

Achieve

Spring 2016



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*

The latest news from Cambridge Assessment, the University's international exams group.



Why girls can have it all

Technology chief speaks out on gender divide.
see page 3



China looks forward

Ambassador predicts a golden era.
see page 8

Communication is key, says Cambridge

Communication must be at the heart of education, the world's largest gathering of education and skills ministers has heard.

In a speech to the Education World Forum, Saul Nassé, who leads Cambridge English Language Assessment, said that in order to take advantage of the revolution that mobile technology is bringing to our lives, teachers should be given the skills to support the learning of communication and language while children should be allowed to spend at least part of the school day using digital devices.

"It's never been easier to access communication, it's never been more important to access communication, but it's never been harder to communicate well," Saul said.

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Saul Nassé, Chief Executive of Cambridge English Language Assessment, addresses the Education World Forum.

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Neil Carmichael MP

What is education for?

I was honoured to be elected Chair of the Education Select Committee in the UK Parliament last year. Parliamentary Select Committees were first introduced in 1979 and have now become firmly established as powerful instruments for holding the government accountable and, increasingly now, sources of ideas for change. When I became Chair I also emphasised a third activity – introducing new ways of operating – which will also characterise its work.

One innovation is joint inquiries with other Select Committees in order to underline the value of holistic approaches to policy making. To this end, a new joint committee has been established between the Education Select Committee and the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee for a wide-ranging investigation into the much-discussed economic productivity gap between the UK and our competitors. Our first joint inquiry on careers advice is set to look at issues such as how schools and colleges can help match skills with the needs of the jobs market.

"I think the main purpose of my education is to get me a job," said one of the young people featured in the launch video for the Education Select Committee's wider inquiry into the Purpose and Quality of Education in England. But what do you think the purpose of education should be? As a Committee we're eager to hear your views. Should England's education system be doing more to prepare children for adult life and equip them with the skills to lead fulfilling lives?

I want to stimulate public debate and to try and get a clearer overview of the purposes of our education system. Too often policymakers of all political stripes embark on major educational reforms without appearing to engage, or acknowledge, the fundamental question of what the purpose of education should be. In this respect we have much we could learn from other countries, not least in looking at ways we might improve the quality and take-up of vocational qualifications as a route to successful careers, and I would welcome the thoughts of the international education community.

This inquiry is the starting point for the Committee to examine over the course of this Parliament whether our curriculum, qualifications, assessment and accountability systems really are fit for purpose. More information and how to submit evidence can be found on our website at www.parliament.uk.

Neil Carmichael has been the Member of Parliament for the Stroud Valleys and the Vale since 2010. He served as a member of the Education Select Committee from 2010–15 and was elected the new Chair for this Parliament in 2015.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assessment first makes welcome return

A new course for leaders in educational assessment has proved so popular it will return again in September.

'Leadership in National Assessment' was first held by the Cambridge Assessment Network last year. It is tailor-made for international education specialists who want to gain a better understanding of assessment, education and society from a global perspective.

The 2015 course brought together ministry and examining board leaders from countries as diverse as the Bahamas, Indonesia and Portugal to explore issues such as the role and use of international surveys, the role and impact of assessment on society and the day-to-day job of leading an assessment agency.



Asrijanty Asril from the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia, was one of those who attended last year's course.

The course will be held in Cambridge, England, from 19–23 September and you can register online at www.canetwork.org.uk/leadership.

Penfriends project: something to write home about



Thousands of children around the world have taken part in a project to help them improve their English reading and writing skills.

Students from schools registered with a penfriends scheme run by exam board Cambridge English Language Assessment send traditional postcards or e-postcards to partner schools around the world, with each school

also invited to upload their best postcards to the Penfriends website.

Over 15,000 such postcards have been showcased on the Cambridge English Penfriends website, while overall more than 90,000 postcards have been exchanged between 5,500 schools in 98 countries. www.cambridgeenglish.org/penfriends

Cambridge gets China education award

An international exam board has been given a major Chinese education award. Cambridge International Examinations won the International Education of Influence Award at the China Education Ceremony held by media company Sina.

The award recognises the growth of Cambridge International Examinations in China and its commitment to support schools that offer a Cambridge international education.

