

Submitted to Curriculum and Assessment Review
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Foreword from the Review Chair

Background to the Review

Why does the Review matter?

What is in scope of the Review?

About this call for evidence

Who is this call for evidence for?

Section 1: About you

1 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Section 1: About you

3 If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the below best describes which part of the sector your organisation represents?
[If more than one applies, please select the one that you think is most important to understanding your consultation response.]

Charity, social enterprise organisation or non-profit organisation

Please describe:

4 What is the name of your organisation?

Organisation name:
The Vegan Society

5 What is your role within the organisation?

Job role:

Education Officer
Head of Campaigns, Policy & Research

Section 1: About you

6 What is your name?

Name:
Laura Chepner & Claire Ogley

7 What is your email address?[Please note: If you are willing to be contacted about your submission, please provide your email address. You do not have to give your email address, and your views will be considered whether or not you provide this.]

Email address:
education@vegansociety.com ; policy@vegansociety.com

8 Are you happy to be contacted directly about your response?[Please note: The Review may wish to contact you directly about your responses to help our understanding of the issues. If we do, we will use the email address you have given above.]

Yes

9 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Definitions

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?

What is working well?:

a) Curriculum

_ PSHE is an essential tool to prepare learners for navigating a changing world, but its impact is limited by being non-statutory. _

The National Curriculum has various strengths that support and recognise educational progress for children and young people. Key subjects like PSHE and Citizenship, when taught well, enable learners to explore social responsibility, ethical awareness and diverse perspectives. This foundation encourages young people to consider the impact of their actions on both human and non-human lives. However, the broad PSHE curriculum, which also covers critical topics like emotional wellbeing, environmental responsibility and ethical citizenship is currently non-statutory.

The Vegan Society advocates for Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) to be a statutory and integrative subject, serving as a backbone for the entire curriculum. By embedding PSHE throughout core subjects like Maths, English, and Science, learning will be centred on empathy, ethical relationships with all living beings, respect for the natural world and an understanding of our interconnectedness within global ecosystems. Making PSHE statutory and central to the curriculum will ensure that every young person has the chance to build a deeper understanding of values like empathy, sustainability and inclusivity—skills that are essential for fostering a kinder, more conscious society.

This aligns with the review's aims of holistic development, preparing learners for a sustainable and inclusive future and ensuring the curriculum reflects the ethical, social and environmental challenges of the modern world.

Statutory PSHE should have a strong emphasis on social and emotional learning and this should be woven throughout the curriculum as a core, foundational element rather than presented as an isolated, non-statutory topic. This approach will allow learners to acquire essential skills in English, Maths and Science through meaningful, integrated projects in topic areas such as sustainability, eco-farming and non-human animal sentience. This will help build a truly comprehensive education that prepares all learners to tackle the current climate crisis, biodiversity and other global crises.

Ofsted has found again in 2024 that, '... in 60% of schools PSHE training was not good enough and certainly needed to improve, and the evidence suggests that the Government's approach to PSHE just is not working' (Long & McGrath 2024). The Government's intentions were undoubtedly in the right place when recognising the need for PSHE in education. However, without proper implementation, these well-meaning efforts are falling short, leading to missed opportunities for learners and ultimately affecting the future of society. It is time for PSHE to be fully embraced, not just as a subject, but as a core part of our education system that shapes a compassionate, forward-thinking generation.

The lack of statutory status for PSHE education has contributed to it being deprioritised in many schools. Without legal requirements to include PSHE in the curriculum, schools often allocate less time to the subject, and its importance may be diminished both by staff and learners. Research suggests that the absence of statutory status results in schools treating PSHE as a secondary or optional subject, particularly in comparison to core subjects like English, Maths, and Science (House of Commons Education Committee (2021). This often leads to a fragmented approach to PSHE, with some schools failing to give it sufficient attention in curriculum planning. Furthermore, learners may perceive PSHE as less important due to its lack of clear exam outcomes or direct impact on future academic prospects.

_ 'Living Things and Their Habitats' module will be strengthened by inclusion of non-human animal sentience _

In addition, it is good that the Key Stage 1 and 2 Science curriculum introduces learners to 'Living Things and Their Habitats', which should promote a respect for the environment and an understanding of biodiversity. Taught well, with an appropriate curriculum, this should help learners develop an appreciation for the interdependence of all species. This in turn will lay vital groundwork for more comprehensive humane education principles in later Key Stages.

However, although the topic of 'Living Things and Their Habitats' exists within the curriculum, there is no structured space for learners to discuss non-human animal sentience. Non-human animal sentience is now recognised in law under the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 (for all vertebrate non-human animals, as well as all cephalopod mollusc and decapod crustacean animals). Sentience is the capacity of both humans and non-human animals to experience feelings, including pain and pleasure, and thus have relevant cognitive abilities and awareness (Broom 2019).

By failing to explicitly include in the core curriculum the ethical implications of the sentience of non-human animal, the curriculum misses an essential element that could deepen learners' understanding of their relationship with other living beings. Introducing discussions on non-human animal sentience will not only enhance learners' empathy towards animals but will also promote a more respectful and ethical view of our natural world.

This could be achieved by adding a dedicated core module or core writing topic that specifically include animal sentience, ensuring learners are provided with the opportunity to learn about the emotional and cognitive experiences of non-human animals.

In conclusion, statutory PSHE has the potential to act as a unifying framework within the curriculum, addressing pressing ethical, social and environmental issues, and preparing learners for the challenges of our changing times.

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b) Assessment System - No comment

c) Qualification Pathways - No comment

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?

What should be improved?:

a) Curriculum

_ Statutory PSHE with a Social and Emotional Learning element should underpin other core and foundation subjects throughout the curriculum _

The Vegan Society believe that statutory Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), incorporating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), is needed to provide children and young people with more of the essential skills to respond effectively to the challenges of our changing world.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) describe SEL as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

The Vegan Society believes that PSHE should be made statutory as soon as possible and that statutory PSHE, with a strong emphasis on SEL, should be woven throughout the curriculum as a core, foundational element rather than presented as isolated topics. This approach would allow learners to acquire essential skills in English, Maths and Science through meaningful, integrated projects in topic areas such as sustainability, eco-farming and non-human animal sentience. This will help build a truly comprehensive education that prepares all learners to tackle the current climate change, biodiversity and other global crises.

