

It is also important to explicitly challenge cultural violence and hateful narratives explicitly and consistently, and schools can usefully draw from outside civil society expertise to do this.

27. In which ways do the current qualification pathways and content at 16-19 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?

As noted under question 10, under 18 military recruitment undermines student safety, rights and educational integrity. Leaving the risk of physical injury and death aside, military enlistment frequently hurts people's life chances (Responding to Military Engagement in schools, 2022, Quakers in Britain).

We believe the Department for Education will not facilitate Ministry of Defence recruitment in schools if it has the best interests of young people in mind.

We also made the case that teaching peacemaking and peacebuilding are crucial educational priorities for success in later life.

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?

As noted under Question 15, good resources have been developed to support a whole school approach in primary context. We particularly recommend Learning for Peace from Peacemakers (www.peacemakers.org.uk) , which offers a spiral curriculum linked to Spiritual Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

> 'The lessons made me feel more confident and I have different thoughts about different people in my class, better thoughts.' –Year 4 Pupil experiencing Learning for Peace lessons

The DFE will also need to play a role in ensuring schools feel they have "permission" to dedicate classroom time and teaching to cultivating peace, but the outcomes are manifest.

> 'Peace is essential, so a happy, safe environment is the foundational bedrock of our curriculum. It means that every child can come to school every day and enjoy the learning that takes place.' Richard Simcox, Headteacher at John of Rolleston Primary School

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?

29.1) Broad and balanced

Learning about, for and through peace needs to be an explicit curriculum goal, and not a peripheral concern.

> 'Many teachers see areas such as human rights, the environment, or peace education as more than a series of topics to cover in the classroom' (Bourn & Hatley, 2022, Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Evidence in Schools in England)

A high-level of personal reflection and active engagement in debate is required in order to effect the change needed to embody peace. This can only happen through a learner centred participatory pedagogy.

England can learn from its UK neighbours. The curricula in Scotland and Wales are organised around organising principles, the Four Capacities in the Curriculum for Excellence and the Four Purposes in the Curriculum for Wales. Emulating this model

in the curriculum could be one way to do this, for example by adopting the purpose, "Ethical, informed citizens of the world".

29.2) Provide more impartiality about the military

A broad and balanced curriculum is undermined by the disproportionate role of the military in many schools. The weapons industry visits hundreds of schools, but students do not typically get the chance to consider the ethics around this.

https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/responding-to-military-engagement-schools, citing CRIN, 2021, 'British armed forces: Why raising the recruitment age would benefit everyone'

Under-18 recruits have worse long-term mental health outcomes than civilians of comparable age and background. citing CRIN, 2021, 'Recent research on outcomes for junior armed forces entrants: A response'

The resources currently allocated for projects like Combined Cadet Forces in schools could usefully be made available to a wider range of extracurricular support, including art, sport, music and drama opportunities.

53. How could technology be used to improve how we deliver the curriculum, assessment and qualifications in England?

53.1) Peace education as innovating pedagogy

One way to understand peace education is as a part of education technology.

As stated by the Institute of Educational Technology:

'Pedagogies of peace may contribute to more cooperative coexistence across the planet by amplifying practices of compassion, tolerance, restorative justice, and global citizenship.'

'Global citizenship is an expanded view of restorative justice that allows teachers and learners to look beyond the conflicts of their own classrooms toward an impact on the global community.'

'As the world community shrinks and global conflicts grow, educators will increasingly feel the impact of external conflicts within their classrooms'

'While often undervalued or relegated to enrichment, pedagogies of peace are most impactful when they are foregrounded as a foundation on which other learning occurs.'

See: *Innovating Pedagogy 2024* https://iet.open.ac.uk/files/innovating-pedagogy-2024.pdf

53.2 Using technology to centre voices from the global majority

A perennial challenge, linked to the need to decolonise the curriculum, can be how to build empathy with people around the world. But technology is making strides in this area.

Where voices from the global majority -what has been called the developing world or the Global South- are featured in a classroom in England, there is a risk that their experience is exoticised or stereotyped. This risks increasing cultural violence.

Where encounters do happen between English young people, either online or indeed in-person through extra-curricular trips, there is a risk that this becomes extractive, treating the knowledge and experiences of global majority peers as a resource without considering their motives and needs.

Communications technology and systems such as online video meetings and sharing spaces provide exciting opportunities for learning and interface. We have, for example, facilitated connections between secondary school classrooms and peacebuilders in the Middle East and East Africa. Done well, this can inspire global citizenship founded on relationships alongside conceptual learning themes about themes such as peace, human rights and sustainability. This can inspire global citizenship.

The curriculum should provide encouragement but also guidance about how to use technology to foster global connections in a spirit of equitable collaboration, guarding against it becoming a new frontier of colonial objectification. Drawing on good practice from organisations like the 'Critical Dialogue Model' applied by STEKA Skills in Scotland and Malawi.

53.3: inclusive technologies

We are also excited to see innovation for inclusion, with more use of text-to-speech, speech-to-text, speech-to-sign language, duel coded resources with imagery and text. We hope these practices will be embraced across the curriculum to develop inclusive classrooms.

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?

'Peace education proposes an approach to teaching and learning that attends to the integrity of relationships at every level.' Our evidence report, *Peace at the heart: a relational approach to education in British schools*, Quakers in Britain, 2022, along

with accompanying case study videos, can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education-case

An introduction to the variety of peace education resources can be found in Teach Peace resources, sourced from multiple organisations:

www.peace-education.org.uk/teach-peace

Our guidance, 'Responding to military engagement in schools', can be found at:

https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/responding-to-military-engagement-schools

CRIN, 2021, 'British armed forces: Why raising the recruitment age would benefit everyone' https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5afadb22e17ba3eddf90c02f/t/66ea8a04491af25ff77aa2a8/1726646788801/CRIN-2024-briefing-armed-forces-recruitment-age.pdf