

Skills Framework Consultation Report
Consultation 8th January 2007 to the 30th March 2007

The table below shows the totals number of responses received, organised according to category of respondents.

Two further responses arrived late – one from a primary school and one from ESIS. These are not included in the table below but comments have been noted.

| Category | Percentage | Amount |
|------------------------|------------|--------|
| Primary School | 42.67% | 61 |
| Secondary School | 9.09% | 13 |
| Special School | 5.59% | 8 |
| College | 4.19% | 6 |
| LEA | 20.28% | 28 |
| Teachers' organisation | 2.09% | 3 |
| Other | 16.09% | 24 |
| Total | 100% | 143 |

1. The Framework contains four sections – Developing thinking across the curriculum; Developing communication across the curriculum; Developing ICT across the curriculum; and Developing number across the curriculum.

a) To what extent do you agree that these are the appropriate skills to develop across the curriculum?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 56.64% | 81 |
| Tend to agree | 33.57% | 48 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 0.70% | 1 |
| Tend to disagree | 1.40% | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.40% | 2 |

**b) To what extent do you agree that progression is clear in:
*Developing thinking?***

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 46.85% | 67 |
| Tend to agree | 37.06% | 53 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2.80% | 4 |
| Tend to disagree | 3.50% | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.40% | 2 |

Developing communication?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 43.36% | 62 |
| Tend to agree | 37.76% | 54 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2.10% | 3 |
| Tend to disagree | 9.09% | 13 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.70% | 1 |

Developing ICT?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 39.86% | 57 |
| Tend to agree | 39.86% | 57 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2.10% | 3 |
| Tend to disagree | 9.79% | 14 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.70% | 1 |

Developing number?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 39.86% | 57 |
| Tend to agree | 41.26% | 59 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7% | 10 |
| Tend to disagree | 3.50% | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | 0.70% | 1 |

2. The introductory text to the Skills Framework explains the links between thinking and the wider Key Skills – working with others; improving own learning and performance; problem solving.

To what extent do you agree that these links are sufficiently clear?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 25.87% | 37 |
| Tend to agree | 43.36% | 62 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7.69% | 11 |
| Tend to disagree | 14.69% | 21 |
| Strongly disagree | 3.50% | 5 |

3. The Skills Framework was developed to support greater coherence in cross-curricular planning and implementation.

To what extent do you agree that it will help to achieve this?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 39.16% | 56 |
| Tend to agree | 28.67% | 41 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 12.59% | 18 |
| Tend to disagree | 13.28% | 19 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.10% | 3 |

4. The Skills Framework, together with the revised National Curriculum Orders, with their sharper focus on skills, was developed to promote a skills-based curriculum for all learners.

To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 35.66% | 51 |
| Tend to agree | 34.27% | 49 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 15.38% | 22 |
| Tend to disagree | 8.39% | 12 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.10% | 3 |

5. The Skills Framework was developed to meet the needs of all learners including those with Additional Educational Needs and the more able.

To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 34.27% | 49 |
| Tend to agree | 42.66% | 61 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 9.79% | 14 |
| Tend to disagree | 5.59% | 8 |
| Strongly disagree | 1.40% | 2 |

6. The Skills Framework was developed to address concerns expressed by employers and educational institutions regarding skills shortages.

To what extent do you agree that this will be helpful?

| | % | Number |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|
| Strongly agree | 35.66% | 51 |
| Tend to agree | 34.97% | 50 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 13.99% | 20 |
| Tend to disagree | 4.90% | 7 |
| Strongly disagree | 2.10% | 3 |

Note.

All percentages are calculated against the amount of replies received, as many people left certain questions blank, or sent in a report set around the questionnaire.

