

REFLECTIE OP BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS CURRICULUM FOR ALL

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The current system is not working well for all

The socio-economic gap in relation to educational attainment remains stubbornly wide, and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) make less progress than their peers. Whilst the explanations for this often lie outside the curriculum and assessment, the Review has worked to ensure that the system reflects high expectations for all and properly supports all young people's progress and achievement.

Curriculum shape and challenges with specific subjects

Specific problems with content in some curriculum areas impede the quality of teaching and learning, as well as pupil outcomes. There are tensions with curriculum breadth and depth and, consequently, these present a challenge for schools and colleges in meeting the important local needs and enrichment provision which are highly valued by young people and their parents and carers.

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Growing apart The evolution of the disadvantage gap

Emily Hunt, Maxime Perrott, Dr Eva
Jiménez and David Robinson

June 2026

Secondary school

- By the time they take their GCSEs, disadvantaged students are 17.9 months behind their peers. Much of this gap (87 per cent) can be explained by differences in the characteristics of disadvantaged students.
- By far the largest contributor to the KS4 gap is the lower prior attainment (at age 11) among disadvantaged pupils, adding 6.8 months to the gap. Prior attainment at age seven (key stage 1 [KS1]) also contributes (1.6 months) over and above KS2 attainment, reinforcing that early intervention has a 'protective' factor against gap-widening later on.

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Kwaliteitsvolle interactie met ALLE leerlingen: geen evidentie

Black, 2004; Myhill, 2006; Smith & Higgins, 2006; Smith et al., 2010; EEF, 2026

Oral language interventions

High impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence

Implementation cost ?



Evidence strength ?



Impact (months) ?



Het doorbreken van onbewuste beurtverdelingsmechanismen

Leerlingen van wie de leraar lagere verwachtingen heeft, komen minder aan het woord en krijgen minder uitdagende vragen



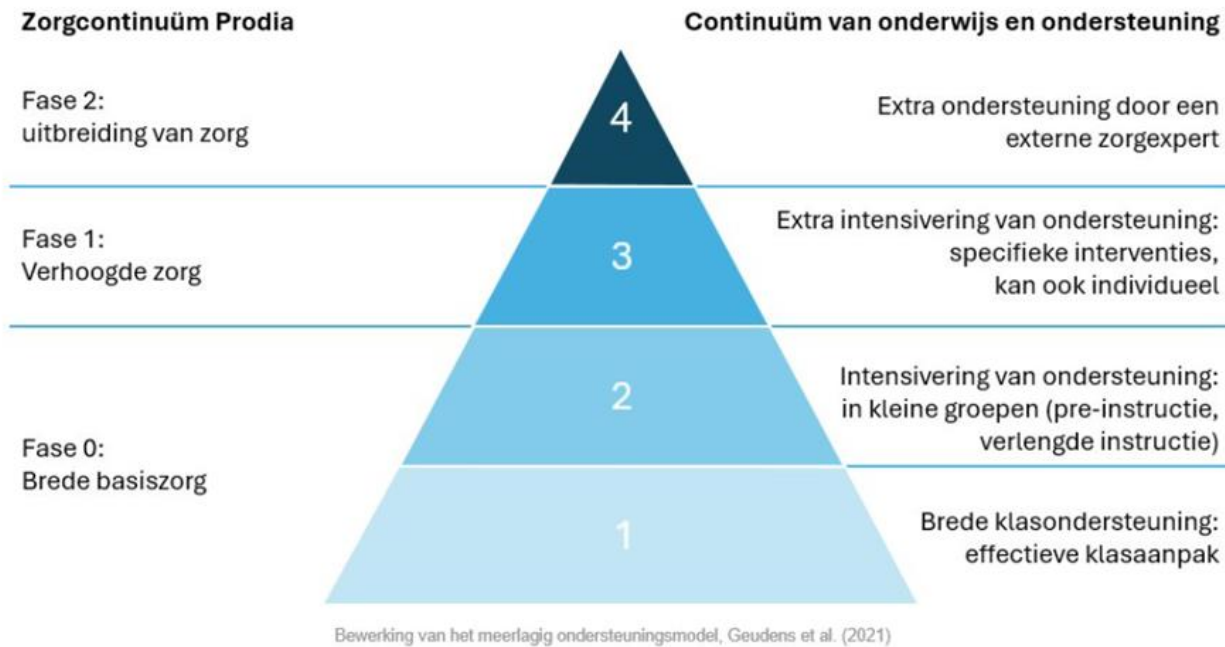
Figure 1. Visualisation of the stimulated recall interview prompted with eye-tracking recordings.

