

The Science Education Policy Alliance (SEPA) welcomes recognition of the importance of science education in preparing young people for future study, STEM careers, and wider societal and economic progress in the Curriculum and Assessment Review Report. Our organisations call for real change as part of this reform, and highlight the need for funding and support to achieve the aims of the Francis Review and the Government response.

SEPA organisations aim to work closely with Government as these plans develop, ideally through ongoing two-way consultation with experts and the teaching community. We seek to provide expert guidance to the DfE on both the design and content of these qualifications, but also advocate for the right approach to implementation, ensuring our communities' voices are heard. We want to ensure the new qualifications are both evidence-based and achievable in the classroom. Meaningful delivery of these recommendations will require sustained and renewed investment in science education, particularly recruitment, retention, and training high-quality science teachers and technicians.

- **Curriculum content and focus:** We welcome the recognition that there is content overload in the current science Programmes of Study. The move to streamline the curriculum around core scientific ideas and explanations across all key stages is a positive and timely development. However, this will need to go beyond just removing repetition to ensure the sciences are a manageable size and give space for developing both deep understanding of the content and lasting capability in the practices and ways of thinking of the sciences. SEPA member organisations' curriculum frameworks provide a strong foundation to inform and guide this important work.
- **Progression and balance:** We endorse the report's focus on developing a balanced and coherent science curriculum across all phases, supporting continuity and sustained engagement for young people. This aligns closely with the evidence presented by SEPA member organisations. It will also be important to ensure that these changes provide space to nurture curiosity, skills development (including practical science), and engagement to support future STEM workforce needs.
- **Entitlement to triple science:** SEPA is keen to explore with DfE the implications of an entitlement to triple science, and explore the barriers to schools and within regions. Careful consideration will be needed to ensure that implementation does not overburden schools and teachers or inadvertently widen disparities. For this entitlement to have a meaningful impact, issues around timetabling, deployment of teachers, choice of qualification route, and the purpose and perception of triple science and Combined Science GCSEs must be acknowledged and addressed.

- **Practical science:** Ensuring all young people have access to high-quality hands-on practical experiences is essential for developing scientific understanding, curiosity, and transferable skills. However, unless this commitment is matched with sufficient support for teachers and technicians, resources and funding for hands-on laboratory activities and field work, it risks becoming aspirational rather than a reality in all schools and for all students.
- **Climate change and sustainability:** Climate change and sustainability education is vital for all students. By embedding this into the curriculum in a meaningful way it will help young people understand and respond to the global challenges that will shape their future.

Commenting on the publication, Chair of SEPA Dame Athene Donald DBE FRS remarked: "There are many encouraging recommendations in the review, which should help develop the scientifically-informed citizen of tomorrow, as well as future scientists and technologists. Additionally, the report seems sparse on the importance of digital mastery and handling of large data sets across the curriculum, and especially in the science subjects. We need to be sure we are educating children ready for a world where almost all roles will require these competencies, as well as simply subject knowledge. There are existing systemic challenges that must be addressed by Government including the shortage of specialist teachers and the general lack of ongoing subject-specific CPD which may make implementation difficult, particularly for the more disadvantaged."

About SEPA

SEPA brings together the Association for Science Education, Institute of Physics, Royal Society, Royal Society of Biology, and Royal Society of Chemistry, and our Chair Dame Athene Donald DBE FRS. SEPA's mission is to bring about systemic improvement by influencing policy and therefore funding and practice so that all students experience a high-quality, inclusive, accessible, and contemporary 5–19 education in the sciences that unlocks individual opportunity, supports economic growth, and benefits our society

All five organisations have responded individually to the report, and these responses are available on their websites:

[Association for Science Education](#)

[Institute of Physics](#)

[Royal Society](#)

[Royal Society of Biology](#)

[Royal Society of Chemistry](#)