Why do you keep asking the same questions?

Tracking the health of history in England's secondary schools

In 2009 the Historical Association conducted the first of what has become an annual survey of history teachers in England. Its aim was to get beyond bare statistics relating to subject uptake and examination success to examine the reality of history teaching across all kinds of schools and to map the extent of variation in students' and teachers' experiences as individual schools' responded in different ways to national policy initiatives and curriculum reforms. In this article reviewing the survey's findings over the past eight years, Katharine Burn and Richard Harris begin by enumerating the reasons to be cheerful; charting the ways in which concerns that inspired the first survey, and others that subsequently emerged, have been addressed. It continues by acknowledging the reasons for continued vigilance – the new challenges as well as the opportunities that lie ahead – and the value of keeping up in touch with so many teachers' experiences and current priorities.

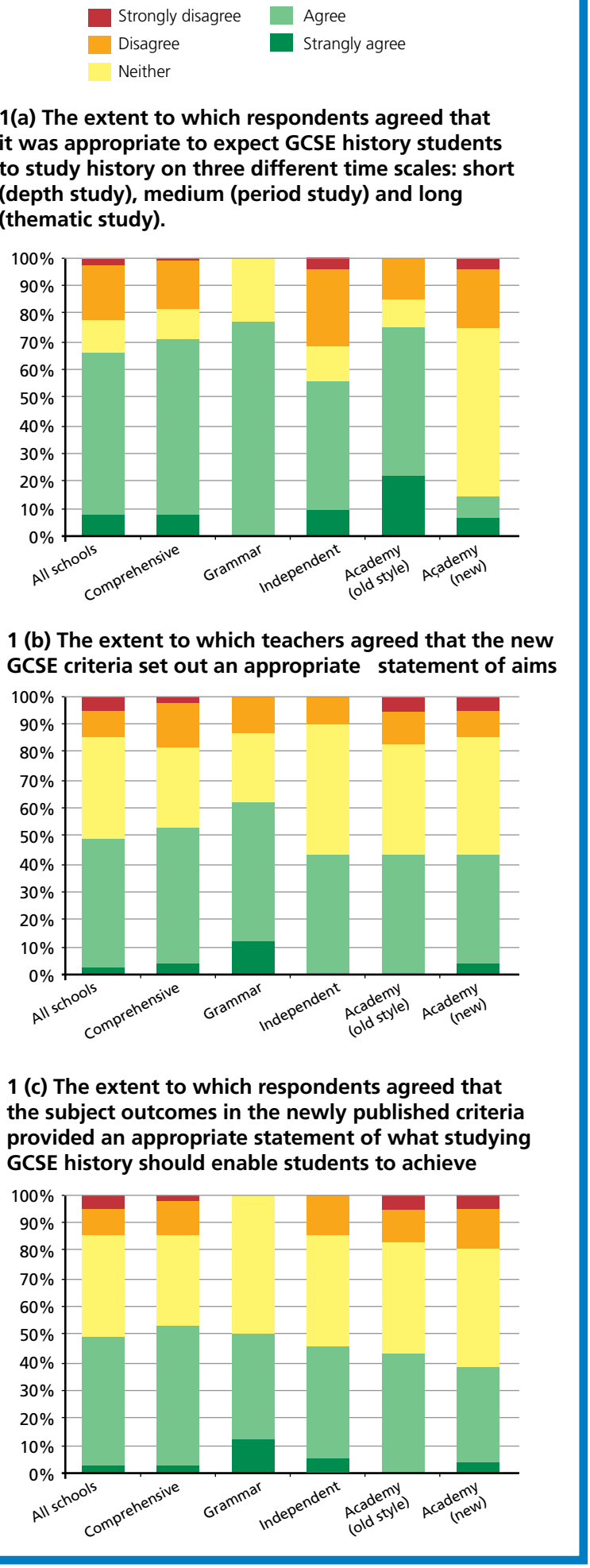
Katharine Burn and Richard Harris
Katharine Burn is an Associate Professor of History Education at the University of Oxford. Richard Harris is an Associate Professor of History Education at the University of Reading Institute of Education.

As we sat down to write this article, the Historical Association (HA) had just launched its 2016 survey of history teachers in England. Were we crazy in hoping that teachers would take the time to fill it in? Yet again?! This was the ninth such survey, and we seemed to keep asking exactly the same questions! After the struggles of the past year – wrestling with new AS-levels and (for many) new GCSEs taught to Year 9 classes before draft specifications had even been approved – and faced with another round of fresh planning for new A-levels in Year 13 and the new GCSEs for students entering Year 10, surely teachers could do with a break.[1] Why not leave them alone to get on with tackling the challenges?

The answer, as you might expect from historians, lies in the importance of the evidence that the survey generates and in the picture that it enables us to construct of the experiences of history teachers – and of their students – across the country. The evidence provides an essential foundation for the HA's claim to act as 'the voice for history' in relation to secondary education and underpins all that the association does in representing history teachers' views, most obviously to government. It also informs the HA's provision of support and guidance to teachers: the kinds of resources that it generates and publishes and the sorts of professional development opportunities that it seeks to provide.