Ieder kind taalheld?

OKAN-leerkrachten protesteren aan kabinet van Demir tegen besparing op vervolgcaches

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Pedagogy trumps curriculum

“Trying to change students’ classroom experience through changes in curriculum is very difficult. A bad curriculum well taught is invariably a better experience for students than a good curriculum badly taught: pedagogy trumps curriculum. Or more precisely, pedagogy *is* curriculum, because what matters is how things are taught, rather than what is taught.”

(William, 2011, p. 13)

Een breed curriculum?

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Through responses to our Call for Evidence, our review of existing research and our public engagement and polling, the Review has heard repeated concerns that certain areas of applied knowledge and skills require more attention within the curriculum. Many areas have been raised, including those that fall beyond our [Terms of Reference](#) (such as careers education). Five areas have received the most attention from young people, parents and carers, and other stakeholders. These are the applied knowledge areas (frequently referred to as 'life skills') of financial literacy, digital literacy and media literacy; education on climate change and sustainability; and the skill of oracy. Young people also raised political knowledge frequently; this is addressed in our recommendations in [Citizenship](#).



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Een eigentijds curriculum?

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The curriculum needs to respond to social and technological change

In a world of rapid technological, environmental and social change, subject-specific knowledge remains the best investment. Being secure in core subjects such as Maths and Science will remain pivotal for young people, now and in the future, as will their understanding of human culture through the humanities, languages, and arts. However, additional knowledge and skills will be needed if we are to maximise young people's opportunities and equip them to meet challenges presented by our fast-changing world. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and trends in digital information demand heightened media literacy and critical thinking, as well as digital skills. Likewise, global challenges, both social and environmental, require attention to scientific and cultural knowledge and skills.



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Unequal Chances

Children and economic inequality

Table 1: A league table of child well-being

Rank	Country	Physical health	Mental well-being	Skills
1	Netherlands	5	1	11
2	Denmark	1	4	7
3	France	2	12	9
4	Portugal	10	3	21
5	Switzerland	8	15	6
6	Ireland	11	24	1
7	Lithuania	13	13	13
8	Spain	22	5	17
9	Romania	24	2	22
10	Hungary	29	6	14
11	Sweden	14	16	15
12	Italy	17	10	25
13	Slovenia	16	29	2
14	Finland	23	17	16
15	Croatia	34	7	4
16	Austria	20	23	8
17	Japan	3	32	12
18	Latvia	12	9	29
19	Slovakia	25	11	26
20	Iceland	6	26	27
21	Czechia	4	25	31
22	Canada	27	22	20
23	Greece	26	8	33
24	United Kingdom	21	28	19
25	Germany	15	21	34
26	Malta	19	18	35
27	Republic of Korea	30	34	3
28	Bulgaria	32	14	32
29	Estonia	28	30	24
30	Poland	18	31	30
31	Costa Rica	37	20	39
32	New Zealand	33	37	23
33	Colombia	39	27	37
34	Uruguay	35	35	38
35	Mexico	41	19	40
36	Türkiye	36	36	36
37	Chile	40	33	41
	Australia	31	n/a	18
	Belgium	7	n/a	5
	Norway	9	n/a	10
	United States	38	n/a	28

Source: See Technical appendix for full details.
 Note: Due to lack of availability of data, it was not possible to include three countries in the league table – Cyprus, Israel and Luxembourg. These countries are included in other parts of the report where data were available. In addition, it was not possible to fully rank the last four countries due to missing data on life satisfaction.

