Chapter 7

THE HISTORY CURRICULUM IN ENGLAND: CONTESTED NARRATIVES

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This chapter will explore the contested nature of the history curriculum in England and Wales in recent years, looking at the role of central government and special interest groups in shaping schooling, and will consider the importance of history education in a multiethnic, multi-faith society.

I. The Origins of History Education in Schools

A national, and initially fairly loosely regulated, system of Education in England and Wales developed from the 1830s, with the first government grants for primary school buildings paid in 1833, and compulsory education up to the end of primary schooling from the 1870s. During the twentieth century compulsory secondary education was gradually extended to young people aged fourteen, fifteen, and then sixteen. It is currently planned that by 2013 young people will remain in either education or training until they are seventeen years old, rising to a school leaving age of eighteen by 2015. Throughout much of the history of state education the study of history has been seen as an essential, and mostly unquestioned, element of schooling, principally aiming to transmit a sense of national identity and provide examples of great men and great deeds to inspire the young (Marsden 2001). The first version of the National Curriculum (DES 1991) suggests that school History should:

> 'help pupils develop a sense of identity through learning about the development of Britain, Europe and the world'
>
> The Purposes of School History,
> Non Statutory Guidance Page B1, Section 1.0, part 1.3,
> National Curriculum, (DES 1991)

The belief that history *teaches* identity is not new, from the very beginning of state primary education, for example, one of the three reading books that

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young people were using at any point was required to have an historical theme. However, it is a view that has often been left unquestioned.

For much of the history of education in England the design of the classroom curriculum was left largely to the professional judgement of teachers, with some guidance as to content and pedagogy offered through the publications of the Board of Education, local government authorities and teacher's associations. Traditionally the teaching of history in English schools relied on textbooks which were content heavy, British history centred, and focused on what a later critic described as the story of 'dead white men.' For a long period teachers largely replicated what they had themselves studied, and an unproblematised approach to teaching and learning dominated education. Rote learning of key dates and events, a chronological approach and the breaking down of history into key periods based on royal houses was largely unquestioned and a received information centred curriculum model continued unchanged and unchallenged for decades. In the period after the Second World War a range of social reforms and hardships brought many previously unchallenged assumptions into question. University education expanded and greater demands were placed on schools to produce a dynamic, skills rich range of potential workers and innovators who would serves the needs of society and a post-imperial, post-war, economy. 'Traditional subjects' were no longer automatically assured curriculum time and a freer attitude in society brought expectations of greater choice of subjects studied in the last years of compulsory education. History continued to offer a Anglo-centric political, military and socio-economic focus, looking at Britain from 1714-1918. History was not perceived to be forward looking or relevant to many young people and less and less young people studied the subject when they reached the age at which they could 'drop' history.

History in Danger,'The New History' and a Period of Contestation: 1960s and 1970s

Rapid changes in society and working patterns during the later twentieth century led to further pressure on the curriculum to adapt to 'modern needs' and offer a relevant and technologically focused approach to schooling, especially at Secondary school level. Skills and competencies became fashionable, and knowledge and recall of *facts* for their own sake were questioned, as was the nature of historical truth. The existing very traditional and factual recall model of history education led to even more young people opting out of the study of history at age 14. In 1968 an article was published in the Historical Association's journal *History* which was entitled *History in Danger* (Price 1968) which launched a debate about the value and nature of

History in schools and raised concerns about the potential impact on society of a generation lacking in a mature understanding of history. The debate generated considerable interest in the history education community, and a range of interesting responses followed.

At the same time the idea of refining the notion of subject disciplines was underway, with Coltham and Fines' (1971) *Educational Objectives for the Study of History*, which provide a taxonomy for learning in history. Debate about the nature of History led to proposals to radically overhaul subject teaching in schools and organisations such as the Schools Council, and the Nuffield Foundation engaged with interesting and radical projects to reconceptualise subject learning and school examinations. The emergence of what was later christened the 'New History' blended a skills and concepts based approach to history, and focused on different understanding the dimensions of history- local, national, international, depth and overview studies rather than memorisations or depth of recall.

