Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME)
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Edited note of meeting held on Thursday 1st December 2011 at the Royal Society

Present
Professor Dame Julia Higgins FRS (Chair)
Professor Anne Watson
Dr Jack Abramsky
Sybil Cock
Jennie Golding
Jo Lees
Dr Niall MacKay
Dr Roger Porkess

In attendance
Dr Rosalind Mist, Martin Smith and Marie-Claude Dupuis, ACME Secretariat
Libby Steele, Head of Education, the Royal Society
Professor Celia Hoyles, Director, National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM)
Professor Stephen Sparks FRS, Incoming ACME Chair, from 10.30 to 12.30
Stephen Rogers, Department for Education, from 11.00 to 12.30
Professor Matthew Harrison, Director of Education, Royal Academy of Engineering, from 13.15 to 14.00.

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Chair welcomed Professor Stephen Sparks FRS, incoming Chair of ACME. ACME members introduced themselves to the new Chair.

2. The Chair noted that Stephen Rogers of the Department for Education would be joining the meeting from 11.00 to 12.30 to talk about post-16 pathways in mathematics and primary mathematics. Professor Matthew Harrison would present the results of the Royal Academy of Engineering Further Education STEM Data Project to the committee after lunch.
Minutes of 3rd November: Action Points and Matters Arising

3. The minutes were approved by the Committee, with modifications to item 17, 22 and 23 for clarity purposes.

4. **Pending Actions.** Rosalind Mist noted that a member of Secretariat would be attending the launch of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Financial Education for Young People report on 12 December.

Preparation for the meeting with Stephen Rogers

5. **Update since the last ACME meeting.** Rosalind Mist and Martin Smith reported on their meetings with Stephen Rogers from the Department for Education and Dominic Cummings, special advisor to Michael Gove. They were both very interested to see ACME lead on the Post-16 Mathematics Pathways. The project had also been discussed at the November Joint Mathematical Council meeting and there was general support for ACME taking a lead on the issue.

6. **Primary mathematics.** The members had identified some issues they wished to discuss with Stephen Rogers:

Post-16 Pathways Discussion

Stephen Rogers from the Department for Education joined the meeting.

7. **Update from the Department.** Stephen Rogers updated the committee on the latest developments in 16-19 Mathematics Pathways. The Department had started to do some work on 16-19 mathematics. They were particularly interested in the ‘middle’ pathways.

8. **Link to GCSE.** The committee discussed how the possible post-16 pathways would be influenced by the linked GCSE Mathematics pilot, and vice-versa. ACME members were in agreement that pupils at GCSE needed a broad enough experience of mathematics to be able to assess the options available to them at Level 3. It would be important to make sure the content of the GCSE Mathematics is appropriately rich and complex.

9. **GCSE retakes.** The possible routes for students who don’t get a C at GCSE were discussed. Having students retake their GCSE until they get a C was not considered to be an educationally sound option by ACME. It was felt that the best option would be to have a qualification with content suitable for more mature students.

10. **Value of the qualification.** The new pathways would have to gain recognition and value from the employers and Higher and Further Education. It would be important as well to stop considering all A-levels as equal if the qualification is to have real value. In addition, the qualification would need a broader purpose than A-level mathematics in order to be able to suit the needs of a broad range of students.
11. Next Steps. The committee discussed how best to engage with stakeholders, especially awarding bodies. It was agreed that Sybil Cock, Roger Porkess, Jack Abramsky, Jennie Golding and Niall Mackay would lead on the project.

**Primary Mathematics**

12. Maths Specialist Teachers. The group discussed the future of the Mathematics Specialist Teachers programme. The government was still working on a definition of a maths specialist in a primary school.

**Presentation from Professor Matthew Harrison**

13. Further Education STEM Data Project. Professor Matthew Harrison, Director of Education at the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng), presented the results of the RAEng project on Further Education STEM Data, with a focus on mathematics and numeracy. The group discussed: how the data related to the Post-16 pathways project, the drivers in the system that promote certain qualifications, the ‘invisible’ mathematics taught in a lot of post-16 qualifications and whether there should be a specific qualification for primary mathematics teachers.

**Current Consultations**

14. DfE consultation: 16-19 Programmes of study. The committee discussed the draft response and suggested a few modifications. There was a discussion on the terminology of the ‘middle pathways’.

15. DfE consultation: 16-19 Funding Formula review. The committee discussed the response and suggested some modifications, particularly in regard to the size of the programmes that should be funded.

16. Ofsted Consultation: Initial Teacher Education Inspection Framework. Ofsted had invited ACME to attend a meeting on the consultation.

**ITE-CPD Proactive Project**

17. Next ACME proactive project: Rosalind Mist introduced the paper which was a draft proposal for the next ACME proactive project. The committee suggested a few modifications and discussed whether the main aim was too aspirational but agreed it should stay as is. Potential timing for the project was discussed, keeping in mind the Post-16 project and the National Curriculum review.

**National Curriculum review**
18. The committee discussed the possible ways forward for the National Curriculum review. It was agreed that the committee should be prepared to comment on any new developments before the Christmas holidays.

**Any other Business**

19. **Early Years Mathematics review.** Rosalind Mist noted that DfE had asked ACME for some informal feedback on the Early Years review. Anne Watson and Elizabeth Carruthers, a member of the Outer Circle, had given some feedback and offered to draft a response to the upcoming consultation.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on **12 January 2012**.