The Department for Education has noted that the inconsistency in PSHE provision, with some schools not prioritising it due to its non-statutory status, leads to gaps in learners' knowledge and skills. Ofsted research in 2024 indicates that about 40% of schools still lack a robust PSHE curriculum, which limits learners' preparedness for personal and social challenges.

_ Statutory PSHE can improve wellbeing of learners and reinforce learning in foundational subjects _

PSHE contributes to the overall well-being of learners by addressing critical topics such as mental health, sustainability and personal safety, all of which are pivotal for healthy adolescent development and preparation for adulthood, life and work (PSHE Association). Further research from the PSHE Association emphasises that when PSHE is taught effectively, it enhances learners' academic performance and fosters resilience, better decision-making, and improved mental and physical health.

The current National Curriculum and assessment system in England provide a strong foundation, but there is significant scope for improvement to ensure all children and young people can benefit from the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities presented by integrated PHSE teaching. By prioritising real-world application, diverse topical lessons and critical thinking, the curriculum can become the rich, broad, and innovative programme envisioned by this review.

For instance, incorporating real-world application might involve embedding financial literacy lessons within Maths, where learners explore budgeting for everyday life or analysing global economic inequalities. In English, learners could critically examine media texts to identify misinformation, encouraging them to question biases and assumptions. Science lessons could incorporate sustainability projects, where learners design practical solutions to local environmental challenges, connecting theoretical knowledge with tangible outcomes.

Lessons on empathy could include exploring refugee experiences through History or Geography, where learners examine migration patterns and personal stories to understand the human aspect of global issue. Other ideas could involve role-play activities that encourage learners to consider different perspectives, creating deeper interpersonal understanding and collaboration.

These approaches not only align with the review's aim to create a rich and engaging curriculum for learners but also prepare them to navigate complex societal challenges as informed, compassionate and critical thinkers who are equipped for adult life.

_ Taking a humane education approach and incorporating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) would encourage empathy and responsibility from an early age _

"Humane education" promotes compassion, respect and responsibility towards people, non-human animals and the environment, aiming to foster ethical and sustainable choices that contribute to a more just and caring world.

By embedding discussions on non-human animal welfare, sustainability and human rights into the curriculum this would enable learners to connect ethical considerations with their daily learning and lives, creating a deeper sense of empathy and responsibility from an early age. More resources and statutory guidance on humane education approaches would also empower educators to tackle complex ethical topics with confidence, helping to make this learning a more prominent part of a broad curriculum.

Humane education broadens the learning experience by moving beyond traditional subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science to include critical SEL. SEL supports positive developmental outcomes, such as resilience and interpersonal skills. SEL thus equips young people with skills to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts peacefully and make compassionate choices. Meta-analyses demonstrate that SEL improves learners' attitudes toward school and their academic performance too, with significant gains in standardised test scores. One large meta-analysis found that learners in SEL programmes experienced an average increase of 11 percentile points in academic performance compared to non-participants (CASEL, 2024). Therefore, we know that well-taught SEL programmes can promote critical skills like self-management, responsible decision-making and social awareness, which positively impact both academic achievement and lifelong well-being. Thus, SEL will be a valuable addition to the core curriculum, as long as educators are given the appropriate support to develop their Social and Emotional teaching skills.

Examples of how incorporating a humane education approach and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) could practically look in the National Curriculum for England:

English and Language Studies

In English, humane education could be incorporated through literature and media that explore diverse perspectives, social justice issues and the environment. Learners might analyse texts that discuss human rights, sustainability or non-human animal welfare, engaging in discussions that develop empathy and critical thinking. For instance, while reading a novel, learners could explore character motivations, reflecting on moral choices and the impact these have on others and the environment. This would help learners practise responsible decision-making and understand complex social issues in a compassionate way.

Science and Environmental Education

Science lessons could include units on ecosystems, interdependence and the impact of human actions on the environment. Learners could investigate topics like climate change, biodiversity or sustainable agriculture, considering how their actions affect the natural world and other species. Through project-based learning, learners could work collaboratively to design solutions for real-world issues, such as reducing plastic waste or conserving local wildlife. This approach would boost social awareness, environmental responsibility and teamwork.

Geography and Economics

In Geography and Economics, learners could examine how different economic models impact societies and ecosystems globally. Through case studies, they might look at the economic challenges of Global South countries or the societal effects of resource exploitation. By connecting these subjects with SEL principles, learners can foster an appreciation for global interdependencies and are encouraged to think critically about issues like economic history, fair trade, sustainable development and global citizenship.

_ Greater focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) will encourage needed critical thinking skills _

Schools with a strong focus on critical thinking and ethics report higher engagement, as learners feel their education is relevant to real-world challenges (Falk & Dierking, 2010). By embedding critical thinking as a core element, learners develop skills to assess evidence, reason logically and make informed decisions. A curriculum focused on critical thinking prepares learners to analyse problems systematically, which is essential in subjects like science and history, where evidence-based reasoning is foundational. In mathematics, a critical thinking approach will encourage learners to consider multiple ways to approach problem-solving, building resilience and adaptability (Tishman, Perkins, & Jay, 1995).

Statutory PSHE, with a focus on SEL could further promote critical thinking by discussing current events and ethical issues, equipping learners with the skills to form well-rounded opinions and engage in respectful debate. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) education framework emphasises that critical thinking is crucial for developing "global competence," enabling learners to thrive in a diverse and interconnected world (OECD, 2018).

We would like to see PHSE not only as a statutory subject, with the inclusion of SEL, but as a subject that underpins other core and foundation subjects throughout the curriculum. In doing so, this will create a broad curriculum that will provide children and young people with essential skills to respond effectively to the challenges of our evolving world.

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b) Assessment System

No comment

c) Qualification Pathways

No comment

Section 3: Social justice and inclusion

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?

Barriers for socioeconomically disadvantaged:

No comment

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 characteristics (e.g. disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion or belief etc.)