The big picture – both the annual snapshot and the patterns of change and continuity over time – is important too, but it can sometimes be overlooked in the heat of campaigning about specific issues or in the urgency of commissioning new resources. History teachers' responses to the new GCSEs offer an interesting case in point.[2] Despite all the concerns that teachers registered about the extent of the changes and the demands that the new criteria would make, the same teachers also made it clear that they essentially welcomed the changes as embodying a more appropriate conception of historical knowledge and understanding. Despite the new subject knowledge that many of them would have to acquire after years of teaching only twentieth-century history at GCSE, Figure 1(a), taken from the 2014 survey report, shows that most teachers strongly *approved* the requirement that future GCSEs should require the study of history on different time-scales, including a long-term thematic study over many hundreds of years.[3] It is easy for the broad support that teachers also expressed about the aims and intended outcomes of the new qualifications, shown in Figures 1(b) and 1(c), to be obscured by their anxiety about the provision of new resources, reflected in Figure 2. The latter issue obviously has to be addressed, but teachers' widespread support for, and commitment to, an historical education that extends well beyond 'the Modern World' is also important to acknowledge.

Figure 1: Teachers' responses in the 2014 survey to different aspects of the new GCSE criteria



This article therefore adopts a broader and more reflective approach than can be provided by the HA's annual survey reports. We redress the balance by stepping back to consider the view; taking time to celebrate the inspirational features that stand out (even if they do so against looming clouds) and recognising the obstacles that have been surmounted, not simply those that lie ahead.

Reasons to be cheerful

1. The place of history within the curriculum for Key Stage 3

The first cause for celebration is that the concerns about the place of history in the school curriculum that first inspired the launch of the survey have largely disappeared. At Key Stage 3, these were concerns not about the *content* of the 2008 National Curriculum but about the way in which its presentation, particularly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), seemed to have encouraged a range of cross-curricular and competence-based initiatives, many of which paid little attention to the distinctive features of different subject disciplines and the different ways in which knowledge is generated and validated within them.

While each subject continued to be defined in terms of the key processes, key concepts and the 'range and content' to be included, QCA also published a 'big picture of the curriculum' in which subjects were presented as only the seventh of nine rows of different elements expected to shape the thinking of school curriculum planners.[4] Set within the all-encompassing (and entirely laudable) aims and proposed outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* agenda and expected to contribute to a list of carefully defined 'Personal Learning and Thinking Skills', it was perhaps unsurprising if the distinctive features of history and other 'foundation' subjects no longer seemed important to senior leaders.[5] Many concluded that subject specialists were not necessarily required for Key Stage 3 and chose to cut the time for what they regarded as non-essentials, either by reducing that stage from three years to two, or by adopting the 'integrated and innovative solutions' proposed by the RSA's 'Opening Minds' curriculum.[6]

As the editors of *Teaching History* reflected, soon after the 2008 National Curriculum had been published:

> *[A]necdotal evidence suggests [that] many departments nationally face challenges to their ability to respond appropriately to curriculum revisions through a continuing squeeze on history time and/or through proposals to blur subject boundaries. There is a vogue, it would seem, for old wine in new bottles – for revivals of pre-National Curriculum project work, for example – and for the notion that we can advance children's education by diluting the disciplines.*[7]

It was the 'anecdotal' nature of the evidence that troubled members of the HA Secondary Committee who tried to raise their concerns with the Department for Children,

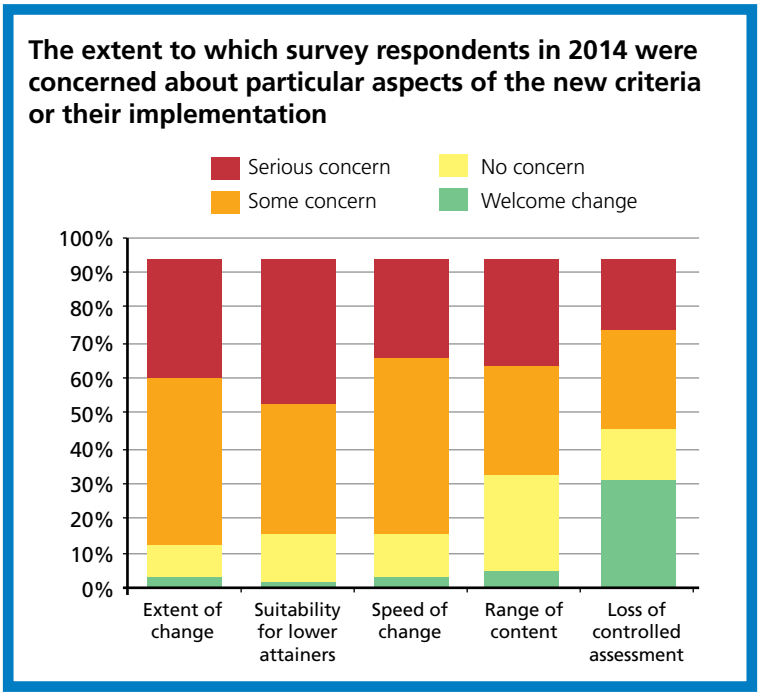
Schools and Families (DCSF). Despite growing anxiety, expressed by Ofsted in its 2007 subject report, *History in the Balance,* and sufficient to justify QCA-funded research into the factors influencing students' decisions about whether or not to take history GCSE, the DCSF saw little reason for alarm.[8] Since history GCSE results were regarded as relatively strong, department officials assumed that the subject was in good health, effectively dismissing the suggestion that reducing students' opportunities to be taught by dedicated history specialists might undermine effective GCSE recruitment or students' subsequent achievements in the subject.[9] The discussions, however, laid bare the lack of evidence on both sides about patterns of teaching at Key Stage 3. While the DCSF lacked data with which they could allay the Secondary Committee's concerns, the HA similarly lacked detailed evidence that would allow them to lobby more effectively. So it was that the first annual survey was born.