Lina Li, Cambridge Senior Manager in Beijing, said: "I am really glad and honoured. Cambridge International

Examinations sets a global standard for international education and is dedicated to preparing students with the knowledge and skills they need for life.

"We are looking forward to more opportunities for closer cooperation with Chinese educators, parents and students. I want to thank everyone who has supported us."

The board has recently launched several new initiatives for schools and students in China, including a China website, Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards and more training for teachers.

Admissions tests bolster Cambridge–Kazakhstan link

The links between Cambridge and Kazakhstan have been further strengthened with the provision of admissions tests for one of the country's leading universities.

The Admissions Testing Service is providing Nazarbayev University with admissions tests to help it select students on its Foundation Year Programme. All students take a mathematics test followed by a subject chosen from chemistry and biology, physics or thinking skills.

Andy Chamberlain, from Cambridge Assessment's Admissions Testing Service, said: "Admissions tests give students the chance to stand out from the crowd and show a university exactly what they can do. We've developed a test which assesses the key skills students need for success in their foundation year. Nazarbayev University's decision to start using

the tests will help them find students with the best chance of excelling in their studies."

The Admissions Testing Service is part of Cambridge Assessment and develops tests and services that are designed to enable fair access to opportunities in education and employment around the world.

Cambridge has been supporting students in Kazakhstan since 2011, when its international exam board began working with Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS), a network of schools throughout Kazakhstan for exceptional students of age 12 to 18.

Communication is key, says Cambridge

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learners, we should put communication at the centre of education. We should give teachers the skills to support the learning of communication and language. And we should let children spend at least some of their school day in the digital space they will spend their lives in."

Under the Cambridge brand, Cambridge International Examinations, Cambridge English Language Assessment and Cambridge University Press were Platinum Partners for the Education World Forum which was held in London in January. Attended by dozens of ministers from around the world, it was addressed by a range of education pioneers, policymakers and experts.

Saul's full speech can be found at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news.



Saul Nassé, Chief Executive of Cambridge English Language Assessment.

"The real power of mobile technology will only be realised by the power of highly skilled human communication. For us to unleash that human power, to empower our learners, we should put communication at the centre of education. We should give teachers the skills to support the learning of communication and language. And we should let children spend at least some of their school day in the digital space they will spend their lives in."

"Girls can have it all" – technology chief

Girls should be encouraged to believe they can do anything they want to, whether that be career, family or both, a leading figure in technology has told a conference.

Darlene Schroeder, Group Chief Technology Officer at Cambridge Assessment, spoke at a conference staged by the exam group on gender differences in education.

Darlene, who is originally from Canada, said she was brought up to believe anything is possible, with her father treating her and her two sisters in a neutral way – encouraging them to take part in activities and buying them presents that were both girl and boy focused. The career she then went on to choose was, and still is, a very male-dominated one.

"I chose Information Technology because it's an area where you have challenges and mountains to climb," she said. "But once you do that it is an amazing feeling."



Delegate and panel member Jessica Rowson from The Institute of Physics.

She told *Gender differences – the impact of secondary schooling – boys or girls, who's winning?* that she had also chosen to move to the UK and to work as a contractor to help work/life balance.

"Here I can be in numerous countries in two hours, but if I'd stayed in Canada, travel would have been much more difficult. I chose to be a contractor so I could make my own decisions, and choose a position based on the organisation, the role in the organisation and the difference I could make, and the location."

Before making the speech she had asked her teenage children how her career had impacted on them. "They said 'you were here when we needed you and for all the important things'," she said.

"My daughter said 'you've made me believe I can do anything that I want to do and have anything I want to have'."

In conclusion, Darlene said that she believed in helping young females gain the confidence to make the decisions that are right for them. "That might be a career, a family or that might be both," she said. "If they have the right support both for the culture and family and friends then they can make those decisions and feel open about it."



Darlene Schroeder, Group CTO at Cambridge Assessment, said that girls should be encouraged to believe they can do anything they want to.



The conference also heard from Tim Oates CBE (pictured above), who chaired the review of the National Curriculum in England. He said that efforts to tackle gender differences needed to make a multi-faceted approach, beginning from birth and right through to adulthood. Tim, who is Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, said that efforts to tackle boys' under achievement by teaching them differently to girls were "absolutely wrong" because the kind of learning strategies that girls use to get ahead had been proven to be effective with both sexes.



