

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1000
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/04315/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of the Petitions Committee.
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6 August 2020

Dear Janet

Thank you for your correspondence dated 27 July relating to Petition P-05-1000 Make it compulsory for Black and POC UK histories to be taught in the Welsh education curriculum.

The recent events in America have reminded us all of the importance of an understanding and appreciation of all aspects of our history and the struggle faced by black communities in Wales, the UK and across the world.

It is important for learning to be inclusive and to draw on the experiences, perspectives and cultural heritage of contemporary Wales. The history of Wales is diverse, and comprises a variety of diverse and rich histories of the many communities, races, religions, and individuals in our country. Black history is a part of Welsh history.

As you are aware from 2022 there will be a new [Curriculum for Wales](#). In the new curriculum, learners will explore the local, national and global contexts to all aspects of learning, and will learn how to make connections and develop understanding within a diverse society. Central to the vision of the Curriculum for Wales is allowing teachers the flexibility to decide which topics, subjects and resources are best suited to their learners

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales framework there are four purposes which have been central to every decision made about the new curriculum. These four purposes, specifically supporting learners to become “ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World”, are a part of the statutory framework for the Curriculum for Wales, and present significant opportunities for schools to develop curriculums incorporating black history.

The Curriculum for Wales framework gives every school in Wales the opportunity to design their own curriculum. It encourages schools to build their own vision for their learners within

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

the context of the four purposes and the learning defined at a national level. Whilst the new curriculum guidance does not include a long list of individual topics, it does set out what schools should take into account in designing their curriculum and the broad expectations for learners.

This framework includes mandatory elements, including statements of What Matters for each Area of Learning and Experiences. One of these statements of What Matters for Humanities is “Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs”. Through this, learners will explore the varied beliefs, values, traditions and ethics that underpin and shape human society, and develop an understanding of the diversity of different societies.

Humanities includes concepts such as citizenship, authority and governance, interconnectedness, justice and equality, enterprise, rights, and social action and responsibility.

Learning about human rights, equity, and diversity are cross-cutting themes which should be embedded within learning across the curriculum. The guidance on [cross-cutting themes](#) for the curriculum also explains how the local, national and international contexts provide key perspectives for learners and are of particular importance in supporting learners to realise the four purposes. Linking the local, national and international includes opportunities like examining Wales’s role in the slave trade and our contribution to building the empire. It means learners examine different perspectives on the Welsh experience

The [‘Designing Your Curriculum’](#) guidance, published to support schools in implementing the Curriculum for Wales framework, explains that Wales, like any other society, is not a uniform entity, but encompasses a range of values, perspectives, cultures and histories that are inclusive of everyone who lives in Wales. In contemplating different perspectives, and different ethnic and cultural thinking in Wales, learners will appreciate the extent to which they are part of a wider international community, fostering a sense of belonging that can encourage them to contribute positively to their communities.

The Design Your Curriculum guidance also explicitly states that learning should “Focus on the experiences of ordinary people, including those who have traditionally been underrepresented.”

On 21 July, I was pleased to announce that Professor Charlotte Williams OBE, a leading academic who has written about ethnic diversity in Wales, has agreed to chair a Communities, Contributions and Cynefin: BAME Experiences and the New Curriculum Working Group.

The work of the Group will be closely aligned to the Estyn review of Welsh history will be carried out in phases. The first phase will focus on a review of existing resources available to teachers and good practice, and the second phase will focus on a review of professional learning related to BAME communities. This phased approach will allow us to feed into teaching for the coming academic year and before the Group is hopefully in a position to present key recommendations to me by the end of December.

I have received a significant amount of correspondence in this area, which also raises the need to address the under-representation of BAME communities in the education workforce is an issue that we are actively seeking to address. We have set up a project to specifically look at the issues around recruitment to Initial Teacher Education programmes and into the

workforce more generally. We have commissioned the Education Workforce Council to undertake a review of the data that is available to support our development of policy. We are also engaging with relevant stakeholders such as the Race and Faith Forum and the Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team. Our engagement with other stakeholders will increase as the project progresses. We will use the data and the intelligence provided by stakeholders to develop policies to strategically address the shortage of BAME representatives in the education workforce.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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