

Number: WG 36143



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum

Proposals for a new legislative framework

Date of issue: 28 January 2019
Action required: Responses by 25 March 2019

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum - Proposals for a new legislative framework

Overview

We want views on proposals to legislate for the implementation of the new curriculum arrangements. This consultation focuses on the legislative framework for the curriculum. The detailed content of the new curriculum will be published in April 2019 for all schools to feedback and refine.

How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be e-mailed/posted to the address below to arrive by **25 March 2019** at the latest.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

[Successful Futures](#): Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales (2015)

[Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#) (2017)

The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/consultations

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Ministerial Foreword

The publication of this White Paper is a significant landmark on our education reform journey.

Across the country, we are all contributing to our national mission of raising standards, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system that is a source of national pride and enjoys public confidence.

I know that getting it right for all our children and young people is what drives the teaching profession in Wales. We don't write off anyone, or anywhere. To keep raising standards for all and expanding opportunities, we need to further empower schools and teachers by moving away from a narrow, inflexible and crowded curriculum.

The legislative proposals I am bringing forward reaffirms the principles, freedoms and structures for our new curriculum and assessment arrangements. These are the foundations for our ambitious and necessary education reforms.

The proposed changes are ambitious because we are committed to a system that works for all, partnering equity with excellence. They are necessary because reforming education and developing informed and engaged citizens is essential for economic prosperity, social cohesion and well-being.

Improving both the skills and knowledge of our young people gives them, their families and communities the tools to live fulfilling lives, to change society, to create and find great jobs, and to contribute as citizens of Wales and the world. Building better futures depends on expanding educational opportunities for all.

Reformers and radicals throughout history – both here and internationally – have known that it is through education that we progress as citizens, communities and countries.

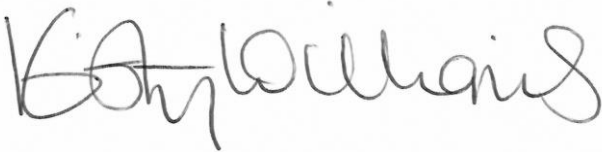
On entering public life, Abraham Lincoln said that that education *was “the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged”*. Ahead of those challenging times, he proclaimed that every citizen should receive an education so that they were *“enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of free institutions”*.

Developing our new curriculum has, and will continue to be, a collective endeavour across Wales, with support and guidance from international experts.

It is a shift in our education culture, in our way of doing things. We are still a relatively young democracy, still able to shape new and exciting ideas and opportunities. Our education reforms, and these legislative proposals, are fundamental to citizenship, to learning, and to future life and work in Wales.

Our education reform journey must continue, and we will move forward together. Our approach, as represented by this White Paper, is that we raise standards for all and ensure that each and every child in every single school is supported to be ambitious and capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.

Whilst the formal full roll-out of these reforms across the whole of the education system for 3-16 year olds won't be complete until 2026 I firmly believe the principles behind the changes can be adopted by all schools in advance of this. Many schools are already focussing delivery for their learners around the four purposes. Support for practitioners is a key part of moving this forward and I would urge all teachers, head teachers and governing bodies to continue to engage with this exciting process of change.

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

Kirsty Williams AM

Minister for Education

1. Introduction

- 1.1 *Our National Mission* is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap, and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence. The new curriculum, made in Wales but shaped by the best from around the world, is fundamental to achieving that mission.
- 1.2 The next few years are crucial in achieving ambitions which are shared – and demanded - across Wales. We need to ensure that our young people are able to lead fulfilling personal, civic and professional lives in our modern democracy.
- 1.3 The approach is being developed and delivered in partnership with schools and teachers across the country, with digital competency playing a significant role in this. Expectations are high, as they must be, but underpinned by a shared commitment to learn from each other, to share experiences and expertise, as we move forward in this collaborative innovation.
- 1.4 Since 2016, the Welsh Government has worked collaboratively with a network of Pioneer Schools and experts to shape the detailed design and development of a new curriculum which better reflects wider national and societal needs, including those of learners, communities and the economy. The network has also included Consortia, Estyn, Local Authorities, Higher and Further Education representatives and wider stakeholders in:

Developing transformational curriculum and assessment arrangements will be crucial to realising our vision for children and young people in Wales. They will have higher standards of literacy and numeracy, become more digitally and bilingually competent, and evolve into enterprising, creative and critical thinkers. Our new curriculum will have equity and excellence at its core and help develop our young people as confident, capable and caring citizens.¹
- 1.5 The new curriculum will clearly articulate its purpose for learners and provide a framework for schools and teachers to apply their expertise and creativity as to how it is delivered.
- 1.6 To work effectively alongside the new curriculum, there is a need to establish a coherent and consistent approach to assessment. We are refocusing assessment around the individual learner and enabling everyone to maximise their potential – and we are redefining how schools are evaluated and supported to improve their practice.
- 1.7 The new curriculum will be published for feedback in April 2019 and we will be exploring the professional learning and support required for all practitioners,

¹ <https://beta.gov.wales/our-national-mission-0>

maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings, working collaboratively with a network of Pioneer Schools and educational experts.

- 1.8 Alongside this, we also need to update the legislative framework so that we can implement the new curriculum and assessment arrangements.
- 1.9 This White Paper sets out the legislative proposals and explains where we will be relying on the existing legislative framework and where we will be making new subordinate legislation to support our policy intentions.
- 1.10 In essence, the new legislation will reaffirm the principle of a new curriculum for Wales and define it through a broad set of duties which provide the freedom for practitioners to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners.
- 1.11 The White Paper consultation seeks views on the proposals for legislation on the structure of the new curriculum framework, with the four purposes at its core, the six Areas of Learning and Experiences (AoLEs), the Welsh Language, the English Language, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Religious Education. It will also explain our wider intentions for learner assessment and evaluation of schools.
- 1.12 The White Paper focuses on the legislative proposals necessary to implement the new curriculum. The new curriculum and the assessment arrangements will be made available for feedback in April 2019, building on extensive engagement and collaboration with pioneer schools and practitioners.
- 1.13 All schools will have access to the final curriculum from 2020, allowing them to take preparatory steps in readiness for statutory roll-out in September 2022 (i.e. the start of the phasing in of the compulsory teaching of the new curriculum).

Diagram 1: The role of legislation in curriculum reform

Education in Wales: Our national mission
Legislation's role as one of the enablers for the new curriculum

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2. Case for change

2.1 Comprehensive curriculum reform is necessary for our schools and young people to reach even higher standards, and to meet the following challenges and opportunities:

- Evidence from the Programme for International Student Assessment surveys (PISA), the relative performance of children and young people in Wales in national qualifications, and evaluations in Estyn reports which demonstrated that levels of achievement are not as high as they could be;
- The high degree of prescription in the national curriculum, allied to the accountability mechanisms, which tended to create a culture within which the creative role of the school has become diminished, a narrowing of learning and knowledge, and the professional contribution of the workforce underdeveloped;
- The essential features of a curriculum devised in 1988, by the then Westminster Government, is out of time with recent and future shifts in technology and development of our society and economy; and
- Assessment arrangements are not making the contribution they should to improving learning.

- 2.2 Since 2016 the Welsh Government has been working with a network of Pioneer Schools, Higher and Further Education representatives, disciplinary and other experts and wider stakeholders to develop a new curriculum which better reflects wider national and societal needs, including those of learners, communities and the economy.
- 2.3 The White Paper represents a next stage in this journey of developing a new curriculum together. The new curriculum is part of our education reform to raise standards, close the attainment gap and create an education system which is a source of national pride and confidence.

Key steps in the development of the new curriculum so far

Successful Futures

2.4 In February 2015, Professor Graham Donaldson published the outcome of his independent and fundamental review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. The report, *Successful Futures - Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*² made a series of interrelated recommendations to Welsh Government on how education should work in Wales.

2.5 The recommendations covered:

- Curriculum purpose and definition;
- Curriculum structure – breadth and progression steps;
- Curriculum choice;
- Learner assessment arrangements;
- Teacher and leadership capacity;
- National and local ownership;
- Legislation; and
- School accountability.

Other independent reports

2.6 As well as undertaking its own research, the Independent Review also considered a wealth of other evidence within Wales, including Estyn reports, Welsh Government policy documents (in some cases with associated evaluation reports) and, importantly,

² <https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>

the reports of a number of independent reviews commissioned by the Welsh Government including:

- The ICT Steering Group's report to the Welsh Government³;
- The Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4⁴;
- The final report of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig, history and the story of Wales review group⁵;
- The report of the Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group⁶;
- The report on Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales⁷;
- The report Culture and Poverty: Harnessing the power of the arts, culture and heritage to promote social justice in Wales⁸; and
- The Review of Qualifications for 14 to 19-year-olds in Wales⁹;

The Great Debate on Education

2.7 The recommendations of *Successful Futures* were tested through the Great Debate¹⁰ on Education between March and May 2015. The Great Debate confirmed there was very strong support from the majority of respondents for the four central purposes for the curriculum outlined in *Successful Futures*. The majority of respondents broadly welcomed the proposals for the curriculum structure. There was widespread support for the role of literacy, numeracy and digital competence within the curriculum, and the emphasis on providing opportunities to develop these across AoLEs. In relation to assessment, there was a strong perception that the existing system was not fit for purpose, and that the emphasis of the proposals on assessment for learning was welcome. Respondents also sought clarification and reassurance regarding how these would work in practice, including issues such as quality assurance.

A Curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life

2.8 *A Curriculum for Wales – a curriculum for life* was published in October 2015 by the previous Welsh Government and outlined the proposed steps for achieving the recommendations set out in *Successful Futures*.

³ <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/131003-ict-steering-group-report-en.pdf>

⁴ [One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 \(2013\)](#)

⁵ [One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 \(2013\)](#)

⁶ <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/physical-literacy-an-all-wales-approach-to-increasing-levels-of-physical-activity-for-children-and-young-people-schools-and-physical-activity-task-and-finish-group.pdf>

⁷ <https://beta.gov.wales/review-arts-education-final-report>

⁸ <https://gov.wales/topics/culture-tourism-sport/tackling-poverty-through-culture/culture-and-poverty-harnessing-the-power-of-the-arts-culture-and-heritage-to-promote-social-justice-in-wales/?lang=en>

⁹ <https://beta.gov.wales/review-qualifications-14-19-year-olds-final-report-and-recommendations>

¹⁰ [Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales - A report on responses to the Great Debate: A report for the Welsh Government, June 2015](#)

2.9 It set out that the Welsh Government would work with a network of Pioneer Schools and experts to shape the detailed design and development of the new, inclusive, broad, balanced and challenging curriculum.

Where we are now

OECD report

2.10 In November 2016, we invited the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to examine the work underway on education reforms and shine a light on progress to date. The OECD found that, since their previous visit in 2014, progress had been made in a number of areas and a noticeable shift had taken place in our approach to school improvement – towards one guided by a long-term vision. They found the Welsh reform journey was increasingly characterised by close working between government and the education sector, with a commitment to improvement ‘visible at all levels of the education system’¹¹.

Education in Wales: Our National Mission

2.11 Informed by the OECD report, we published *Education in Wales: Our National Mission* in September 2017. *Our National Mission* supports ‘Ambitious and Learning’, one of the key themes as set out in the Welsh Government national strategy *Prosperity for All*. Its purpose is to develop a school system which will instil in our learners an ambition to make the most of their potential, lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement, and equip them with the right skills for a changing world.

2.12 Our vision for Wales is for a fully inclusive education system where all learners have equity of access to education that meets their needs and enables them to participate, benefit from and enjoy learning.

2.13 It sets out in detail that, in delivering our new transformational curriculum, we will need to focus on the following four key enabling objectives:

- Developing a high-quality education profession;
- Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards;
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being; and
- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.

2.14 This commitment was reaffirmed in the new agreement (December 2018) between the First Minister and Education Minister to “*design, develop and deliver a world class*

¹¹ <http://www.oecd.org/education/The-Welsh-Education-Reform-Journey-FINAL.pdf>

curriculum, supported by robust assessment and accountability arrangements that will raise standards across our schools."¹²

Expert Panel Report on Sex and Relationships Education

2.15 A Sex and Relationships Expert Panel chaired by Professor Emma Renold from Cardiff University was established in March 2017 to inform the development of the future Sex and Relationships (SRE) curriculum as part of the Health and Well-being Area of Learning Experience.

2.16 The Panel's report, *Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales*¹³, examined the current and future status and development of the Sex and Relationships Education curriculum in Wales. It brought together a range of international research on best practice; demonstrating how high quality SRE can support young people to develop social, emotional and physical well-being.

2.17 These recommendations have informed the approach to developing the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum.

The proposed new curriculum

2.18 Drawing on all of this work, and created with practitioners and experts, the new proposed curriculum means that the whole approach to developing young people aged 3 to 16 will change.

