

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/05154/14

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

12 November 2014

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 30th September on behalf of the Petitions Committee seeking my views on the information provided in relation to the suitability of Noah's Ark Zoo Farm for visits from Welsh schools.

I do not condone the teaching of Creationism and the Curriculum should not be used as a vehicle or seen as a route for its promotion.

Whilst it falls within the remit of Local Authorities and Consortia, working in partnership with schools, to determine appropriate venues for educational visits and to ensure they are investigated and assessed appropriately, the selection and use of such venues is a responsibility I expect them to take very seriously.

Once a venue has been determined, headteachers and members of staff must ensure that a comprehensive Health and Safety risk assessment is carried out for each school visit. The Outdoor Education Adviser Panel has produced revised national guidance for schools and governing bodies on school trips which can be found at the following link.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/healthandsafety/educationalvisits/?skip=1&lang=en>

The National Curriculum in Wales is broad and balanced the programmes of study that have been developed for each statutory national curriculum subject, from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, identify and map the subject contexts that are most appropriate for development.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Correspondence.Huw.Lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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This is to ensure that we aim to reduce prescription in the curriculum and give control and responsibility to schools and learners. Schools in planning their curriculum have a clear responsibility to organise and deliver the curriculum in the way that best suits their circumstances and needs. They can choose to retain their existing approach to curriculum organisation whilst adopting a new approach to delivery or develop more imaginative and innovative ways of delivering the statutory curriculum. Such changes in approach might include using a series of whole days – in or out of school – to focus on a particular topic.

However I do not endorse the teaching of creationism as a factual or scientific explanation of the origin of life. The curriculum is designed to be 'broad and balanced' to give learners the opportunity to interface with the world around them through the processes of gathering and analysing evidence, robust debate and critical thinking.



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