The driving force of the 'New History' in its early years was the *Schools History 13-16 Curriculum Project* (SHP), which was introduced in the 1970s, and focused on the methodology of the historian, the application of historical processes, critical evidence use, and skills and concepts development more than simple knowledge retention. The SHP continues today as an organisation dedicated to strengthening history teaching and learning, and as the originator/parent of a popular history examination syllabus studied by a little under half of 14-16 year olds who study history at examination level.

Phillips (1998:18-21) suggests although the SHP's initial impact was limited, it significantly influenced how history was taught in schools. A period of reinvigoration followed the introduction of SHP, with a highly contested, at times very public and bruising debate about how far skills should be privileged over knowledge, and how well young people can genuinely engage with historical methods in a meaningful and valid way. During the debate some aspects of the skills debate were especially heavily contested, for example the use of empathy was questioned by traditionalists on the grounds that it was a-historical, and could lead to counter-factual history. Phillips (1996, 1998) reviews this period of schism in the history community, and notes how a blend of knowledge and emphasis on skills developed in British history education- despite ongoing criticism from conservatives and the right wing press who also queried whether the 'national story' was under threat and claimed a generation would be unable to recount key dates, events and names in British history.

Regulation, and Further Contestation: the 1980s and 1990s

During the mid 1980s government mistrust of teachers led to increasing regulation of initial training, the curriculum and the examination system, resulting in a dramatic increase in the level of power held centrally by the Secretary of State for Education. A set of 'National Subject Criteria' were introduced to define history at examination level in 1985, followed by the new GCSE examination in 1986 accompanied by a centrally imposed set of national aims and objectives for the study of History at secondary school examination level. The same government then introduced a National Curriculum (DES 1988), ostensibly to ensure that all young people in state schools received a basic entitlement and a high quality education.

In particular the debate about what constituted History was the subject of heated and prolonged debate (Crawford, 1995; and Phillips, 1997, 1998, 2002) and often polarised positioning. The government appointed 'History Working Group' (DES 1989; 1990a &b) found itself at the centre of a power struggle between politicians, key stakeholders, the media, and lobby groups (Phillips 1998). Having packed the Working Group with people expected to deliver a more traditional approach to history as a subject there was some surprise amongst leading ruling Conservative party politicians, who clearly favoured a 'traditionalist' interpretation of History as a corpus of knowledge (Thatcher 1993), when the new History National Curriculum placed a heavy emphasis on skills and concepts and did not very closely specify exact content to be covered in schools. Direct intervention from the Secretary of State for Education and the Prime Minister bolstered the focus on Anglo-centric content, a proposed a regime of testable content knowledge, and compulsory history lessons to the age of sixteen.

Spiralling costs and increasing concerns about centralisation, increased bureaucracy and manageability resulted in a reduction in intended regulation and control, with history (and geography, art and music all becoming optional after the age of fourteen. The final version of the National Curriculum to be introduced featured less specified content, no national testing for the optional subjects, but a requirement to report to Whitehall on pupil performance against a nine stage national performance scale for pupils aged 14. Despite the continuing clear emphasis on historical skills the emergent *History Orders* (DES 1991) created a curriculum model of school History mainly as the narration of the 'national story' in which incomers are mentioned, and are successfully assimilated: a continuation of ethnocentrism from earlier curriculum models. This translated into a History National Curriculum dominated by British History Study units, and although the titles of the study units in the current

curriculum have changed with each version of the National Curriculum, the focus on English history remained. Today secondary schools are introducing the fourth version of the National Curriculum for History, and primary schools are undergoing review of their curriculum offer, as will be explored in the following section.

II. The History Curriculum in Primary Schools.

The advent of the history National Curriculum was generally welcomed by most history practitioners in primary schools. It meant that all children from the age of 5-11 now had a statutory right to learn history and this was important. Prior to the National Curriculum children's learning in history had been quite patchy and some children, particularly very young children received little history teaching at all.

A survey by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) who visited a range of primary and infant schools noted some good examples of history teaching , particularly where it was focused on the locality, but they also described many instances where history was poorly planned with little account being taken of progression in children's experiences and very little engagement with historical enquiries using a range of different sources of evidence. In many schools children's only experience of learning history was through watching television programmes (DES. 1989).

The introduction of the history National Curriculum in 1991 was thus an important milestone in ensuring that all children from the age of 5 had an entitlement to learning in history(DES, 1991).