2.19 The settings that will have to teach the proposed new curriculum include all maintained primary and secondary schools and unless otherwise stated special schools not established in a hospital in Wales. It will not apply to independent schools.

2.20 A maintained school includes:

- Community schools;
- Foundation schools;
- Voluntary schools, comprising -
 - Voluntary aided schools, and
 - Voluntary controlled schools;
- Community special schools;
- Foundation special schools; and

¹² <https://beta.gov.wales/first-ministers-agreement-kirsty-williams-am>

¹³ [Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales](#), the Welsh Government (December 2017).

- Maintained nursery schools.

2.21 Funded Nursery Settings will also have to teach the new curriculum. Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) do not have to deliver the entirety of the new curriculum. Nonetheless PRUs are required to deliver a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and this requirement will continue in relation to the new curriculum arrangements. The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (Wales) Regulations 2007 applies one element of the basic curriculum to PRUs – this requires sex education to be taught to pupils of secondary school age. This will also continue to be the case. The new curriculum will have more emphasis on equipping young people for life. It will build on their ability to learn new skills and apply their learning more positively and creatively. As the world changes, they will be more able to adapt positively.

2.22 Learners will also get a deep understanding of how to thrive in an increasingly digital world. A new digital competence framework is now introducing digital skills across the curriculum, preparing them for the opportunities and risks that the online world presents.

2.23 Teachers will have more freedom to teach in ways they feel will have the best outcomes for their learners.

2.24 The central focus of the proposed assessment arrangements will be to ensure learners understand how they are performing and what they need to do next. There will be a renewed emphasis on assessment for learning as an essential and integral feature of learning and teaching.

2.25 The purpose of the new curriculum (“the four purposes”) is to support our children and young people to be:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

2.26 It is proposed the curriculum will have six AoLEs:

- Expressive Arts;
- Health and Well-being;
- Humanities;
- Languages, Literacy and Communication;
- Mathematics and Numeracy; and

- Science and Technology.

2.27 The span and scope of each AoLE will encompass (but is not restricted to) the following disciplines:

- Expressive Arts – art, drama, music, dance, film and digital media, encompassing wider creative aspects such as improvisation;
- Health and Well-being – PE, sport, mental, physical and emotional well-being, sex and relationships, parenting, healthy eating and cooking, substance misuse, work related learning and experience, and learning for life;
- Humanities – history, geography, RE, business and social studies;
- Languages, Literacy and Communication – listening and speaking (oracy) skills and reading and writing in English and Welsh, international languages, digital communication and literature;
- Mathematics and Numeracy – mathematics, including traditional components of arithmetic, mathematics and statistics together with logic; and
- Science and Technology – physics, chemistry, biology, design and technology, engineering and computer science.

2.28 It is also proposed to include three cross-curricular responsibilities: literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

2.29 Assessment is a continuous process and takes place on a daily basis in schools. Progression Steps help learners, teachers, parents and carers to understand if appropriate progress is being made. It is proposed that they will set out expectations for learners in each area of their learning relating broadly to ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.

2.30 Detailed information on the new curriculum is available on the Welsh Government's website¹⁴.

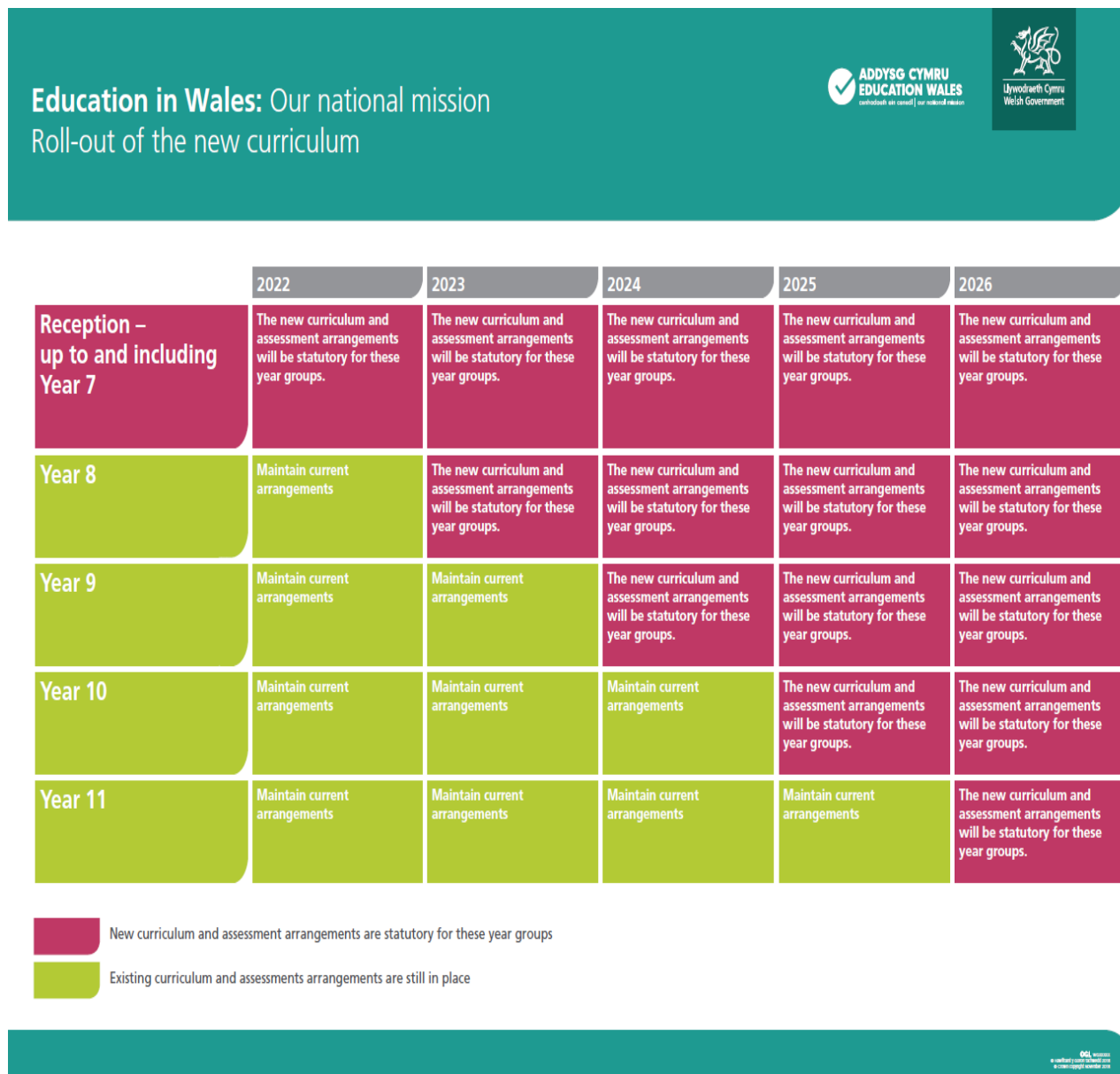
Timetable for the introduction of the new curriculum into schools and Funded Nursery Settings

2.31 In April 2019 we will make the new curriculum and assessment arrangements available to all for feedback, to help us refine it. Schools will then have access to the final curriculum and assessment arrangements from January 2020, allowing them to take preparatory steps in readiness for statutory roll-out in September 2022 (i.e. the start of the phasing in of the compulsory teaching of the new curriculum). The

¹⁴ <https://beta.gov.wales/new-school-curriculum>

proposal is that it will be introduced from nursery to Year 7 in 2022, rolling into Year 8 for 2023 and so on until it is introduced to Year 11 in 2026, as illustrated in the timeline.

Diagram 2: Timetable for introduction of the new curriculum.



What we need to legislate on

2.32 We have identified the following proposals require new primary legislation:

- Four purposes;
- Six AoLEs;
- Three Cross-Curricular Responsibilities;

- The Welsh language;
- The English language;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE);
- Religious Education (RE); and
- Assessment arrangements.

2.33 These legislative proposals are the focus of the rest of this White Paper consultation.

Wider education reform

2.34 The new curriculum is a key element of achieving Our National Mission. Together, our plans from the earliest age, through compulsory schooling and on to post-compulsory education and training aim to meet the needs of learners, employers and civic society in Wales.

2.35 Over the last two years, we have made significant progress. Schools, staff and young people across the country already achieve very high standards, and are the equal of anyone or anywhere in the world. However, there is an ambition and recognition right across the country that we can be even better.

2.36 We will continue on our reform journey. We are already significantly increasing our support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds so that every child gets the best start. The Education Minister recently announced the single biggest investment in support for teachers since devolution. Infant class sizes are being reduced across Wales, starting with the largest, where teaching and learning needs to improve, and where there are high levels of deprivation. In addition, we are reforming higher and further education so that there is funding and opportunities that benefit learners of all ages, and we will continue to view high-quality education as the driving force for social mobility, national prosperity and an engaged democracy.

2.37 Separate to the proposals in this White Paper, we are bringing forward reforms to ensure a whole system solution to the funding, regulation and performance of tertiary education, training and research and innovation – creating a new Commission that will take on responsibilities right across those sectors delivering for learners and the economy for many years to come.

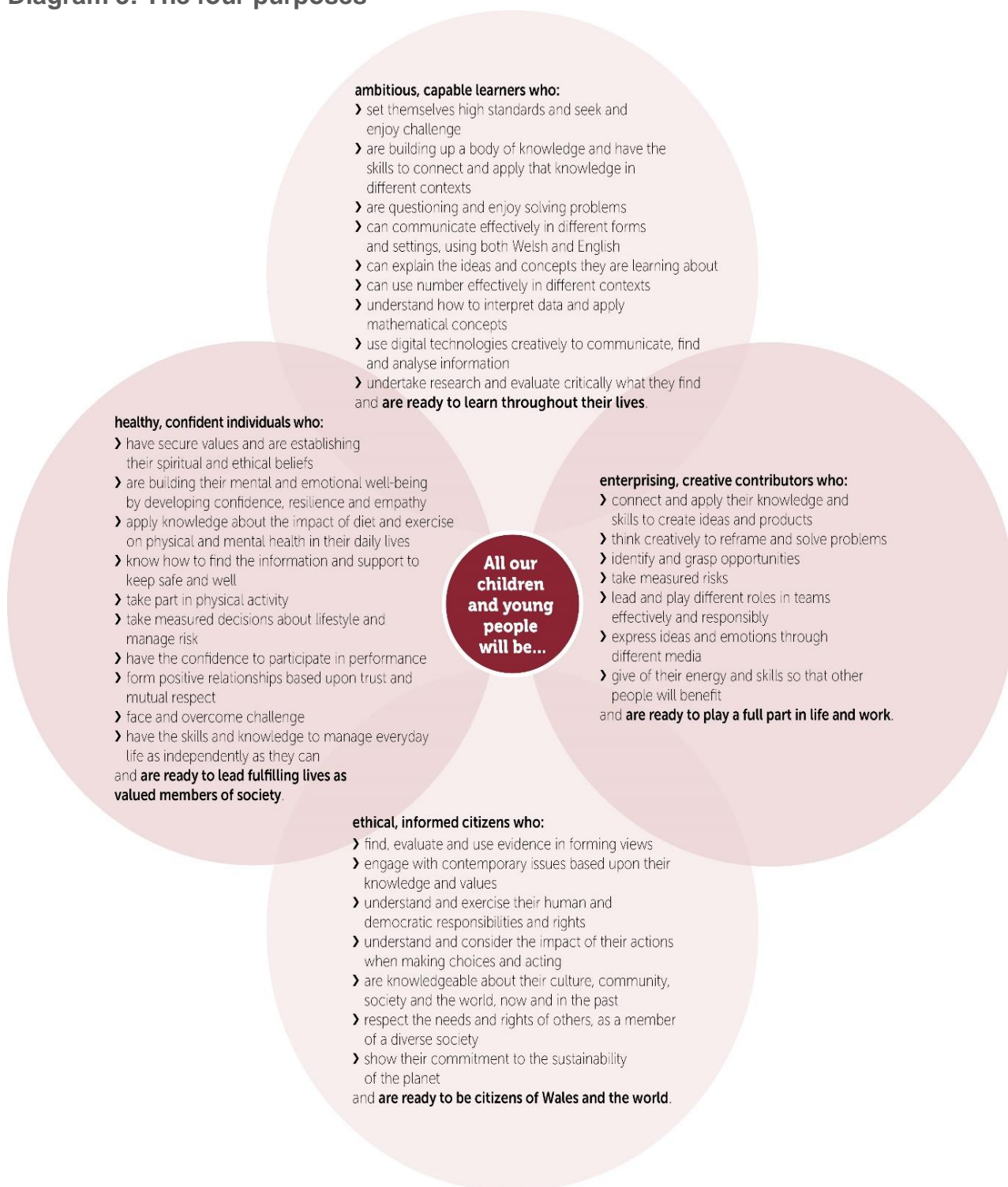
3. What changes are we proposing?