New research was unveiled at the conference, which found little evidence for a gender gap in English language learning. Dr Agnieszka Walczak (above) and Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh examined English language proficiency and found that at the global level female learners perform slightly better than male learners in tests, but this difference is negligible and mostly due to strong performance of female learners in a few countries.

New Latin GCSE passes the test

A new GCSE in Latin has been given the seal of regulatory approval.

OCR chose the eve of the Roman festival of Saturnalia to announce that the England exams regulator Ofqual had accredited its new GCSE in Latin, one of the first subjects to be accredited in the second of three waves of government reform to GCSEs and A Levels in England.

Set prose and poetry texts for the new GCSE include Livy's account of Hannibal crossing the Alps; Tacitus' portrayal of Boudicca's rebellion and extracts from Virgil's Aeneid. Topics about Roman life range from gods to roads and dinner parties to theatre, while the vocabulary list is 475 words long, from 'amor' to 'vox'.

Since 2010, the number of students taking GCSE Latin in schools in England and Wales has risen by 13 per cent and, as a language, it benefits from being one of the core subjects included in the 'EBacc' performance measure that is being used in England.

Professor Mary Beard of the University of Cambridge said it is easy to see why the subject has enduring appeal. "Learning Latin gives you direct access to some of the most impressive, challenging and influential literature the world has produced," she said.

OCR's Subject Specialist Caroline Bristow added: "With its logical, structured, and consistent grammar, learning Latin greatly boosts general literacy and, because it can be like solving puzzles, students find it really satisfying to learn."

Exam board helps top scholars

Nine high-flying students have been given £3,000 a year towards the cost of their undergraduate studies at Cambridge University.



The bursary recipients are high-flying students from across the UK's West Midlands region.

Having completed their A Levels, the students from across the UK's West Midlands region were all given bursaries by UK exam board OCR. They were presented with their awards by Simon Lebus (pictured second from left), Chairman of OCR and Group Chief Executive of OCR's parent organisation, Cambridge Assessment.

Recipients of the OCR bursaries can use the money for living or tuition costs, or a combination of both. The award fund, which arises from OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Exam Board, enables talented students in the region to make the most of their studies at the University. It is the 12th year that OCR has funded the bursary scheme and

the students will be studying a range of subjects including Natural Sciences, Medicine, Economics and Modern and Medieval Languages.

Barney Fidler (third from right), from Alcester Grammar School, is studying Natural Sciences at Christ's College. He said: "I'm hugely excited to go to the University of Cambridge and will never forget how happy I was when I received my results. However, the debt that comes with higher education was a concern for me. Having access to this financial support means I can get the most out of my time at university without the burden of debt being even greater. I am really grateful to OCR for the opportunity it has given me."

Why proof of English counts for Czech students

Students in the Czech Republic that hold recognised English qualifications are now entitled to an exemption from a secondary school leaving exam.

Cambridge English qualifications have been officially recognised by the country's Ministry of Education, meaning that students holding a qualification set at Level B1 (or above) on the Common European Framework of Reference are entitled to an exemption from the country's secondary school leaving exam, the Maturita.

The Czech Republic is the latest country to use Cambridge English qualifications to raise the standards of English language tuition within a state secondary school system. The Ministries of Education in Moldova, Romania and Lithuania already offer exemptions to Cambridge English certificate holders.



Effective and fair HE admissions examined

A new study has investigated how effective the A* at A Level is as a predictor of university performance in the UK.

Researchers Carmen Vidal Rodeiro and Nadir Zanini, of Cambridge Assessment, found that the number of A* grades an A Level student receives is a good predictor of them achieving a first or at least an upper second-class degree in both Russell and non-Russell Group universities.

The researchers also found that the A* was a good predictor of success in specific degree subjects. An A* in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths at A Level was a good predictor of success not only in science-orientated degrees but also in other degrees such as social sciences or creative arts.

'The role of the A* grade at A Level as a predictor of university performance in the UK', which was published in the *Oxford Review of Education* and presented at the AEA-Europe 2015 conference in Glasgow, also confirmed some previous studies about the divide between the performance of state and independent school students at university.

