

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

Organisation: North Wales Regional Response to include GwE and the 6 Local Authorities

1. The Bill's general principles

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

Yes

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)

We welcome this new legislation and the principles and aspects within. We recognise fully that the current curriculum is outdated and based on a model is no longer fit for purpose. The high degree of prescription in the current curriculum has tended to create a culture where creativity has diminished and this new curriculum, with the Four Purposes central to all teaching and learning, offers the teaching profession an opportunity to have greater freedom and flexibility to plan and design a curriculum that meet the needs of all learners within their communities.

The current Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for a wide range of broader skills including adaptability, creativity and the importance of developing communication skills through the use of digital technology; the new curriculum offers a very real opportunity for all children and young people to make connections in their learning across the Areas of Learning and Experience and we are pleased to see that the legislation gives equal weighting to all six Areas. Within the new curriculum, our children and young people can develop as ambitious and capable learners, able to contribute fully to society and adapt to the ever-changing demands of the workplace in the 21st century. As seen during the recent months, the priority of Health and Wellbeing is vital, not just as an individual Area of Learning and Experience but as a whole school approach.

We especially welcome and recognise the emphasis this Bill places on ensuring that the teaching and learning of Welsh within the new curriculum. Developing learners' ability to develop linguistic skills and engage with the Welsh language across one continuum of language learning is an essential aspect of Welsh Government's vision and commitment to reach a million speakers by 2050. It is essential that we work in partnership with all schools to ensure that there is a consistent approach that aligns with regional and Local Authority strategies and policies to include Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and language policies.

We also welcome that within the new curriculum, schools in Wales will have the opportunity to develop their curriculum to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to understand and recognise Wales' heritage and culture on a local and national level.

We also acknowledge the Curriculum for Wales framework, created through a continuous process of co-construction, offers greater opportunity for learners to see their learning as a continuum from the ages of three to sixteen. We recognise the effective work that many schools are already undertaking collaboratively across their local networks to enhance learning across the continuum, and in particular at key transition points. We support the role of assessment to inform learning and principles of progression in the new curriculum.

The legislation for the new Curriculum sits within an ambitious programme of reform within education in Wales. We actively promote the integration of all aspects of this wider reform, including Welsh in Education and the Additional Learning Needs Transformational Bill, which we believe should be considered to fully achieve success for all learners.

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)

We agree that the legislation will support the achievement of the Bill and is both able to support the consistency and equity of all learners whilst supporting the principle of subsidiarity, enabling schools the professional space to design a curriculum that is authentic, relevant and responsive to the locality.

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)

Within the implementation of this new curriculum, there are factors to consider which we detail below.

Professional Learning is critical to the new curriculum and to support the profession to understand and develop the skills and knowledge necessary with the Curriculum for Wales. For example, as stated previously, opportunities for creativity and curriculum design have been limited within the current curriculum and it is imperative that time and resource are in place to develop skills. Professional Learning should be high quality and based on a sound evidence base. It should support the workforce to develop a collaborative approach and offer opportunities to reflect both on current and future practice. Professional learning which is classroom focused can improve the quality of teaching and learning for current cohorts of learners and not just specifically for the new curriculum.

In light of the recent Covid-19 pandemic, it is also important to reflect on the accessibility of Professional Learning and ensure that the workforce is able to engage with a quality Professional Learning offer through a blend of approaches including a range of digital technologies.

Supporting the education workforce is a priority and we look to continue to work in partnership across North Wales to support all our schools. We also welcome opportunities to work with partners across the whole of Wales and beyond where appropriate and by ensuring clear roles and responsibilities, schools and learners will benefit. By taking a strong collaborative approach, we can support school leaders to develop professional learning for all their staff and inform strategic decisions for example, developing leadership at all levels, identifying and developing the Welsh language needs of the workforce.

The Explanatory Memorandum makes reference to the development of new evaluation and improvement arrangements which will be imperative to ensure this culture change and all reforms can be realised.

In line with this, it is also vital that the nature and reform of qualifications takes place at pace and that recognise and reflect wider measures of performance for successful learners in schools across Wales. It is also imperative that these changes are communicated clearly

with rationale within the wider society and inform public perception so as not to hinder employability and further education possibilities for the young people in Wales.

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)

The Bill does acknowledge these barriers, however, in light of Covid-19, it is also important that schools and the wider system are given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of this pandemic so appropriate support can be identified.

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)

Communication at all levels and with all stakeholders is vital for the new curriculum and the wider reforms to ensure that the rationale behind the changes are clear and supports understanding of the wider public perception.

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)

Appropriate funding will be imperative to support schools to realise the new curriculum and in particular supporting the commitment of professional learning of all the workforce. This Bill should ensure world class evidence-based research will be an innate element of continuous professional learning.

Working closely with partners, our North Wales approach aims to support schools to work collaboratively where possible to support the changes and ensure that effective practice can be shared.

Commitment to funding should be ensured to develop all resources bilingually, as well as complimenting the 2050 Welsh Language agenda.

To ensure the continuation of digital learning, we believe the Hwb grant project should continue to lead the way in providing sector wide access to software and hardware that will facilitate and support our digital competencies framework.

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)

It is important and appropriate that the Bill acknowledges the need for Welsh Ministers to ensure that the curriculum can respond to the changing society and world around us. As such, amendments can then be made that enable the new curriculum to remain relevant to our learners and that are in keeping with the overarching principles and purposes of the curriculum.

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)

-

