**Historical Association   
Survey of History in Schools in England 2013***Authors: Dr Katharine Burn, University of Oxford and Dr Richard Harris, University of Reading*

**1. Summary**

**1.1 Key Stage 3 History**

**1.1.1 The length of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and the impact of a reduced two-year programme**

While most schools still offer a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum for students (which spans Years 7, 8 and 9), there is considerable variation between schools, and over 18% of respondents report that their school now offers a two-year Key Stage 3 programme. This condensed Key Stage 3 is most likely to be found in older style academies and its impact is felt not only in a reduced time allocation for history (with students’ core entitlement cut by a third, because of the loss of the additional year, and also frequently limited to an hour a week or less), but also in a reduced uptake for the subject at GCSE. Two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum programmes are also more likely to be associated with alternative forms of curriculum provision in which history loses its identity as a discrete subject.

**1.1.2 The extent of non-specialist teaching at Key Stage 3**

The extent of non-specialist teaching varies considerably by type of school. Only 25% of older style academies report that **all** their history classes in Year 7 are taught by specialist teachers. For comprehensives and newer academies the figure is around 45% of classes in which all teaching is provided by specialists, whereas in independent and grammar schools the proportions are much higher, 75% and 66% respectively.

**1.1.3 Time allocated to history**

The amount of time allocated to history teaching seems to be a continuing issue of concern in some schools, particularly in older style academies which are more likely than any other type of school to restrict history at Key Stage 3 to an hour a week or less. While some pupils receive a much more generous time allocation, only 55% of respondents report that pupils are taught history for more than 75 minutes a week in Year 7.

**1.2 GCSE History**

**1.2.1 The length of GCSE history courses**

There is considerable variety (and often considerable obscurity) in terms of GCSE provision for students. Paradoxically, one-year history GCSE courses are more likely to be taught in schools that have allocated three years to their Key Stage 4 teaching: of schools with only two years available for Key Stage 4 only 3% offer a one-year programme; in schools with three years available (because of a condensed two-year Key Stage 3) some 18% of respondents report they offer a one-year GCSE history course. Forty per cent of such schools offer the standard two-year GCSE course, while over 36% report that they offer a three-year GCSE programme.

The pattern of this provision raises a number of questions, particularly regarding students in schools with a three-year Key Stage 4, as it is unclear what students do afterwards if they finish their courses in one or two years. There are also perhaps questions to be asked about the experience of students spending three years covering a course that was designed to be taught in two.

**1.2.2 Patterns of uptake and class sizes at GCSE**

In nearly half of the schools overall, respondents report a rise in numbers taking GCSE history, with more than 50% of respondents reporting that more GCSE classes are being created, and over 45% reporting an increase in average class size. The majority of GCSE classes now have 25-30 students, except for independent and grammar schools where the majority of classes have fewer than 25 students.

The percentage of the year group who opt for history is significantly different between schools that offer a two-year and three-year Key Stage 3. In schools with a shorter two-year Key Stage 3, just over 50% of schools report that more than a third of the cohort is studying history, whereas the figure is nearer 80% for schools with a traditional three-year Key Stage 3. It appears that students with more experience of the subject in the early years of secondary school are more likely to find the subject interesting and worthwhile.

**1.2.3 The extent of non-specialist teaching at GCSE**

In the vast majority of cases all GCSE classes in history are still taught by a history specialist, but this is only the case in 64% of the old style academies (those established in areas of socio-economic deprivation). While this is an improvement on last year’s figure of 44%, it remains an important concern, as do the small number of schools (comprehensives and academies) in which over half the teachers who are teaching GCSE history groups are not history specialists.

**1.2.4 The extent to which certain students are steered away from GCSE history**

The concerns identified last year about students being actively steered away or specifically prevented from taking history are even more pronounced this year, with 38% of respondents reporting that this is happening in their schools compared with 31% in 2012 (and 16% in 2011). Restrictions are usually based on students’ prior or predicted attainment, but very different standards are applied in different contexts: some schools allow students to take history only if they seem likely to achieve a grade C, while others regard much lower grades (F or even G) as nonetheless worthwhile.

Particularly worrying is the way in which the E-Bacc measure can make students’ chances of being allowed to take history dependent on their success in *other* E-Bacc subjects, such as Foreign Languages or Science.

As last year, it is clear that while many schools do give their students a genuinely free choice about continuing with the subject at GCSE, others simply rule out the option of any kind of history study beyond the end of Key Stage 3 for those who do not meet minimum requirements in terms of their current or expected attainment. There is certainly no sense of national entitlement that any student who wishes to continue with the subject beyond the age of 14 has the right to do so.

**1.2.5 Views of the impact on history of proposed changes to accountability measures**

Teachers had widely divergent views of the likely impact of a new accountability measure based on students’ achievement across eight subjects and compared with their Key Stage 2 SAT results. Some expected to gain time back from the core subjects, while others expected to experience more pressure but gain no more time. Some thought that history would be valued for delivering high grades; others feared that since it was already perceived as difficult a difficult subject by their senior leadership teams, more students would be steered away from it to something assumed to be easier.

**1.3 AS and A2 history**

**1.3.1 Changes in A level uptake**

While most schools reported static numbers or the regular annual fluctuations, the numbers reporting an increase in AS level students over the past three years were three times higher than those reporting a decrease. A similar tendency was also evident (though not quite so pronounced) at A2. However, the changes to AS and A2 that will take effect from 2015 were thought likely to jeopardise these gains.

**1.3.2 Reactions to the changes (from2015) separating AS from A2**

Over half of respondents in schools and colleges in which A level is currently taught rejected the suggestion that new arrangements in which AS level will become an entirely separate qualification from A level would improve students’ learning and better prepare them for university study. The strength of opposition to the change was most pronounced among sixth form colleges, while support for them was more evident among grammar school respondents, with the independent schools very evenly divided in their views. When asked specifically about the likely impact of the changes on history provision in their own contexts, a quarter of all respondents thought that the impact would be negative, contrasted with only 4% who thought that it would be positive.

The most common concern was about the narrowing of students’ sixth-form studies, with far fewer students (particularly those taking science subjects as their main focus) choosing to take AS history as a fourth option. The loss of flexibility within the examination arrangements was also expected to lead to the loss of those students who had previously chosen history as a fourth option and then found that they enjoyed or were sufficiently good at the subject to make it worth continuing with it to A level.