Dr Vidal Rodeiro said: "In both Russell and non-Russell Group universities, students from independent schools were less likely to achieve either a first class degree or at least an upper second class degree than students from comprehensive schools with similar prior attainment."

The researchers note how previous research has suggested two reasons for the finding: private school students may have lower incentives to perform well at university and therefore may invest more effort in social life rather than academic work; or they may have been 'coached' at school and subsequently struggle when they get to university.

The researchers say their work highlights the importance of a grading system that allows greater differentiation among students, as it can be beneficial for effective and fair higher education admissions, particularly on the most oversubscribed courses.



Researchers Nadir Zanini (left) and Carmen Vidal Rodeiro (right).



Demand for international education drives expansion

Increased demand for international curricula and a growing interest in bilingual education in many countries is driving the growth of international exam board, Cambridge International Examinations.

Last year the board opened new offices in New York, Karachi and Pretoria, and appointed its first ever representatives in Ghana, Kenya and Brazil. This year the international expansion is continuing and new staff posts have been created to bolster the nine regional teams around the world.

Janet Morris, Director, International Network (pictured front left), said: "We are seeing more and more demand for international education from parents, schools and governments worldwide. Providing more regional support will bring us closer to our schools and enhance our understanding of local education needs."

In 2015 Cambridge International Examinations introduced a March series of Cambridge IGCSE exams for students in India – an example of how the board is responding to specific regional needs. By taking exams in March, students in India are able to meet local college and admission deadlines. The popularity of the new exam series is evident by its growth – entries more than doubled in 2016 – with schools making more than 26,000 entries for a range of Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International AS Level subjects.



Principals from Cambridge schools across East and West Africa attended events in Kenya and Ghana to celebrate the announcement of a new and bigger support team.

Thumbs-up for history of a hidden continent

Teachers have been giving their verdict on a new history qualification which offers the opportunity to study pre-colonial Africa.

UK exam board OCR's reformed History A Level is being taught this year for the first time after the syllabus underwent major reform following government policy change.

"When we reformed our History A Level, we made our syllabus broader and longer – broader in geography and further back in time," said OCR's Head of History, Mike Goddard. "This will help young people to become more sophisticated global citizens with a broader understanding of the world. We kept the favourites such as the Tudors and modern European history, but introduced 10 new options including a ground-breaking new topic on pre-colonial African kingdoms."

The new topic covers the kingdoms of Kongo and Benin, and the empires of Songhay, Dahomey and Oyo, all of which had great wealth and power in the 15th century.

Julie Curtis, Head of History at The Piggott School in Berkshire, England, said she and her students were really enjoying the course.

"It is good to be teaching something really different, and something that changes your perceptions," she said.

"I feel like we are exploring the history of a hidden continent and the topic's an excellent preparation for higher education. Students taking it will really stand out when they apply for university."

"It is good to be teaching something really different, and something that changes your perceptions."



New rules for nurses

European nurses must prove English language ability to practise in the UK

Nurses and midwives from Europe will need to prove they have the required English language skills to practise in the UK, under new rules which have just come into force.

If nurses and midwives cannot provide evidence of their English language skills – such as having trained or worked in an English-speaking country – they will need to take an officially recognised English language test, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

Under current rules, medical professionals from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) are required to take a test in order to register as practitioners in the UK. Many thousands take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) each year to prove their English proficiency.

An IELTS spokesperson said: "As a secure and reliable test of the four skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking – IELTS will also be an ideal choice for nurses and midwives who want to prove their English language ability".

IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment.

Accountability – how to make it work

The accountability system in England needs re-engineering to make it work properly, a leading academic has said.

At a seminar held by the Cambridge Assessment Network, Professor Rob Coe, Director of the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University, said that while research suggested that accountability did have a positive effect on outcomes, it had a number of "dysfunctional side effects" and unintended consequences.

Calling for action, he said: "The chances are this is a re-engineering problem rather than a design problem... this is about tweaking something to get it to work in the most optimal way rather than sitting down with a piece of paper and saying what should accountability look like? But how do we get to a place where that looks like a feasible thing to do? We don't tend to do policy in that way."

In a wide-ranging speech, Prof Coe reserved particular criticism for the England schools watchdog Ofsted. He called for trainee inspectors to have to pass an exam to prove their judgements were valid, and for Ofsted to carry out regular research to make sure that the standard of inspectors' judgements was being maintained.