Overview of proposals for curriculum arrangements

- 3.1 We propose to bring forward legislation for revised curriculum and assessment arrangements to reaffirm the principle of a new curriculum for Wales. This will be designed to provide freedom for our practitioners to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners and raise standards.
- 3.2 In order to have parity across the country we propose the new Curriculum for Wales be compulsory for all maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings for pupils below year 12 (16 years and under) (Section 98 of the *Education Act 2002*).
- 3.3 Education is compulsory broadly for children aged 5-16 years and the proposed legislation will not change that. Parents or guardians will still be able to choose whether to start the child's education prior to five years old. The focus will be on teaching developmentally appropriate¹⁵ content to enable learners to get the best out of their time in education to help them flourish throughout their lives.
- 3.4 In summary, similar to existing arrangements, it is proposed that the new curriculum will be provided for:
- 3-5 year olds who attend nursery classes in maintained schools and those attending Funded Nursery Settings; and
 - 5-16 year olds who attend maintained schools in Wales.

¹⁵ SRE Expert Panel definition of developmentally appropriate - "Part of designing an effective education curriculum for children and young people is tailoring it to their intellectual, cognitive and social development in general, and to their emerging social and sexual identities and relations in particular" (Flood, Fergus and Heenan, 2009, p.47)

Diagram 3: The four purposes



Curriculum: structural proposals

Summary of proposals:

Four Purposes

- Duty on Welsh Ministers, Local Authorities, Governing Bodies and Head Teachers, to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that is designed to meet the four purposes.

Areas of Learning and Experience

- Duty on the Welsh Ministers, Local Authorities, Governing Bodies and Head Teachers to deliver a curriculum that contains the named AoLEs. This is accompanied by a power for Welsh Ministers to amend, add or remove an AoLE.
- A power to enable the Welsh Ministers to issue statutory guidance for each AoLE setting out statements outlining how aspects of the curriculum should be embedded in the AoLE, what matters statements and rationales, planning support and descriptions of learning.
- Amend provisions relating to the local curriculum so that the requirement reflects an entitlement to study courses within and across AoLEs between the ages 14-16.

Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities

- Duty on schools to teach three Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities. This is accompanied by a power for Welsh Ministers to amend, add or remove a Cross-Curriculum Responsibility.

Progression

- Removal of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages terminology to create one continuum of learning.
- A duty to be placed on schools to provide a curriculum that enables most learners to reach, or go beyond Achievement Outcomes set by the school and progress along the continuum for the Progression Steps according to the child's educational development.
- A duty for schools to have Achievement Outcomes, but schools will have discretion as to what they are, but the Welsh Ministers will provide statutory guidance on Achievement Outcomes to assist schools.

Existing Arrangements

- 3.5 The current arrangements have a set of overarching principles that the content of the curriculum should broadly satisfy.
- 3.6 The current curriculum must be balanced and broadly based which:
- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
 - prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- 3.7 Section 100 of the *Education Act 2002* places a duty on the Welsh Ministers, local authorities in Wales, head teachers and school governing bodies to exercise their functions to ensure that the curriculum for every school satisfies those general requirements. This applies to maintained schools, maintained special schools and nursery funded education.

The Current Curriculum

- 3.8 The main provision for the curriculum is set out in Section 101 of the Education Act 2002. It requires that the 'Basic Curriculum' must be taught in every maintained school in Wales, which includes:
- Religious education for all registered pupils, (but not including learners in nursery classes);
 - Personal and social education for all registered pupils of compulsory school age;
 - Work-related education for all registered pupils during KS3 & KS4;
 - Sex education for all registered pupils in secondary school and, in special schools, those receiving secondary education;
 - In secondary school, the local curriculum (the offer to 14-16 year olds); and
 - National Curriculum for all registered pupils at the school who have attained the age of three but are not over compulsory school age (i.e. 3-16 year olds).
- 3.9 Current legislation breaks the 'National Curriculum' down into the Foundation Phase and Key Stages (KS) (*Education Act 2002, Part 7*).
- 3.10 **Foundation Phase:** The Foundation Phase applies to learners aged 3 to 7¹⁶

¹⁶ Originally, Key Stage 1 included the ages of 5 to 7, which continues to be the case in England. Key Stage 1 has been replaced by the Foundation Phase.

3.11 **KS 2:** is the period beginning at the same time as the school year in which the majority of pupils are aged 8 and ending at the same time as the school year in which the majority are age 11.

3.12 **KS 3:** is the period beginning at the same time as the school year in which the majority of pupils are aged 12 and ending at the same time as the school year in which the majority are age 14. This period marks the beginning of secondary education.

3.13 For ages 8 to 14, the National Curriculum for Wales must include:

Core subjects

- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- Welsh (in Welsh-speaking schools)

Foundation subjects

- Design and technology
- information and communication technology
- Physical education
- History
- Geography
- Art and design
- Music
- Welsh (in non-Welsh speaking schools)

Foundation subject at KS3 only

- A modern foreign language

3.14 **KS 4:** *The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009* introduced the local curriculum into the curriculum for Wales. Currently the local curriculum provides that all pupils in KS4 in maintained schools are able to choose a course or courses of study from a minimum of 25 (of which at least three must be vocational) choices – this ensures that young people are able to choose courses which meet their needs.

3.15 At the moment the detail of what must be taught as part of the Foundation Phase and the national curriculum Key Stages are set out in a series of documents often referred to as programmes of study. There is an express power which allows the Welsh Ministers to set out the detail of the educational programmes in a separate document. That separate document is not physically part of the Order but is given legal force as if it were. The content of the programmes of study must be taught in schools.

3.16 The Welsh Ministers may also by way of an Order prescribe attainment targets and assessment arrangements for the Foundation Phase and the Key Stages. There is an express power which allows the Welsh Ministers to set out the detail of the attainment targets and assessment arrangements in a separate document. As noted above that separate document is not physically part of the Order but is given legal force as if it were. This is a legislative-based and prescriptive approach. The new arrangements will mark a significant departure from this approach.

Proposed New Arrangements

Overview

3.17 As a key part of our education reforms, our proposals aim to reset our approach to the curriculum and put Wales at the forefront of what a modern, forward looking curriculum should look like.

3.18 Our approach is rooted in optimism about the potential of our children, teachers, students and institutions. These proposals are about better enabling a forward-looking, pupil-centred, and a practitioner-led approach.

3.19 The key changes we are proposing, which reflect the recommendations of *Successful Futures*, are intended to create a system which:

- Reflects and promotes the curriculum purposes;
- Embodies the principle of entitlement of all children and young people, including those with severe, profound or multiple learning difficulties, to a high-quality broad and appropriately balanced education throughout the period of statutory education;
- Promotes progression in children and young people's learning;
- Promotes coherence and encourages children and young people to make connections across different aspects of their learning;
- Encourages stimulating and engaging teaching and learning;
- Is as simple and straightforward as possible; and
- Is understood and has the confidence of parents, carers and teachers.

3.20 Our proposals seek to reaffirm the principle of a new curriculum framework for Wales, whilst providing the freedom for practitioners to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners. This approach reflects the ambitions and recommendations set out in *Successful Futures*. To give effect to this, we propose including significantly less detail in legislation relating to the curriculum content.

3.21 We propose limiting legislation to the elements set out in the summary of proposals in paragraph 2.32. AoLE 'content' will be outlined in statutory guidance to support the teaching of learners across the AoLEs.

Four Purposes

3.22 We propose to retain the duty that the curriculum for maintained schools should be broad and balanced. However, we will replace the references to promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and preparing them for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life with the four

purposes of the new curriculum. The intention is that there is to be a duty on the Welsh Ministers, the local authority (in respect of schools it maintains), governing bodies and head teachers to exercise their education functions to secure that the general requirements of the new curriculum are to be met (i.e. that the curriculum must be broad and balanced and achieve the four purposes).

3.23 The four purposes, which we propose to legislate for, will be to facilitate the development of:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

3.24 We are doing this because statements of aims or purposes are the starting point for curriculum specifications in many countries. They typically relate to implications for the individual, for society and for the economy and set broad directions to guide subsequent decisions about structure and content. In its recent review of school education in Wales, the OECD found that Wales lacked a convincing overall set of aims and purposes and recommended that the Welsh Government should '*develop a shared vision of the Welsh learner, reflecting the government's commitment to quality and equity*'. *Our National Mission* addresses this by providing a clear and comprehensive narrative setting out four enabling objectives that will ensure the delivery of a new curriculum:

- Developing a high-quality education profession;
- Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards;
- Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being; and
- Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.

3.25 These support the Government's aims of raising standards for all, reducing the attainment gap and delivering an education system which is a source of national pride and enjoys public confidence.

3.26 By legislating for clear and agreed statements of purpose for the curriculum, we intend to:

- Provide clarity about aspirations for the children and young people of Wales;

- Emphasise the importance of longer-term outcomes for children and young people beyond specified knowledge, skills and understanding that a school is expected to deliver;
- Mobilise the education community around a common mission;
- Promote broad ownership of education and make the curriculum open to wide debate beyond the professional community;
- Provide a consistent point of reference for curriculum development, promoting coherence, progression and flow in learning intentions;
- Establish a firm basis for determining priorities as pressures on the curriculum continue to build;
- Guard against narrowing of the curriculum in response to short-term pressures;
- Act as a consistent guide for the discriminating selection of content, experiences and pedagogy;
- Provide the basis of necessary agreement among national and local government, schools and teachers about the desired overall direction, while allowing freedom to determine how the intentions will be achieved;
- Promote the basis for focus and consistency in teacher professional development; and
- Provide a broad focus for accountability and improvement.

3.27 These purposes will be included on the face of the proposed legislation. *Successful Futures* further elaborated on these purposes with key characteristics to provide a practical guide for the planning of the curriculum and learning and teaching. We propose that these characteristics will be outlined in AoLE guidance to which practitioners must have regard. These are set out in diagram 3 on page 16.

3.28 The proposal is that the Welsh Ministers will issue statutory guidance that will explain how a school could develop a curriculum that would meet the four purposes. A key part of that will be describing that any curriculum should be capable of producing learners who fit the above characteristics. It is anticipated that the characteristics will evolve over time and this is why they are being provided for in statutory guidance which can be updated. Outlining these key characteristics in statutory guidance will ensure that they are central to planning, learning and teaching, but also allow flexibility for them to evolve and be updated in response to future developments.

Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)

3.29 In terms of curriculum structure, it is proposed that the six AoLEs are named in legislation along with order making powers for Welsh Ministers to amend, add or remove an AoLE. The AoLEs we propose to make provision for in the legislation are:

- Expressive arts;
- Health and well-being;
- Humanities (including RE which should remain compulsory to age 16);
- Languages, literacy and communication (including Welsh, which should remain compulsory to age 16, and international languages);
- Mathematics and numeracy; and
- Science and technology.

3.30 The content of the AoLEs (see Annex B), including ‘What Matters’ statements, will set out the essential aspects of learning across the whole AoLE and make the link with the four purposes. Planning support and descriptions of learning will be set out in statutory guidance. The current arrangements in the Programmes of Study are perceived by some to be rigid and not facilitating innovation. In the future, schools and governing bodies will need to have due regard to the content of the guidance when they are developing lessons. It will allow more freedom for schools to respond to their local contexts and provide flexibility in adapting the curriculum over time and in light of evidence about its implementation. There are already examples of schools adopting the philosophy which underpins our reforms but legislative change will provide the catalyst for change in all schools.

14-16 age range

3.31 To facilitate breadth of learning, it is the expectation that the majority of learners in maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings will study all of the AoLEs (drawing on the content of the statutory guidance) in their entirety up to the age of 14. From 14 onwards, learners will have choices in whether to specialise in particular areas, while still having experiences across all the AoLEs, or to continue to study across the breadth of all AoLEs.

Wider skills

3.32 *Successful Futures* also recommended that there are other aspects of the curriculum that learners should continue to study up to the age of 16. These include wider skills, which we propose should be embedded throughout the AoLEs. These wider skills will be outlined in statutory guidance to support practitioners to help children develop their:

- Critical thinking and problem solving;
- Planning and organising;
- Creativity and innovation; and
- Personal effectiveness.

3.33 These wider skills will be embedded across the AoLEs and we propose they will be addressed in statutory guidance and other supporting guidance. We do not propose making any provision in primary legislation in relation to them, in keeping with the legislative recommendations in *Successful Futures*, and to ensure flexibility for the future.