The history National Curriculum identified progression in key historical skills and concepts, such as chronology; causation; change and continuity; source analysis; historical interpretations, and also specific historical knowledge. The identification of particular content to be taught at different ages was designed to ensure that there was continuity and no repetition in children's experiences for children from 5- 16 years old. Children aged 5-7 years olds (Key Stage 1) learned about local, personal and family histories together with learning about significant people and events. Teachers were required to teach them about the ways of life of men, women and children living in a period of time before living memory.

At Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) children were introduced to a broad range of historical knowledge covering key periods of British history from 1AD to 1066, in a unit called Invaders and Settlers; the Tudor and Stuart period 1485- 1715 and a choice between studying the Victorians 1837-1901 or Britain since the 1930s. Children were also expected to study Ancient Greece and

the voyages of exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Alongside these study units, the history National Curriculum also included a choice of thematic units such as food and farming; ships and seafarers; land transport; writing and printing; houses and places of worship and domestic life, families and childhood.

These units were designed to introduce children to developments over longer periods of time, and reflected the prevailing primary pedagogy where children were taught through topics rather than single subject approaches. There was also a local history study unit and a choice of units from non-European history to be included within children's experiences.

It was clear from the very beginning of implementation that there was too much content in the history National Curriculum and consultations on its possible reduction began soon after teachers began to implement it in their classrooms.

Although there have been reductions in the content of the history National Curriculum for primary aged children, most notably in 1995 when the thematic units were removed, the core components comprising British, local, European and world history have remained remarkably similar over the past twenty years for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children (DfEE & QCA, 1999). Given the investment in training and resources in the early years of the implementation of the National Curriculum, the government was unwilling to make dramatic changes. The focus on the development of key skills and concepts has also remained consistent and since there have been few changes, most primary teachers are now very familiar with the requirements of the history National Curriculum.

The introduction of the National Curriculum in primary schools created several challenges for teachers in primary schools, many of which have continued to be unresolved. The next section will discuss some of these challenges.

Primary teachers' subject knowledge of history is very variable. When the history National Curriculum was first introduced, many primary school teachers were very unfamiliar with the historical knowledge to be learned. They had not studied the periods of history which they were expected to teach at school, nor had they received much training in teaching history during their teacher training studies at university.

There was thus a tremendous need to train teachers to teach the history curriculum; to update them in terms of their historical knowledge, but also in ways in which to develop historical enquiries and encourage the development of historical skills and concepts. Many training courses were organised for

primary teachers in the early 1990s to develop their skills in history teaching and learning. These courses were organised alongside other subject courses for teachers, since the National Curriculum introduced a total of nine subjects for primary teachers. Teachers were expected to teach all these nine subjects and to become familiar with both the subject knowledge and key skills and concepts associated with them.

Not only was primary teachers' history subject knowledge often weak, but teachers also had little experience of teaching history skills and developing historical enquiries in the classroom using a range of historical sources of information. Whilst some training was provided, many teachers adopted a transmission approach to learning, encouraging children to complete worksheets and copy out what they had read from history books.

Teachers' subject knowledge in history remains a perennial problem. In their inspections in the 1990s HMI were referring to this constantly. More recent inspections too, still indicate that teachers' knowledge of the subject needs more support and is effecting children's attainment. A further concern is that children at the end of the primary years do not have a sense of chronology and how the different historical topics which they have studied link together (OfSTED, 2007).

The National Curriculum introduced a subject- based curriculum into primary schools. This was a change from teachers' previous experience, since prior to the National Curriculum most primary teachers had not taught specific subjects other than maths and English separately, and had planned their teaching through topics. Topics could be a number of subjects clustered together within a common theme or topic which would be planned by the teacher. Some examples of popular topics such as Ourselves or Light and Dark would seek to draw on different subject areas to provide children with a holistic learning experience.

When the National Curriculum was first introduced primary teachers tried to link the new statutory requirements with their existing plans for organising the curriculum within a topic approach. This was very difficult since primary teachers were trying to include not only history, but also other subjects within their existing topics. After 1995, teachers' planning became more focused on a single subject and teachers began to plan their work from history schemes of work which were developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA and DfEE, 1998). Although the schemes of work were only meant to provide guidance, many teachers adopted them completely, since they felt this would ensure that they would receive good reports for doing this when their schools were inspected. This led to a narrowing of the curriculum in

many primary schools and government policies from the early 2000s onwards have been encouraging teachers to plan more creatively.