Losing the scope to try a subject out without making a two-year commitment to it was thought likely to disadvantage less confident students who would no longer be prepared to embark on the course. It was also expected to increase perceptions of history as a difficult subject, and therefore not worth pursuing. The lack of opportunity to take re-sits was also thought likely to deter such students from even embarking on a history course, prompting them to look for ‘easier’ subjects from the start.

**1.4 Teachers’ concerns**

**1.4.1 Curriculum change**

The most pressing concerns experienced or anticipated by teachers relate to the process of curriculum change. While the most extreme of them – the inappropriate nature of the proposed changes and a sense that teachers’ views were being ignored – may have been partly addressed by the publication of a significantly revised second draft of the National Curriculum for history (in July 2013), many concerns relate to the pace of change and the capacity of schools (and others) to prepare adequately for them. Not only do new curricula call for new resources (which may be unavailable in the time available, or prove to be unaffordable) but they may also call for appropriate continuing professional development (CPD), which many teachers report that they cannot access.

**2. Nature of the survey**

The findings reported here are based on the response of history teachers in England to an online survey sent by the Historical Association to all schools and colleges teaching students in the 11–18 age range. The survey was sent out during the second half of the spring term 2013.

Responses were received from 557 history teachers working in different contexts including middle schools and sixth-form colleges. While some responses – such as teachers’ concerns – were analysed at an individual level, multiple responses from teachers within the same school were eliminated to ensure that each school was counted only once in response to questions about the nature of provision for history at different key stages. These school-level responses were analysed in relation to different types of schools: state-maintained comprehensives, state-maintained grammar schools, independent schools, old-style academies (established under previous Labour governments in areas of socio-economic disadvantage) and new academies (established under the terms of the Academies Act of 2010 which allows high-performing schools to convert to academy status, as well as for sponsors to take over schools that are judged to be failing). While all types of academy have similar independence from local authority control and are equally free to ignore the requirements of the National Curriculum, the different circumstances in which they have been established means that they tend to serve very different kinds of catchment areas.

Detailed responses to questions about teaching history at Key Stage (traditionally the first three years of secondary school for students aged 11-14, but now reduced in some schools to the first two years of secondary provision for students aged 11-13) were received from 448 schools. These 448 schools included 205 state-maintained comprehensive schools, 8 state-maintained grammar schools, 41 independent schools, 19 old-style academies and 185 new academies. This means that detailed responses in relation to Key Stage 3 were received from approximately 5% of grammar schools, 10% of the old-style academies and 9% of independent schools. The number of schools switching rapidly from comprehensive to academy status makes it difficult to calculate exactly what proportion of these types of school responded to the survey, but the figure for their combined responses represents approximately 14% of the combined total of comprehensives and new academies. Responses to questions about provision at Key Stage 4 (conventionally ages 14-16) were received from 494 schools; while 280 schools and sixth-form colleges reported on their AS and A level history provision.

**3. Key Stage 3**

**3.1 The length of the Key Stage 3 curriculum**

While most schools offer a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum for students (which spans Years 7, 8 and 9), there is considerable variation between schools, and over 18% of respondents report that their school offers a two-year Key Stage 3 programme. Table 1 sets out the length of the Key Stage 3 programme being taught by respondents in different kinds of schools, revealing that this condensed model is most common among the old style academies, originally set up in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

*Table 1: The length of the Key Stage 3 programme in respondents’ schools*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3-year Key Stage 3** | | **2-year Key Stage 3** | | **No Key Stage 3 (Upper schools)** | | **Total** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comprehensive** | 178 | 82.0% | 34 | 15.7% | 5 | 2.3% | 217 |
| **Grammar** | 6 | 75.0% | 2 | 25.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 8 |
| **Independents** | 39 | 92.9% | 2 | 4.8% | 1 | 2.4% | 42 |
| **Academy  (old style)** | 9 | 47.4% | 10 | 52.6% | 0 | 0.0% | 19 |
| **Academy (new)** | 145 | 79.7% | 37 | 20.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 182 |
| **Overall** | 377 | 80.6% | 85 | 18.2% | 6 | 1.3% | 468[[1]](#footnote-1) |

**3.2 The organisation of history within the Key Stage 3 curriculum**

As a subject, history is overwhelmingly taught as a discrete subject within the Key Stage 3 curriculum. This is true both for schools with a two and a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum. Table 2, in which figures for both curriculum models are combined, illustrates how the curriculum is organised for Year 7 students in different schools, and also provides a comparison with data collected in 2012 and 2011.

As can be seen, in 2013, in all grammar schools and all but one independent school, respondents report that history is taught as a discrete subject, and generally follows a trend where history is consistently regarded as a subject to be taught in its own right. In comprehensives and newer academies around 80% of respondents report that history is taught as a discrete subject. The longer term data suggest that more comprehensive schools are moving towards a position of history as a separate subject, whereas the situation in newer academies shows more fluctuation. Obviously these figures have to be considered carefully as more comprehensives gain academy status, there may be some flux in these figures, but the overall trend is towards a strengthening of history as a discrete subject. In the older academies (established in areas of socio-economic disadvantage) fewer than 50% of respondents report that history is taught as a discrete subject (although the number of such academies responding to the survey is low). The number of schools reporting ‘alternative’ curriculum arrangements, such as Opening Minds, remains very small at just over 3%, although the apparent downward turn in this kind of provision, noted between 2011 and 2012, has not been sustained, and such alternative models are much more prevalent among academies, especially the older ones.