1. The Framework contains four sections – Developing thinking across the curriculum; Developing communication across the curriculum; Developing ICT across the curriculum; and Developing number across the curriculum.

a) To what extent do you agree that these are the appropriate skills to develop across the curriculum?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 40 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 17 | | 9 |
| Tend to agree | 17 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 10 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | | | | | | |
| Tend to disagree | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Strongly disagree | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

**b) To what extent do you agree that progression is clear in:
*Developing thinking?***

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 32 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 13 | | 10 |
| Tend to agree | 23 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 5 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| Tend to disagree | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | | | 1 | | | | 1 |

Developing communication?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 28 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 14 | | 9 |
| Tend to agree | 24 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 12 | 2 | 5 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | | 2 | | | | | 1 |
| Tend to disagree | 7 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | | | 1 | | | | |

Developing ICT?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 27 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 13 | | 7 |
| Tend to agree | 24 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 7 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | | 3 | | | | | |
| Tend to disagree | 7 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | | | 1 | | | | |

Developing number?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 28 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 12 | | 7 |
| Tend to agree | 23 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 14 | 2 | 8 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6 | 3 | | | | | 1 |
| Tend to disagree | 1 | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | | | 1 | | | | |

2. The introductory text to the section Developing thinking explains the links between thinking and the wider Key Skills – working with others; improving own learning and performance; problem solving.

To what extent do you agree that these links are sufficiently clear?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 17 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | | 8 |
| Tend to agree | 34 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 | | 3 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| Tend to disagree | 4 | 3 | | 1 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | | |

3. The Skills Framework was developed to support greater coherence in cross-curricular planning and implementation.

To what extent do you agree that it will help to achieve this?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 30 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 5 | | 6 |
| Tend to agree | 15 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 6 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4 | 2 | | 2 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Tend to disagree | 11 | 2 | | 1 | 6 | | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 |

4. The Skills Framework, together with the revised National Curriculum Orders, with their sharper focus on skills, was developed to promote a skills-based curriculum for all learners.

To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 28 | 6 | 4 | | 8 | | 7 |
| Tend to agree | 14 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 13 | 2 | 6 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 15 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| Tend to disagree | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 4 | | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 |

5. The Skills Framework was developed to meet the needs of all learners including those with Additional Educational Needs and the more able.

To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 31 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 4 |
| Tend to agree | 22 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 13 | 2 | 13 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 6 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 2 |
| Tend to disagree | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | |
| Strongly disagree | | | 1 | | | | 1 |

6. The Skills Framework was developed to address concerns expressed by employers and educational institutions regarding skills shortages.

To what extent do you agree that this will be helpful?

| | Primary | Secondary | Special | College | LEA | Teachers' organisation | Other |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|------------------------|-------|
| Strongly agree | 27 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 7 |
| Tend to agree | 16 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 15 | | 9 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 13 | | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 1 |
| Tend to disagree | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | | 2 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 |

Note:

4 of the other replies are reports where no quantitative data is available.

1 of the replies from an LEA section was in a report form with no quantitative data available.

Main issues

Response to consultation

This consultation was limited to a sample of 20% of primary and secondary schools along with a sample of early years settings and special schools, LEAs, teacher unions and school representative bodies, ITETs, church diocesan authorities, national bodies and agencies in Wales with an interest in education. These amounted to 1178 participants. The consultation questionnaire along with the Skills Framework was also published on the DELLS website where responses were invited.

A conference was held on March 23, 2007, attended by 28 delegates from primary, secondary and special schools, LEAs and Estyn.

The total number of responses received within the consultation period was 143, giving a 12.14% reply rate. The highest response came from primary schools who gave a positive endorsement of the Framework. The response from secondary schools was disappointingly low, though equally positive. Although 28 responses were received from LEA personnel, it is not possible to say that all LEAs responded as LEAs were not identified and some of these responses may have come from different officers within the same LEA. Several of the LEA responses made it clear that the response represented the views of a group of teachers or schools, or were the result of advisory team discussion. Similarly, the Estyn response was the summary of views expressed by HMI from across the organisation.

Question 1

The what extent do you agree that these are the appropriate skills to develop across the curriculum?

