



Jacquie Spatcher
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT

Dear Jacquie,

GCSE Mathematics Linked Pair Pilot

I am writing to you regarding the current evaluation of the GCSE mathematics Linked Pair Pilot. As you will know, ACME was key in securing the development of the pilot and in convening the awarding bodies to work together in developing the pilot qualification. An ACME member also sits on the pilot advisory group, which was previously run by the QCDA but is now run by the Department for Education.

ACME has some concerns regarding the evaluation process and we would like to raise these with the Department.

Firstly, ACME has been concerned for some time that there have been no meetings of the advisory group since October 2011. It would be best practice for the group to meet on a more regular basis in order to ensure that the piloting process is properly informed. I understand now that the advisory group has received the interim evaluation report to review but that no meeting has been planned to allow the group to discuss the findings. Without an opportunity for the group to have a well-informed discussion about the findings, there is a risk that the report will not be properly peer-reviewed. We believe that simply allowing individual members to respond to the report in writing is insufficient. Members of the advisory group should be given the opportunity to share their thoughts not only with the DfE staff involved in the pilot but also with the evaluation team and with other members of the advisory group. In addition, I would also like to ask the Department for Education whether ACME could be allowed to see a copy of the evaluation report. We would like to have access to the full information on the pilot in order to be in a better position to advise the DfE on the upcoming GCSE mathematics reform.

Secondly, we note that the new single GCSE mathematics, which was implemented in 2010, has not undergone any evaluation. This new single GCSE has a lot in common with the linked pair and it would be reasonable to assume that some of the issues will also be the same. ACME would therefore recommend that the new single GCSE should be evaluated alongside the linked pair in order to offer some comparability and to better inform decisions on the viability of a linked pair of GCSEs in mathematics.

The result of the evaluation of the linked pair will clearly have a significant impact on GCSE reform and ACME is in the process of preparing a briefing document on the GCSE mathematics Linked Pair. I would therefore like to request a meeting with DfE officials to discuss these important issues. I would be grateful if you could contact the ACME Secretariat (Marie-Claude Dupuis, marie-claude.dupuis@royalsociety.org) to arrange a suitable date and time.

Kind regards,

Professor Stephen Sparks FRS
Chair, Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education