"It's a mystery to me what training [Ofsted inspectors] actually do," he said.



Professor Rob Coe, who said the accountability system in England needs re-engineering.

"It would be nice to have some reassurance that the people [at Ofsted] who are making these judgements actually are capable, that they make sound and valid judgements. Can we demonstrate in a convincing way that they do, by testing them? If they don't, if their accuracy isn't sufficient, or they are out of line with the standard, they shouldn't be allowed to practise."

He also criticised politicians' involvement in accountability, saying: "Politicians just can't leave it alone. It's too irresistible to them. They see this as a lever which is not only powerful, but it's one they can reach. We need to somehow get [politicians] away from [accountability]."



Amanda Spielman, Chair of England exams regulator Ofqual, was part of the audience.

He ended by calling for experimentation to solve the accountability problem and "better, harder to distort measures".

"We need to turn those dials in lots of different independent ways and work out what gets the best mixture coming out of the factory at the end," he said.

You can watch Prof Coe's talk at www.canetwork.org.uk/school-data.

Exam board gets top marks for customer service

An English language exam board has been given formal recognition of its good customer service.



Juliet Wilson, Director of Network Services at Cambridge English, receives the award from Luke Fisher from The Institute of Customer Service.

Cambridge English Language Assessment has been awarded ServiceMark accreditation by the UK professional membership body The Institute of Customer Service.

The Cambridge English Network Services team was assessed by the Institute on customer satisfaction feedback and how employees engage with customer service. The Institute report cited evidence of a great deal of hard work being carried out to raise and maintain the profile of customer service within Cambridge English.

Juliet Wilson, Director of Network Services, said: "Our customers are spread all over the world and they include students, parents, professionals, governments and universities. They all rely on Cambridge English exams for what are often life-changing opportunities. It's essential that we can respond to their concerns and enquiries as quickly as possible.

"One big advantage we have is a multilingual workforce in Cambridge and around our global network. This means we can give customers the support they need, regardless of where they are based."

Arizona aims high

An initiative which prepares high school students in an American state for college-level study is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

Arizona's 'Move on When Ready' programme, which incorporates Cambridge IGCSE, enables students to earn a recognised high school diploma and gives them the skills, knowledge and confidence to take on college study without the need for remedial classes. To date, over 26,000 students in more than 20 high schools have participated in the programme.

More than 100 students and teachers came together at an event to mark the five-year anniversary which was held in Phoenix, Arizona, by a think tank called the Center for the Future



Students and teachers celebrated five years of the 'Move on When Ready' programme.

of Arizona (CFA). The event was also attended by leading figures in the community, including representatives from business and education, as well as the State Governor, Doug Ducey and Michael O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Cambridge International Examinations, who said it was an honour to see first-hand how the programme is helping students and teachers in Arizona.

Cambridge International Examinations is seeing substantial growth in take-up in the US of its programmes, not just Cambridge IGCSEs and Cambridge International A Levels at high school level, but also its primary and lower secondary curricula, which focus on core knowledge and skills in English, maths and science.

UK university admissions: which way forward?

The UK university admissions system needs to be reconfigured in the wake of the 'decoupling' of AS Level from A Level, a Cambridge admissions tutor has told a seminar.

Richard Partington, Senior Tutor of Churchill College, University of Cambridge, has been involved in admissions for 18 years. In his talk, *Is the UK HE admissions system fit for purpose?* he argued for a new approach that would have A Level results at its heart.

Up until this year, pupils sat AS Levels in the first year of sixth form and A2s in the second, with the scores combined to form a final grade. But new AS Levels have been 'decoupled', making them standalone qualifications. Universities including Cambridge have argued the move deprives them of a key indicator of applicants' potential. But, acknowledging that it looked unlikely that decoupling would be reversed, Mr Partington suggested focusing on A Level results, which he said research had consistently shown were a very good indicator of potential.

"The A Level identifies potential consistently and well," Mr Partington told the seminar held by the Cambridge Assessment Network.

"It was created in 1951 as a university entrance exam, it's always been a university entrance exam. That's its job – in a sense we should focus on the thing that does this best, and we know A Level does."