90.21% strongly agree/tend to agree

The main positive aspects identified were:

- Progression is clear across the 6 columns of the Framework
- Good that progression is developmental and not linked to age
- The whole document is clearer than previous documents on skills
- Emphasis on thinking skills is welcomed
- The Framework provides the structure and flexibility to allow individuals to learn at their own level/speed
- The skills described meet the needs of all pupils and will help prepare them for the world of work
- Framework should help whole-school planning

Concerns included:

- Terminology should be consistent across this and all other skills documentation from whatever source, particularly the name of the skills set
- Although the framework was welcomed from the perspective of AEN, there was some desire for smaller steps, particularly at the beginning of the continuum; a link with the Routes for Learning document was suggested
- Possible assessment of skills; how will the Framework relate to the proposed Y5 Skills assessments and to future skills profiles?

- Thinking progression was seen to be too detailed/daunting/to contain too many strands. Suggestion that it be simplified and detail put into further guidance with examples.
- Need to strengthen link between Developing thinking pedagogy and A4L principles – how thinking about their work can help learners to improve its quality (IOLP)
- Creative and critical thinking need enhancement. They apply equally to 'develop' and 'reflect'.
- Need to recognise the value of sustained shared thinking
- Too much academic jargon in Introduction to Developing thinking
- Some concerns about the glossaries – could be seen as patronising
- The position of ICT was questioned – does it need to be there?
- Link with NC Orders not sufficiently clear
- Positioning of icons in the Orders is not helpful. May be better to remove them altogether to prevent teachers thinking these are the **only** opportunities for skills development. Better for senior managers to use SF with teachers as the means to plan for the development of skills and to track progress in all subjects and areas of the curriculum.

Question 2

The introductory text explains the links between thinking and the wider Key Skills – working with others; improving own learning and performance; problem solving. To what extent do you agree that these links are sufficiently clear?

69.23% strongly agree/tend to agree

18.19% tend to disagree/strongly disagree

Comments came mainly from those who had concerns. These included:

- It will create confusion to have the Framework alongside Key Skills – or whatever the converged skills are eventually called. Key Skills are established and schools are familiar with the 6 elements.
- References to the current wider Key Skills should be emboldened or clarified in some other way in the Framework. Currently, in this document, their status is not clear. (Suggestion that text of SF and each subject Order should contain clear statements on the requirement to develop each of the wider KS)
- Explanation needs to be clarified in introductory text
- Statement needed in all sections of Framework and in each NC Order to make the links explicit
- Working with others and IOLP particularly weak

Question 3

The Skills Framework was developed to support greater coherence in cross-curricular planning and implementation. To what extent do you agree that it will help to achieve this?

67.83% strongly agree/tend to agree

15.38% tend to disagree/strongly disagree

Positive responses included:

- Will help teachers plan more exciting experiences with cross-curricular links
- Helps to focus on/identify areas across key stages and the NC
- Allows flexibility
- Current planning can be adapted accordingly

Concerns included:

- Change in approach will take time
- Clear pathways from KS2 to KS3 needed
- Coherence not clear
- Vast gaps between phases of learning
- Staff worries about future requirements to provide evidence – e.g. for inspection
- Opportunity lost to move straight to skills-based curriculum
- Focus needs to be on where and how pupils develop skills, not on teaching
- Vague in terms of outcomes

Question 4

The Skills Framework together with the revised NC Orders with their sharper focus on skills was developed to promote a skills-based curriculum for all learners. To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

69.93% strongly agree/tend to agree

10.49% tend to disagree/strongly disagree

Positive comments included:

- Will provide more opportunities to meet individual pupil needs across the curriculum
- Excellent to have sharper focus on skills
- Long awaited
- Allows flexibility and freedom for teachers

Concerns included:

- Will only work if more content is removed from NC – e.g. history
- Skills agenda needs to be enhanced/prioritised so that school managers take it seriously
- Clarity of terminology needed
- Does not go far enough

Question 5

The Skills Framework was developed to meet the needs of all learners including those with AEN and the more able. To what extent do you agree that this has been achieved?