*Table 2: The inclusion of history within the Year 7 curriculum in 2013 compared with 2011 and 2012*Figures for 2013 are presented in the top line in each case; those for [2012] are presented in square brackets in the second line; and those for (2011) in standard brackets in the third line

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **As a discrete subject** | **As a distinct subject within humanities** | **Within integrated humanities** | **Other** | **Total respondents** |
| **All schools** | 368  [179]  (287) | 44  [26]  (40) | 21  [19]  (28) | 15  [6]  (20) | 448  [230]  (375) |
| 82.1%  [77.8%]  (76.5%) | 9.8%  [11.3%]  (10.7%) | 4.6%  [8.3%]  (7.5%) | 3.3%  [2.6%]  (5.3%) |
| **Comprehensive** | 165  [90]  (181) | 21  [12]  (30) | 12  [10]  (21) | 7  [3]  (17) | 205  [115]  (249) |
| 80.5%  [78.3%]  (72.7%) | 10.2%  [10.4%]  (12.0%) | 5.9%  [8.7%]  (8.4%) | 3.4%  [2.6%]  (6.8%) |
| **Grammar** | 8  [5]  (16) | 0  [0]  (0) | 0  [1]  (0) | 0  [0]  (0) | 8  [6]  (16) |
| 100%  [83.3%]  (100.0%) | 0.0%  [0.0%]  (0.0%) | 0.0%  [16.7%]  (0.0%) | 0.0%  [0.0%]  (0.0%) |
| **Independent** | 40  [22]  (48) | 1  [1]  (2) | 0  [0]  (1) | 0  [0]  (1) | 41  [23]  (52) |
| 97.6%  [95.7%]  (92.3%) | 2.4%  [4.3%]  (3.8%) | 0.0%  [0.0%]  (1.9%) | 0.0%  [0.0%]  (1.9%) |
| **Academy  (old style)** | 9  [5]  (14) | 3  [3]  (4) | 3  [1]  (1) | 4  [1]  (0) | 19  [10]  (19) |
| 47.4%  [50.0%]  (56.0%) | 15.8%  [30.0%]  (16.0%) | 15.8%  [10.0%]  (20.0%) | 21.1%  [10.0%]  (8.0%) |
| **Academy (new)** | 146  [56]  (28) | 19  [10]  (4) | 6  [7]  (1) | 14  [2]  (0) | 185  [75]  (33) |
| 78.9%  [74.7%]  (84.8%) | 10.3%  [13.3%]  (12.1%) | 3.2%  [9.3%]  (3.0%) | 7.6%  [2.7%]  (0.0%) |

For schools with a two-year Key Stage 3, the proportion of respondents reporting that history is taught as a discrete subject is lower than the proportion for schools with a three-year Key Stage 3. This is shown in Table 3, which compares the data for schools with a three-year and two-year Key Stage 3.

*Table 3: The inclusion of history within the Year 7 curriculum in 2013 comparing schools with a three-year and a two-year Key Stage 3*

The figures for schools offering a two-year Key Stage 3 are presented in the top row in each case, while the figures for schools offering a (three-year Key Stage 3) are shown below in brackets.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **As a discrete subject** | **As a distinct subject within humanities** | **Within integrated humanities** | **Other** | **Total respondents** |
| **All schools** | 56  (312) | 13  (31) | 5  (16) | 6  (9) | 80  (368) |
| 70.0%  (84.8%) | 16.3%  (8.4%) | 6.3%  (4.3%) | 7.5%  (2.4%) |
| **Comprehensive** | 23  (142) | 5  (16) | 3  (9) | 2  (5) | 33  172 |
| 69.7%  (82.6%) | 15.2%  (9.3%) | 9.1%  (5.2%) | 6.1%  (2.9%) |
| **Grammar** | 2  (6) | 0  (0) | 0  (0) | 0  (0) | 2  (6) |
| 100.0%  (100.0%) | 0.0%  (0.0%) | 0.0%  (0.0%) | 0.0%  (0.0%) |
| **Independent** | 1  (39) | 1  (0) | 0  (0) | 0  (0) | 2  (39) |
| 50.0%  (100.0%) | 50.0%  (0.0%) | 0.0%  (0.0%) | 0.0%  (0.0%) |
| **Academy (old style)** | 4  (5) | 3  (0) | 1  (2) | 2  (2) | 10  (9) |
| 40.0%  (55.6%) | 30.0%  (0.0%) | 10.0%  (22.2%) | 20.0%  (22.2%) |
| **Academy (new)** | 26  (120) | 4  (15) | 1  (5) | 2  (2) | 33  (142) |
| 78.8%  (84.5%) | 12.1%  (10.6%) | 3.0%  (3.5%) | 6.1%  (1.4%) |

Overall only 70% of those offering a two-year Key Stage 3 course teach history as a discrete subject. The figure is less than 70% for comprehensives, less than 80% for newer academies and as low as 40% for older style academies. The proportion of schools offering alternative curricula within this two-year Key Stage 3 programme is small, but at 7.5% of respondents is higher than for schools with a three-year Key Stage 3.

Schools have different reasons for offering a shortened two-year Key Stage 3; it is said to provide a greater focus to Year 8 students as they have to choose options earlier, and it also allows schools three years to prepare students for external examination. It does however reduce significantly the entitlement of all students to an education in history, as it effectively reduces the amount of **guaranteed** curriculum time given to the subject by a third. Obviously students can opt to study history at GCSE, but given that the subject is not compulsory, and that only around 40% of students currently choose to do so[[2]](#footnote-2), approximately 60% of young people in schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 will experience a significantly reduced history curriculum. In addition, as the figures show, schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 are less likely to offer history as a discrete subject. This can have the effect of further diluting young people’s access to history

**3.3 The extent of non-specialist teaching at Key Stage 3**

The extent of non-specialist teaching varies considerably by type of school. As shown in Figure 1, only 25% of older academies report that **all** their history classes in Year 7 are taught by specialist teachers. For comprehensives and newer academies the figure is around 45% of classes in which all teaching is provided by specialists, whereas in independent and grammar schools the proportions are much higher, 75% and 66% respectively. These figures are similar to those for 2012 (shown in Figure 2), except for the old style academies, where it seems that more schools are now providing fully specialist history teaching (25% compared with only 10% in 2012), although this figure remains the lowest amongst all school types reported here.

*Figure 1: 2013 The proportion of history lessons in Year 7 taught by non-specialists in schools with a three-year Key Stage 3*

*Figure 2: 2012 The proportion of history lessons in Year 7 taught by non-specialists*

In the comprehensive schools and new academies, many classes have non-specialist history teaching; about one third of comprehensive schools report that up to a third of classes are taught by non-specialists, whereas 40% of newer academies say up to a third of classes are taught by non-specialists. There are some reported cases where over 60% of classes are taught by non-specialists; in comprehensives this accounts for nearly 8% of responses, and in older academies the figure is 25% (although again it must be acknowledged that the number of responses from this type of schools is low). In comparison to 2012 these figures show some variation; the situation in comprehensive schools is similar, older academies show an improvement in 2013 (although the figures are still the highest across the type of schools reported here); the situation in newer academies is much improved, but appears to have deteriorated in grammar schools. These variations may be due to annual staffing fluctuations and merely represent a temporary ‘blip’, but they indicate underlying concerns about staffing in the history classroom at Key Stage 3.

