EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT OF THE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2013

2013 No. [XXXX]

1. 1.1 This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by The Department for Education and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Purpose of the instrument

2.1 This instrument provides for replacing the subject of Information and Communication Technology with Computing at all four key stages.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None

4. Legislative Context

4.1 The instrument amends sections 84 and 85 of the Education Act 2002 (c. 32) to replace the foundation subject of Information and Communication Technology with Computing for all four key stages. Section 84 provides for the curriculum requirements for the first, second and third key stages and section 85 makes similar provision for the fourth key stage.

4.2 The instrument is subject to the consultation process in section 96 of the Education Act 2002, which requires a consultation on the proposal and then a consultation on the draft order, and is subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

5. Territorial Extent and Application

5.1 This instrument applies to England.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

Elizabeth Truss, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Education and Childcare) has made the following statement regarding Human Rights:

In my view the provisions of the Education (Amendment of the Curriculum Requirements) (England) Order 2013 are compatible with the Convention rights.

7. Policy background

7.1 Information and Curriculum Technology is a National Curriculum subject at all four key stages. Our proposal to replace this subject with a new computing curriculum is in keeping with the views of learned bodies such as the Royal Society and BCS – The Chartered Institute for IT. The new subject title is aimed at reflecting the content included in the proposed revised programmes of study for the subject which are more ambitious and rigorous than the existing programmes of study for Information and Curriculum Technology, and place much greater emphasis on teaching the principles of computational thinking and practical programming skills.

7.2 The new computing curriculum is designed to prepare pupils to apply existing digital technologies confidently and effectively in further study and employment, and will also provide them with the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to create new digital technology products. Many organisations concerned with computing and technology, including the Royal Society, BCS -The Chartered Institute for IT, Microsoft and the Royal Academy of Engineering, support the changing of the subject to computing on the grounds that 'ICT' is perceived as carrying negative connotations of a dated and unchallenging curriculum that does not serve the needs and ambitions of pupils. These organisations argue that renaming the subject will encourage schools and teachers to develop new and fresh approaches to its teaching. They have advised that computing is a more appropriate name for the subject.

8. Consultation outcome

8.1 The Department gave notice of the proposal to associations of local authorities, bodies representing the interests of schools' governing bodies, and to organisations representing school teachers. Notice was also given to organisations connected with Information and Curriculum Technology, and to others via publication of the proposals on the Department's website.

8.2. The consultation on proposals to replace the subject of Information and Communication Technology with Computing was held from 7 February 2013 to 16 April 2013. 2,687 people responded to this question. 1019 (38%) agreed with the proposal, 958 (36%) were against and 710 (26%) were unsure. Respondents who agreed with the proposal believed that the change of subject name was necessary in order to move away from the 'bad reputation' of ICT; to rebrand and improve the status of the subject; and to signal a change in content and ambition for schools, parents and pupils.

8.3 Many key organisations concerned with ICT and computing, including the Royal Society, BCS, Microsoft and the Royal Academy of Engineering, support the proposal to change the subject name to computing, though there are differing views on the precise content of the programmes of study. Respondents who disagreed with the proposal argued that the term 'computing' implied too narrow a focus. Some respondents suggested

alternative subject names such as ‘computing and information technology (IT)’ or simply ‘IT’ to bring the subject label in line with industry terminology. Respondents who were not sure expressed similar reasons to those who disagreed with the proposal and questioned whether the proposed subject name of ‘computing’ was fully inclusive of all elements of the subject area. Some respondents agreed that change was necessary but their reticence was in relation to the proposed content of the draft programmes of study rather than the term ‘computing’

8.4 Having carefully considered the responses to this consultation, as well as a range of other relevant factors, the Government decided to proceed to make the instrument to replace Information and Curriculum Technology with computing. The Government’s view is that changing the subject name to computing will help to improve the status of the subject and, more importantly, will reflect more accurately the breadth of content included in the proposed programmes of study. The Government also agrees with the position set out in the well-regarded Royal Society 'Shut Down or Restart' report, which is that 'computing' is an appropriate overarching term to use in referring to the subject as it should be taught at school level - encompassing aspects of computer science and programming, information technology and digital skills, all of which feature in the proposed curriculum.

8.5 In line with statutory procedures which govern the national curriculum, the Secretary of State undertook a consultation on a draft of the Order necessary to effect these changes. This consultation closed on 3 June. There were 42 responses to the consultation. However, only a handful of respondents offered comments on the appropriateness of the draft order. They agreed that the proposed order appeared to implement the name change correctly.

8.6 Many respondents supported the policy to change the subject of ICT to computing, but amongst these there were a number who called for the computing programmes of study to feature greater emphasis on digital skills and information technology. The vast majority of respondents used the consultation exercise as an opportunity to set out, or reiterate, their views on the pros and cons of replacing the subject. The programmes of study are being finalised and a revised set will be available when the consultation on the draft orders is underway in due course.

9. Guidance

9.1 Under the National Curriculum requirements, the Department for Education will provide schools with a programme of study which sets out the key matters, skills and processes which should be taught to pupils. The Department consulted on draft programmes of study for all subjects of the National Curriculum including for the proposed subject of computing between 7 February and 16 April 2013. It is intended that following consultation on the draft orders, the programmes of study for computing will be available to schools along with new programmes of study for other subjects of the National Curriculum in autumn 2013. Schools will start teaching the programmes of study from September 2014.

10. Impact

10.1 No impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies is expected.

10.2 It is envisaged that the programme of study will be covering only the key matters, skills and processes so that schools can design a fuller programme of study to meet the needs of their pupils effectively, taking account of local circumstances.

10.3 An Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument.

11. Regulating small business

11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring & review

12.1 This instrument will not be subject to monitoring or review as it is envisaged that new programmes of study, attainment targets and assessment arrangements will be introduced from September 2014.

13. Contact

Phil Bannister (Tel: 0114 2742080 or email phil.bannister@education.gsi.gov.uk) or Maleck Boodoo (Tel: 0207 3408119 or email maleck.boodoo@education.gsi.gov.uk) at the Department for Education can answer any queries regarding the instrument.