He said the A Level provided and measured some of the key things needed for success at university: core knowledge, technical skills, 'stickability', focus, calmness, the ability to prioritise, intelligence, imagination, creativity and logic. It also had a further advantage – it created no further obstacles to applicants.

"Students are going to do A Levels anyway, you place them at the heart of admissions, you are making it as easy as you can in terms of additional barriers to entry," he said.

But he said that, for a new A Level-focused approach to work, a number of changes needed to be made. Firstly, faith in the soundness of A Level marking needed to be re-established. Recent criticisms of marking had at times "verged on the hysterical", he said, when it was "undoubtedly the case that A Level marking remains very reliable in most subjects almost all of the time".

Secondly, A Level grades ideally needed to be more granular, he said, giving admissions tutors "more grades to play with". University applicants and their teachers also needed more guidance on what to put in UCAS personal statements and references. And the system overall needed to be made much more



Richard Partington, Senior Tutor of Churchill College, University of Cambridge.

transparent, he argued, with universities required publicly to outline and justify the basis upon which admissions decisions were made.

He concluded: "This has got to be – in the interests of fair admissions, widening participation, and good outcomes at university – a system that bases its decisions on validity and at the present time the best thing that's out there is A Level."

You can watch Mr Partington's talk at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news/uk-university-admissions-which-way-forward.

Since Richard's speech was held, Cambridge University has announced that it is working with the Admissions Testing Service to develop and deliver pre-interview assessments, for undergraduate entry in 2017. More details are expected soon.

Leading learning: join the debate

The theme of "leading learning" will be explored at international conferences being held this year.

Three conferences are being staged by Cambridge International Examinations for its schools this year, rather than two, to meet the increased demand for teacher professional development.

The first conference is being held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 27 to 29 April while the others are planned for Cambridge, England, in September and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in December.

Cambridge Schools Conferences bring together principals and teachers from schools worldwide to consider common challenges in education. More details, including resources from past conferences, can be found at www.cie.org.uk/csc-2016.



A panel debate at the Cambridge Schools Conference in Dubai last year.

CONTACT US

Please feel free to phone, write or email at any time:

Bene't Steinberg or Hilary Fletcher

Public Affairs
1 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1GG

Tel: +44 (0)1223 556018 (direct)
public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk



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Photography: Adam Cash (page 2, 3, 6 and 7); iStock (page 4); Keith Heppell (page 5).
Design: H2 Associates, Cambridge
Editorial: Hilary Fletcher



England's no oddball, says exams chief

A claim that England is an "oddball" nation because its young people take GCSE exams has been rejected by the chief executive of a major international exams group.



In a speech at an education forum in Westminster, Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, stated that the employers' organisation the Confederation of British Industry, was wrong to claim that England's exam system was out of step with the rest of the world.

Mr Lebus said that a study by Cambridge Assessment's Research Division had looked at the education systems in more than 50 countries and found that more than half carry out some form of external assessment at the gateway to upper secondary education.

He said that calls to abolish the GCSE were in fact a "proxy debate about the sort of curriculum we need and the sort of learning we want for our young people in a period of change".

He ended his speech by calling for a respite from education upheaval in England. "I very much hope we can be left to bed changes in before we embark on any further wholesale curriculum reform or system re-configuration," he said.

Monkey business

Cambridge Assessment celebrated the Chinese New Year at the UK Houses of Parliament with the All Party Parliamentary China Group (APPCG). It is the year of the monkey so lots of mention was made at the event of the monkey's entrepreneurialism, enthusiasm and sociability.

Group Director of Public Affairs Bene't Steinberg is pictured standing next to Sajid Javid MP, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, who remembered past meetings both in relation to the APPCG and the launch of the Skills Commission's Guide to the Skills System, supported by UK exam board OCR. Cambridge Assessment is a sponsor of the APPCG, which is chaired by Richard Graham MP (pictured on the far right of the photo below).

Stephen McKenna of Cambridge English and Matthew Wolff of Cambridge International Examinations also attended (pictured left and right in the second image below) and helped brief the Chinese Ambassador, H.E. Liu Xiaoming (pictured in the centre of the images below) who spoke of his hopes of 2016 as the beginning of a 'golden era' for Chinese/British relations.



"It is the year of the monkey so lots of mention was made of entrepreneurialism, enthusiasm and sociability."