*Figure 3: 2013 The proportion of history lessons in Year 7 taught by non-specialists in schools with a two year Key Stage 3*

For schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 (see figure 3) the extent of non-specialist teaching appears to be less of an issue. In 55% of comprehensives all classes are taught by specialists; in newer academies the figures is just over 40%. In the grammar and independent schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 all classes are reported as being taught by specialists. The exception to this is the older academies where only just over 10% of schools report all lessons taught by specialists. (However, it should be acknowledged that the number of independent and grammar schools, and older academies reporting a two year Key Stage 3 are so small so it is difficult to extrapolate any significant conclusions from some of the data.)

**3.4 Time allocation at Key Stage 3**

The amount of time allocated to history teaching seems to be a continuing issue of concern in some schools. As reported in previous years, the amount of time does vary considerably by type of school. As can be seen from the figures below, which present data relating to Year 7, there has been a change in the schools reporting an allocation of more than 90 minutes a week. Previously comprehensive schools have been generous in this regard, but in 2013 (Figure 4) the figures have dropped from nearly half of comprehensives in 2012 (Figure 5) to just over a third. The reasons for this are unclear, but it is unlikely to be related to a change in a school’s status from a comprehensive to an academy as the figures for newer academies seem relatively stable between 2012 and 2013.

*Figure 4 2013: The amount of time actually allocated to history in Year 7 in schools with a two-year Key   
Stage 3*

*Figure 5:*  *2012 The amount of time actually allocated to history in Year 7*

In 2013, for Year 7, the overall figures show that 55% of pupils are taught history for more than 75 minutes a week, and by Year 9 this figure is nearly 65%. Older style academies do stand out in 2013 as providing less time overall for students at Key Stage 3; more schools of this type provide 60 minutes or less than any other school type reported here.

Additionally, for schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 the figures are generally weaker, as Figure 6 shows. Although overall around 55% of schools teach history for more than 75 minutes a week, schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 are more likely to offer pupils an hour or less a week than schools with a three-year Key Stage 3; the figures are approximately 30% and 20% respectively.

*Figure 6: 2013 The amount of time actually allocated to history in Year 7 in schools with a two-year Key   
Stage 3*

In terms of schools reporting whether the time allocated to history had changed there has been an increase in the number of schools reporting some kind of change to the time allocation. In 2013, of schools with a three-year Key Stage 3, 12.1% reported that time had been cut, whilst 9.9% reported an increase in time allocation; in 2012 the figures had been 5.9% and 5.4% respectively. An unusual anomaly is the fact that more independent schools have cut the time allocation for history (nearly 25% of respondents) than have increased it. Moreover, independent schools were more likely to have cut time allocations than any other school type. The data from the 2013 survey also highlighted that schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 were more likely to have reduced time for history than those with a three-year Key Stage 3. Overall 17.7% of respondents said that time had been taken away from history, as opposed to 7.6% who reported an increase. These reductions in time allocation for schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 are almost entirely confined to academy schools; 40% of older academies and 28% of new academies reported a decreased time allocation

**4. GCSE**

**4.1 The length of GCSE history courses**

Somewhat paradoxically, one-year history GCSE courses are more likely to be taught in schools that have allocated three years to their Key Stage 4 teaching. As Table 4 shows, among schools that allow the conventional three years for Key Stage 3 and allocate two years to GCSE teaching, only around 3% of respondents reported that they offered a one-year GCSE programme.

*Table 4: 2013 GCSE provision offered in a school with a two-year Key Stage 4*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **History courses offered in a two-year Key Stage 4** | **1 year GCSE** | **2 year GCSE** | **Humanities** | **Other** | **Total respondent s** |
| **All schools** | 9 | 363 | 14 | 15 | 401 |
| 2.2% | 90.5% | 3.5% | 3.7% |
| **Comprehensive** | 5 | 176 | 8 | 9 | 198 |
| 2.5% | 88.9% | 4.0% | 4.5% |
| **Grammar** | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Independent** | 0 | 36 | 0 | 3 | 39 |
| 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Academy (old style)** | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| 0.0% | 90.0% | 10.0% | 0.0% |
| **Academy (new)** | 4 | 136 | 5 | 3 | 148 |
| 2.7% | 91.9% | 3.4% | 2.0% |

However as Table 5 shows, among those schools that allocate only two years to Key Stage 3 (and thus could have up to three-years for GCSE teaching) more than 18% of respondents report that they offer a one-year GCSE history course, while 40% offer the standard two-year GCSE course, and over 36% report that they offer a three-year GCSE programme.

The pattern of this provision raises a number of questions, particularly regarding students in schools with a three-year Key Stage 4, as it is unclear what students do afterwards if they finish their courses in one or two years. There are also perhaps questions to be asked about the experience of students spending three years covering a course that was designed to be taught in two.

*Table 5 2013 GCSE provision offered in a school with a three-year Key Stage 4*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **History courses offered in a three-year Key Stage 4** | **1 year GCSE** | **2 year GCSE** | **3 year GCSE** | **Humanities** | **Other** | **Total respondents** |
| **All schools** | 17 | 38 | 34 | 3 | 1 | 93 |
| 18.3% | 40.9% | 36.6% | 3.2% | 1.17% |
| **Comprehensive** | 7 | 13 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| 19.4% | 36.1% | 44.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Grammar** | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Independent** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 0.0% | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| **Academy  (old style)** | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| 9.1% | 36.4%% | 45.5% | 9.1% | 0.0% |
| **Academy (new)** | 9 | 18 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 43 |
| 20.9% | 41.9% | 30.2% | 4.7% | 2.3% |

**4.2 Patterns of uptake and class sizes at GCSE**

In nearly half of the schools overall, respondents report a rise in numbers taking GCSE history; the proportion reporting such a rise is higher in comprehensives and academies, although the smaller growth in independent and grammar schools may be due to the large numbers who have traditionally opted for the subject within these contexts.. Over 50% of respondents overall report more GCSE classes being created, but at the same time over 45% of schools report an increase in average class size, with the majority of classes having 25-30 students, except for independent and grammar schools where the majority of classes have fewer than 25 students.