That first survey, conducted in 2009, revealed that just over 7% of the schools responding were teaching some kind of competence-based or cross-curricular course in Year 7 (see Figure 3). In almost as many schools again, history was being taught as part of an integrated humanities programme, usually alongside geography and often with religious education or citizenship. In a further 10% of schools history retained a distinct identity as a subject in its own right but was taught within a humanities programme which often meant that the same teacher (sometimes a historian, but often not) taught all three or four humanities subjects in rotation. While history continued to be taught as a discrete subject in three quarters of the schools from which we received responses, it was striking how much higher this proportion was among the independent and grammar school respondents (at 97.1% and 94.1% respectively) and that the schools in which students were *least* likely to be taught history as clearly defined subject in its own right (see Figure 3(b)) were the sponsored academies established by New Labour with the express intention of raising aspiration and attainment in in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.[10]

There was clear evidence here that young people were not being given equal opportunities to study history. The following year's results (2010) confirmed the distinctions between different types of school, but also showed that the trend within *all* types of school was away from discrete history teaching. These findings caused particular alarm when set alongside some of the detailed evidence gathered by Ofsted in subject-focused inspections between 2008 and 2010. In seven out of the ten schools visited, where schools had moved to a competency-based or integrated curriculum, history, with other foundation subjects, 'had suffered as these schemes were created and developed.' The study of themes such as 'water' had forced teachers to make 'artificial links', developing schemes of work that 'lacked coherence and undermined progression in history'. Where there had been little subject specialist input, the result was 'superficial and simplistic teaching and learning' and feedback to students was 'of limited value because it lacked subject-specific comments about how they might improve'.[11]

The other shocking findings that emerged from the earliest surveys was the extent of variation between schools in

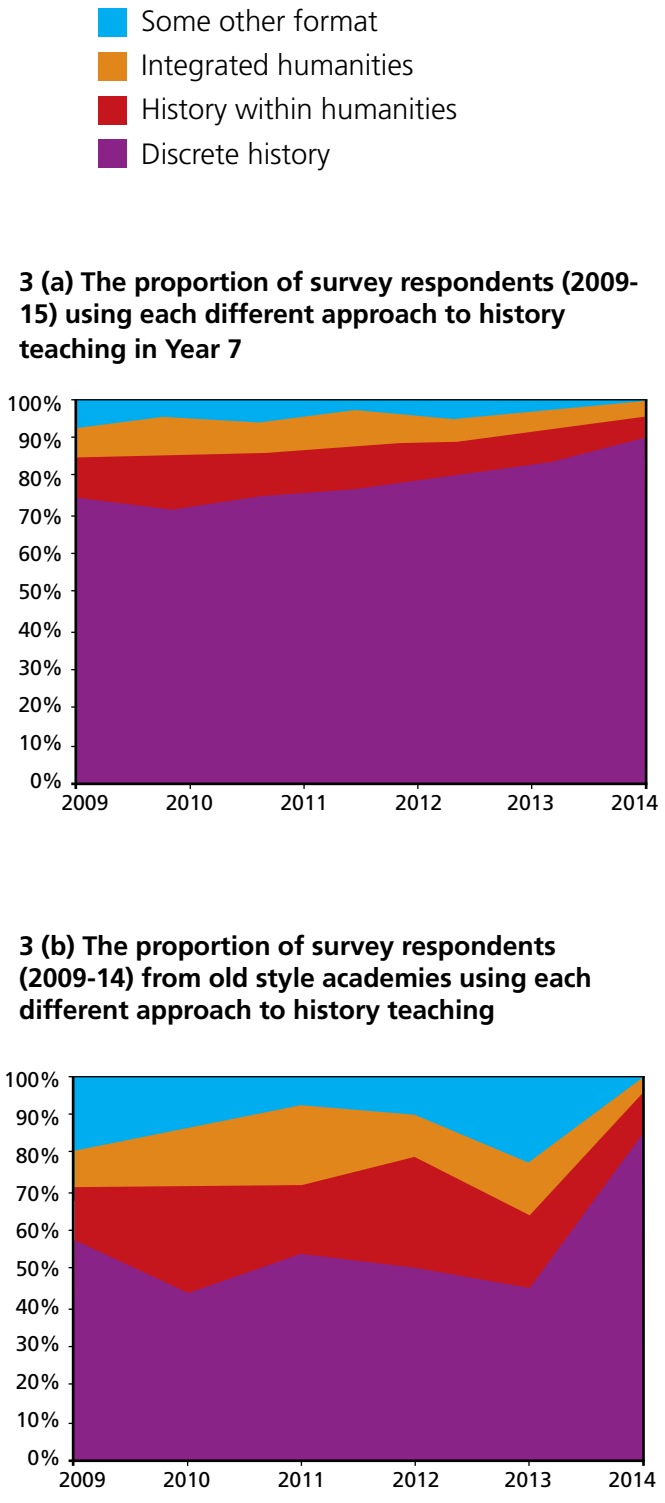
Figure 2: Teachers' concerns about the new GCSE criteria



the amount of time allocated to the subject and the high proportion of schools reporting a reduction in the amount of time allocated to Key Stage 3 history. In 2009 almost a third of comprehensive schools and over half of the academies responding explained that their time allocation had been reduced in the previous year. This downward trend was reflected in the fact that around a third of comprehensive school respondents reported that they allocated an hour a week or less to history teaching at Key Stage 3. Provision in the original sponsored academies was even poorer, with more than half providing an hour or less of history each week. In the worst case, we found one school which dedicated just 38 hours to history teaching across the entire course of Key Stage 3.[12] Although there were plenty of other schools in which history was given a generous allocation of time, the disparity between students' experiences was of considerable concern – as was the continuing trend evident in 2010 and 2011 towards reducing the time allocated to the subject.[13]