Barriers based on protected characteristics:

a) Curriculum

_ Veganism is a legally protected philosophical belief which qualifies as a protected characteristic and must be treated equivalently to recognised religious beliefs. _

Veganism is a diversity and inclusion issue. Under Equality and Human Rights law and treaty, vegans are entitled to education which respects our veganism, through protected belief provisions including the Equality Act 2010, and the Human Rights Act 1998 in England. The Vegan Society emphasises that veganism qualifies as a legally protected philosophical belief, as confirmed by Judge Postle in 2020, and must be treated equitably and equivalently to the protections given in England to recognised religious beliefs.

This requires inclusive, unbiased approaches that neither misrepresent nor marginalise vegan values within education. The curriculum should recognise that philosophical beliefs such as veganism should be recognised alongside religious beliefs in teaching.

_ Despite attracting protections under the Equalities Act 2010, vegan learners face challenges to being fully included by the current curriculum _

"Vegan-inclusive" means creating an environment where vegan values, needs and choices are respected, accommodated and integrated, ensuring vegans are fully supported and included in all aspects of life, from education and dining to work and social activities.

The current curriculum presents barriers to inclusion, particularly for vegan learners. Despite veganism attracting protections under the Equality Act 2010, there is limited recognition of the need for vegan-inclusive education. This lack of inclusivity can impact the participation, attainment and well-being of vegan learners, as they are highly likely to experience marginalisation in environments that fail to accommodate their ethical beliefs. For example, vegan learners face difficulties in practical lessons, such as those involving animal-based resources, planned visits to zoos and animal farms or feel excluded during school events that feature non-vegan food or activities. Vegan learners, in particular, can feel marginalized by the dominance of animal-based food choices in educational settings.

To address this, the curriculum should integrate principles of vegan-inclusive education, ensuring that ethical and philosophical beliefs, such as veganism, are respected and reflected throughout all learning experiences. This can be achieved by embedding respect for all living beings and the natural world into core subjects through a PSHE integrated curriculum and by explicitly stating that non-human animals, alive or dead, should not be used as resources in education.

Research supports that inclusive education not only improves social and emotional development but also enhances academic engagement and success (Hughes et al., 2019). Additionally, incorporating vegan-inclusive practices will align with the review's aim of ensuring that the curriculum is reflective of diverse beliefs and prepares all learners to thrive in a compassionate and interconnected society.

A vegan-inclusive education, embedded in the National Curriculum, will benefit vegan learners by ensuring their ethical beliefs are acknowledged and respected and will reduce instances of exclusion or discomfort in educational settings. For example, vegan learners will not feel marginalized during lessons that involve animal-based resources, trips to zoos, aquaria or animal farms or school events that feature non-vegan food. This approach will also benefit the entire cohort by fostering empathy and critical thinking, as learners engage with diverse ethical perspectives, such as those surrounding animal rights and environmental sustainability. Research by Cummings et al. (2021) demonstrates that inclusive education improves social integration, reduces bullying and enhances overall well-being.

_ Respect, critical thinking, and equity for all will be strengthened through vegan-inclusive education. _

There is a significant concern regarding the erosion of empathy in society, particularly among young people. Studies highlight a steady decline in empathy among university students since the 1980s, attributed to factors such as increased technology use and a rise in individualism (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011). A focus on humane education could help reverse this trend, nurturing more compassionate attitudes that extend beyond human relationships to include non-human animals, promoting a culture of respect and kindness.

By incorporating references to philosophical beliefs such as veganism into the curriculum, schools will not only promote more compassionate and responsible children and young people but will also be meeting their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), ensuring that learners' protected beliefs are respected and promoting equality of opportunity for all. This aligns with the review's aim to create an inclusive curriculum that enables all learners to thrive.

The current curriculum also risks marginalising learners from diverse backgrounds by failing to reflect the full range of dietary practices and ethical perspectives. By explicitly addressing plant-based diets and ethical food choices, the curriculum could ensure inclusivity for learners whose families follow vegan, vegetarian or religious dietary practices. Research indicates that promoting respect for diverse dietary choices, including veganism, can mitigate issues of bullying and exclusion (Taylor & Stalker, 2018).

By integrating plant-based nutrition and the ethical considerations surrounding food choices, the curriculum will not only support vegan learners but also foster an inclusive environment where respect for different belief systems is prioritised.

The Vegan Society has produced, 'Supporting Veganism in Education: A Guide for Educators' (2022) to give educators more practical guidance on implementing these and other recommendations.

_ The social, environmental, and health consequences of industrial animal farming disproportionately impact marginalized communities _

The impact of industrial-scale farming of animals on marginalised communities in England presents a significant barrier to equity in education. Economically disadvantaged communities, particularly those in rural or industrial areas, often bear the brunt of environmental and health consequences caused by industrial farming practices. These include air and water pollution, poor diets and a higher incidence of diseases linked to the environmental degradation caused by intensive farming, such as respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular diseases. In areas like the Midlands and the North of England,

where industrial farming is prevalent, these issues disproportionately affect local populations, making it more difficult for learners from these communities to succeed within an education system that does not address these broader societal challenges (Sustainable Food Trust, 2023).

As the review seeks to address inequalities in access, attainment and participation, it is essential that the curriculum incorporates education on the social, environmental, and health consequences of industrial animal farming. This could be achieved through lessons on sustainable agriculture, food justice and the ethical implications of food production, particularly within subjects such as Science and Geography. By providing learners with the knowledge to understand the systemic impact of industrial farming, the curriculum can empower them to engage with and advocate for sustainable practices, helping to break down barriers faced by disadvantaged communities. This will align with the review's aim of creating an education system that better prepares all students to navigate the complexities of modern life and ensures more equitable opportunities for all learners.

Additionally, the curriculum's failure to highlight the role of the Global North in perpetuating harmful industrialised farming practices further entrenches inequality. The Global North has historically driven the industrialisation of farming, with its associated environmental and ethical consequences. As the world faces urgent challenges such as climate change, food security and biodiversity loss, it is the responsibility of the Global North to lead the transition toward more sustainable and equitable food systems, including the adoption of plant-based diets and methods of farming. However, the lack of education on these global challenges limits the ability to critically engage with the realities of our interconnected world and hinders our learners' ability to act as informed agents of change. The British Curriculum Forum has concluded that there is, "...a growing consensus on the need for a holistic, interdisciplinary approach that moves beyond mere scientific literacy to include emotional and practical engagement with the environment" (Education and the Climate Crisis: a Curriculum for Sustainability, 2023).