Interestingly, the percentage of the year group who opt for history is significantly different between schools that offer a two-year and three-year Key Stage 3. In schools with a shorter two-year Key Stage 3 (see Figure 7), just over 50% of schools report more than a third of the cohort studying history, whereas the figure is nearer 80% for schools with a traditional three-year Key Stage 3 (see Figure 8). There are clearly differences by type of school, however recruitment across all types of schools is stronger where there is a more traditional three-year Key Stage 3.[[3]](#footnote-3) While we have no specific data that can explain the reasons for this phenomenon, it is quite possible that students who have only studied the subject for two years, and whose experience may therefore have been of a rather crowded and rushed curriculum, are less likely to develop a strong sense of engagement or interest in the subject.

*Figure 7: 2013 Percentage of Year 10 students in schools with a* ***two-year*** *Key Stage 4 who   
are studying history*

*Figure 8: 2013 Percentage of students in Year 10 in schools with a* ***three-year*** *Key Stage 4 who are   
studying history*

**4.3 The extent of non-specialist teaching at GCSE**

In line with concerns expressed last year that the increase in GCSE numbers (prompted in part by the introduction of the ‘E-Bacc’ measure of schools’ effectiveness) might lead to an increase in the number of GCSE classes taught by non-specialist teachers, the proportion of respondents who can report that all GCSE history classes are taught by a history specialist is slightly lower this year (81.3%) (see Figure 9) than it was in 2012 (85%) (see Figure 10). It is true that in the vast majority of cases all GCSE classes in history are still taught by a history specialist, but this is only the case in 64% of the old style academies (those established in areas of socio-economic deprivation). While this is an improvement on last year’s figure of 44%, it remains an important concern, as do the small number of schools (comprehensives and academies) in which over half the teachers who are teaching GCSE history groups are not history specialists.

*Figure 9: 2013 Extent of GCSE teaching undertaken by non-specialist teachers*

*Figure 10: 2012 Extent of GCSE teaching undertaken by non-specialist teachers*

Respondents were asked in a separate section of the survey about the extent to which they felt that particular issues were matters of concern to them. A quarter of all respondents reported that the lack of specialist history teaching was a matter of current concern to them (and this proportion includes the 10% of respondents for whom the concern was ‘serious’). As noted previously, the problem is most acute in the older academies, established in areas of socio-economic deprivation, where over 60% of respondents regarded the issue as a matter of concern (among whom 46% regarded the concern as ‘serious’).

While 40% of all respondents had no worries about the issue of non-specialist teaching, a further third of respondents thought that a lack of specialist history teaching might well become a concern in their school. In a parallel question about the extent to which specialist history teachers were being replaced by specialists when they left, 16% of respondents were already concerned that this was not happening, and a further 40% thought that this might well come to be the case at their school.

**4.4 The extent to which certain students are steered away from GCSE history**

The concerns identified last year about students being actively steered away or even prevented from doing history are even more pronounced this year. persist. Last year 31% of respondents reported that certain students were being actively discouraged or completely denied the opportunity of taking history at Key Stage 4 (compared with only 16% in 2011). The proportion reporting the same phenomenon this year has risen to 38% with the tendency to steer students away higher in academies (especially the old style academies) than in other kinds of school.

*Table 6 : The extent to which certain students are steered away from taking GCSE*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Are students actively prevented or discouraged from taking history GCSE** | | | | | |
|  | **Yes** |  | **No** |  | **Total** |
| **Comprehensive** | 77 | 37.6% | 128 | 62.4% | 205 |
| **Grammar** | 1 | 14.3% | 6 | 85.7% | 7 |
| **Independents** | 12 | 24.0% | 38 | 76.0% | 50 |
| **Academy (old style)** | 10 | 52.6% | 9 | 47.4% | 19 |
| **'New' Academy** | 75 | 44.4% | 94 | 55.6% | 169 |
| **Overall** | 175 | 38.9% | 275 | 61.1% | 450 |

**4.5 The grounds on which students are steered towards or away from GCSE history**

In explaining their options system and the patterns of take-up of history at GCSE respondents were asked on what grounds students might be encouraged or compelled to take history, and if any were discouraged or prevented from doing so, on what grounds this advice or prevention would be based.

One hundred and forty-one respondents took the opportunity to comment specifically on what sort of students were steered towards history. Fifteen per cent of those respondents declared (some of them very proudly) that all students were encouraged to take the subject and that there was a genuinely free choice, and a few (9%) emphasised students’ interest in, or enjoyment of the subject as a sufficient or partial reason for encouraging them to take the subject. However, most respondents explained the steer or compulsion in terms of students’ abilities and the likelihood of them achieving the range of grades necessary to meet the requirements of the English Baccalaureate. Over a third of respondents (52) referred to students’ abilities, while some were more specific, pointing either to the National Curriculum levels they had achieved at Key Stage 3, or to their expected GCSE grades. In some cases, reference was made to the ‘pathway’ systems that determined what options they were actually given – with those on the ‘traditional’ or ‘academic’ or ‘E-Bacc’ pathways sometimes advised, but often compelled, to take history. There were 23 references specifically to the E-Bacc and in some cases it was clear that the injunction to take history depended on the students’ success or assumed capabilities in **other**E-Bacc subjects. In five cases, those who were thought likely to achieve a grade C in a Modern Foreign Languages were required to take history. In four other cases, the students’ success in science became grounds for pushing or compelling them to take history. While the E-Bacc measure seemed to be the most prominent influence on this steer, a few teachers made an explicit reference to the scope that taking history (as a subject valued by Russell group universities) would give students when it came to thinking about university education.

Two hundred comments were made in response to the request to explain the types of young people or the grounds on which they were steered away or actively prevented from taking history.   
Thirty per cent of these comments (61) referred specifically to the literacy demands of the subject or to students’ particular difficulties with literacy:

*Those that would clearly struggle with the written aspects of the GCSE history course.*

*(Respondent 187, New Academy)*

*Some new to English students and students with low literacy, which means they won't be able to access the curriculum and probably won't get a grade.*

*(Respondent 531 , Comprehensive)*

As in the preceding comment, sometimes specific emphasis is placed on the inaccessibility of the course or of the exam requirements for students who are relatively new to learning English as an additional language:

*We have a number of students who struggle with English language and as a result   
find history impossible to access. (Respondent 559, Independent School)*

A quarter of the comments (54) referred in more general terms either to the difficulty of the subject or to the problems that ‘less able’ students would have with it. These were general references to the demands of the subject for ‘weaker’ students or to those in the ‘lower’ or ‘bottom’ sets, but ten comments focused particularly on those with ‘special learning needs’ of some kind or to those with ‘severe learning difficulties’. Nine of the respondents (4.5%) specifically pointed out the lack of tiered papers in history as the reason for particular students not being allowed to continue with the subject, a few of them contrasting the situation with geography in which it was possible to undertake a ‘Foundation’ level paper.