It is therefore a matter of some celebration to note both the dramatic increase, since 2011, in the proportions of schools teaching history as a distinct subject in its own right (see Figure 3) and a process of stabilisation in terms of the time allocated to the subject at Key Stage 3. Highlighting these developments is certainly not to claim that the HA was responsible for their accomplishment; nor is it to suggest that all the measures by which they have been achieved have been universally welcomed by history teachers. The statistical data merely demonstrate that since the announcement of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) as a measure of attainment to be reported at the school level, the tendency towards integrated or competency-based curricula has been reversed and that history's position within the Key Stage 3 curriculum now appears to be more secure.[14] This period has, of course, also seen the introduction of a new National Curriculum (with effect from 2014).[15] Although the expansion of the academies programme under the same Coalition government that revised the curriculum simultaneously created an extraordinary surge in the number of secondary schools with no statutory obligation to follow the National Curriculum, the emphasis on subject disciplines inherent in

Figure 3: The format in which history was taught in Year 7 over successive years



Note: The old style academies were the sponsored academies established by the Labour government in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. In 2015 the survey ceased to draw a distinction between different kinds of academies, since respondents could not report with confidence what kind of academy their school was or when it has become an academy. In the 2015 survey all non-selective state schools were classed as 'comprehensives'.

that revision is clearly reflected now in schools' curricular arrangements.[16]

2. The increased uptake of GCSE history

The second cause for celebration, reflected in the findings of the survey over time, but also made abundantly clear in the National Pupil Database of results for all students, held by the Department of Education, is the dramatic rise in GCSE uptake from a very steady state of around 32% of the cohort each year to nearly 39% in 2013 and just over 40% in the following two years.[17] This increase is undoubtedly due to the introduction of the EBacc school performance measure, which was announced in 2010 and began impacting on results achieved in 2013 (reflecting subject choices made in 2011).

3. The recent reversal of restrictions on GCSE uptake for lower-attaining students

The survey responses, however, also revealed an alarming negative effect that was not picked up in official data: an increase in the proportion of teachers reporting that certain students were being actively dissuaded or prohibited from taking history. As Figure 3 shows, this proportion almost doubled from 16% in 2011 – the first year in which we asked this question, following initial concerns raised by HA members, as the effects of the EBacc announcement were beginning to be felt in GCSE options – to 31% a year later. It continued to rise over the next two years, reaching a high point of 45% by 2014, when the most frequent reasons given were expressed either in terms of students' abilities or their likely achievement (mentioned in 36% of the explanations) or with specific reference to the EBacc measure, which was explicitly cited in 26% of the comments. It may seem perverse to have been worrying about this particular problem at a point when the proportion of the cohort as a whole now continuing with the subject to GCSE had increased so significantly; but it was a matter of serious concern that the emphasis on achievement at grade C or above, which was used to define GCSE 'success', was effectively operating as a perverse incentive. In many contexts, the official success measure had been interpreted to mean that that there was no point investing in history education for students (who might enjoy the subject and even be expected to make considerable progress within it!) if their ultimate attainment was thought likely to fall below the threshold that would make it count.

The third reason to be cheerful is, therefore, the fact that this trend seems to have peaked. Although not yet confirmed as a trend, the significant fall from 45% in 2014 to 35% in 2015 seems to be attributable to the introduction of *another* school performance measure, Progress 8, to be reported for the first time in 2016.[18] As the name implies, this measure will focus not on absolute achievement but on progress achieved across eight qualifying subjects, in relation to students' attainment (in literacy and mathematics) at the age of 11. The complexity of the measure and the fact that it will stand alongside, rather than replacing, more straightforward measures of attainment has made it difficult to predict its impact, but this early evidence from the 2015 survey suggests that the risk of history becoming the exclusive preserve of high-attaining students may have been averted.

4. Students are not being forced to choose between history and geography

Equally gratifying in terms of GCSE uptake is what the survey has revealed about students' opportunities to study both history *and* geography. The decision to include one humanities subject within the EBacc measure by offering students a choice of either history or geography as the qualifying subject prompted concern within the HA that schools might replicate that choice in the options frameworks that they constructed, requiring students to take one or other subject but restricting their opportunity to continue with both. In fact, consistent evidence from the survey suggests that this has *not* happened. While the increase in GCSE uptake has in many contexts been the result of compulsion – with around 40% of respondents noting that some or all students are indeed required to take at least one of the two subjects – Figure 4 shows that only 4% of respondents in 2015 reported that students were forced to choose *between* the two. In all other cases the options system made it possible for students who wished to do so (and who were not restricted in their choice by concerns about their abilities or capacity to achieve at least a C grade) to continue with both history and geography.