A policy entitled, *Excellence and Enjoyment* published in 2003 encouraged schools, 'to take a fresh look at their curriculum, their timetable and the organisation of the school day and week, and think actively how they would like to develop and enrich the experience they offer their children' (DfES 2003, 12). More recently, planning in many primary schools has returned to thematic and topic approaches and current proposals for a primary curriculum for 2010 group history, geography and social understanding as a cluster of subjects to be studied together (Rose, 2009).

History, alongside other subjects such as geography, art, music, design technology and PE has always been regarded as less important that the three core subjects of the primary curriculum, maths, English and science. Most space is allocated to these three subjects within the timetable. English and maths dominate the learning during the morning in most primary schools, and this was particularly the case for several years following the introduction of National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies in 1998 and 1999 (DfEE, 1998, DfEE, 1999). Consequently history has to compete with many other subjects for time on the timetable during the afternoon lessons.

However, history is still taught on a much more regular basis in primary schools than before the National Curriculum. Primary teachers continue to find planning historical enquiries difficult. They also are uncertain about planning for progression and what progress in historical understanding looks like for young children. The current National Curriculum provide levels of attainment to record children's progress, but these levels are rarely used by primary teachers who tend to report on children's enjoyment of the subject, rather than their progress in the acquisition of historical skills and knowledge (OfSTED, 2007). Unlike maths, English and science there are no statutory requirements for assessing children's progress in history.

A further consequence of the introduction of the history National Curriculum has been the proliferation of a range of resources for learning and teaching history. There was very little available when the National Curriculum was first introduced and publishers produced a whole range of new children's books and teaching manuals to support teachers (Harnett, 2003). Since the content of the curriculum has remained relatively stable, schools have built up their own collections of resources to support their teaching.

The history National Curriculum requires children to work from a range of sources of information (artefacts, pictures, maps, documents etc) and parents and grandparents have been encouraged to provide such material for schools

to build up their own museums (Barnsdale-Paddock and Harnett, 2002). It is also common for family members and members of the local community to go into school and talk to the children about their memories of past ways of life and what it was like in the locality in former times. In addition, there has been a growing trade in the production of replica artefacts, so that young children can now handle a copy of an Ancient Greek vase, try lighting a Roman oil lamp or practise their reading using a Tudor horn book from the sixteenth century.

The history National Curriculum also requires children to visit historic sites and buildings and this has resulted in museums, art galleries and historic sites providing a range of resources for learning and also guidance for teachers on how to use their collections. Many sites encourage historical re-enactments where children are encouraged to dress up in costume and act out different roles of people living in the past. Drama and role play is also an effective learning strategy in schools. For example many schools create their own nineteenth century classroom and children take on the roles of former pupils (Sands, 2004). In early years classrooms, the play area may be turned into a medieval castle and children encouraged to take on the different roles of people who lived there (Harnett, 1998). Such approaches are enjoyed by the children and are often their most memorable experiences of learning history in primary schools.

When the history National Curriculum was first introduced, there were concerns by some historians that children at Key Stage 1 would find history too hard. Some early years' practitioners also argued that history was too difficult since it was too abstract a subject and that children needed to start with concrete learning experiences from the environment close to them. However, experience of teaching children 5-7 years over the past 20 years has demonstrated that children are excited by history and are capable of asking and answering questions about the past. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum for children from birth to 5 years now suggests a range of activities to develop very young children's historical understanding within an area of learning and development entitled, 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' (QCA, 2008).

At the time of writing (2009) the curriculum in primary schools is under review. Six areas of learning rather than particular subjects are recommended and history is grouped within historical, geographical and social understanding. The suggested curriculum is much less prescriptive with no identification of specific periods of history to be studied. The importance of interlinking historical, geographical and social understanding however is

clearly emphasised in the suggested essential knowledge. 'Children should build secure knowledge of the following:

a. How the present has been shaped by the past, through developing a sense of chronology, exploring change and continuity over time, and understanding why things happened
b. How and why places and environments develop, how they can be sustained and how they may change in the future
c. How identities develop, what we have in common, what makes us different and how we organise ourselves and make decisions within communities
d. How people, communities and places are connected and can be interdependent' (Rose, 2009).

