

Sent by email

7 October 2024

Dear Helen Hayes,

Congratulations on your election as chair of the Education Select Committee.

We are writing to introduce you to the Royal Statistical Society and to set out some of our priorities for education. With the new government initiating a curriculum review, this is an important time for education policy. The RSS's view is that the mathematics curriculum is in urgent need of an overhaul – to ensure that statistics, data and computational skills are taught coherently within mathematics. Statistics and data analysis are also important to subjects outside of mathematics – we believe it is important that the subjects are taught more effectively across all subject areas.

This is important for two main reasons. First, the UK's ability to respond to the largest public policy issues that we face – from climate change to improving productivity in both public and private sectors – requires a workforce with a greater number of people with strong statistical and data analysis skills. Second, statistics is uniquely important to enable people to act as informed citizens – as a greater number of decisions are being informed by data it becomes more important that our school system equips everyone with a certain level of statistical literacy.


While these are points that we are sure you would expect us to make as the Royal Statistical Society, we would also point to the Royal Society's [recent report on this subject](#), which echoes many of our concerns.

We would like to share with you some briefings, [setting out our priorities for statistics and mathematical education](#). With regards to the curriculum, we welcome the recently launched review and the opportunity to improve the teaching and assessment of maths, statistics and data. The current system is not equipping students with the relevant skills to navigate and thrive in a world where careers are increasingly data focused and, in the briefing, we outline our recommendations for how this problem can be addressed.

With regards to teachers, we require a healthy workforce of qualified teachers for the problems around maths education to be addressed. Currently we face a shortage of teachers, with issues around pay, wellbeing and a lack of professional development. This can only have a negative impact on the teaching of maths, statistics and data. We call for several incentives to increase the number of qualified maths teachers in the attached briefing.

We hope you find the briefings helpful. Please let us know if you would like further information or if a member of your committee's team would like to meet to discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Sarah Cumbers
Chief Executive Officer



Dr. Andrew Garrett
President