National priorities

3.34 *Successful Futures* also stated that learners should continue to study aspects of the curriculum that support national priorities up to the age of 16. To allow flexibility for the new curriculum to evolve and respond to future needs, we do not propose that all the national priorities are listed in legislation. Depending on the nature of the priority, they will be addressed in a variety of ways including through AoLE statutory guidance, Welsh Government support programmes, school-level planning and evaluation. We will be making specific provision in relation to Welsh and English, for example, and our plans for these are set out in this White Paper.

Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities

3.35 The Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities (CCRs) of literacy, numeracy and digital competence will be statutory up to 16 years old. We propose to list these in primary legislation with a power to allow the Welsh Ministers to amend, add or remove CCRs. This will enable the curriculum to stay up to date with social and technological developments.

3.36 The detail of the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence Frameworks will not be set out in legislation but will be published and made available to support schools and settings to embed the responsibilities across the new curriculum. They will also be referenced in the AoLE statutory guidance where appropriate.

Progression

The Continuum

3.37 We propose that the new curriculum be organised as a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16. The emphasis is on seamless transition and references to the Foundation Phase and Key Stages will be removed. We propose that progression is signalled through Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16. They will act as a road map for each learner's development allowing for individual abilities, experiences and rates of learning and understanding. We will legislate to define the progression steps for those age milestones but the detailed content of each 'step' will be set out in statutory guidance.

3.38 The objective is to enable every learner to achieve their full potential. To deliver this, we propose that a duty be placed on schools and Funded Nursery Settings to:

- Help most learners to reach, or go beyond, each Progression Step; and
- Have policies and procedures in place to monitor the progression of each pupil and identify those pupils who are struggling and might not meet the relevant Achievement Outcomes and also those pupils who could cope with the more advanced work.

3.39 The purpose of these duties is to enable each individual learner to look forward on the continuum of learning and move through the progression steps to reach their potential. The Achievement Outcomes for each progression step will be outlined in the statutory guidance for each of the six AoLE.

3.40 We do not want schools to rush learners through the Progression Steps when they are not ready. We want to ensure there is a depth of learning to securely meet what is outlined in each of the Achievement Outcomes articulated at each Progression Step. We therefore propose governing bodies and head teachers will need to have policies and procedures to achieve those aims and so satisfy the duty. This approach reflects the principles behind Professor Donaldson’s proposals that curriculum content and assessment should be personalised for each learner. The focus is on raising standards and ensuring each child maximises their potential by focusing on gaining an accurate picture of the educational development of each child and then setting Achievement Outcomes that push them as far they can realistically go. In some cases that will mean going beyond a given Progression Step, in other cases it will not.

3.41 The governing body would take a strategic role (in line with the *School Government (Terms of Reference) (Wales) Regulations 2000*) in setting policies, aims and objectives whilst the head teacher would make the arrangements and establish practices and procedures.

Questions:

1. Do you agree with our approach to legislating for the new curriculum structure?
2. Do you agree we should impose a duty on schools and Funded Nursery Settings to provide a curriculum to help most learners to reach, or go beyond the Achievement Outcomes set by the school and to progress children along the continuum for the Progression Steps in accordance with their educational development?
3. What actions should the head teacher and governing body take to satisfy this duty?
4. What support would be required to enable schools to take those actions?

Careers and Work Related Experiences

Summary of proposal:

- Retain the existing requirement in section 43 of the *Education Act 1997* (*Careers education*) so that learners aged 13 -16 are provided with a programme of careers education.
- Repeal the basic curriculum requirement that schools teach work-related education (WRE) to pupils broadly aged 11 to 16.
- Age appropriate careers education and work related experiences¹⁷ will be embedded within each AoLE from age 3 and there will be additional focus within the Health and Well-being AoLE.

Existing Arrangements

3.42 Work Related Education currently forms part of the basic curriculum for all registered pupils aged 11 to 16 at maintained schools. This focuses on skills that would be relevant to the work place. Careers education focuses on advice that will guide pupils in making decisions about further training or education or on entering the world of work.

New Proposed Arrangements

3.43 Age appropriate careers education will be available within each of the AoLEs. Where appropriate, relevant work related experiences will also be made available. Specifically, careers education will also be included within the Health and Well-being AoLE, to reflect the importance of career related decisions on a learner's health and well-being. This AoLE emphasises skills such as responding to challenges and developing positive relationships which are integral to learners' later careers.

3.44 Careers and Work Related Experiences guidance will be developed to support practitioners. Schools will need to ensure due regard is given to this guidance when planning careers education and work related experiences activities for learners as part of the new curriculum. This guidance will be developed in partnership with a range of key stakeholders.

3.45 A pilot of the *Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks*¹⁸ is taking place across the Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority relating to careers and work related experiences with a view to the benchmarks then being used to drive improvements across Wales.

¹⁷ Following discussion with stakeholders the Welsh Government is proposing to change the name of 'Careers and the World of Work' to 'Careers and Work Related Experiences'.

¹⁸ <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

The current Careers and the World of Work framework will be renamed as ‘*Careers and Work Related Experiences*’ to reflect changes that are taking place to help ensure careers education and experiences continue to meet the needs of learners and employers.

Question:

5. Do you agree that age appropriate careers education and work related education should cover the age range 3-16, in line with the AoLEs?

Relationships and Sexuality Education

Summary of proposals:

- Sex education to be renamed Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in primary legislation and reinforced with a new description in guidance.
- Teaching of RSE within the context of the new curriculum for Wales to be mandatory in all maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings for pupils of compulsory school age but optional for those pupils in the sixth form.
- Existing duty to issue statutory guidance on sex education will be retained (and extended to include RSE) but reformed so that the requirement should be for the Welsh Ministers to issue guidance to secure that RSE is provided in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate to the children receiving it.
- Existing duty on schools to develop, keep up to date and make available to parents and learners their policy on sex education (RSE) should be retained for all maintained schools.

Existing Arrangements

3.46 The current legislation requires that all secondary school age pupils attending maintained settings must receive sex education (set out in Section 101(c) and (d) of the *Education Act 2002*). Primary schools are able to deliver sex education but this is at the discretion of their governing bodies. Sex education is defined in legislation as including, but not limited to, teaching the topics of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS (set out in Section 579 of the *Education Act 1996*). The school must have a written and published policy on the sex education it provides, which must be made available to parents on request (set out in Section 404 of the *Education Act 1996*). The Welsh Government has issued guidance to support schools in fulfilling their duties in this area.¹⁹

¹⁹ Sex and relationships education in schools, Welsh Assembly Government Circular 019/2010

3.47 Schools also have a statutory requirement to provide Personal and Social Education (PSE) from the ages of 7-16. They are supported in planning their PSE provision by the non statutory framework for PSE document, which contains a health and emotional well-being theme. However, as the PSE Framework is non-statutory schools are free to decide on the content and approach to delivery.

3.48 Relationships education is already present in the Foundation Phase, which covers 3-7 years old. The Foundation Phase contains a Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity area of learning. Within this, children learn about themselves, their relationships with other children and adults both within and beyond the family. From KS2 (7 years old) onwards, schools are able to use the *Sex and Relationships Education in Schools guidance* and the health and emotional well-being theme of the PSE framework to support them in planning the relationships aspect of their provision. Both the SRE guidance and PSE framework are non-statutory.

New Proposed Arrangements

3.49 The Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel stated that the partial definition of sex education (which references such education including education on sexually transmitted diseases) under existing curriculum legislation has tended to lead schools to adopt a narrow, biological focus within its provision. In general, broader topics are therefore not a priority; with a lack of time and resources and delivery by non-specialist staff. This finding was also made by Estyn's thematic review of *Healthy Relationships Education*²⁰(July 2017) which stated schools did not allocate enough time or importance to SRE and that teachers lacked the confidence and knowledge to effectively respond to the needs of learners.

3.50 The Expert Panel's report²¹ made 11 recommendations including:

- Renaming the subject²² to reflect a more inclusive, holistic, rights and gender equity based approach;
- Making it a statutory part of the new curriculum for all learners under 16 years old;
- Establishing specialist professional learning pathways within initial teacher training and for the existing workforce; and
- Enhancing the ability of the education workforce to respond to a wider range of issues, with emphasis on better equipping them with the confidence and knowledge to deal with issues, including domestic abuse, adverse childhood experiences and LGBT issues.

²⁰ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/review-healthy-relationships-education>

²¹ <https://beta.gov.wales/future-sex-and-relationships-education-curriculum>

²² The Expert Panel suggested a new name of Sexuality and Relationship Education, through engagement with stakeholder we propose the new name should be Relationships and Sexuality Education.

- 3.51 In order to bring about the changes identified by the Expert Panel we propose to make provision in legislation that the teaching of RSE should be mandatory from ages 3 to 16 for maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings. Renaming the subject will enable it to reflect the wider range of considerations identified as being important by the Expert Panel, signalling the importance of healthy relationships and reflecting the teaching chronology of the subject.
- 3.52 Practitioners will need to have the confidence and flexibility to deal with any emerging social and technological factors that can affect their learners' health and well-being. Therefore, statutory guidance will set out the scope of RSE, to help inform teaching and learning.
- 3.53 An initial scope for what might be included in RSE, based on advice from the Expert Panel, has informed development of Welsh Government policy on RSE and will provide the basis on which to develop statutory guidance.
- 3.54 Relationships and Sexuality Education is about nurturing and developing learners' understanding of the influences that can affect them, both positively and negatively, as they seek to develop and establish a range of respectful, healthy relationships. This includes, but is not limited to, learning about:
- Different types of relationships, such as familial, non-sexual and sexual relationships;
 - The changing functions of the human body and how it influences behaviour and relationships; and
 - Social and cultural influences on representations of the body and relationships; and
 - Physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.
- 3.55 The objective is to improve the profile, quality and consistency of RSE so that schools:
- Support learners to become healthy, confident individuals who form positive relationships based on mutual trust and respect and are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy;
 - Develop high quality RSE provision which responds effectively to a wide range of issues in response to the lived experiences of their learners; and
 - Ensure learners have access to a wide range of support and advice.
- 3.56 We propose to amend the existing guidance provision in primary legislation so that the Welsh Ministers can provide statutory guidance on 'developmentally appropriate' RSE. This will replace the existing provision for guidance on 'age appropriate' provision of sex education. This acknowledges that, whilst age will still be a factor in making decisions around provision, schools will need to consider the physical and cognitive development of their learners, including taking into account the experiences of learners, when making decisions regarding planning RSE content.

3.57 We also propose to make provision in primary legislation to expand the existing requirement for maintained schools to develop and publish a written statement to inform parents and learners of their policy on the provision of sex education to include all aspects of RSE.

3.58 In order to be in line with the arrangements for all other aspects of the new curriculum, we also propose to amend existing legislation so that it is not compulsory for schools to provide any specific curriculum subject for learners in sixth form. At present all learners in school sixth forms must study Religious Education (RE) and sex education. Under these proposals, it is important to note that schools will not be prevented by the legislation to continue to provide RE and/or sex education to sixth formers. However, there will be no legal obligations for sixth formers to attend if they do not wish to do so. Guidance will be made available for schools to support this new approach.

3.59 There is currently a right for parents to withdraw their children from sex education, though not the areas included in the national curriculum programmes of study (set out in Section 405 of the *Education Act 1996*). There is a need to determine the appropriate arrangements for this and the similar right to withdraw from RE. This is discussed further at paragraphs 3.75 to 3.78.

Questions:

6. Do you agree with making age and developmentally appropriate RSE compulsory for 3-16 years?
7. Do you agree with the proposed changes to the guidance making power so that it is designed to secure that RSE is provided in a way that is age and developmentally appropriate to the children receiving it?
8. Do you agree with our proposals to make RSE optional for learners in sixth forms?

Religious Education

Summary of proposals:

- Retain statutory requirement to teach RE in all maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings but within the context of the new curriculum for Wales.
- There is currently an exemption from RE for registered pupils in nursery classes. It is proposed that the exemption be repealed to ensure parity for all

subjects / components of the AoLEs so that RE will be taught to 3-16 year olds.

- Retain existing provisions outlining the arrangements for teaching the agreed syllabus in specific schools and amending provisions around the adoption of an agreed syllabus by local authorities.
- Retain the existing provisions regarding the manner in which schools with a religious character deliver religious education.
- Amend the current provisions regarding the description of an Agreed Syllabus as well as membership of Committee A of Agreed Syllabus Conferences and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education to encompass non-religious views that are analogous to religious views

Existing Arrangements

3.60 At present, schools have a statutory duty to teach RE to all learners in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, with an exemption for children in nursery classes.

RE in Schools

3.61 Community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools without a religious character follow the Agreed Syllabus (paragraph 2 of Schedule 19 to the *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*).

3.62 Foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character²³ must provide religious education in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus unless a parent requests that their child be provided with RE in accordance with the trust deed for the school or, if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion.