For England's curriculum to support true equality in education, it must address the interconnections between social justice, environmental sustainability and non-human animal welfare. Central to this shift is the integration of a vegan-inclusive and humane education, which reflects the realities of global food systems, environmental justice and personal health. The inclusion of both vegan-inclusive education and an awareness of the disproportionate impact of industrial farming directly aligns with the review's objectives of inclusion, equity, and social justice. It is crucial that all learners, regardless of their background or beliefs, have access to an education that not only equips them with the knowledge to navigate complex global challenges but also empowers them to contribute positively to society. As such, The Vegan Society believes that such insertions, which critically address the causative role of industrial-scale farming of non-human animals upon current food, biodiversity and climate crises are long overdue. These changes are necessary for improving educational outcomes, and also for ensuring that all learners, regardless of background, are equipped to tackle the pressing global challenges and crises.

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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?

Barriers based on SEND:

No comment

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]

Enablers:

No comment

Section 4: Ensuring an excellent foundation in maths and English

16 To what extent does the content of the national curriculum at primary level (key stages 1 and 2) enable pupils to gain an excellent foundation in a) English and b) maths? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim? [Please note, we invite views specifically on transitions between key stages in section 9.]

English and maths - primary content:

No comment

17 To what extent do the English and maths primary assessments* support pupils to gain an excellent foundation in these key subjects? Are there any changes you would suggest that would support this aim? *These include SATs at the end of key stage 2, the phonics screening check and the multiplication tables check.

English and maths - primary assessment:

No comment

18 To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim?

English and maths - secondary content:

No comment

19 To what extent do the current maths and English qualifications at a) pre-16 and b) 16-19 support pupils and learners to gain, and adequately demonstrate that they have achieved, the skills and knowledge they need? Are there any changes you would suggest that would support these outcomes?

English and maths - qualifications:

No comment

20 How can we better support learners who do not achieve level 2 in English and maths by 16 to learn what they need to thrive as citizens in work and life? In particular, do we have the right qualifications at level 2 for these 16-19 learners (including the maths and English study requirement)?

Support for learners who do not achieve level 2 by 16:

No comment

21 Are there any particular challenges with regard to the English and maths a) curricula and b) assessment for learners in need of additional support (e.g. learners with SEND, socioeconomic disadvantage, English as an additional language (EAL))? Are there any changes you would suggest to overcome these challenges?

Challenges with curricula and assessment - changes to overcome these:

No comment

Section 5: Curriculum and qualification content

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.

Subject content:

a) There is too much content; not enough content; or content is missing:

_ Integrate the vital areas of learning about sentience, empathy, and plant-based food systems into the curriculum which are currently missing. _

_ Sentience _

The inclusion of sentience education within the National Curriculum for England, delivered through a statutory Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) programme embedded in a broad, project-based curriculum, represents a crucial opportunity to address pressing global challenges while cultivating a more empathetic and inclusive generation of learners.

Sentience—the capacity to experience feelings such as pain and pleasure—is increasingly recognised across vertebrates, cephalopod molluscs, and decapod crustaceans, as evidenced by scientific consensus (Broom, 2019). By introducing learners to the concept of sentience, education can foster respect for non-human animals and nurture a sense of responsibility toward the natural world.

As society grapples with complex ethical issues surrounding animal welfare, environmental degradation and sustainability, it is essential that young people are equipped with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to navigate these challenges thoughtfully and compassionately. Integrating non-human animal sentience into the curriculum directly supports the aims of this review, particularly in promoting personal development, inclusivity, and preparing learners for the challenges of modern society. This can be achieved through cross-curricular approaches that integrate PSHE and social-emotional learning (SEL). Far from detracting from core subjects like English and Maths, this approach will enrich them; for instance, literature studies could include characters exploring emotional depth, fostering understanding of sentient experiences beyond humans, while Maths lessons could analyse data on the environmental impact of compassionate practices such as plant-based eating, linking academic subjects with real-world ethical issues.

Moreover, integrating sentience education into the curriculum offers a powerful way to bridge the gap between science and ethics, enabling learners to critically engage with the complexities of human-animal relationships. Studies show how learning about the emotional and cognitive experiences of non-human animals, they are more likely to develop pro-social behaviours such as empathy and kindness (Hoffman, 2000). Educating learners about the moral implications of sentience will also encourage them to consider the interconnectedness of all life forms and engage in ethical decision-making around issues like factory farming, wildlife conservation and non-human animal testing. Without this education, learners are left ill-prepared to assess the ethical dimensions of pressing global challenges, such as the climate crisis and zoonotic disease outbreaks linked to other animal exploitation. In an era where the public is increasingly concerned with non-human animal welfare and sustainability, incorporating sentience education into the curriculum is an urgent need. It ensures that learners are not only aware of the ethical issues at stake but also empowered to act on them, both as individuals and as members of a global community.

The value of sentience education extends beyond individual learners and has the ability to initiate a collective societal shift toward greater compassion and ethical engagement. As the world faces significant challenges—from the environmental crisis to the rapid rise of ethical consumerism—education must evolve to reflect the values that will guide future generations. Research highlights the growing importance of ethical and compassionate behaviour in shaping a sustainable future and incorporating sentience education into the curriculum provides the foundation for this shift (Burgess et al. 2015). By teaching all learners to respect the sentience of other species and to critically evaluate the ethical implications of their actions, we are preparing them not only for the challenges of the modern world but also for their role as agents of positive social change. Failing to integrate this education risks perpetuating outdated and harmful attitudes, hindering the development of individuals who are capable of tackling the ethical and environmental issues that will define the 21st century. In light of this, the inclusion of sentience education is not only an investment in the development of well-rounded, ethical citizens, but also a vital step toward creating a more compassionate, sustainable and just world for all living beings.

_ Empathy _

Incorporating empathy as a standalone subject within a statutory PSHE curriculum offers transformative potential for creating inclusive and compassionate citizens. Empathy helps individuals appreciate not only human experiences but also the lives of non-human animals, an essential perspective in a rapidly changing world. When integrated into statutory PSHE, empathy education aligns with the Curriculum Review's goals of nurturing personal development, inclusivity and preparing learners for the challenges of modern society. Studies consistently show that empathy cultivates critical thinking, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, which are crucial for addressing societal issues like climate change and animal welfare (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006).

