

## Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

### About you

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Teacher, Mrs

## 1. The Bill's general principles

### 1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

No

### 1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)*

The current provision of the New Curriculum will not ensure fit for purpose skills, particularly in language learning for our future learners. Although there is a greater focus on Welsh, our learners also need to learn Modern Foreign Languages, if the country is to set up effective trading relationships with other countries. Currently, 2/3 of Welsh exports go to the EU and the majority of those are exported to Germany. If the new curriculum does not have more robust wording in its expectations that Welsh learners should have the skills to communicate in Welsh/ English and Modern Foreign Languages (please note the plural and see comments on unintended consequences) then this ability to look outwards will be severely diminished.

MFL learning and particularly the learning of German in schools has reduced dramatically over the years and is in danger of being wiped from children's curriculum choices. This is because the optional element of language learning has allowed pupils to seek perceived "easier" options and other languages are perceived as "easier". It has not been supported in the same way that STEM subjects have and yet it is a perfect skill to combine with STEM subjects, if Wales wants to be able to trade globally. In manufacturing it is the best choice, as well for areas such as R and D, IT, Finance and publishing ( to name but a few). The

figures on Welsh exports show that Spanish and French are not necessarily the skills that are most in demand by Welsh businesses. It has been easy for schools to "save money" by narrowing the curriculum choices of pupils and wiping German from the curriculum. Unless the New Curriculum states clearly that the offering of more than one MFL is required and desirable for our future learners, schools will simply offer the bare minimum (see comments on unintended consequences).

Also, there seems to be an over reliance on the Global Futures program to address this problem, but frankly this won't work. Most German teachers cannot access this help and support because the financial situation is so desperate in schools. They're not allowed out of their classroom to access the training and support that is offered. Basic cover costs are not paid. (As an example; In order to seek support from colleagues in other schools to set up a new German A'level in our school, I had to organise my own teaching cover and rely on the support of favours from colleagues. Nothing would be paid by the school, despite the A'level being a mandatory element of bringing in extensive funding from outside.) Schools will inevitably find ways to reduce costs, against the spirit of the New Curriculum.

The New Curriculum must make the expectation that we want multilingual learners in the future, who are equipped to communicate with many countries, including Germany, very clear. The only way to ensure this is to make the offering of more than one MFL in a secondary setting mandatory. This will be even more important in the wake of Brexit, where our businesses will be much more reliant on the relationships with trading partners to survive.

### **1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

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## **2. The Bill's implementation**

### **2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

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## **2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

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## **3. Unintended consequences**

### **3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

The unintended consequence of not making the expectation clear that more than one MFL should be on the curriculum is that the linguistic abilities of future generations will be narrowed to one single MFL (probably Spanish, where we spend our money as tourists in the Spanish economy, but do not make money as a trading nation from them). As MFL learning at GCSE is much lower than in England anyway, we will have a generation, where the vast majority of people are bilingual in Welsh and English, but cannot communicate outside of Wales's borders. This is a dangerous place to be in the current economic climate.

Also, the primary agenda for MFL is too vague. It currently allows schools to offer an "other language". Many primary schools are intending to offer "sign language" to meet this criteria. A whole generation of people being able to communicate through sign language is noble, but is hardly in the spirit of building learners who can contribute to a robust economy! Similarly, many schools are planning to offer this provision by offering ad hoc sessions with 6th formers. Again, if Wales is serious about building linguistic competences from primary school age upwards, it must use specialists and ensure that it makes those demands clear on schools. The principle of starting learners on one MFL besides Welsh at primary level and then expanding to a second MFL at secondary level is a good one, but only if the teaching is coherent and serious in its aims to build linguistic competences. Currently, this will not happen and schools will pay lip service to the provision. Again, more robust wording and expectations are needed.

## 4. Financial implications

**4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

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## 5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

**5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)*

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## 6. Other considerations

**6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?**

*(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)*

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