3.63 Voluntary aided schools with a religious character must provide religious education in accordance with the trust deed for the school, or if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion. However, if the parents so request it must be provided in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus (paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 19 to the 1998 Act).

Agreed Syllabus

3.64 An Agreed Syllabus Conference develops the curriculum content for RE in each local authority area. The Conference must include members from a committee representing teachers; a committee representing the local authority; and a committee representing the Christian denominations and the other principle religious traditions pertinent to

²³ A school is has a religious character (i.e. a faith school) if it has been designated as having a religious character by an Order made under section 69 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

their area. All maintained community schools must teach RE according to the agreed syllabus recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference and adopted by the local authority.

New Proposed Arrangements

- 3.65 In keeping with *Successful Futures*, we propose that RE is retained as a statutory requirement from age 3 and forms part of the Humanities AoLE.
- 3.66 It is our intention also that RE reflects our historical and contemporary relationship in Wales to philosophy and religious views, including non-religious beliefs. Therefore the current legislation will be amended to ensure the agreed syllabus for RE takes account of non-religious world views which are analogous to religions (e.g. humanism).
- 3.67 Our approach will recognise the local responsibility of the Agreed Syllabus Conferences, local authorities and the place of the denominational syllabus in Voluntary Aided schools but make a clearer connection with a national approach.
- 3.68 We propose to amend the legislation relating to the adoption of an agreed syllabus to ensure that each Agreed Syllabus Conference and local authority must give due regard to a supporting framework to be produced by Welsh Government. This document will be developed with expert practitioners and key partners such as the Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) and the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education and will clarify and further develop aspects relating to RE outlined in the statutory guidance to be produced for the Humanities AoLE. There will be regular consultation with SACRE members and key stakeholders throughout the development period.
- 3.69 Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character will continue to deliver their denominational RE and guidance will be developed by the relevant authorities to make the links with the Humanities AoLE.
- 3.70 There is currently an exemption from RE for registered pupils in school nursery classes. It is proposed that the exemption be repealed to ensure parity for all subjects / components of the AoLEs. We believe learners of all ages can benefit from knowledge of the broad spectrum of religious, philosophical and cultural traditions held by people in Wales. Those Funded Nursery Settings will also have to deliver the new curriculum for Wales, this will include the Humanities AoLE and they will be expected to give regard to the content of the statutory guidance document, as well as their locally agreed syllabus.
- 3.71 We propose to legislate to amend the current provisions regarding the description of an Agreed Syllabus as well as membership of Committee A of Agreed Syllabus Conferences and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) to encompass non-religious views that are analogous to religious views. This is to clarify the current legislation and take account of the effect of the *Human Rights Act 1998*

which means that references to religious views should be read as also encompassing non-religious views that are analogous to religious views. We have already written to Local Authority's Directors of Education setting out the action they need to take in response.

3.72 The following provision included in Schedule 19 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 will also be retained:

“No agreed syllabus shall provide for religious education to be given to pupils at a school to which this paragraph applies by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination (but this is not to be taken as prohibiting provision in such a syllabus for the study of such catechisms or formularies).”

3.73 At present all learners in school sixth forms must study Religious Education. In future, it is proposed that learners will have an entitlement to receive learning and schools must provide it if it is requested – it will be optional. It is important to note schools will not be prevented by the legislation to continue to provide Religious Education to sixth formers. However, there will be no legal obligations for sixth formers to attend if they do not wish to do so. Guidance will be made available for schools to support this new approach.

3.74 There is currently a right for parents to withdraw their children from RE. There is a need to determine the appropriate arrangements for this and the similar right to withdraw from sex education in the current system. This is discussed below.

Questions:

9. Do you agree with the proposed approach to RE?
10. Do you agree with our proposals to make RE optional for learners in sixth forms?

The Right to Withdraw from Religious Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education

3.75 The current legislation provides that:

- A parent of a pupil at a school has the right to withdraw their child from RE (either wholly or partly);
- A parent of a pupil at a school has the right to withdraw their child from sex education (either wholly or partly), unless it forms part of the National Curriculum programme of study; and

- In both RE and RSE only a parent can request that a child be withdrawn. Therefore, a pupil of any age, including those in the sixth form, cannot withdraw them self at any point and must rely on the parent to do that for them.

3.76 These arrangements have been in place and unchanged for decades. Central to the new curriculum is the right of children and young people to have access to a curriculum which fulfils the four purposes.

3.77 We are therefore keen to explore potential approaches to modernise these arrangements. In considering a potential new approach we are keen to ensure the rights of children and young people are central to considerations but also that full consideration of the impact on all protected characteristics is given. We also want to ensure that any changes do not increase the burden on schools and teachers.

3.78 At this stage, we would welcome views on the case for change and any specific ideas of how to modernise this area.

Questions:

11. Should the right to withdraw from RE and RSE be retained?
12. If the right to withdraw is to be retained, should it remain with the parent (parent includes those with parental responsibility or those who have care of the child)?
13. If the right to withdraw is removed, what alternative, if any, should be in its place?

Welsh and English Language

3.79 *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*²⁴ sets out the Welsh Government’s long-term vision and strategy for the Welsh language and creating a truly bilingual Wales. The new curriculum has a key role to play in supporting this ambition.

Summary of proposals:

- Duty on all schools and Funded Nursery Settings to teach Welsh, as a compulsory element of the new curriculum for Wales for 3 to 16 year olds.
- Removal of the Welsh first and second language programmes of study and replace with one continuum of learning as part of the Languages, Literacy and Communications Area of Learning and Experience.

²⁴ <https://gov.wales/topics/welshlanguage/welsh-language-strategy-and-policies/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy/?lang=en>

- A power for the Welsh Ministers that will allow them to prescribe the definitions for school language categories by way of subordinate legislation.
- Duty on all schools and Funded Nursery Settings to teach English as a compulsory element of the new curriculum for Wales. [*Please see a [statement by the Welsh Government confirming its intention for Welsh immersion to continue under the new curriculum arrangements.](#)*]

Existing Arrangements

- 3.80 Welsh is currently a compulsory subject for all learners age 3-16 years old. In the current curriculum, learners in “Welsh-speaking schools²⁵” follow the Welsh (first language) programme of study as a core subject. In “non-Welsh-speaking schools” learners follow the Welsh second language programme of study as a foundation subject.
- 3.81 Learners are assessed in Welsh first language at the end of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages 2 and 3. Learners who follow the Welsh first language programme of study are also required to undertake the Welsh reading test in years 2-9. GCSEs are available as qualifications for learners at the end of Key Stage 4. For Welsh first language, new Welsh Language and Welsh Literature GCSEs were introduced in September 2015, and were first awarded in summer 2017. Learners are assessed in Welsh second language at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3.
- 3.82 A new Welsh Second Language GCSE was introduced for first teaching from September 2017, and will be first assessed in summer 2019. Qualifications Wales (QW), as Wales’ independent regulator, consulted on proposals to change the Welsh Second Language GCSE. The reformed Welsh Second Language GCSE reflects Welsh Government policy with more emphasis on speaking, listening and using the language, which further aligns it with the (first language) Welsh Language GCSE.

Context for change

- 3.83 The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* aims to ensure that public bodies think about long-term strategy and planning. One of the seven goals is a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and one of the indicators is the percentage of people who can speak Welsh as set out in *National Indicators for Wales*.²⁶

²⁵ A school is Welsh-speaking if more than one half of the following subjects are taught (wholly or partly) in Welsh

- (a) religious education, and
- (b) the subjects other than English and Welsh which are foundation subjects in relation to pupils at the school.

²⁶ <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160316-national-indicators-to-be-laid-before-nafw-en.pdf>

3.84 *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers* sets out the Welsh Government's long-term vision and strategy for the Welsh language. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers is one of the three key themes, and includes the following as one of the key transformational changes that will be required within the statutory education sector in order to achieve the vision:

“transform how we teach Welsh to all learners in order that by 2050 at least 70 per cent of those learners report that they can speak Welsh by the time they leave school.”

3.85 *Education in Wales: Our national mission, Action plan 2017–21*, sets out the actions to be taken to implement wide-ranging reforms to the education system in Wales. Developing a transformational approach to the learning, teaching and assessment of the Welsh language with the aim of ensuring all learners will be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school is at the heart of the curriculum reform.

3.86 An independent review of Welsh second language in 2013 ²⁷ led by Professor Sioned Davies concluded:

“it is the eleventh hour for Welsh second language... Low attainment in Welsh second language has been accepted as the norm. If we are serious about developing Welsh speakers, and about seeing the Welsh language thrive, a change of direction is urgently required before it is too late.”

3.87 One of the key themes in the evidence received was that further consideration should be given to developing a language continuum for the purposes of curriculum planning and delivery, and for recording attainment. It would facilitate a system of progression across all phases of learning and would also have the advantage of providing learners, parents and employers with a clear definition of the skill levels achieved by learners. The review recommended that one continuum of learning for Welsh should be developed with clear expectations for pupils learning Welsh in English-medium, bilingual and Welsh-medium settings. Developing such a continuum would mean that all pupils in Wales would follow the same curriculum and be assessed against one framework, thus removing the term Welsh second language and the programme of study.

3.88 *Successful Futures* recommended that Welsh language learning remains compulsory to the age of 16 and that there should be a renewed focus on learning Welsh primarily as a means of communication, particularly oral communication and understanding.

Medium of teaching and Welsh across the curriculum

²⁷ [One language for all: Review of Welsh second language at Key Stages 3 and 4 \(2013\)](#)

- 3.89 Learners' acquisition of Welsh will vary depending on the language of provision. Welsh-medium schools generally deliver the majority of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh, and learners are immersed in the language from an early age. Bilingual schools can refer to a wide range of teaching and learning settings which include varying amounts of Welsh language in the delivery. English-medium schools generally only deliver Welsh as a subject with the remainder of curricular time delivered through the medium of English.
- 3.90 Language acquisition is generally at its most successful when the language is used as a medium of learning in practical and relevant contexts. Other than in dedicated Welsh-medium schools, there are already numerous examples of introducing new approaches to using Welsh as a medium of instruction. For example, some English-medium primary schools have developed opportunities to include varying amounts of Welsh-medium provision across some curricular subjects to extend learners' use and acquisition of Welsh. Also a small number of secondary schools have developed opportunities for a limited number of subjects to be taught through the medium of Welsh at Key Stage 3, by working in partnership with feeder primary schools to give intensive Welsh-language and Welsh-medium teaching during the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
- 3.91 Such opportunities provide possible methods of raising standards in Welsh in English-medium schools. These practices could be extended and creative methods of enriching pupils' Welsh language skills must be encouraged.
- 3.92 The Welsh Government's document *Defining schools according to Welsh-medium provision*²⁸ (October 2007) gives a series of definitions to describe the linguistic nature of primary and secondary schools in Wales. These definitions serve an important function in terms of providing clear information to parents and facilitating an understanding of the kinds of language provision available across Wales. The definitions are also used in school organisation proposals. A change in the amount of Welsh-medium teaching in a school may trigger the need for a regulated alteration school organisation proposal (the detail of when such a change would necessitate a school organisation proposal is in Schedule 2 to the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*).
- 3.93 The *Rapid review of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans – 2017-20*²⁹ concluded that the definitions of linguistic categories of schools need to be simplified. An Independent Advisory Board was established in May 2018 to take forward the recommendations of the review, and experts in the field of language planning have been contracted to move forward with the work of simplifying the definitions of linguistic categories of schools. The work will include reviewing the models used in schools internationally, and to develop new categories that can be used to inform and support school and curriculum planning. This work will be undertaken during 2019

²⁸ <https://beta.gov.wales/defining-schools-according-welsh-medium-provision>

²⁹ <https://beta.gov.wales/review-welsh-education-strategic-plans-2017-2020-final-report>

with a formal consultation on the new draft categories to take place during autumn 2019.

Progression and Assessment

- 3.94 One of the key considerations as we develop the new curriculum is how to assess learners along a continuum. We want to ensure that all learners make progress and can gain appropriate qualifications and recognition for their learning. Welsh Government acknowledges that moving from the current system of Welsh first language and Welsh second language programmes of study requires careful planning and transition.
- 3.95 The approach to progression recommended in *Successful Futures* recognised that children and young people will progress at different rates. This is particularly true with language acquisition. The linguistic nature of schools in Wales means that progression in Welsh will need to be defined according to the language of the school. This will mean that learners in English-medium schools will progress at a slower pace than learners in Welsh-medium schools and the nature of language acquisition may differ.