The potential benefits of empathy-focused education extend beyond academics to shaping a society that values compassion, fairness and responsibility. Research indicates that empathy can reduce societal inequalities by encouraging a deep understanding of diverse lived experiences, including those of non-human animals affected by exploitation and environmental degradation (Beausoleil et al., 2019). As this empathy grows, individuals are more likely to advocate for policies promoting social justice and sustainability, ensuring the protection of all sentient beings. By teaching empathy for both humans and non-human animals, we raise citizens capable of creating ethical, sustainable communities that recognise the interconnectedness of all life (Moral et al., 2015).

The integration of empathy into the curriculum also supports the broader aims of the review by encouraging active participation in solving global challenges. Schools that prioritise empathy and social-emotional learning (SEL) contribute to healthier learning environments with fewer conflicts, better mental health and stronger social relationships (Clarke et al., 2015). Moreover, learners who engage in such curricula are more likely to develop leadership skills, resilience and a sense of moral responsibility. This approach will equip learners with the tools to become proactive agents of change, not only in local communities but also on the global stage, addressing the needs of both human and non-human life.

Additionally, studies show that children who learn empathy early in life are more likely to become adults who actively promote environmental

conservation and animal welfare (Liu et al., 2018). The inclusion of empathy as a core part of the curriculum, through statutory PSHE, is not only an investment in academic success but also in the creation of more compassionate, responsible future citizens who will champion ethical and sustainable living for both humans and non-human animals.

_ Plant-based Food Systems _

The teaching of Food and Nutrition in the National Curriculum for England should evolve to reflect contemporary evidence on sustainability, public health and ethical considerations. This transformation aligns with the curriculum review's aims of promoting inclusivity, equipping learners with critical thinking skills and preparing them for real-world challenges. Current evidence highlights the need to address the environmental and social consequences of industrial-scale animal farming and the benefits of plant-based diets, both for human health and the planet (Humane Society International, "Plant-Based Eating").

The environmental impact of industrial-scale animal agriculture is well-documented. Research published in *Science* by Poore and Nemecek (2018) demonstrates that switching to plant-based diets could reduce food-related greenhouse gas emissions by up to 73% and significantly lower land and water use. Incorporating this evidence into the curriculum will allow learners to explore how food choices directly affect the environment and encourage sustainable behaviours from a young age. Recent public discourse, supported by organisations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), underscores the urgency of reducing meat consumption to meet climate goals. By integrating these discussions into the classroom, learners will better understand the global context of sustainability and develop critical skills to make informed decisions about their diets and broader lifestyle choices.

From a public health perspective, education about plant-based nutrition can help to address nutritional imbalances in the typical UK diet. According to the British Dietetic Association (BDA), plant-based diets are suitable for all life stages when well-planned and offer significant health benefits, including reduced risks of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. However, current curriculum content often prioritises traditional sources of nutrients, such as meat and dairy, neglecting the role of legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Including evidence-based lessons on plant-based nutrition will equip learners with the knowledge to diversify their diets and make healthier food choices, aligning with national efforts to tackle obesity and diet-related illnesses.

Lessons that explore the welfare of non-human animals in food production and the moral implications of consuming other animal products encourage empathy and critical thinking. According to research by Compassion in World Farming (2018), educating young people about animal welfare increases their awareness of the ethical issues in food production and often leads to more compassionate choices. Learners could engage with project-based activities, such as comparing the environmental and ethical impacts of different diets or designing sustainable food systems, fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of human, non-human animal and environmental well-being.

Moreover, project-based learning that incorporates real-world applications—such as calculating the carbon footprint of meals or designing plant-based recipes—could engage learners more effectively than traditional teaching methods. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2018) has shown that practical, hands-on approaches enhance engagement, especially for learners with SEND, EAL needs or those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. These activities not only improve academic outcomes but also build transferable skills such as problem-solving, collaboration and resilience, preparing learners for future challenges.

Updating the Food and Nutrition part of the curriculum to reflect these elements will position learners as active participants in shaping a sustainable future. By equipping them with the knowledge and skills to make ethical and sustainable food choices, the curriculum will address pressing global issues while meeting the review's objectives of inclusivity, relevance and real-world impact. This approach ensures that education evolves alongside societal needs, empowering learners to contribute to a healthier, more equitable world and helping them to see the connections between the academic subjects they study and the ethical issues they face in the world.

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b. the content is out-of-date;

No comment

c. the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good curriculum design or pedagogy);

No comment

d. there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for teachers to develop and adapt content)?

No comment

Please provide detail on specific key stages where appropriate.

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

Changes to ensure curriculum is more diverse and representative of society:

_ Curriculum _

_ Veganism is a legally protected philosophical belief which qualifies as a protected characteristic and must be treated equivalently to recognised religious beliefs. _

Veganism is a diversity and inclusion issue. Under Equality and Human Rights law and treaty, vegans are entitled to education which respects our veganism, through protected belief provisions including the Equality Act 2010, and the Human Rights Act 1998 in England. The Vegan Society emphasises that veganism qualifies as a legally protected philosophical belief, as confirmed by Judge Postle in 2020, and must be treated equitably and equivalently to the protections given in England to recognised religious beliefs.

This requires inclusive, unbiased approaches that neither misrepresent nor marginalise vegan values within education. The curriculum should recognise that philosophical beliefs such as veganism should be recognised and represented alongside religious beliefs in teaching.

Additionally, a more inclusive curriculum should embrace the diverse dietary needs of all learners, including those from different cultural, religious and ethical backgrounds. A vegan-inclusive curriculum will ensure that no child feels excluded due to their dietary choices, and that learners are educated about a variety of food systems and their associated ethical, health, and environmental impacts (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Providing plant-based food options and incorporating education on sustainable eating practices ensures that all students are equipped to make informed, compassionate food choices. This approach is particularly important for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may not have had access to information about plant-based diets and their benefits.