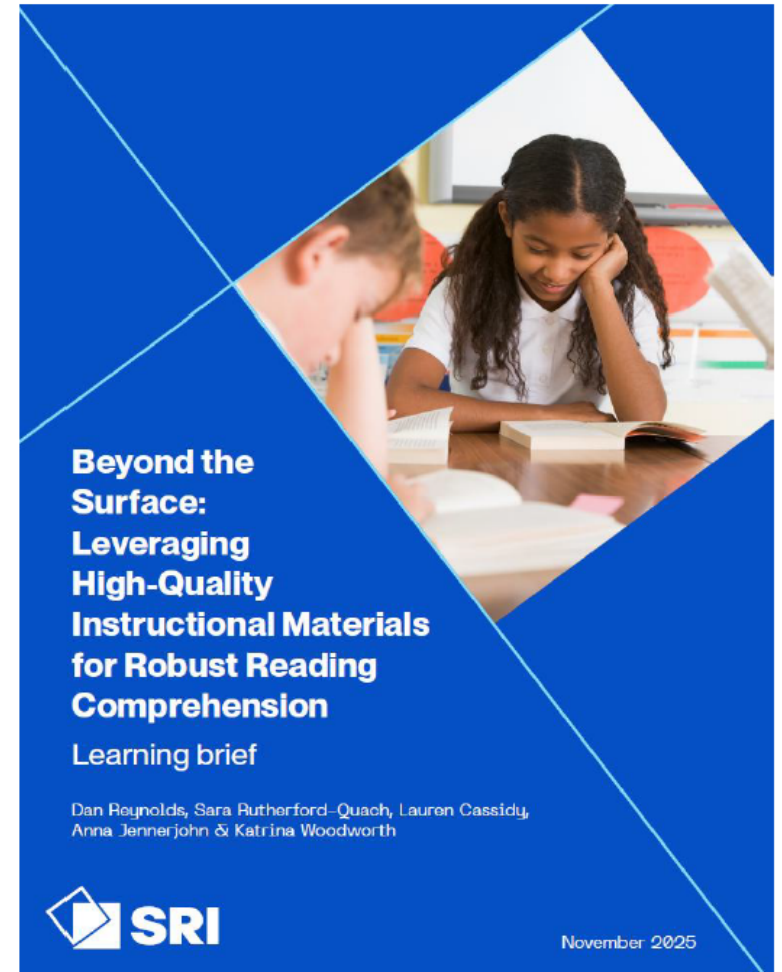
Een inclusief curriculum?

While the national curriculum already offers flexibility for teachers to integrate inclusive and diverse learning experiences, we heard that more needs to be done to ensure that all young people feel represented, to deliver on the equalities duties to support equality of opportunity, and to challenge discrimination.¹¹² Responses to our Call for Evidence identified opportunities to broaden representation in relation to protected characteristics and socio-economic background across many subjects. In Art and Design, research shows that works by minority ethnic artists are rarely used, despite the subject's potential to reflect Britain's cultural diversity and contributions to the discipline.¹¹³ In English, while the curriculum allows for a range of texts, we heard that in practice selections often lack breadth, shaped by limited availability of resources and a tendency to rely on well-established works.¹¹⁴ Likewise, we heard that in Drama and Dance, work is needed to broaden the range of creators, performers, styles and genres studied. In History, teachers called for clearer guidance to help them reflect the subject's inherent diversity without replacing core content.¹¹⁵ In Music, stakeholders noted that terminology and

Oppervlakkige interactie tijdens kennisgerichte leeslessen

- Implementatie van kennisrijk curriculum in 24 Amerikaanse scholen
- Onderzoek op basis van uitgebreide klasobservaties
- In 2/3 van de leeslessen beperkt de interactie over de tekst zich tot oppervlakkige informatie.

(Reynolds e.a., 2025)



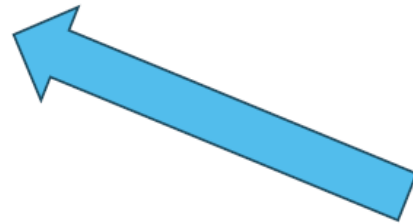
Interactie tijdens kennisgerichte leeslessen

Diepgaande interactie over de
gelezen/beluisterde tekst



“robust understanding”

“acquiring deep-level knowledge”



- Verband tekst – afbeeldingen expliciteren
- Tekststructuur herkennen
- Betekenis moeilijke woorden afleiden uit context
- Verbindingswoorden expliciet interpreteren
- Inhoud verbinden met voorkennis leerlingen en buitenschoolse, concrete voorbeelden/ervaringen

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Het laatste woord is aan de leerlingen

“.... we have heard compelling arguments, some directly from young people in our roundtables, that the curriculum needs to reflect society, support equality of opportunity, and challenge discrimination.” (p. 33)