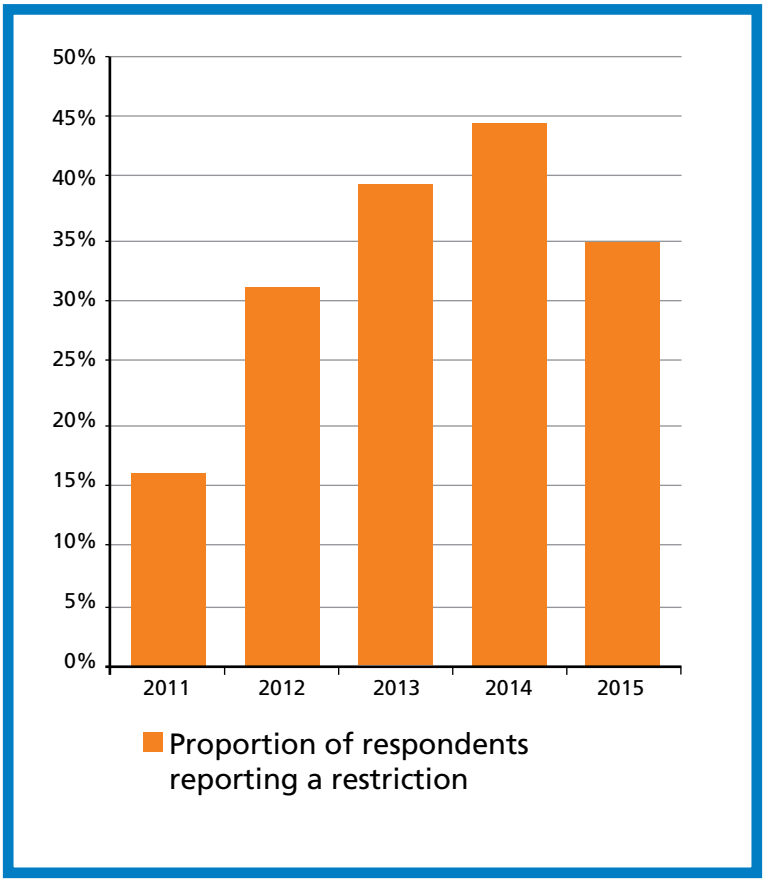
5. Many concerns expressed by teachers about National Curriculum reform were addressed

A very different cause for celebration inspired by reflections on the evidence generated by the survey in recent years is the extent to which the concerns registered by hundreds of teachers in their response to the 2013 survey were addressed in the final version of the revised National Curriculum for history published in the September of that year.[19] More than 700 individual teachers had responded to the survey, which included a range of questions intended to inform the HA's response to the formal government consultation. As Figure 6 and the following quotations illustrate, teachers from all types of school used the survey to show how appalled they were about many aspects of the draft: the sheer amount of content and the detail in which it had been prescribed; the requirement to teach it all in chronological order across the primary and secondary phases, with primary schools required to cover the time-span from the Stone Age to 1700; and the overwhelming predominance of British history:

> *It has a narrowly British focus. Surely there should be a bit of space for producing citizens for a European and global world, and who thus have some awareness or other societies and cultures? There is a sweeping and self-contradictory comment in the statement of aims about knowing and understanding the broad outlines or European and world history, but that is ridiculous in the context of the long list of British history that is specified.*
> Teacher 217, grammar school

> *Its division of topics by key stage means children at best will learn some facts by rote, but won't be able to properly see the flow of historical events, or understand the influence of earlier history on more modern events.*
> Teacher 6, comprehensive school

Figure 4: The proportion of survey respondents reporting that certain students are actively discouraged or prevented from opting for GCSE history



Teachers were particularly alarmed that the detailed prescription of content to be covered would reduce teaching to the simple transmission of a list of events or developments with no opportunity to explore genuinely historical questions (even though these were endorsed within the curriculum document) about how and why they happened, what

Figure 5: The kinds of choice that survey respondents report are given to students about taking history at GCSE

	A requirement that all students must take						A requirement for that some students must take						A completely free choice about history		Total
	History		History or Geog		History &/ or Geog		History		History or Geog		History &/ or Geog				
2015	8	2.1%	10	2.7%	83	22.3%	3	0.8%	5	1.3%	50	13.4%	214	57.4%	373
2014	0	0%	7	2.6%	44	16.5%	7	2.6%	8	3.0%	46	17.3%	154	57.9%	266

difference they made to people's lives and how significant they had proved to be over time:

> *Although we are prompted to get students to think about change, causation, diversity, evidential understanding etc. the curriculum makes no attempt to explain how this could work in practice. The list of topics dominates everything – the substantive knowledge overwhelms the disciplinary knowledge.*
>
> Teacher 337 comprehensive school

In the event, however, two of the teachers' main concerns were fully addressed in the final version of the curriculum which moved the boundary between the primary and secondary curriculum back to 1066 and reduced the detailed prescription at Key Stage 3 by mandating only the seven broad 'aspects' of history to covered and leaving the choice of specific content within each aspect up to teachers. While the British emphasis of the original draft remained, with five out of the seven 'aspects' devoted to local or national history, and a sixth focusing on the challenges 'facing Britain, Europe and the wider world' since 1901, the seventh aspect did at least require 'at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history'. The transformation wrought between the first and second drafts was such that Jamie Byrom, who thought that teachers had been quite right to 'kick-off' against the February draft, subsequently urged them to 'kick-on' exploiting the potential offered by the final version, which had not only re-asserted the importance of substantive historical knowledge (thereby defending the subject's claim to curriculum time) but also preserved within it a powerful conception of the nature of the discipline.[20]

Reasons to be wary: why carry on asking the same questions?

With the nature of the history curriculum essentially settled now, in terms of policy and public exam specifications (at least for the duration of this parliament) and with so many positive outcomes to report, the question arises as to why the HA is continuing to administer an annual survey. What are the challenges ahead or the dangers of which we need to remain wary? One answer lies in the range of *other* aspects of education that are currently subject to reform; another is rooted in the value of being able to track trends over time.