76.93 strongly agree/tend to agree

6.99% tend to disagree/strongly disagree

Positive comments included:

- Excellent. Allows learner to progress at own rate
- A good step towards inclusive education
- Good opportunities for differentiation. Might help to reduce disapplication/withdrawal of pupils from some subjects if skills are taught within subjects e.g. MFL

- Provides opportunities to challenge able pupils

Concerns included:

- Needs clearer link to routes to learning for those pupils who will not move above the first stage
- Very dependent on ability of teachers
- Exemplar materials needed
- Skills emphasis might dilute entitlement with a reduction in subject knowledge (one person within conference group)
- Refs. to pupils with AEN in introductions to Developing Communication and Developing number should be included in other introductory text, for consistency.

Question 6

The Skills Framework was developed to address concerns expressed by employers and educational institutions regarding skills shortages. To what extent do you agree that the framework will be helpful?

70.63% strongly agree/tend to agree

7.00% tend to disagree/strongly disagree

Very few comments were made.

Some felt the Framework would help equip learners with transferable skills.

Working with others and Improving own learning and performance need to be highlighted.

Some felt it was too early to tell.

AEN group felt there was a need to look at skills-based awards for pupils with AEN, in English and Welsh. Many qualifications such as ASDAN are English only.

Other/general points made

Lack of reference to bilingualism. This should be included - ? in Communication., e.g. higher level skills of working in 2 languages – processing/translating etc.

Concern about the quality of the language in the Welsh medium version.

Significant concern about training issues and whether any funding is to be made available.

LEAs, in particular, felt that there were major training implications. Training has traditionally been subject-based so there will have to be a change of approach.

Significant number of requests for exemplification/guidance – posters?? – something to help in mapping opportunities across subjects. Without this, unlikely that schools will change.

Concern about lack of consistency in skills terminology across institutions.

Concern about links with current Key Skills, especially the wider Key Skills.(see Q2 and Q6 above)

Concern about Estyn response during inspections. All teams – not just HMI – need to be fully informed.

Framework is unwieldy and could be simplified. Request that Developing thinking in particular be made clearer/shorter.

A suggestion that emotional intelligence be included in the Framework.

ICT resource issues in some schools.

Need for continuity in skills profiling from Foundation Phase to Y7 and beyond.

Skills agenda needs to be reflected in examinations/qualifications system so that teachers in KS4 onwards do not return to subject-based teaching.

Skills Framework should be in schools before the NC Orders if schools are to see them as the starting point for revised approaches.

The Skills Framework should be statutory.

Major concern about Developing number expressed by DELLS personnel and partially echoed by some respondents.

Estyn and some respondents from colleges point out that Framework is almost entirely school Focused yet it purports to relate to 3-19. Additional questions should be:
What is its relationship with FE/with WBQ/Credit and Qualifications Framework/key Skills in 14-19 Learning Pathways/link between SF and Consultation on National Learning and Skills Assessment 2007: Priority Setting.

Should Framework refer to 'providers' and 'learners'? (see point above)

Document refers to PSE framework but not to CWW – and vice versa

Need to clarify **purpose** of SF. Is it a framework to promote progression in learning; a planning tool; an assessment framework; or all of these?

Further detailed comments/ suggestions for individual sections:

Thinking

- The 'valuing errors and unexpected outcomes' progression line states 'Show surprise at unexpected outcomes' where the lowest recognition of achievement for this strand should simply be 'recognise when an outcome is unexpected'.
- The 'entrepreneurial thinking' progression line begins with 'favour the familiar when presented with new ideas'. This seems to be the direct opposite to entrepreneurial thinking, so does not indicate any level of achievement.
- Some terms in glossary, particularly 'terminology for teachers' are too complex. Conversely, some terms (the definition of 'fact') appear simplistically self-evident.

Communication

- Some important skills appear too early or too late. E.g. core reading muddled. Initial reading skills – fluency and accuracy when decoding texts – left out completely

ICT

- Are the strands the wrong way round?
- Need to include when ICT can develop understanding e.g. by modelling in 2D/3D. Also role of ICT in developing work in shape and spatial awareness

Number

- Doesn't match maths as written in subject Order. Whilst cyclical nature of skills development is acknowledged, users of framework will inevitably try to follow progression as stated in the document grid, top of page 18