New Proposed Arrangements

- 3.96 The intention is to include a provision for Welsh to be a compulsory element of the new curriculum for Wales for all learners of compulsory schools age (3-16 years old).
- 3.97 We propose that English should also be a compulsory element in the legislation, reflecting our legal, policy and educational commitment to bilingualism. Whilst English is not one of the subjects identified as requiring statutory status by *Successful Futures*, it is identified alongside Welsh in the key characteristics of the four purposes.
- 3.98 The requirements for Welsh, English and International Languages will be set out in the Languages, Literacy and Communications (LLC) AoLE for all learners. The proposed content of the LLC AoLE (including components currently referred to as What Matters Statements; Knowledge, Skills and Experiences; and Achievement Outcomes) will be set out in statutory guidance and will be based on one continuum for learning languages.
- 3.99 Within the new LLC AoLE, all learners will follow the same curriculum for learning Welsh along a continuum, thus removing the term Welsh first and second language and repealing the associated programmes of study. The LLC AoLE has been designed to recognise the varying pace of learning in English and Welsh medium schools. These expectations will be reviewed every three to five years to gradually increase the challenge and to reflect learners' changing experience of learning Welsh as the new Curriculum is rolled out and as we work towards the goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This proposal is in line with Professor Davies'

recommendation *“to develop a language continuum of learning for Welsh with clear expectations for pupils learning Welsh in English-medium, bilingual and Welsh-medium settings”*.

- 3.100 In order to set out which Achievement Outcomes will apply to different schools during the transition period, the legislation will include a Regulation making power for the Welsh Ministers that will allow them to prescribe the definitions for those school language categories. These definitions will be used for the purpose of curriculum planning and school organisation.
- 3.101 Within the new curriculum, it is intended that the Modern Foreign Languages component of the curriculum will be re-named International Languages. It is intended that International Languages will not be provided for in primary legislation specifically. Instead we propose it will be included in the What Matters Statement in the AoLE statutory guidance for the LLC AoLE. It will be a matter for schools to determine whether, and to what extent, to teach International Languages and to what age range of pupils. In doing so, schools would need to have due regard to the guidance in determining their approach to the teaching of International Languages. It is proposed that the statutory guidance on content and the Achievement Outcomes would recommend learners begin learning International Languages during primary school and set Achievement Outcomes which recognise the pace of learning an International Language(s) will differ to that of English and Welsh.

What will change?

- 3.102 There will be no significant change in legislation as the Welsh language is already a statutory part of the existing curriculum. However, the proposal is that there will no longer be Programmes of Study, which distinguish between first and second language Welsh.
- 3.103 In the classroom there will be little change for teachers and learners in Welsh-medium schools but English-medium schools will have to focus more on their Welsh language provision.
- 3.104 We are looking at the system as a whole, to ensure that there is sufficient time to make the required changes to ensure that schools will focus more on providing the best opportunities for their learners to become fluent. We are already investing in professional learning to ensure that the workforce can develop their Welsh language skills in accordance with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and in preparation to deliver the new curriculum. Through the regional consortia, we will also be encouraging schools to strategically plan for improvements, to include consideration of workforce planning and developing a culture and ethos within the school to promote the Welsh language. Schools will also be expected to self-evaluate their progress within the new accountability and evaluation framework.

Question:

14. What are your views on the proposed approach for ensuring that the teaching and learning of Welsh is an integral component of the curriculum for Wales?

Assessment and Evaluation Framework

- 3.105 The need for a nationally agreed Assessment and Evaluation Framework is one of the key policy recommendations of *Successful Futures*. It is proposed that this Framework will be clear about the different forms of assessment and their roles and distinguish between those activities whose place lies in teaching and learning and those that will contribute to self-evaluation, external accountability and national monitoring.
- 3.106 Assessment's prime purpose is to provide information that can guide decisions about how best to support learning. It should be used in the best interest of pupils; enabling teachers to adjust teaching strategies to support their progress.
- 3.107 Up until this academic year teacher assessment has also been a key element of our accountability system. Welsh Government has published teacher assessment data at local authority level as an annual statistical release, provided schools comparative data within school datapacks, and published teacher assessment information at school level on My Local School³⁰. We recognise that the lines between assessment and accountability have too often been blurred, leading to unintended consequences in the classroom and distorted teaching and assessment.
- 3.108 The evidence of the effects of 'high stakes' use of assessment information is accepted internationally. By 'high stakes' we mean a system which places undue weight on outcomes and where 'failure' or perceived failure has consequences beyond what is intended or appropriate. In this case, it means that rather than being about the learner and guiding teaching and support to enable them to fulfil their potential, learner assessment has become something which is seen to reflect on the performance of teachers and schools. As a result, choices may be made which reflect the interests of the teacher or school rather than the learner. The issues are cited within OECD reports and by leading assessment academics. *Successful Futures* cites the (2013) *Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment* OECD report:

"A major OECD report on evaluation and assessment cautions that '...high-stakes uses of evaluation and assessment results might lead to distortions in the education process...', and that '...it is important to design the accountability uses of evaluation and assessment results in such a way these undesirable effects are minimised'.³¹

³⁰ <http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/>

³¹ <https://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>

3.109 To re-establish the prime purpose of assessment and uncouple assessment from high stakes³² accountability, Welsh Government has ceased the routine publication of teacher assessment and national test data at school and local authority level, to help prevent this data being used to make judgements on schools.

3.110 There is widespread recognition that developing assessment and evaluation arrangements that have a consistency of objectives, and clarity over how the different components should interrelate, is key to building stronger school systems focused upon achieving improved learner progression. The proposal is that together these arrangements will form an Assessment and Evaluation Framework that keeps the learner at the centre of our system and focused on development at all levels to improve teaching and learning. The next section sets out the learner assessment arrangements, followed by the evaluation arrangements.

Learner Assessment Arrangements

Summary of proposals:

- Re-enact most of the provisions for assessment arrangements, which are currently provided for in relation to the National Curriculum, so that these are available to support the new Curriculum for Wales.
- A duty to be placed on head teachers to set Achievement Outcomes against each of the Progression Steps. Head teachers will need to have due regards to statutory guidance when setting what the new Achievement Outcomes will be. Schools will develop assessments based upon the Achievement Outcomes described at each Progression Step.
- A power for Welsh Ministers to issue statutory guidance for the assessment arrangements under the Assessment and Evaluation Framework

Existing Arrangements

3.111 There are a number of statutory assessment requirements within current arrangements. The powers to make these arrangements are in section 108 of the *Education Act 2002*. They provide that Welsh Ministers can set out the assessment arrangements they consider appropriate for the Foundation Phase or Key Stage within orders.

³² in this context 'high stakes' we mean a system which places undue weight on outcomes and where 'failure' or perceived failure has consequences beyond what is intended or appropriate. I.e. rather than learner assessment being about the learner and guiding teaching and support to enable the learner to fulfil their potential, it becomes a system which is seen to reflect on the performance of teachers, departments and schools. As a result, choices may be made which reflect the interests of the teacher, department or school rather than the learner.

3.112 The Welsh Ministers also have the power to prescribe in Orders desirable outcomes for the Foundation Phase and attainment targets for Key Stages. Both set out the expected standards of learners' performance. Desirable outcomes take the form of statements which describe the type and range of achievements characteristic of children within the Foundation Phase. While attainment targets take the form of level descriptions which describe the types and range of performance that learners working at a particular level should characteristically demonstrate. Teachers assess learners against these desirable outcomes and attainment targets and have to report the outcomes achieved.

3.113 To ensure these assessment arrangements work in practice there are also a number of supplementary powers under section 108 of the *Education Act 2002*.

3.114 The Welsh Ministers have exercised their Order making powers under section 108 of the *Education Act 2002* so that schools are currently required to:

- Carry out a baseline assessment of all children within the first six weeks of entry into Reception Year;
- Conduct end of Foundation Phase and Key Stage summative³³ assessments;
- Conduct formative³⁴ assessment of literacy and numeracy skills;
- Administer national tests; and
- Participate in cluster moderation of teacher assessments.

Reporting to parents

3.115 Section 408 of the *Education Act 1996* provides a power enabling the Welsh Ministers to make regulations for reporting to parents. It is the intention of the Welsh Government to retain this provision to require head teachers to report to parents.

Transition planning

3.116 Section 198 of the *Education Act 2002* (transition from primary to secondary school) requires secondary schools and their feeder primary schools to jointly draw up transition plans to facilitate the transition from primary school to secondary school of pupils at those primary schools who are admitted to the secondary school. The proposal is to retain this provision.

Proposed New Arrangements

³³ Summative assessment is also referred to as assessment of learning and has a stronger focus on assessing the cumulative nature of what has been learned at appropriate points

³⁴ Formative assessment should be an essential and natural part of the teaching process. It is also referred to as assessment for learning. Assessment for learning is the process of finding out where learners are within a learning continuum, where they need to go and how best to get there.

- 3.117 Our new assessment arrangements must redress the current emphasis on summative assessment and ensure formative assessment has priority as an essential and natural part of the teaching process. We know that assessment has become more synonymous with accountability than with learning. We propose to address this within our assessment and evaluation arrangements to ensure assessment supports progression in learning.
- 3.118 *Successful Futures* identified that the current system has become centred on making general, best-fit judgements about performance. The consequence of this is that insufficient attention is being focused on progression, with ‘best-fit’ judgements masking wide variation in progress in different aspects of learning. We propose that the current system of ‘Levels’ will be removed. Schools will develop assessments based upon the Achievement Outcomes described at each Progression Step. Progression Steps will be defined in legislation and have been deliberately set at three yearly intervals so as to allow teachers to plan and assess learning without constant reference to externally determined criteria.
- 3.119 Many of the features of the current assessment system will remain relevant to support the new curriculum. The need to understand where learners are on entry to statutory schooling and establish a baseline; the need for formative ongoing assessment; consistent summative teacher assessment; planning to support transition for learners; and reporting to parents remain essential. The detail of these arrangements will change to reflect and support the new curriculum.
- 3.120 The existing powers enable us to make the majority of changes necessary to achieve this vision for assessment.
- 3.121 For example, we are already making changes to our national tests, and have introduced personalised assessments. The purpose of the assessments is to help learners progress, through understanding what they can do, the things they need to work on, and their next steps. In personalised or ‘adaptive’ assessments, the questions are selected based on the learner’s response to the previous question. This provides an individual assessment experience and tailors the level of challenge for every learner.
- 3.122 We propose to re-enact most of the provisions for assessment arrangements, so that these are available to support the new Curriculum for Wales. Therefore we propose to provide the Welsh Ministers with an Order making power to specify in relation to each of the AoLEs such assessment arrangements as they consider appropriate.
- 3.123 We are also proposing to enact the following supplementary powers to ensure these assessment arrangements work in practice:
- i. A power to set out the details of the assessment arrangements in an external document.

- ii. A power to allow Welsh Ministers to confer functions on the head teacher, governing body, local authority, a person providing Funded Nursery education (potentially a private nursery) and any other persons as the Welsh Ministers deem appropriate in relation to any Order which prescribes assessment arrangements.
- iii. An order making power for determining the extent to which the curriculum and any assessment arrangements, including the implementation of these arrangements, achieve the purpose for which the arrangements are made (i.e. assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum and the assessment arrangements), but doing so in a way which is consistent with privacy laws.
- iv. A power enabling the Welsh Ministers to confer powers on a head teacher, governing body, local authority and a person providing Funded Nursery education (potentially a private nursery), when exercising any function in connection with assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum and the assessment arrangements to enter premises of the school or, as the case may be, premises on which the Funded Nursery education is being provided:
 - To observe implementation of the curriculum and assessment arrangements, and
 - To inspect, and take copies of, documents and other articles.
- v. A power to enable that an assessment arrangement Order may authorise the Welsh Ministers to make such provision giving full effect to or otherwise supplementing the provision made by the Order as appear to the Welsh Ministers to be expedient.

3.124 These proposed supplementary powers extend the current powers by:

- Allowing Welsh Ministers to confer functions on ‘any other persons the Welsh Ministers deem appropriate’ (in addition to head teachers, governing bodies and local authorities); and
- Assessing the effectiveness of assessment arrangements is amended to assess the effectiveness of both curriculum and assessment arrangements, recognising the curriculum is central and assessment has a supporting role.

Proposed New Arrangements for Achievement Outcomes

3.125 Welsh Ministers will no longer have the power to prescribe desirable outcomes and attainment targets by way of Order. Instead there will be a duty on head teachers to set Achievement Outcomes against each Progression Step for their pupils. Progression Steps will be defined in legislation and have been deliberately set at three yearly intervals to allow teachers to plan and assess learning without constant reference to externally determined criteria. Achievement Outcomes would set out the expected standards of pupils’ performance.

3.126 It is proposed that these Achievement Outcomes would take the form of statements which describe the type and range of achievements characteristic of children at each Progression Step. In deciding a child's outcome at each Progression Step, teachers should judge which description best fits the pupil's performance. Head teachers would have the discretion to specify what the Achievement Outcomes are but would need to have due regard to the Achievement Outcomes set out by Welsh Ministers within statutory guidance. Schools will develop assessments based upon the Achievement Outcomes described at each Progression Step.