1. The value of being able to represent history teachers' views and students' experience to the government

While the extent of the changes made to the National Curriculum may be somewhat exceptional, the fact that the HA could quickly marshal extensive evidence of teachers' views, across all types of school, enabled it to present a powerful case with conviction. This ability to respond quickly and effectively to government consultations is fundamental to an organisation that claims to speak 'for' the subject and on behalf of its members. The HA has drawn both on the statistical data and on individual teachers' explanations of their experience and of the ways in which particular policies play out in their schools to respond, not only to curriculum reform proposals (at A-level and GCSE as well as within the National Curriculum), but also to national reviews, such as that led by Andrew Carter into initial teacher training, and to consultations about the most effective forms of continuing professional development.[21]

In response to the former, the predominant message from survey respondents, asked specifically in 2014 about the value of giving schools greater responsibility for leading training programmes, was about the importance of the subject-specific dimension of their training. While many School Direct programmes are linked with universities that have sufficient numbers of students to make it cost-effective to provide an extensive history programme, the increased allocation to school-led providers has also led to many more history trainees following a more generic programme with limited access either to an established community of history mentors or to the historical scholarship and educational research expertise accessible within school/university partnerships. In response to the CPD consultation, we could cite teachers' particular needs for subject knowledge development in relation to the new specifications as well as the concerns expressed by more than half of survey respondents in 2015 about the lack of opportunity for them to attend subject-focused professional development (partly because of an emphasis on *internal* school development programmes that tend to be highly generic).

Most recently the HA's response to the government's declared intention that 90% of young people should be entered for the EBacc range of subjects was richly informed by our knowledge of the reasons why so many schools tended to steer certain students away from history GCSE.[22] While the HA has expressed strong support for the principle that history should form part of all young people's education up to the age of 16, teachers' accounts of the challenges that the current GCSE specifications pose also enable us to ask authoritative questions about the appropriateness of the new GCSE examinations as the only way of assessing and validating young people's learning about the past and to campaign on behalf of young people for the professional development that their teachers will need. As the range of students positively encouraged or required to take history widens (particularly in those schools that have previously restricted entry to GCSE), many teachers will face new demands in relation to effective forms of differentiation and support for EAL learners grappling with the demands of academic English: specific demands for which those teachers will need appropriate kinds of training. Ongoing accounts of their experience *and* that of their students (alongside data about the outcomes achieved) will be essential in campaigning, if necessary, for more accessible forms of assessment that can capture and appropriately reward genuine achievement at different levels.

2. The continued importance of tracking trends over time

Changes in AS-level and A-level uptake

As the latest EBacc proposal demonstrates, while the nature of the curriculum may now be settled, changes in school accountability measures and the decisions of external stakeholders continue to have an impact on the curricular choices offered in different school contexts. Some trends – such as the changes in GCSE uptake resulting from the EBacc proposal, or the effects of making AS-level a separate

qualification that no longer contributes to students' ultimate A-level grade – can be relatively easily tracked through the National Pupil Database; but the detailed reasons for school-level decisions can only be discovered by asking about practices in individual schools. For this reason both the 2015 and 2016 surveys have included a specific focus on school policy in relation to AS-level. While the 2015 survey suggested that many schools would be encouraging most history students to take AS-level at the end of Year 12 (leaving open the possibility of continuing to A-level the following year), more recent anecdotal evidence suggests that they may be making very different decisions for those entering the sixth form in September 2016. In light of the difficulties that teachers have experienced in preparing students for two different specifications related to the same material, more schools may require a two-year commitment to the A-level course before students start. Given the extent to which history numbers rose as a result of the *introduction* of AS-level, back in 2000, because of the scope it provided for students to take history as a fourth subject (only to find that they enjoyed it more, or proved to be more successful than they had expected), such a policy could have very serious implications for the subject.[23] Early monitoring of schools' intentions will help the HA to highlight any emerging patterns and to support schools where A-level provision may be threatened.

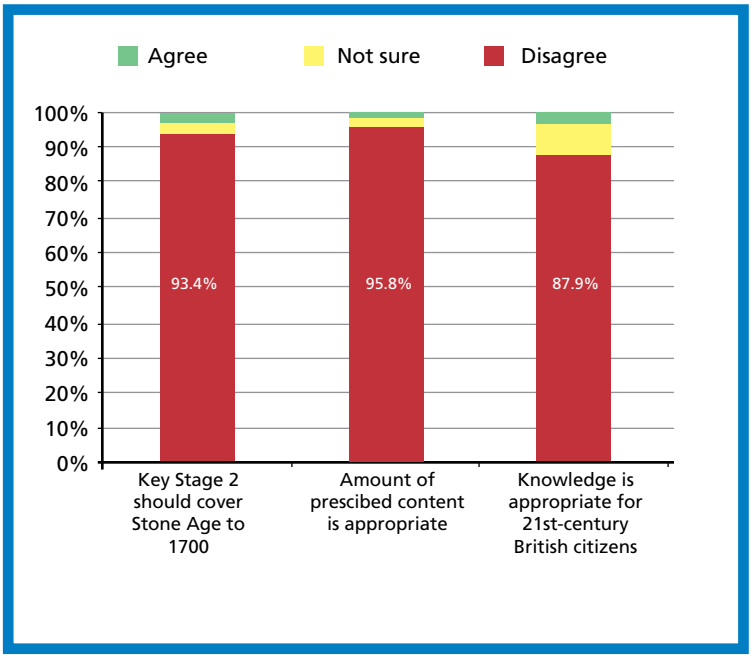
The widespread adoption of a two-year Key Stage 3

Other important trends are impossible to track in official data although their impact can be highly significant in terms of restricting young people's access to history. Any school's decision to reduce the Key Stage 3 curriculum from three years to two automatically reduces by a third the time that is allocated to history for all those young people who choose not to continue with the subject at GCSE. That those opting for the subject may gain additional time as a result cannot compensate for the fact that the entitlement of *all* young people to history education up to the age of 14 has been abandoned. While there are no official statistics related to the number or proportion of secondary schools that have reduced the length of Key Stage 3, the proportion of survey respondents in recent years whose schools have now adopted this approach is around a third, with some new signs in 2015 that a higher proportion of grammar and independent schools, previously more resistant to the trend, were also beginning to embrace it.

