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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/05197/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair
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14 September 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 4 September relating to Petition P-05-1022 - *To Follow the Scottish Parliament and have LGBTQ history taught in all Welsh Schools.*

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.

As you will be aware, in January 2020 the first iteration of the new Curriculum for Wales was launched. The curriculum will be available for first teaching in September 2022. At the heart of the new curriculum are the four purposes, which set out the aspirations for all children and young people. These four purposes, which specifically support learners to become “ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World”, are a part of the statutory framework for the Curriculum for Wales. Instilling learners with passion and pride in themselves, their communities and their country is a principal object of the four purposes. 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, and the framework encourages schools to build their own vision for their learners within 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.

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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 Curriculum and Assessment Bill proposes that every school's curriculum must enable learners to progress towards these purposes. The Curriculum for Wales guidance forms part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework (Framework). The Framework is determined nationally and includes both the curriculum requirements, which will be set out in legislation, and a range of supporting guidance.

The Curriculum for Wales framework includes mandatory elements, including statements of What Matters for each Area of Learning and Experiences (AoLE). One of the statements of What Matters for Humanities, which includes History, is "Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs". Learners will explore how places, communities and societies evolve over time, experiencing continuity and change that has affected, and continues to affect, their own and other people's lives. This will help learners build an understanding of the causes, consequences and significance of the changes and interrelationships that have shaped societies at different levels of development.

Another statement of What Matters for Humanities is "informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action". This aspect of the Area encourages learners to explore concepts including citizenship, authority and governance, interconnectedness, justice and equality, enterprise, rights and social action and responsibility.

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

Learners should be grounded in an understanding of the identities, landscapes and histories that come together to form their *cynefin*. This will not only allow them to develop a strong sense of their own identity and well-being, but to develop an understanding of others' identities and make connections with people, places and histories elsewhere in Wales and across the world. The guidance explicitly states the importance of learning being inclusive and drawing on the experiences, perspectives and cultural heritage of contemporary Wales.

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 explains how schools and practitioners should have a methodology for designing a curriculum which incorporates, where appropriate, opportunities which allow learners to consider local, national and international contexts and to develop understanding of relationships and sexuality education, human rights education and diversity, and careers and work-related experiences.

Safeguarding all our young people and supporting them to navigate the complex area of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is vital. This is why we are making RSE a statutory requirement in the new curriculum. Within the new curriculum, inclusivity is a key principle that underpins our vision for RSE. Learners will also be given a broader understanding of sexuality that is fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ learners which includes wider issues such as rights, equity and respecting diversity that draws on all Areas of learning and experience, including Humanities.

Earlier this year I established a RSE Working Group to agree the topics to be covered by schools and to co-construct the detailed guidance to support learning. The role of the group

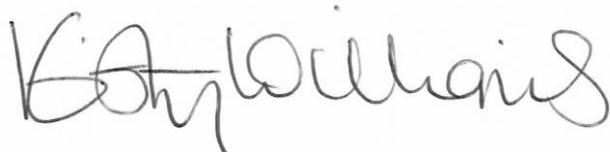
is to engage in the development of RSE guidance, and to develop a shared understanding of the new curriculum.

One of the core themes which the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicities Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group will be exploring is the principle of Cynefin. Cynefin is a principle within the Curriculum for Wales framework and its guidance. It is defined as our place of belonging, but not just the physical place, it includes the different histories, cultures, social aspects, language, and community. Cynefin is described as *“The place where we feel we belong, where the people and landscape around us are familiar, and the sights and sounds are reassuringly recognisable. Though often translated as ‘habitat’, cynefin is not just a place in a physical or geographical sense: it is the historic, cultural and social place which has shaped and continues to shape the community which inhabits it.”*

This will be different for all individuals, and naturally must extend to LGBTQ+ history, as it will be essential for all learners, as it provides an opportunity that learning in the Curriculum for Wales is meaningful and recognisable, and helps cultivate in learners a sense of place and sense of belonging. 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.

In order to deliver the new curriculum effectively and realise our shared vision, it is vital that our schools have the support, understanding and resources they need. We will therefore be working with practitioners to commission new resources which will refer to key events and topics in the histories of Wales and the world. This work will also be informed by the outcome of the forthcoming Estyn review of Welsh history, which will take full account of Welsh and wider history, identity and culture.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

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