Twenty per cent of the comments (40) explained their school’s policies in relation to the potential grades that the students were predicted to achieve or to the National Curriculum levels they were judged to have achieved at Key Stage 3. As last year, there was considerable variation both in terms of what kinds of grade were thought to be potentially worthwhile achievements, and in terms of the minimum level that students needed to have achieved already in order to be allowed to continue with the subject. While Grade C was most commonly seen as the minimum expectation, some schools regarded a potential grade D, or even a grade F or G, as making it worthwhile to continue with the subject. The same kind variation was evident among those who worked on the basis of students’ current achievements. Most commonly schools restricted the option to those who were judged to be working at level 5 at least within the National Curriculum, but some insisted on level 6, while others were prepared to accept students working at level 4.

*They must have Level 5 English, and now because it is to be made even harder, that will change to Level 6 English. (Respondent 273, Comprehensive)*

*It does not appear as an option for v small number of students with a reading age below 9 and who haven't achieved a Level 4 at Key Stage 3. They do Prince’s Trust instead.  
 (Respondent 523, New Aacdemy)*

The differences between schools were even more pronounced in terms of whether judgments made by the school were regarded as fixed and binding or merely advisory; and how far they allowed the students’ interest in the subject to outweigh judgements about their likely or current success:

*If the data says the child will not receive a C grade or above they are not put on the course, even if they picked it. They are made to do a course they can get a C or above in. (Respondent 170, Comprehensive)*

*Sometimes those students who are felt to be unlikely to be able to achieve a grade C are discouraged from taking the subject - though if they show real enthusiasm for the subject they are allowed to choose it. (Respondent 12, New Academy)*

*Those in the bottom pathway do not have the subject in their options booklet. However, I can allow those with a special interest to take it as long as their KEY STAGE 3 work suggests they will be able to get above a G grade. (Respondent 234, Comprehensive)*

As the above comment illustrates, many schools made use of ‘pathway’ options system in which students were essentially guided (or forced) into following particular routes in which certain qualifications were simply not offered to them. Twenty-five of the comments (13%) referred explicitly to pathways and those following ‘vocational’ paths often were not even offered a history course of any kind. A few mentioned alternatives such as the ASDAN qualification or a GCSE in Humanities which could include elements of history, but most simply referred to BTECs.

Generally prior or predicted achievement was regarded as a more important criterion than the students’ attitude towards or interest in the subject, but in a few cases a lack of interest or enthusiasm was essentially a seen as a prohibiting factor.

Other factors that were not necessarily associated with the nature or perceived challenges of the subject also operated in some cases, such as group sizes or particular timetabling issues making it impossible to combine certain subjects.

As last year, it is clear that while most schools do give their students a genuinely free choice about continuing with the subject at GCSE, and encourage all those with a genuine interest to continue either with a GCSE course in history or a programme that includes a significant element of history, others simply rule out the option of any kind of history study beyond the end of Key Stage 3 for those who do not meet minimum requirements in terms of their current or expected attainment. There is certainly no sense of national entitlement that any student who wishes to continue with the subject beyond the age of 14 has the right to do so. Although schools might argue that it is in students’ interests to seek to maximise their chances of achieving GCSE passes at grades A\*-C, it would appear that their concern to steer particular students away from history GCSE may sometimes owes more to a concern to protect their own ‘league table’ position, than it does to a commitment to cater effectively for the needs and interests of individual students.

**4.6 The potential impact on history provision of a new measure of achievement based on an average grade value-added score across eight subjects**

As part of its consultation about changes to the curriculum, announced in February 2013, the Department of Education proposed a new accountability measure for assessing and reporting on the achievement of schools. It was suggested that this should be a value-added measure comparing students’ achievement in eight GCSEs subjects (including English and Maths, at least three of the E-Bacc subjects – Sciences, MFL, History and Geography – and any three others, including equivalent qualifications) with the students’ prior attainment in the Key Stage 2 SATS (taken in English and Maths). Respondents to the survey were asked how far they agreed with the suggestion that the use of such a measure would be an ‘appropriate way of calculating and reporting students' achievement and schools' performance’. A third of respondents gave neutral responses to the proposal; just over 45% disagreed with the suggestion and only 21% expressed support for the idea.

Only 36 respondents chose to explain their answer about the how they thought the proposed 8-subject average measure might influence provision in their school and the range of expectations expressed was very varied, so no clear trends could be observed. In some cases schools seemed to have reacted to what they saw as an abandonment of the E-Bacc by giving students greater freedom to choose the subjects that they were most interested in and some history teachers feared that the boost that history’s inclusion in the E-Bacc had given to the subject. In others, teacher welcomed the encouragement that the new measure seemed to give to a broader curriculum. While some were hopeful that it would prevent time being taken away from history to invest in the core subjects, others were doubtful that the subject would be given any more time:

*This proposal may have a positive impact on GCSE History, to a degree. The reason being that so many lessons are lost for extra core subject interventions and module exams, that if a school's performance was based on an 8 point average then history would most probably not lose the lessons to core subject intervention.*

*(Respondent 333, Comprehensive)*

*Pupils will probably be pushed to do history but unlikely history will be a higher priority for SLT, unlikely history will get more time - essentially more pressure.*

*(Respondent 536, New Academy)*

Some teachers were confident that history in their school would be more highly valued by SLT because their department was seen as strong and capable of securing high grades for students:

*As value added scores in history tend to be high it will help to promote the subject to SMT. (Respondent 341, Grammar school)*

*Since we currently get between 50 to 80% A\*/A grades, and last year we had the highest percentage in the school of A\*/A grades, I should think that the SMT might have an eye to the marketing potential of promoting the subject.*

*(Respondent 621, Independent)*

Others, however, expressed considerable anxiety that because history was seen as – or indeed known to be – more difficult that other GCSE subjects, students would be steered away from it.