The next few years will thus see further changes occurring within the primary curriculum. Children's learning in history and the extent to which they enjoy it, will be very much dependant on how teachers interpret these requirements within their planning and classroom practice.

III. The History Curriculum in Secondary Schools

Initially, during the consultation phases, and then in the early stages of the introduction of the National Curriculum for History (DES 1991) secondary school teachers were concerned about the possibility of having a very traditionalist and turgid curriculum to introduce. To the surprise of many, including the Prime Minster, at least according to her memoirs, the skills *and* knowledge based focus of the new curriculum was a well balanced pathway between the traditional and 'new' history approaches and drew on best practice from both. The government's initial intention had been that history would be a compulsory subject to the age of sixteen, but it became clear that the new curriculum was overloaded and an amendment was made to make the study of history become optional after the age of fourteen. A curriculum review initiated almost immediately after the introduction of the first version of the National Curriculum, led by Sir Ron (later Lord) Dearing led to a much slimmed second version of the curriculum, with greater teacher control over planning but within a regulatory framework where schools were frequently inspected and could faced strong criticism if considered to be underperforming.

The first three versions of the National Curriculum document for History set one structure for historical study for pupils from the age of five to fourteen, with five key strands at the heart of the curriculum: chronology; causation; change and continuity; source use; historical interpretations, and historical

knowledge and understanding and a ten level scale for assessing performance. Young people at lower secondary level (Key Stage 3) were required to cover four key periods of British history: Britain 1066-1500; 1500-1750; 1750-1900 and the Era of the Second World War (later changed to a study of the Twentieth Century) as well as a unit based on a turning point in European history and a non-European study, provided that this was not one of the topics offered in the Primary curriculum. The history National Curriculum orders suggested a blend of thematic, depth and overview units, with some coverage of local, national and international/world history, and attention to building on prior study and preparation for further study at GCSE level and beyond.

Revisions to the lower school curriculum (Key Stage Three, the curriculum for 1-14 year olds,) took place in 1995, 1999 and 2007, with each handing more flexibility to teachers, but have largely left a structure in which schools have followed a chronological approach and in which British, and in particular English history was been favoured. Secondary teachers tend to have a very strong sense of subject identity as typically a teacher has a specialist subject for which they were initially trained and further subsidiary subjects which they subsequently also teach at lower school level. The close definition of key skills and concepts has therefore served to strengthen subject identity and teacher planning, assessment and the application of active learning methods.

During the 1960s the introduction of an examination syllabus for 14-16 year olds that offered modern world history as an alternative to traditional political and economic history had proved popular, and in the 1970s the introduction of the School History Project thematic study of history had also helped revitalise the subject in many schools. The SHP approach was to prove very influential, bringing a focus on using historical sources, analysis and interpretation that was radically different to earlier approaches. The teaching of history skills and the development of historical enquiries using a variety of historical sources has been a core expectation for history teachers since the 1970s, and was at the heart of the National Curriculum. Secondary history teachers are therefore familiar with the structure and demands of the history curriculum, although the ongoing challenge has always been to find enough curriculum time to cover content, concepts and skills adequately.

Most secondary school history lessons are taught by specialists, and therefore subject knowledge tends to be sound for new teachers since all have an initial degree in History, and a post-graduate qualification in education¸ and good for those with more experience.

Recent research by Haydn and Harris (2009) stresses pupils belief that the role of the teacher is crucial. 'Unsurprisingly, pupils like teachers who are

'fun' and 'enthusiastic', but they also consider how teachers talk to them as important. This includes both teachers' ability to explain things and how they address pupils' (Haydn and Harris 2009)

The focus of in-service training for secondary teachers in the early years of the introduction of the National Curriculum was therefore not related to developing subject knowledge, but related to assessment or 'levelling' and developing a common understanding about pupil performance. More recently, national initiatives have focused on support for literacy skills, and cross-curricular working, although history teachers have found it difficult to get time out of school, and rarely get opportunities to engage with subject specific training for history. The initial version of the curriculum was overloaded with content, with the curriculum orders listing content outlines that were almost impossible to deliver. Later versions of the curriculum slimmed the content requirement, and gave teachers more autonomy, although some schools have been slower than others to take up the opportunity to vary the curriculum which they offer and break away from a very chronological and traditional focus.