3.127 This approach is consistent with the overall ethos of the legislation in providing schools with more freedom in relation to teaching and assessment.

Proposed New Arrangements for Statutory Guidance

3.128 We are proposing to include a provision in the legislation to issue statutory guidance for the assessment arrangements under the Assessment and Evaluation Framework, which will include E-Portfolios. This will set out the statutory requirements and also include guidance that schools, Funded Nursery providers, and local authorities should have regard to when making plans for assessment and when assessing learning.

3.129 It will also enable us to issue statutory guidance for E-Portfolios. We are developing an online system that will enable all learners in maintained settings (3-16) to create and own an online E-Portfolio. E-Portfolios will afford learners the ability to showcase their work, achievements and experiences from both within and outside of school. They will reflect what is important to the learner and contribute to the Four Purposes of Education as described in *Successful Futures*.

Question:

15. What are your views on the legislative proposals to enable the new assessment arrangements?

Evaluation Arrangements

Summary of proposals

- We propose to use existing powers to support the new evaluation arrangements and are not proposing any new provision in the legislation.

Existing Arrangements

3.130 The education system, and the elements within it, are currently evaluated and supported through a range of accountability processes, for instance:

- Governing bodies are the first line of accountability for schools. Their duties are laid out in legislation (set out mainly in Part 3 of the *Education Act 2002*);
- Schools' self-review based on All-Wales Core Data Sets and comparisons with the family of 'similar' schools. This informs their statutory school development plan³⁵;
- Local authorities' statutory duties and the school improvement functions which are delivered by the regional consortia. This is subject to local democratic scrutiny as well as the working arrangements within the National Model for Regional Working.
- The current set of performance measures collected and published by the Welsh Government in statistical bulletins and the MyLocalSchool website;
- The National School Categorisation System;
- Estyn HMCI (Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate) inspections, annual reports and thematic reports; and
- Participation in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys on a three-yearly cycle.

3.131 The OECD 2014 policy review of Welsh education³⁶ noted the rich amount of assessment and evaluation data available at different levels of the system to improve policy and practice. However, it saw a lack of coherence in the totality of assessment and evaluation arrangements and commented that, '*...Wales has struggled to strike a balance between accountability and improvement*'. Since then, *Successful Futures* and *A Learning Inspectorate – An independent review of Estyn*³⁷ have recommended that Welsh Government should no longer gather information about children and young people's performance at a school level, but should monitor performance in key aspects through annual testing on a sampling basis.

3.132 Some of the unintended consequences of the current accountability system and performance measures include a narrowing choice of the curriculum at both the primary and secondary sector away from the subjects which are not measured closely. The current Level 2 inclusive measure creates an arbitrary and undue focus on learners on the GCSE grade C / D boundary and a system where the result is undesirable behaviours being encouraged.

3.133 In summary, the current arrangements do not form a coherent set of complementary components with consistent expectations and purposes. Without such coherence, schools are subject to potentially conflicting messages about what matters and may divert effort from learning and teaching towards gathering and retaining, often considerable, quantities of evidence to satisfy different requirements.

³⁵ [Education \(School Development Plans\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

³⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/education/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf>

³⁷ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/learning-inspectorate-independent-review-estyn>

- 3.134 The OECD evidence is clear: if we are to raise standards for every learner, then we must ensure we have an evaluation system which prioritises improvement and is coherent with the new curriculum and assessment arrangements.
- 3.135 *Successful Futures* also identified that learner assessments in Wales have wrongly been part of our accountability system; lines between the two have been blurred which has led to negative, unintended consequences that have hampered raising school standards. Stakeholders have told us that 'high stakes' use of teacher assessment data can lead to additional stress placed on schools and their pupils, and that such cultures may divert attention from meeting the needs of young people as individuals, with the focus instead on schools seeking to disguise weaknesses and present themselves in as good a light as possible. Undue attention is often given to those pupils whose marginal improvement will affect performance figures or attempts may be made to select the school population at the expense of young people with the greatest needs.
- 3.136 In order to address this recommendation, the *Education (Amendments Relating to Teacher Assessment Information) (Wales) Regulations 2018* came into effect in July 2018 which removed duties placed on local authorities and governing bodies to publish teacher assessment data and National Reading and Numeracy Test data at a school, local authority and consortia level. However, this information will still be available within the school to support teaching and school self-evaluation. These amendments were made to ensure that teacher assessment data is used primarily to support progress at an individual pupil level rather than being misused for accountability purposes.
- 3.137 In order to support this objective further views have considered whether we should legislate to prohibit the publication of assessment data at school level (or of anonymised learners). However, engagement with practitioners and other stakeholders on this alternative option generated a negative reaction. Their view was that a prohibition on publication of data beneath the national level went too far and implied a level of secrecy which was inappropriate. Stakeholders were also concerned that such a prohibition would prohibit them from publishing marketing materials in relation to schools. They considered that, given GCSE data would still be published, there would be sufficient, relevant information on secondary school outcomes in the public domain.
- 3.138 We have considered the merits of pursuing a prohibition in the light of this feedback and have concluded we should not pursue this option.

New Arrangements

Guidance on self-evaluation

- 3.139 Under Section 33 of the *School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013*, there is a power for the Welsh Ministers to issue statutory guidance to local authorities,

governing bodies and head teachers on how to exercise their education functions in order to improve the standard of education. The school authorities must adhere to the guidance unless there is a good reason not to follow it and it has published its own policy or, in a particular case, to follow the Welsh Minister's guidance would be unreasonable.

- 3.140 We do not propose to implement new primary legislation on evaluation and improvement of schools, rather we will use existing provision complemented with statutory guidance to assist stakeholders to be robust in their evaluation of the new curriculum.
- 3.141 As set out in *Education in Wales: Our National Mission*, the Evaluation and Improvement Arrangements, published in February 2019, clearly shows the responsibilities of each part of the system to embed collaboration and raise standards for all of our learners. Self-evaluation forms the basis of the new system. It follows the *Successful Futures* principle of subsidiarity in that the responsibility for ensuring that each tier of the education system (Welsh Government, local authorities and schools) plays its part and is located as close as possible to the point of delivery.
- 3.142 Key to the new evaluation and improvement arrangements will be robust and continuous self-evaluation along with professional dialogue to support improvement for schools.
- 3.143 The principles underpinning the evaluation and improvement framework are set out below and a summary of the priorities will be published:
- Self-evaluation will drive improvement;
 - Self-evaluation will focus on the four purposes of the new curriculum;
 - Self-evaluation will be subject to peer engagement and authentication; and
 - Self-evaluation will be a continual process and not a snapshot of a particular point in time.

Self-Evaluation for Learning and Improving

- 3.144 A new national self-evaluation framework is being developed by OECD, Estyn and the profession. The intention is that evaluation criteria and approaches will provide coherence and a common language to self-evaluation for schools, local authorities, consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government.

Validation and Peer Review

- 3.145 School, consortia and Welsh Government self-evaluation will need an element of external perspective if it is to offer the necessary challenge. Authentication at school level will be undertaken by the regional consortia and peer engagement will form part of the self-evaluation process.

Action Plan and Publication

- 3.146 The outcome of the self evaluation process for schools will result in an action plan for improvement. A summary of this will be published by the school.
- 3.147 The Welsh Government will publish statutory guidance on self-evaluation for all maintained nurseries and schools in Wales. At this stage, it is intended that it will take the form of the new national self-evaluation toolkit, which is being developed in partnership with the OECD, Estyn and practitioners.
- 3.148 The transition measures to implement the new evaluation and improvement framework in order to support the incoming Curriculum for Wales are outlined in the details published in February 2019.
- 3.149 All tiers³⁸ will benefit from self-evaluation based on a broad range of qualitative and quantitative information. There will be greater transparency in future of actions being taken to support improvement as a result of the requirement to publish a summary of priorities. Peer engagement and validation will introduce extra accountability into the system. It will draw on a wider range of information not just a small set of performance data.
- 3.150 We will establish a programme to assess national progress and will engage partners in its development. The key principles which will underpin it are that it should be focused on the national priorities, for example, literacy, numeracy, digital competence, science and health and well-being, and will only give information at a national level. Its purpose is to assess how the education system as a whole is performing and to inform policy priorities and impact at a national level. It should therefore avoid creating incentives for the wrong behaviours and the pitfalls of 'high stakes' accountability.
- 3.151 Governing bodies, local authorities, and regional consortia will all continue to have an important role to play in holding the system to account. The Independent Review of Estyn recommended changes to how they work, but their role will still be to report on the quality and standards of education as well as incorporating a new element of self-evaluation and provide external accountability by validating self-evaluation through inspection.
- 3.152 Estyn's statutory duties will continue to be to inspect and report on the quality and standards of education and training provided in Wales and the other provisions as set out in section 20 and 28 of the Education Act 2005. Schools will continue to be judged under the five inspection areas as set out in the Common Inspection

³⁸ Tier 1 - Welsh Government

Tier 2 - Four regional consortia, local authorities, diocesan authorities, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, Education Workforce Council (EWC), examination boards and higher education

Tier 3 - Schools

Framework ³⁹(Standards; Well-being and Attitudes to learning; Teaching and Learning Experiences; Care Support and Guidance; Leadership and Management), along with the four main questions set out in recommendation five as agreed with Estyn⁴⁰. Further work will be required on how this looks within a future common inspection framework, but this will form part of a formal consultation by Estyn as the work progresses.

3.153 In future a school's self-evaluation will be validated through inspection by Estyn; the Review of Estyn provides a clear pathway to include validation as part of their new inspection process.

Transition period September 2020 – September 2024

3.154 'A Learning Inspectorate' envisages a three-phased approach to transitioning from the current Estyn inspection arrangements to the new one. The timeline of how Estyn propose to take this forward is designed to reflect and support the maturation of the reform. Each of the phases would retain Estyn's role of providing credible independent assurance. Estyn intend to consult on the arrangements in due course.

Questions:

16. Do you agree with the proposed approach outlined for evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment arrangements?
17. What are your views on the proposed approach to the publication of learner assessment data and any risks you foresee?

Impact assessments

3.155 The proposals put forward in this White Paper will require the education system to change to deliver the new arrangements; this includes changes for practitioners, schools, local authorities, regional consortia, Estyn, Qualifications Wales, Agreed Syllabus Conferences and Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education.

³⁹ <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/inspection-explained/common-inspection-framework>

⁴⁰ The strategic purpose of inspection, self-evaluation (and wider accountability mechanisms) should focus on answering four main questions: A How well is the school engaging with the purposes of the Curriculum for Wales?

B How well are pupils progressing in their learning and achieving appropriately high standards?

C How well developed is the fundamental building blocks for learning: • the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum? • The quality of learning and teaching? • The well-being of all pupils?

D How well does the school use self-evaluation and professional learning to identify its current strengths and set priorities for development?

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/A%20Learning%20Inspectorate%20-%20en%20-%20June%202018.pdf>

These proposals will have an impact on the education children and young people receive in Wales and these are the key basis for the reforms.

3.156 It is important to understand these new requirements, which can range from financial costs or savings, to cultural and behavioural changes, environmental impacts and social impacts, and to set out this understanding in order for the public to fully understand the proposals being put forward.

3.157 The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) and impact assessments which accompany this White Paper show the beginnings of this appraisal process to understand the potential impacts and we welcome views to help support this appraisal. The impact assessments have identified positive contributions to Welsh language and children's rights as a result of the proposals. The legislative proposals look to support the design principles of the new arrangements that the arrangements are appropriate to every learner in every classroom. The Equalities impact assessment has identified impacts on groups with protected characteristics. We will be working further to develop these impact assessments to understand the potential impacts as the legislative proposals and curriculum develop.