*History is already seen as too difficult by SLT. They want fewer students to take it.*

*(Respondent 273, Comprehensive)*

*The college has concerns over the high literacy demands of history and the fact nationally it is 2.2 grades harder than other GCSEs.[[4]](#footnote-4) Therefore this measure might be used to restrict access to history of students who might struggle to achieve the higher grades. (Respondent 294, Comprehensive)*

*I imagine that History, which is viewed as a 'hard' subject, will lose popularity as students strive to keep their average grade high.*

*(Respondent 377, Comprehensive)*

A few teachers expressed very passionate concerns about the inappropriateness of basing value-added judgements on Key Stage 2 levels of attainment. This was in part because of a view that so much attention was focused on the subjects in the later stages of Key Stage 2 in the subjects in which students took SATs that students arrived in secondary schools having received very little history teaching and therefore at a much lower level of attainment in history than had reached in English.

**5. A level**

**5.1 The proportion of students within Year 12 and 13 taking A level history**

Approximately 280 different schools that taught A level responded to questions about the uptake of the subject. As Figure 11 shows, there was little overall difference in the proportion of students taking AS and A2 history, with the most common cohorts accounting for between 11 and 20% of the year group. Figures 12 and 13, which show the uptake by type of school, reveal that it was the few grammar school and the independent school respondents who tended to report more cohorts that were larger (21-30% and 31-40%), while the old style academies were less likely to see higher proportions of students opting for the subject.

*Figure 11: 2013 The proportion of each year group in all schools studying AS or A2 history*

*Figure 12: 2013: The proportion of the Year 12 cohort in different types of school studying AS level history*

*Figure 13: 2013 The proportion of the Year 13 cohort in different types of school studying A2 history*

**5.2 Trends in the uptake of history at AS and A2**

When invited to comment on any trends within their school or college in terms of numbers of students opting for history, the vast majority of all respondents tended to report either that the proportions were basically unchanged year on year or that there were no clear trends in patterns of uptake from one year to another. As Figure 14 shows, a small proportion of respondents did, however, report some kind of significant change – and these were much more likely to be positive signs of an increase in the subject’ popularity and perceived value. Overall, three times as many schools (72) reported an increase in numbers at AS level than reported a decrease (19).

*Figure 14: Trends in uptake of AS history (Year 12) over the past three years*

A similar pattern is evident for A2 (Figure 15) with over twice as many examples of expanding A2 level numbers reported from all types of school than there are reports of contraction from the same type of schools.

*Figure 15: Trends in uptake of A2 (Year 13) history over the past three years*

**5. 3 Entrance requirements for embarking on A level history courses**

The vast majority of respondents (84%) report that their schools and colleges set a minimum requirement for admission to A level courses, although there were cases in all types of context, except grammar schools of an apparently open admissions policy. Twenty-six respondents referred only to their school’s standard requirements for entry to the sixth form, which was most often five GCSE grades at C or above, but some higher combinations were sought (such as six grade B results at GCSE, or two grade As and three grade Bs). Where schools insisted on a particular grade at history GCSE (or IGCSE) in order for students to be allowed to start the AS level course, this was most commonly a B grade: 157 respondents reported that their school required a B in history (or English), while 104 required only a C grade. A few schools (only 8 – all of them independent or grammar schools) declared that students could only be accepted onto the AS level course if they had achieved a grade A at GCSE. Sixteen respondents suggested that while a minimum grade was stipulated they did have some flexibility, especially if the student was enthusiastic.

While one or two schools absolutely insisted on students having taken GCSE or (IGCSE) history in order to go on to AS in the subject, the vast majority seemed to accept occasional students who had not taken history. Prior attainment at English was then taken into account - and some schools also automatically considered students’ English results at GCSE alongside their grade in history in order to inform their decision.

**5.4 Respondents’ views of the restrictions on uptake that their schools applied to potential AS students**

Among the 75 respondents who expressed an opinion, there was widespread support for the principle of some kind of entry qualification. Almost half of the respondents (36) referred to the long-standing requirements in their school and many more simply took the principle for granted. Almost as many (29) emphatically endorsed the principle of selection, regarding it as essential in eliminating ‘drop-out’ and ensuring that the candidates who took the exam would be successful. A further four respondents, in schools where the minimum requirement had been lowered from a B to a C, or where the official policy seemed to be relaxed to ensure more entrants to the sixth form, regretted the fact that they did not have higher entrance requirements which they thought would reduce drop out and prevent students from making inappropriate choices.

Only five respondents expressed any kind of regret that those who did not meet the school’s minimum requirements were prevented from taking history at AS level. One other respondent pointed to problems now being caused by early GCSE entry, with reduced numbers of AS entrants because of the fact that fewer students achieved a grade B in Year 10 (than had been the case when students took the exam in Year 11), an outcome that s/he attributed in part to the students’ lack of maturity at the time when they took the GCSE exam.

**5.5 Reactions to the decision to separate AS and A2 qualifications**

The Department of Education has announced that for A level courses that begin from 2015 onwards, the AS level qualification will be entirely separate from the A level (or A2) qualification. While AS levels will still exist (and be counted for UCAS purposes as being worth half the points score of a full A level), candidates taking A level courses will have to be examined on the entire content of the full A level programme at the end of the two-year course. Achievement at AS level thus makes no contribution to achievement at A level, and students will be expected to enrol **either** on AS level courses, completed in one year, **or** on separate A level courses, to be completed in two years. Respondents to the survey were asked how far they agreed with the suggestion that this separation of the two qualifications would improve students’ learning.

As Figure 16 shows, over half of respondents in schools and colleges in which A level is currently taught disagreed with the suggestion that the new arrangements would ensure that students learn history more effectively and that those continuing with the subject would be better prepared for university study. The strength of opposition to the change was most pronounced among the small number of sixth form colleges that responded to the survey, and support was much more pronounced among the few grammar school respondents, with the independent schools very evenly divided in their views.

*Figure 16: 2013 Reactions to the suggestion that separating AS and A2 would improve students’ learning in history*

When asked specifically about the likely impact of the changes on history provision in their own contexts, about half the respondents thought that it was simply too soon to tell. Another fifth thought that the impact would essentially be quite limited, but among those who thought that there would be a noticeable effect, the prevailing view was that this would be negative. A quarter of all respondents thought that the impact would be negative, whereas only 4% of respondents thought that there would be a positive impact. As previously, the small number of grammar school respondents was most positive about the potential impact, with 29% expecting it to be positive, and there was some support within the independent sector (11% expecting the change to have a positive impact).