After 1995 the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) developed a series of 'model schemes of work' for secondary schools as well as for primaries. Best practice saw these as exemplars for department discussions and staff development, while some schools adopted the materials as if they represented an official canon, which was not the intention at all. The 1999 and 2007 versions of the curriculum attempted to break away from a sense of a single model of curriculum design or delivery, and encouraged more creative and innovative approaches, with the most recent curriculum design seeking cross-curricular linkage in order to broaden and deepen learning. Accompanying this push towards greater diversity has been a policy of encouraging classroom based research and reflective practice, with the QCA publishing a range of case studies of good practice to encourage the development of locally designed responses to a national outline curriculum model. This presents challenges for resource producers and publishers: in the early versions of the history National Curriculum a core content was required, even if only in outline blocks of history, but later versions have been more open ended in what can be studied, and little close prescription of content.

Indeed in some ways the lack of prescription and open ended nature of the curriculum orders can be both a blessing and a curse. It allows creativity or continuity; it encourages innovation or stifles it; and it means that great variety can exist but that national comparisons can be difficult depending on your viewpoint. An area that also faces related challenges is the production of

educational resources. The textbook market in the UK is entirely unregulated by government and operates as a free market in which individual heads of the History Department decide which textbooks and other resources to purchase. This has led to a wide range of textbooks being available, but there is a risk that as greater diversity is encouraged less titles will be produced since anticipated sales cannot be guaranteed, and thus the profit margin needed by private concerns cannot be secured.

Despite the change to the level of prescription as the National Curriculum has been redrafted there has been some continuity. History teachers are expected to address the histories of Great Britain and Ireland, yet they continue to teach a southern English focused curriculum. All versions of the secondary history orders encourage the use of a variety of historical sources: for example music and sound, artefacts and objects, and learning outside the classroom at historic sites, museums, and art galleries. The nature and range of these sites and the educational programmes and resources available to support their use in the UK is very strong, and larger sites usually have educational provision and activities at a modest cost or free of charge. Online guidance for teachers, risk assessments for visits and materials for educators and young people are also readily available , with some heritage organisations leading the European field in their provision.

IV. History Education in a Multiethnic Britain

Ethnicity in England

Throughout most of British history the size of the visible ethnic minority communities in Britain has been small, and the general population has a restricted sense of the historical facts of migration and population movements as long term trends. None the less historically Britain has been the focus of almost continuous immigration and emigration,

with periods of more intense movement, and an acceleration of incomers post-1945 from the countries of the Britain's former empire and the Commonwealth in response to decolonialisation; interethnic violence in the Indian sub-continent and Africa; and post-World War II labour shortages. Restrictions on immigration from the 1970s, and then the opening up of the UK borders to European Union citizens have changed the nature of migration to the UK.

In 2001, as the following table shows the ethnic make up of the then population of England was-

Ethnic groups as a percentage of the English population (ethnic groups as defined by Office of National Statistics, UK Government)	**% of England**
White British	86.99
White Other	2.66
Asian	4.57
Mixed	1.31
White Irish	1.27
Black Caribbean	1.14
Black African	0.97
Chinese	0.45
Other	0.44

Source: Office of National Statistics. 2001 Census Online

In 2001 less than 10% of the English population was of what constitutes 'ethnic minority' origin in the UK, with 93% of the population classed as 'white' and 7% from visible ethnic minorities. Changing patterns of migration, alterations to the European Economic Community and the inclusion of several 'new' countries, the fluid nature of the global economy, and other issues may make the figures for the 2011 census somewhat different.

Dealing with Diversity

A growing ethnic minority population brings many benefits and challenges to any education system, and change over time has helped focus policy makers minds on how to 'deal with diversity' and respond to competing demands for resources whilst promoting good community relations, inclusion, tolerance, and civic harmony. For these, and other reasons social inclusion and the promotion of good relations between different communities have been high on all government's agendas over the last twenty to thirty years.

All versions of the National Curriculum for History have signalled the desirability of acknowledging that Britain has been a multicultural country since pre-Roman times, and that the UK is made up of multiple communities and four national majorities: the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish - both in order to give a balanced account of the past, and also for reasons of social cohesion and as a counter step to growing racism across Europe and xenophobic attitudes and exclusionary politics.