_ Incorporating humane education principles will ensure the curriculum is more diverse and representative _

Another vital change involves the expansion of global perspectives within the curriculum, including education on climate change, human rights and social justice. As highlighted in the Review's aim for a "broad and inclusive" curriculum, these global issues should be integrated across disciplines, helping learners understand their roles in creating a just and sustainable world. Humane education naturally fits into this approach, promoting interdependence between all living beings, both human and non-human, and encouraging learners to critically engage with the global challenges of the 21st century (Goleman, 1995; IHE, 2023).

It is important to draw attention to the following, as outlined in General Comment No. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change (UN CRC/C/GC/26): School curricula should be tailored to children's specific environmental, social, economic and cultural contexts and promote understanding of the contexts of other children affected by environmental degradation. Teaching materials should provide scientifically accurate, up-to-date and developmentally and age-appropriate environmental information. All children should be equipped with the skills necessary to face expected environmental challenges in life, such as disaster risks and environment-related health impacts, including the ability to critically reflect upon such challenges, solve problems, make well-balanced decisions and assume environmental responsibility, such as through sustainable lifestyles and consumption, in accordance with their evolving capabilities.

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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?

Respect for others:

_ Curriculum _

_ The curriculum should explicitly include vegan perspectives to enhance learners' ability to engage positively with, understand and respect diverse beliefs.
_

The current curriculum, while aiming to promote inclusivity and respect for others, could be significantly enhanced by explicitly addressing the experiences and needs of marginalised groups, including vegans. By broadening the scope of inclusion to incorporate diverse ethical worldviews, such as veganism, learners can be encouraged to engage critically with differing perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of the principles underpinning respectful coexistence. This approach not only aligns with the goals of mutual respect and social harmony but also equips learners with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.

Research indicates that education systems promoting respect for differing beliefs are more likely to cultivate empathetic and socially aware individuals. A 2018 study by Bäckström and Idvall highlights how ethical discussions within the classroom enhances capacity for perspective-taking and critical thinking, skills that are vital for positive societal engagement. Incorporating content that references and explores ethical veganism—recognised as a protected belief under the Equality Act 2010—will enable learners to explore the rationale behind vegan choices, fostering a culture of dialogue and understanding. For example, discussing the environmental and ethical motivations of veganism within core curricula subjects could encourage learners to reflect on how personal choices impact others and the planet.

Currently, the absence of specific references to veganism within qualification content can result in missed opportunities to engage learners with real-world applications of respect and inclusion. Practical examples, such as considering vegan dietary needs in Design and Technology or exploring plant-based recipes in Food and Nutrition, will not only increase awareness of vegan lifestyles but also allow learners to engage actively with inclusion in practice. Similarly, discussions in subjects like Religious Education or statutory personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) could explore veganism as a belief system, encouraging learners to consider its parallels with other ethical frameworks, thereby deepening their understanding of shared values.

Evidence also suggests that marginalised groups benefit significantly when educational content explicitly includes their experiences. A report by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2019) found that learners who saw their values reflected in the curriculum experienced higher levels of engagement and self-esteem. By contrast, the exclusion of vegan perspectives can inadvertently reinforce feelings of isolation among vegan learners and perpetuate misunderstandings among their peers. Acknowledging veganism as part of a pluralistic curriculum will provide all learners, not just vegan learners, with a framework for respecting diverse beliefs, ultimately creating a more cohesive learning environment.

While the curriculum has made strides in embedding principles of equality and diversity, there is scope for improvement in addressing emerging social and ethical issues. For instance, integrating vegan perspectives within environmental science curricula will not only provide a more holistic understanding of sustainability but also challenge students to critically evaluate their own roles in global challenges. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, offer a compelling framework through which vegan-inclusive content could be introduced.

To summarise, a curriculum that explicitly includes vegan perspectives will serve as a powerful tool for promoting respect and understanding among learners. By engaging with the ethical, environmental and practical dimensions of veganism, learners will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of a diverse and interconnected society. Expanding the curriculum to reflect the lived experiences of all learners will reinforce the values of equality and respect, creating a more inclusive and enriching educational experience for every learner.

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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?

Primary - skills and knowledge needed for life and further study:

_ Curriculum _

_ The curriculum should integrate ethical reasoning, Social, and Emotional Learning (SEL), sustainability and global awareness through statutory Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) and equip all learners, including vegans, for an interconnected world. _

The current primary curriculum plays a crucial role in providing foundational skills and knowledge that prepare children and young people for further study and life, with core subjects like literacy, numeracy and science forming the backbone of this education.

However, from a humane and vegan-inclusive education perspective, there are opportunities to expand the curriculum to equip learners with the broader competencies necessary for engaging with the complex and interconnected world they will inherit.

One area for development is the enhancement of critical thinking and ethical decision-making, particularly within a statutory PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education) which we advocate for. While PSHE currently attempts to engage learners with themes of equality, fairness and justice, more could be done to encourage learners to grapple with ethical dilemmas in their daily lives.

Encouraging all learners to engage with issues such as climate change, social justice and animal welfare will help them refine their ability to assess actions based on ethical principles and cultivate empathy. Integrating ethical reasoning into subjects like science and geography, where sustainability issues can be explored, will ensure that learners are better equipped to make thoughtful, compassionate decisions as they grow older, responding to the ethical and environmental challenges of the future (Graham et al., 2019; Broom, 2019). For vegan learners, such integration will not only validate their lived experiences and ethical values but also promote mutual understanding among peers, reducing potential feelings of alienation and strengthening the inclusive ethos of the school community.

In addition to ethical decision-making, greater emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) will complement the skills required for both academic success and life. SEL focuses on helping children develop competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Embedding SEL into the curriculum, through statutory PSHE, will support learners in identifying and managing their emotions, understanding others' perspectives and building healthy relationships. Research has shown that SEL contributes significantly to improved academic outcomes, interpersonal skills and overall well-being (Durlak et al., 2011). For vegan learners, SEL could play a pivotal role in the development of an inclusive environment where their ethical choices are understood and respected. By nurturing social awareness and empathy in all learners, SEL provides a framework for addressing differences and reducing prejudice, thereby creating a more cohesive and respectful school culture.

Sustainability education also presents a critical opportunity for curriculum development. As global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss become increasingly urgent, the curriculum must provide learners with the knowledge and skills to be responsible stewards of the environment. Currently, sustainability education focuses primarily on raising awareness of environmental issues. However, by incorporating hands-on, experiential

learning—such as growing food, reducing waste and using renewable energy—schools can empower learners to take practical action.

