

Response of the LMS Education Committee to the ACME Level 3 Pathways Discussion.

The LMS Education Committee has had a careful look at the ACME Level 3 Pathways Discussion Document. Overall, the committee was positive about the suggestions in the paper, and **agreed that there should be a presumption that mathematics education in some form should be compulsory to the age of 18.**

Members of the committee made several comments on the paper.

- There was a strong feeling within the committee that pupils and their teachers would need **very strong briefing and probably career advice** so that they understood the distinction between each of the pathways and how they might enhance or constrain future choices. The Committee felt that **safeguards would need to be in place** to ensure that pathway 2 was a complement to, and not a replacement for pathway 3. For example, pathway 2 should never be taught unless there was provision in place for pathway 3.
- The Committee felt that different 'packages' of maths education were appropriate, but ideally these should be differently titled, or made explicit on the face of any certification. The pathways as suggested in the ACME paper give credit at the same level for differing amounts of hours per week. The committee felt that it was important to recognise that different pathways should not carry the same credit and be certified accordingly.
- The Committee welcomed the idea of an all encompassing 14-18 structure, and acknowledged that the GCSE played a lesser role in the proposals as set out by ACME.
- The Committee recognised that it was important to consider the needs of the whole cohort of pupils, not only those with a firm aptitude for mathematics and as such, **differing levels/activities/quantities of mathematics was appropriate**. There was a concern however that the ACME paper appeared to assume that everyone would achieve level 2. For such people who did not achieve Level 2 none of the pathways seemed appropriate. A route to reach possibly the half way point of pathway 1 could be an exit point for those who do not achieve Level 2. For some of these, a transfer to a level 3 pathway might be possible at a later stage, eg at the end of year 12.
- Concerns about teacher supply were raised. It will be **critical to get a good number of well qualified teachers to implement the Pathways model**. The Committee was uncertain that there is sufficient capacity in the current system to deliver a three-pathway model with the available teaching force.
- There was some concern about how universities might react to the pathway model and how it would fit with admissions processes. It was felt likely that universities would set different pathway requirements from each other and

that thought should be given by ACME to the **target destinations for the students taking each of the pathways.**

- There was some concern raised about the risk of reform for the sake of it, (especially as the current A-level model is working and the number of students doing A-level maths and Further maths is increasing). It was commented that the current curricula had mostly good content and that different units of this curricula, combining to make different exit points in a diploma type system, would be a good alternative.
- There was strong agreement that AEA or some equivalent qualification should be continued in one form or another and that this should be made explicit.

CJB Jan 8th 2010