*Figure 17: 2013 Respondents’ views about the impact of the change on the provision and uptake of history at A level within their school*

Only two teachers gave an explanation for their assumption that the change would be positive, one (from a grammar school) welcoming the time that it would give students to adjust to the higher demands of A level study, while the other (from an independent school) believed that it would allow for effective teaching of *history,* rather than a constant focus on the requirements of the exam mark-scheme.

Thirty-six respondents explained their assumptions that the impact would be negative. The most common concern was about the narrowing of students’ sixth form studies, with far fewer students (particularly those taking science subjects as their main focus) choosing to take the AS level course as a fourth option. The loss of flexibility within the examination arrangements was also expected to lead to the loss of those students who had previously chosen history as a fourth option and then found that they enjoyed or were sufficiently good at the subject to make it worth continuing with it to A level.

*It will discourage students from gaining a broader base to their education through a range of AS as the push will be to concentrate on just the A2 subjects they want for their degree course . (Respondent 269, Comprehensive)*

*Many of our students take history as their fourth option, only to discover they enjoy and are very good at it, and consequently go onto continue it at A2; if AS is separated from A2 this will have a devastating impact on our take up. (Respondent 325, Sixth form college)*

Losing the scope to try a subject out without making a two-year commitment to it was seen to disadvantage many of the less confident students who simply would not be prepared to embark on the course, and was expected to increase the perception of history as a difficult subject that would not be worth pursuing.

*There is a risk that the students in my college will find it more daunting to study such a content-heavy subject without modules. The aim of reducing exam focus sounds laudable - but that would be better achieved by continuous assessment rather than higher stakes exams. (Respondent 460, Sixth form college)*

The loss of an intermediate stage between GCSE and A level was also deeply regretted for a variety of reasons. Some valued the sense of impetus that it gave to the start of sixth form studies; some welcomed the scope it provided for development through incremental stages, and several were worried about the loss of the formative assessment provided by the exams in Year 12.

*Not sure why we are moving to summative assessment after 2 years when the universities have modular assessments every year. Having AS examinations are motivational for students and give both teachers and students feedback on progress. How will UCAS forms be filled in? (Respondent 327, New academy)*

**6. Teachers’ concerns**

**Curriculum change**

A final section of the survey asked teachers about a number of issues raised by HA members as matters of concern in their school, in order to explore the extent to which these problems may be shared across schools in England. For each issue, respondents were asked to note whether the issue was a matter of concern to them, and if so, whether they regarded it as a ‘serious’ issue. Respondents were also asked whether they think that issues which did not worry them at the time might arise as concerns in the future. As Table 7 illustrates, the most pressing concerns currently experienced or feared by teachers related to the process of curriculum change.

*Table 7: 2013 The proportion of respondents for whom particular issues are a matter of concern ranked in order of severity*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Possible issue of concern** | **Matter of current concern (including those for whom this is a serious concern)** | | **May become a concern** | **Not a matter of concern** |
| Insufficient attention being paid to history teachers’ views in developing new curriculum proposals | 95.9% | (8.3%) | 2.8% | 1.3% |
| Inappropriate nature of the proposed curriculum changes | 94.5% | (4.2%) | 4.2% | 1,3% |
| Lack of funding for new teaching resources to implement proposed curriculum changes | 83.2% | (19.1%) | 14.6% | 2.3% |
| Insufficient time for publishers to produce new resources in response to the proposed curriculum change | 82.8% | (23.8%) | 15.9% | 1.3% |
| Lack of preparation time for the implementation of proposed curriculum changes | 81.4% | (18.2%) | 16.5% | 2.1% |
| Lack of opportunity to attend subject-based CPD | 49.1% | (25.3%) | 28.4% | 22.5% |
| Lack of provision of subject-based CPD | 48.2% | (27.9%) | 30.2% | 21.7% |
| Impact of ‘rarely cover’ on learning beyond the classroom | 40.1% | (22.1%) | 28.9% | 31.0% |
| The amount of history being taught by non-specialists | 26.3% | (16.5%) | 33.3% | 40.3% |
| Specialists are not replacing history teachers who leave | 17.6% | (7.9%) | 40.8% | 43.6% |

The survey was conducted in the spring term – after the publication of the first draft of the revised National Curriculum for history and before the revised version, published in July. While the most extreme of these concerns – the inappropriate nature of the proposed changes and the sense that teachers’ views were simply not being listened to – may have been at least partly addressed by the publication of a significantly revised second draft, many of the concerns related to the pace of change and the capacity of schools (and others – such as publishers) to prepare adequately for them. Not only do new curricula call for new resources (which may be unavailable in the time available, or prove to be unaffordable for schools in straitened times); but they may also call for appropriate continuing professional development (CPD), which many teachers report that they cannot access.

Concerns about a lack of specialist history teachers have been discussed already (in section 4.3), but the one other issue of continuing concern to teachers, although not ranked as high as issues related to curriculum change is the impact of ‘rarely cover’ policies introduced several years ago, which prevent teachers from being called upon to cover absent teachers’ classes (thus protecting time for preparation and marking) but make it much more expensive for schools to run off-site trips that require supervision. This has significantly reduced the scope for visits to museums and historic sites.

1. Although 468 schools reported the length of their Key Stage 3 curriculum, not all respondents went on to explain the nature of their curriculum arrangements and how history was taught within them. The following tables that explain the nature of the Key Stage 3 provision in more detail therefore report on provision in the 448 schools for which full data was submitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. According to figures published by Ofsted, by the qualifications regulator, Ofqual, and by the Joint Council for Qualifications, (JCQ), the proportion of the cohort taking GCSE history in 2011 was 31% in 2011, 33% in 2012 and rose to 39% in 2013. This sharp increase reflects the impact of the introduction of the E-Bacc measure. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The differences in the patterns of GCSE uptake between schools that offer a two-year Key Stage 3 and those that offer a conventional three-year Key Stage 3 were found to be statistically significant when tested using the two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov distribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The respondent offered no specific evidence or reference in support of this particular claim about the relative difficulty of history GCSE. Its inclusion here does not imply acceptance of this assertion, although there has been some analysis of results that tends to confirm the claim that history is a relatively difficult subject in which to obtain high grades. See Coe (2008) Comparability of GCSE examination in different subjects: an application of the Rasch model, *Oxford Review of Education*, 34 (5) 609-636. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)