Research shows that experiential learning in sustainability enhances both knowledge retention and a sense of personal responsibility, enabling children to engage more meaningfully with environmental issues (McDonald et al., 2020; Poore & Nemecek, 2018). For vegan learners, this hands-on approach can further reinforce their ethical commitment to sustainability, demonstrating the practical applications of their values while inspiring peers to consider alternative perspectives.

Lastly, the curriculum could benefit from a deeper focus on global interconnectedness. While subjects such as Religious and Philosophical Education (RPE) and geography introduce learners to different cultures and societies, a more profound engagement with global ethical issues—such as human rights, non-human animal rights, environmental justice and the recognition of animal sentience—could help them understand how their actions affect others both locally and globally. Integrating discussions on interconnectedness, through statutory PSHE, such as linking the study of ecosystems with the ethical treatment of non-human animals or exploring the global impact of food choices, will foster a deeper understanding of the sentience and intrinsic value of all living beings. This approach will cultivate an awareness of the global challenges facing humanity, captive non-human animals and other free-living animals, while empowering learners to see the bigger picture and understand their role in creating a more just and sustainable world. It will also prepare them for the demands of an increasingly interconnected, multicultural society.

In conclusion, while the current primary curriculum provides essential academic skills, there is significant potential to further enhance it by integrating ethical reasoning, social and emotional learning, sustainability education and global awareness. These areas will complement the existing curriculum and ensure that all learners not only acquire the academic knowledge required for further study but also develop the empathy, critical thinking, and global citizenship necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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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?

Secondary - skills and knowledge for life and further study:

No comment

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?

16-19 - skills and knowledge for life and further study:

No comment

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

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?

primary - broad and balanced:

The current primary curriculum is broad in scope but falls short of being balanced in its integration of ethical decision-making, sustainability and humane education principles. To better support learners, the curriculum should adopt a holistic and vegan-inclusive approach, embedding these principles throughout core and foundation subjects. This will ensure a truly broad and balanced education that promotes empathy for both human and non-human animals and prepares learners to engage thoughtfully and compassionately with global challenges.

Such an approach aligns directly with the aims of the Curriculum and Assessment Review by developing critical thinking, inclusivity and sustainability—key components of a modern, forward-thinking curriculum. It addresses the need for education to equip learners with the knowledge and values required to navigate complex global issues, ensuring the curriculum is relevant, balanced and fit for purpose in an interconnected world.

_ Curriculum _

_ A broad and balanced curriculum should include ethics taught through a statutory Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum _

One area for improvement is the integration of ethics and sustainability throughout the curriculum. While some subjects like geography and science include environmental and social issues, The Vegan Society believes that there is a need for more explicit and consistent coverage of topics like sustainability, social justice and ethical decision-making across all subjects. Research indicates that when children explore these topics from multiple perspectives, they develop a more comprehensive understanding of global challenges and are better equipped to address them as they grow (Dillon & Morris, 2018). This will also align with the curriculum's overarching aim to prepare learners for the future by equipping them with the knowledge and values necessary to address issues such as climate change, social inequality and the ethical treatment of animals.

Furthermore, integrating humane education principles could significantly enrich the curriculum. While values like respect and kindness are present, there is limited focus on fostering empathy for non-human animals and promoting ethical food choices. By including humane education across subjects like science, PSHE and citizenship, the curriculum could help learners develop compassion not only for their peers but also for non-human animals and the environment, encouraging a culture of respect for all living beings (Katz, 2018). Additionally, humane education research shows that when introduced early, it fosters empathy and pro-social behaviour, creating more responsible and compassionate citizens (Katz, 2018).

Another critical area for growth is the development of social and emotional learning (SEL). While some aspects of social skills are addressed in the curriculum, dedicating time to activities that help learners manage their emotions, resolve conflicts and work collaboratively will better prepare them for personal and academic success. Research shows that children who engage in SEL programmes demonstrate improved academic performance and stronger interpersonal skills (Payton et al., 2008). A more intentional focus on SEL will provide lasting benefits, supporting learners' development both academically and socially as they transition into adulthood.

The curriculum could better support a diverse and inclusive learning environment by adopting a more integrated and systematic approach. While elements of diversity are addressed through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Religious and Philosophical Education (RPE), these efforts are often siloed and lack consistency across all subjects. Embedding topics such as belief systems, cultural awareness and ethical food choices throughout the curriculum will ensure that all learners feel represented and valued.

For example, in English, learners could analyse texts from a range of cultural and philosophical perspectives, encouraging critical engagement with diverse worldviews. In geography, lessons could explore the intersection of environmental sustainability and ethical food systems, while history could highlight contributions from historically marginalised groups to global progress. Mathematics could incorporate culturally diverse problem-solving methods, demonstrating the universality and variation of mathematical thinking. Through science, learners could investigate the ethical implications of advancements like biotechnology or climate mitigation, fostering critical thinking about real-world challenges.

This approach aligns with the principles of multicultural education, which emphasize the inclusion of varied perspectives to cultivate understanding and respect for diversity (Banks, 2015). Exposure to diverse viewpoints fosters social cohesion, enhances critical thinking, and nurtures an openness to difference—skills vital for navigating an increasingly interconnected world (Banks, 2015). By equipping learners with these tools, the curriculum will not only promote a sense of belonging but also prepare learners to contribute meaningfully to a harmonious, global society.

Finally, experiential learning offers significant potential for deepening engagement and understanding. While opportunities for hands-on learning exist, there could be more focus on real-world issues and activities beyond the classroom. Community projects, sustainability initiatives and nature-based learning experiences will provide meaningful applications of knowledge and foster a sense of responsibility. Research supports the positive impact of experiential learning on engagement and retention, with learners gaining a greater sense of responsibility and practical understanding (Kolb, 2014).

In summary, while the primary curriculum provides a broad foundation, there is significant room for improvement in areas like sustainability, humane education, emotional intelligence and inclusivity. By broadening the curriculum to include these dimensions, all learners will be better prepared for both academic success and responsible citizenship in an interconnected world.

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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?

secondary - broad and balanced:

No comment

30 To what extent do the current qualifications pathways at 16-19 support learners to study a broad curriculum which gives them the right knowledge and skills to progress? Should anything change to better support this?