In the most recent versions of the National Curriculum the QCA has set out explicit aims and values for the secondary school curriculum, including the desire to acknowledge and celebrate diversity and promote tolerance,

inclusion and achievement (QCA 2007), with a spotlight being placed on diversity within and across the curriculum in the latest version of the National Curriculum for England.

The Achievement Challenge

Part of the motivation for inclusive history teaching is the considerable body of research which demonstrates that some ethnic minority groups in Britain do well educationally, whilst others are more likely to experience social, economic and education disadvantage compared to members of the ethnic majority or Caucasian communities. (Home Office 2005). Where achievement and the benefits of a stable society are not shared there is a risk of exclusion, alienation and disengagement from the democratic process, and a break down in social cohesion. Gilborn and Gipps (1995) show that many young people in Britain feel excluded from the education system, and in history lessons we would do well to remember Kurstjens (2002:39) reminder that History is usually constructed and written by intellectual and urban male elites, writing from the viewpoint of history's 'winners', and omitting narratives which are discordant with their national or world view.

The Macpherson Report (1999), completed after the notorious mishandling of the Police investigation a racist murder of a bright young man from London's African-Caribbean community, stresses the importance of teaching for inclusion and the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding, and suggested amending the National Curriculum to require schools to teach about the multiethnic nature of Britain:

> '...aimed at valuing cultural diversity and preventing racism, in order better to reflect the needs of a diverse society.'
>
> (Macpherson, 1999, Ch47:Pt 67)

Following on from this the current National Curriculum (DfEE 1999/DCSF 2007) renews its emphasis on social cohesion, instructing that:

> 'Pupils should be taught… about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, both in Britain and the wider world.'
>
> (DfEE: 1999:20)

Curriculum policy therefore places a strong emphasis on inclusive, tolerant and multi-ethnic approaches to a study of the past.

Despite this practice has not kept pace with policy: Freeman (2004), writing form the perspective of the national History officer for England at the QCA, indicates that

> 'too many schools have yet to adequately tackle issues of diversity through history or to appreciate its relevance to pupils' lives,'

Smart (2005) shows that mainstream publishers have been relatively slow to respond to these calls, although there has sometimes been a good response from the heritage sector (historic sites, museums, art galleries and other cultural endeavours) to the call for change. While textbooks shape between 75-90% of instructional time (Johnson 1999:115) and teacher/pupil confidence in textbooks remains high (Keele 2001, 2002) there is a danger that history will be mis-represented as a wholly or mainly 'white' narrative. History textbooks in England tend to be pedagogically strong, generally well produced and graphically attractive and 'values neutral'/well intention ed, but fail to include inclusive and more broadly based narratives. They continue to anchor and gallery ethnic minorities to particular historical narratives and a continuing Anglo-centric version of the past. The occasional, almost accidental, presence in textbook images of minorities in Britain cannot be allowed to continue as it is historically incorrect and socially undesirable. As a result, in 2007-2008 the *TEACH Report* on teaching emotive and controversial history was commissioned to look at teacher concerns and reservations, and made recommendations about overcoming these; and the 2008 *Ajegbo Report* continued to call for inclusive narratives and an acknowledgement of the diverse nature of Britain over time. Both conclude that there is much still to do to create fully inclusive history teaching,

Conclusions

The changing nature of society, schooling and Europe will all continue to present challenges for educators. For many teachers, especially those from outside of the conurbations, their contact with ethnic diversity and their awareness of non-European histories and perspectives may be limited, and their confidence restricted. Careful development of teacher subject knowledge and pedagogic skills are required to address any shortfall and to enrich the curriculum, to continue to enable teachers to set the pace in innovation and to address social justice issues.

Other, deeper personal-professional rifts are also possible: teaching about diversity may challenge teachers' deeply held existing beliefs and also those of their pupils. It can raise sensitive issues in the classroom and be potentially controversial. Traille (2007) shows that sense of identity, self-worth, and of the ethnic '*other'* does take place in the classroom. None the less- we should expect that teaching is challenging, requires exceptional levels of professionality and deep-seated reflection- teachers shape the future by addressing the past, and they help us understand ourselves and others in equal measure.

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