The extent of non-specialist teaching

The proportion of history classes taught by non-specialist teachers is another concern not officially monitored by government. While history is one of the few subjects that has continued to recruit to target at the national level, despite the growing crisis in teacher supply, there are increasing signs of regional shortages and some indications that the increase in the proportion of students taking history at GCSE has not been matched by an increase in specialist provision, leaving more Key Stage 3 classes in the hands of non-specialists.[24] In 2015 only 33% of respondents reported that all their Year 7 classes were taught by specialists. In 41% of schools up to a third of Year 7 lessons were taught by non-specialists; in another 18% this proportion was as high as two thirds, and in 8% of schools it was even higher. It is hardly surprising that that the same proportion (18%) of respondents reported

Figure 6:The extent to which survey respondents agreed with particular claims about the draft National Curriculum



that lack of specialist teachers was regarded as a 'current' or 'serious' concern. The fact that another 40% suggested that it might well become a matter of concern (driven in part by financial constraints) makes clear the need to track what is happening. It is particularly challenging for non-historians to take on this work at a time when schools are being called upon to devise and implement new systems of defining, measuring and recording progression within the subject, and when the subject colleagues on whose guidance and direction they inevitably rely are focused on developing new programmes of study for GCSE and A-level.

Alternative forms of 'assessment without levels'

The development of new assessment systems is another sphere in which the survey highlights challenges and the need to monitor what is actually happening in some detail. While the revised National Curriculum offered an opportunity to address the worst abuses of a system within which broad level descriptions intended to characterise achievement at the end of a key stage had been arbitrarily atomised or absurdly applied to individual pieces of work, survey responses revealed both the extent of teachers' uncertainty and the lack of scope that many actually enjoyed to develop more appropriate alternatives.[25] In 2014, while around two fifths of respondents were developing new approaches, adapted in some cases from the existing levels, many of them remained constrained in their planning by whole-school solutions that took little account of subject-specific differences. Others were simply awaiting the new GCSE specifications, with the intention of adapting their assessment criteria and mark-schemes for the lower years. The authority and influence that this invests in the new (and untested) GCSE specimen assessment materials is entirely inappropriate. Commercial providers are also now stepping into the breach, some of them providing itemised descriptors that risk replicating some of the worst strategies that were adopted in the early 1990s and quickly abandoned because of their distorting influence. Tracking teachers' experiences of differing approaches and providing information about

possible options can at least equip heads of department with knowledge of alternatives.

3. Focusing on the reality – rather than the rhetoric – of history teaching

A final reason for maintaining the survey is the hope that by accurately representing history teachers' views and experiences over time, the HA may be able to counter some of the more extreme views advanced about history teaching that tend to be advanced in political debate and focus instead on the reality experienced by hundreds and thousands of young people. By reminding policy makers and practitioners of the concerns expressed about history teaching at different points in time, we may be more able to prevent the unhelpful tacking from one extreme to another that tends to happen all too easily in education policy, particularly as governments change.

The HA, in launching its first survey, clearly acknowledged that there were problems when personal learning and thinking skills began not only supplanting the development of secure knowledge, but also obscuring the fundamental distinctions between the nature of knowledge in different subjects and the ways in which it is validated. While it was absolutely essential to redress that balance, it was the *teachers*' responses to the first draft of the revised curriculum in 2013 that allowed the HA to argue for the essential *combination* of both first-order (substantive) and second-order (disciplinary) concepts and for learning to be demonstrated through a variety of processes – as was ultimately required by both the 2014 curriculum and the subject criteria for the new GCSE specifications. Processes without knowledge – as Nick Gibb has recently noted are indeed 'dry and joyless' – they are in fact essentially meaningless; but Martin Booth was no less wrong in 1969 to condemn the routine listing of historical facts as a 'dreary desert'.[26] By drawing on teachers' routine classroom experiences, reflecting the real challenges that they encounter, the HA is able to argue for, and equip teachers to provide, a form of history that is genuinely responsive to the needs of young people but that continues to seek inspiration from and resonate with the discipline that remains its source and inspiration.

REFERENCES

1 New AS and A-level examinations (for students aged 16-18) were introduced for first teaching from September 2016. New GCSE specifications for public examinations at age 16 will be examined for the first time in June 2018. Details of the different specifications offered by each of three examination boards in England (AQA, OCR and Pearson) can be found at www.aqa.org.uk/; http.ocr.org.uk/ and https://qualifications.pearson.com.