16-19 - broad and balanced:

No comment

31 To what extent do the current curriculum (at primary and secondary) and qualifications pathways (at secondary and 16-19) ensure that pupils and learners are able to develop creative skills and have access to creative subjects?

support for creative skills and access to creative subjects:

No comment

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

32 Do you have any explanations for the trends outlined in the analysis and/or suggestions to address any that might be of concern?

Explanations of trends or suggestions to address:

No comment

Section 6: A broad and balanced curriculum

33 To what extent and how do pupils benefit from being able to take vocational or applied qualifications in secondary schools alongside more academically focused GCSEs?

secondary - benefit from vocational qualifications:

No comment

34 To what extent does the current pre-16 vocational offer equip pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills and prepare them for further study options, including 16-19 technical pathways and/or A levels? Could the pre-16 vocational offer be improved?

vocational offer - equip for further study and improvement suggestions:

No comment

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

35 Is the volume of statutory assessment at key stage 1 and 2 right for the purposes set out above?

volume of assessment at key stage 1 and 2:

No comment

36 Are there any changes that could be made to improve efficacy without having a negative impact on pupils' learning or the wider education system?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment improvements:

No comment

37 Are there other changes to the statutory assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 that could be made to improve pupils' experience of assessment, without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment improvements to experience:

No comment

38 What can we do to ensure the assessment system at key stages 1 and 2 works well for all learners, including learners in need of additional support in their education (for example SEND, disadvantage, EAL)?

key stage 1 and 2 assessment works for ALL learners:

No comment

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

39 Is the volume of assessment required for GCSEs right for the purposes set out above? Are there any changes that could be made without having a negative impact on either pupils' learning or the wider education system?

volume of assessment at GCSEs:

No comment

40 What more can we do to ensure that: a) the assessment requirements for GCSEs capture and support the development of knowledge and skills of every young person; and b) young people's wellbeing is effectively considered when assessments are developed, giving pupils the best chance to show what they can do to support their progression?

GCSE assessments - support development of knowledge and skills and considers wellbeing:

No comment

41 Are there particular GCSE subjects where changes could be made to the qualification content and/or assessment that would be beneficial for pupils' learning?

changes to GCSE qualification content or assessment:

No comment

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

42 Are there ways in which we could support improvement in pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 3?

support pupil progress and outcomes at key stage 3:

No comment

43 Are there ways in which we could support pupils who do not meet the expected standard at key stage 2?

support pupils who do not meet expected standard at key stage 2:

No comment

Section 7: Assessment and accountability

44 To what extent, and in what ways, does the accountability system influence curriculum and assessment decisions in schools and colleges?

accountability system influence curriculum and assessment decisions:

No comment

45 How well does the current accountability system support and recognise progress for all pupils and learners? What works well and what could be improved?

accountability system support and recognise progress for ALL pupils:

No comment

46 Should there be any changes to the current accountability system in order to better support progress and incentivise inclusion for young people with SEND and/or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds? If so, what should those changes be?

accountability system changes to support SEND or socio-economically disadvantaged:

No comment

Section 8: Qualification pathways 16-19

47 To what extent does the range of programmes and qualifications on offer at each level meet the needs and aspirations of learners? a) Level 3 b) Level 2 c) Level 1 and entry level

extent to which programmes and qualifications meet needs and aspirations of learners:

No comment

48 Are there particular changes that could be made to the following programmes and qualifications, and/or their assessment that would be beneficial to learners: a) AS/A level qualifications b) T Level and T Level Foundation Year programmes c) Other applied or vocational qualifications at level 3 d) Other applied or vocational qualifications at level 2 and below

changes to programmes and qualifications:

No comment

49 How can we improve learners' understanding of how the different programmes and qualifications on offer will prepare them for university, employment (including apprenticeships) and/or further technical study?

improve understanding on how programmes and qualifications will prepare them for future:

No comment

50 To what extent is there enough scope and flexibility in the system to support learners who may need to change course?

scope and flexibility to support learners changing course:

No comment

51 Are there additional skills, subjects, or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19 education, regardless of their chosen programmes and qualifications, to support them to be prepared for life and work?

skills, subjects or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19:

No comment

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

52 How can the curriculum, assessment and wraparound support better enable transitions between key stages to ensure continuous learning and support attainment?

wraparound support enabling transitions between key stages:

No comment

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

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

how can technology be used to improve delivery of curriculum, assessment and qualifications :

The Vegan Society believes that technology can replace the use of non-human animals – living or dead, free-living or 'domesticated' – throughout the National Curriculum for England. As is already possible for the early stages of the study of human biology and medicine, 'virtual models' can deliver all of the appropriate learning objectives without the need for any use of non-human animals themselves.

Learners can also investigate the ethical implications of advancements like biotechnology or climate mitigation, fostering critical thinking about real-world challenges.

Section 9: Other issues on which we would welcome views

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?

Any further views:

The Vegan Society urges the Government to take this opportunity to properly account for the protections due to children and young people who themselves hold, or who come from households which hold, the protected philosophical belief of veganism (Postle 2020). This has never yet been done in education in England, and thus is long overdue. Humane education – which promotes compassion, respect and responsibility towards all life – and vegan-inclusive education – which under Equality and Human Rights law and treaty, including the Equality Act 2010, and the Human Rights Act 1998 in England, vegans are entitled to – are consistent with case law such as *Campbell and Cosans v. the UK*, 1982 which obliges the State to uphold both negative and positive duties to respect to vegan beliefs.

Also, as outlined in General Comment No. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change (UN CRC/C/GC/26): School curricula should be tailored to children's specific environmental, social, economic and cultural contexts and promote understanding of the contexts of other children affected by environmental degradation. The curriculum must be scientifically, socially and ethically up-to-date so all learners are equipped to face the ongoing crises through democratic engagement and sustainable lifestyles.

We can no longer teach from the untenable position that our current default use of non-human animals is ethical, sustainable or appropriate for reasons of the climate change crisis (British Climate Forum 2023), global food security, global free-living animal survival and protection of the biodiversity which makes up their habitats on our share planet, and the violence inherent towards both humans and non-human animals in the industrial scale farming of animals (Sustainable Food Trust 2023).

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