2 New GCSE subject criteria require students to study history from three different eras (medieval, early modern and modern), on three different time scales (depth, period and thematic) and on three different geographical scales (local, British and European/wider world). British history should form at least 40% of this content. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/310549/history_GCSE_formatted.pdf

3 Burn, K. and Harris, R. (2014) *Historical Association Survey of History in Schools in England 2014* www.history.org.uk/secondary/resource/8584/ha-secondary-history-survey-2014

4 The 'Big Picture' can be found at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100113205508/qcda.gov.uk/5855.aspx

5 Chief Secretary to the Treasury (2003) *Every Child Matters*. Norwich: the Stationery Office (Cm 5860). Details about the Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills have been archived but are available from http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110223175304/http:/curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/personal-learning-and-thinking-skills/index.aspx

6 For details of the RSA 'Opening Minds' curriculum see www.rsaopeningminds.org.uk/about-rsa-openingminds/. For a broader discussion of the dangers of a generic approach to curriculum planning see Counsell, C. (2011) 'Disciplinary knowledge for all, the secondary history curriculum and history teachers' achievement' in *Curriculum Journal, 22* no. 2, pp.201-225.

7 Chapman, A., Counsell, C., McConnell, T. and Woolley, M. (2007) Editorial, *Teaching History, 129, Disciplined Minds Edition,* p.2.

8 Harris, R. and Haydn, T. (2012) 'What happens to a subject in a "free market" curriculum: a study of secondary school history in the United Kingdom' in *Research Papers in Education 27* no. 1, pp. 81-102; Harris, R. and Haydn, T. (2009) '"30% is not bad considering ..." Factors influencing pupil take-up of history post Key Stage 3: an exploratory enquiry' in *Teaching History*, *134*, *Local Voices Edition,* pp. 27-35.

9 In 2007 Ofsted had noted that 'in terms of examination performance, standards in history compare well with other subjects and have been improving over time. In GCSE in 2006, 66% of pupils achieved grades A*–C compared to about 62% in all subjects. At A-level, 75% of candidates achieved grades A–C compared with an average for all subjects of 71%.' Ofsted (2007) *History in the balance,* London: Ofsted, p. 11. Available at http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7089/1/History_in_the_balance_(PDF_format).pdf

10 For an explanation of the intentions behind the Labour government's sponsored academies programme see Adonis, A. (2012) *Education, Education, Education: Reforming England's Schools*, London: Biteback.

11 Ofsted (2011) *History for all* Ofsted, p. 45-46. Available at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413714/History_for_all.pdf

12 In this case, the school followed a competency-based curriculum in Year 7 and allowed students to begin on their GCSE courses in Year 9. History was taught to all students for just one hour a week in Year 8.

13 Our concern became more pronounced as more systematic analysis of the survey demonstrated a clear link between time allocation at Key Stage 3 and take-up at GCSE. See Harris, R., Downey, C. and Burn K. (2012) 'History education in comprehensive schools: using school-level data to interpret national patterns' in *Oxford Review of Education, 38,* no. 4, pp. 413-436.

14 The EBacc school performance measure is based on the proportion of students who achieve a GCSE pass at grades A*-C in what the government as defined as the 'core academic subjects': English, maths, sciences (either a double science award or two separate science subjects) a language and *either* history *or* geography. It was introduced in 2010 by the Coalition government. For details see www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc

15 The revised National Curriculum for history was published in September 2013. It is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study

16 The rapid expansion of the academies programme was launched by the Academies Act of 2010, which allowed successful schools to convert to academy status. Academy schools, which are funded directly by central government are independent of local authorities and have the freedom not only to diverge from the National Curriculum but also to set their own term dates and determine their own pay scales.

17 For details of GCSE uptake by subject see the annual statistics reports, published by Cambridge Assessment, available at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/statistical-reports/

18 DFE (2016) Progress 8 measure in 2016, 2017, and 2018 Guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure.

19 A copy of the content included in the draft curriculum and a detailed discussion of teachers' responses to the draft can be found in Harris, R. and Burn, K. (2016) 'English history teachers' views on what substantive content young people should be taught' in *Journal of Curriculum Studies 48,* (4) 518–546.

20 Byrom, J. (2013) 'Alive and… kicking? Some personal reflections on the revised National Curriculum (2014) and what we might do with it' in *Teaching History, Curriculum Evolution Supplement,* pp. 6-14.

21 Carter, A. (2015) Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training, London: DFE. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/carter-review-of-initial-teacher-training

22 See note 15 for details about the EBacc, including reference to the DFE website that explains this proposal for 2020.

23 The decline in A-level history entries (in absolute terms and as a proportion of the cohort) evident in the late 1990s was halted and reversed following the introduction of AS-levels in Curriculum 2000. As a proportion of all A-level entries, history rose from 4.9% in 2000 to 5.5% in 2002. After holding steady at around 5.7% it rose quite rapidly after 2011 to reach 6.5% in 2015. Data taken from Tables 14 and 15 in DFE (2016) '*Revised A-level and other level 3 results in England 2014/15 (SFR 03/2016).* Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/a-level-and-other-level-3-results-2014-to-2015-revised.

24 For details of current concerns about teacher supply, see House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2016) *Training new teachers: third report of session 2016-17*. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/73/73.pdf

25 For a summary of the problems associated with the misuse of National Curriculum level descriptions see Fordham, M. (2013) 'O brave new world, without those levels in't: where now for Key Stage 3 assessment in history' in *Teaching History Curriculum Evolution Supplement,* pp. 16-23.

26 Gibb, N. (2016) 'What is a good education in the 21st-century?' Speech delivered at Hild Bede College, Durham University, 5 February. Text available at www.gov.uk/government/speeches/what-is-a-good-education-in-the-21st-century; Booth, M. (1969) *History Betrayed*, Harlow: Longmans, p. 66.