Question:

18. Do you agree with our approach for the RIA? Is there anything else you think we should take account of?

Question:

19. Do you agree with our approach for the Impact Assessments? We would particularly value your view on the proposed impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

4. Delivery

Professional Learning

- 4.1 We want every parent to be confident that their child goes to a school that helps them grow as capable, healthy and well-rounded citizens. We recognise that to achieve this, teachers must be supported to be the best that they can be, raising the standing of the profession as a whole.
- 4.2 Teachers share an individual, professional and national mission to help our children succeed. Working closely with the profession, we will raise teaching standards and opportunities for development.
- 4.3 The new curriculum will enable teachers to be confident, ambitious and innovative and we will support teachers to be the best that they can be, raising the standing of the profession as a whole. It responds to what teachers themselves have been asking for, to enable them to unleash their creativity and professional expertise to support every learner to fulfil their potential and to raise standards.
- 4.4 Professor John Furlong's report *Teaching Tomorrow's Teachers*⁴¹ is critical in reforming our teacher training courses and developing the skills teachers want and need, linked to the new Professional Teaching Standards, leadership qualities, and development of learning support staff.
- 4.5 Teachers themselves should also be life-long students. Learning from each other, continuously improving, and studying best practice whether it is in the next school, country or continent. Pioneer schools have already made progress in supporting such peer to peer learning. Federation is an effective structural driver that can, and will, be used to enhance school improvement, underpinned by a leadership programme.
- 4.6 This peer to peer and local drive to improve will be framed by a national approach to career-long professional learning which builds capacity for all practitioners including teaching support staff, classroom teachers and school leaders.
- 4.7 A national approach to professional learning will reduce variation in existing provision and guarantee an equitable entitlement for all practitioners.
- 4.8 Pioneer schools are engaging in focused evidence gathering to inform professional learning. This is supported by the University of Wales Trinity St David, Bangor University and Cardiff Metropolitan University. This work will help identify the immediate professional learning requirements aligned to the new curriculum. The new curriculum will call on all practitioners to think afresh about what they teach, how they teach and about what we want young people to be as well as to learn. Engagement

⁴¹ <https://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/wagreviews/teaching-tomorrows-teachers/?lang=en>

work led by pioneers will help to equip educational practitioners with the skills to support the transition to their new role as ‘curriculum designers.’

4.9 We have been working with the OECD since November 2016 to develop a ‘Schools as Learning Organisations’ (SLO)⁴² model for Wales to continually enhance self-improvement capacity within and across our schools. The SLO model was launched November 2017 and is helping create, share and exploit learning opportunities, in schools, between schools, and with outside organisations. It enables teachers, leaders and schools to work with other schools and networks to identify and address common development needs.

4.10 We are also looking at the use of INSET days to ensure they can support professional learning going forward, working with key stakeholders.

Implications for Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

4.11 A wide ranging ITE reform programme is being implemented in response to *Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers*⁴³. This will support our education reform to raise standards and deliver a high quality education profession.

4.12 New full time programmes of ITE will be available from academic year 19/20 and as Wales moves towards reformed ITE, ITE Partnerships should be clear about the activity included in their programmes for the development of student teachers to teach the new curriculum.

4.13 We are committed to ensure that ITE in Wales is strengthened through a truly collaborative system, where universities and schools work in robust partnership, supported by the consortia and recognising the importance of research, we will develop reflective and highly effective teachers and leaders who have a commitment to their own professional growth and that of their colleagues to ensure effective teaching and learning in our schools.

⁴² <https://beta.gov.wales/schools-learning-organisations-model>

⁴³ <https://beta.gov.wales/review-initial-teacher-training-2015-teaching-tomorrows-teachers>

5. Additional Questions

Question 20 – We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

Question 21 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

Question 22 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

Annex A

Glossary

A

Agreed Syllabus - A syllabus of religious education that is not specific to one religion adopted by an LA for teaching in community and controlled schools. An Agreed Syllabus Conference is convened to recommend a syllabus to the LA.

AOLE – Area of Learning and Experience. The new curriculum’s organising structure will comprise six Areas of Learning and Experience.

ARC – Atlantic Rim Collaboratory - a global group of educational systems that advances values of equity, excellence, well-being, inclusion, democracy and human rights for all students within high-quality, professionally-run systems.

Assessment - The arrangements by which teachers monitor pupils’ progress (see also Statutory Assessment).

Assessment and Evaluation Framework - A system-wide approach from Early Years to Post-16 to ensure that all children receive a quality education in an environment where all learners benefit from an inclusive and diverse curriculum, whilst acknowledging the importance of health and well-being.

Achievement Outcomes - Are statements, made from the learner’s perspective, to indicate their development along the progression steps. These should contribute clearly to the four curriculum purposes and should have an emphasis on achievement in a broad sense, rather than only narrower measures of attainment. They span the components within the Area of Learning and Experience and address the Cross-curriculum Responsibilities and wider skills.

B

Basic Curriculum – The basic curriculum outlines what currently must be taught in every maintained school in Wales. The National Curriculum forms part of the basic curriculum, along with other components such as Religious Education, Personal and Social Education etc.

C

Catholic Education Service (CES) – The body which supports and promotes Catholic Education in England and Wales.

Collective Worship – A daily act of worship for all pupils in the school which is broadly Christian in nature. Collective Worship does not form part of the school curriculum and is therefore not addressed in *Successful Futures*.

Core Subjects – Currently English, Welsh (in Welsh-medium schools), Mathematics and a Science, those subjects that have been given importance within the National Curriculum. All pupils in Key Stages 2,3 and 4 must study the core subjects as well as the foundation

subjects (Welsh in English medium schools and Physical Education, in addition to the core subjects, are compulsory in Key Stage 4).

Cross Curriculum Responsibilities – Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities are ‘foundations for almost all learning and are essential to being able to participate successfully and confidently in the modern world’. For the new curriculum, these have been defined as literacy, numeracy and the digital competence. These elements have therefore been given priority, over Wider Skills (see below).

Curriculum – Professor Donaldson defined the school curriculum in Wales as including all of the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of agreed purposes of education.

Careers and the World of Work (CWoW) – are about the relationships between young people, their learning and the world of work to help learners make effective careers choices. CWoW should enable learners to:-

- Explore the attitudes and values required for employability and lifelong learning;
- Plan and manage their pathway through the range of opportunities in learning and work;
- Develop Key Skills and other skills required by employers; and
- Prepare for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life.

D

Digital Competence - Digital competence is the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable the confident, creative and critical use of technologies and systems.

E

Education in Wales: Our National Mission – Referred to as simply ‘Our National Mission’, this is the Welsh Government’s plan to continue to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence, with roll-out planned for 2022.

Evaluation and Improvement arrangements - Established under an overarching assessment and evaluation framework in order to provide coherence and to underpin the new curriculum and assessment

Evaluation Indicators - A range of indicators for schools to self-evaluate against which would then form part of the National Self-Evaluation Framework being developed by OECD, Estyn and the profession

F

Funded Nursery Setting - means a nursery education provided by a private setting and which is funded by a local authority in Wales pursuant to section 118 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Duty of local authority as respects availability of nursery education).

Formative Assessment – Formative assessment, including diagnostic testing, is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. It typically involves qualitative feedback for both student and teacher that focuses on the details of content and performance.

Four Purposes - The new curriculum proposed in ‘Successful Futures’ is broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging with the four purposes outlined at its heart to ensure that children and young people develop as:

- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society; and
- Ethical, informed citizens ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.

For the related key characteristics for each of the purposes, please see pages 29-30 of Successful Futures.

Foundation Phase – The curriculum for 3 to 7 year olds in Wales, in both maintained schools and Funded Nursery Settings. Within the Foundation Phase, the curriculum is set out in seven areas of learning.

K

Key Stage(s) – Following the Foundation Phase, schooling is currently divided into stages that relate to ages (Key Stage 2: 7-11, Key Stage 3: 11-14, Key Stage 4: 14-16).

L

Literacy - The ability to apply skills and knowledge in oracy, reading and writing in daily activities at school, at home and in the community.

LNF- National Literacy and Numeracy Framework

N

National Curriculum - The national curriculum forms part of the basic curriculum. It comprises the Foundation Phase and Key Stages. Compulsory Programmes of Study and assessment arrangements are outlined on a national level for national curriculum subjects.

Numeracy - The application of mathematical understanding in daily activities at school, at home, at work, and in the community.

P

Pedagogy - The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

Peer review - An external perspective element of self-evaluation that involves senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers at the school level, and the ARC at the Wales Education System level.

Performance Indicator (PI) - An agreed indicator used to measure performance attainment and to assess changes in performance.

Pioneer Network - The Pioneer schools network is at the forefront of the design and development of the new curriculum in Wales and represents a range of different schools from across Wales. There are three strands of work taken forward by the network:

- The design and development of the new curriculum;
- The development of the digital competence framework, and ensuring that it is embedded within the AoLEs ;and
- Professional Learning for practitioners.

They work together as they share practice and learning across the sector.

Progression Steps – Progression Steps set at regular intervals will provide a ‘road map’ for each individual child and young person’s progress in their learning. They will be described at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) - The statutory collections of school information and pupil details, characteristics and curriculum.

R

Regional Consortia – There are four regional consortia in Wales. They are local authorities working together to add value to what local authorities can achieve on their own, allowing them to share good practice, knowledge and skills, magnify local strengths and build capacity.

S

Self Evaluation – Continuous self-evaluation - both qualitative and quantitative - focuses strongly upon improving outcomes in standards and well-being for every pupil. A new national self-evaluation framework is being developed by OECD, Estyn and teachers with the intention to provide coherence and a common language to self-evaluation criteria.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) - Each LA must establish a SACRE to advise it on Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools.

Successful Futures - Review of the education system in Wales by Professor Donaldson - report published in February 2015 containing 68 recommendations which outlined his findings following an independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales.

Summative Assessment – Summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period- typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, programme, or school year.

V

Validation / Verification - Self-evaluation will be validated by Estyn as part of their new inspection process which is being formed following Professor Donaldson's review of Estyn.

W

Whole School Approach - Involves addressing the needs of pupils, staff and the wider community, not only within the curriculum, but across the whole-school and learning environment. It is the effective linking of all elements of an education setting's provision, policy, staff and community; encouraging the communication and reinforcement of a consistent positive ethos and providing holistic high quality support for learners.

Wider Skills - The wider skills are:

- Critical thinking and problem solving – marshalling critical and logical processes to analyse and understand situations and develop responses and solutions;
- Planning and organising – implementing solutions and executing ideas and monitoring and reflecting on results;
- Creativity and innovation – generating ideas, openness and courage to explore ideas and express opinions; and
- Personal effectiveness – reflecting on and understanding oneself and others, behaving in effective and appropriate ways, being an effective learner.

The Welsh Government, in common with other countries across the world, has recognised the importance of ensuring that children and young people develop a range of 'wider skills' thought necessary for modern life and work. It has taken steps to ensure that children and young people develop these wider skills and become more resilient and better able to deal with the changing challenges that face individuals now and in the future.

Annex B

Area of Learning and Experience Content and Guidance

*Please note that this model is currently in draft form. The draft curriculum will be available for feedback in April 2019.

Components included in an Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE)

Where appropriate, references will be made to the links, dependencies and interdependencies within and between AoLEs.

A statement detailing how the AoLE supports the four purposes

The four purposes are at the heart of all decisions relating to designing our curriculum for Wales. Each AoLE includes a statement explaining how it makes distinct and strong contributions to developing the four purposes of the curriculum.

Statements outlining how the following curriculum aspects should be embedded in the AoLE:

- Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence;
- Welsh Dimension and International Perspective;
- Work-Related Learning;
- Wider Skills; and
- Relationships and Sexuality Education.

These aspects of the new curriculum are being addressed in each AoLE as they have been identified as being cross-curricular in nature i.e. elements of the curriculum that all practitioners should have responsibility to consider and embed when designing the curriculum, as well as learning and teaching, at school level.

What Matters statements and rationales

The What Matters statements are used as a means of organising learning and, when considered together, span the breadth of the AoLE. They flow from the four purposes of the new curriculum, draw on key disciplinary knowledge and skills and therefore outline the essential aspects of learning within the AoLE.

Each What Matters statement has an accompanying rationale that further explores what is captured in the statement and provides a justification as to why it is one of the aspects that 'matters most' within the AoLE. The rationale draws further attention to the links between the four purposes, the relevant component disciplines with the AoLE, the What Matters statements and the relevant experiences, knowledge and skills essential to achieving them.

Planning support: experiences, knowledge and skills identified as key to achieving each of the What Matters

For each What Matters statement, further detail is provided to support the development of school level curriculum and to help learners progress towards achieving both the statements and the four purposes of the curriculum. High level statements have been developed relating to experiences, knowledge (both disciplinary and instrumental) and skills and, where appropriate, references are also made to sequencing.

These experiences, knowledge and skills statements have been developed as a common starting point for school level curriculum, ensuring the balance between national guidance and local flexibility, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity.

If deemed essential to achieving the relevant What Matters statement, reference will be made to the cross-curriculum aspects outlined above.

Descriptions of learning: Progression Steps and Achievement Outcomes

Progression as a learning journey is signalled through Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.

Achievement Outcomes related to each of the five Progression Steps have been developed for each What Matters statement. They are described from the learner's point of view, using terms like 'I have...' for experiences and 'I can...' for outcomes.

Achievement Outcomes provide descriptions of learning as broad expectations achievable over a period of time, approximately three years. They:

- Signal an emphasis on achievement in a broad sense, rather than narrow measures of attainment;
- Include references to experiences which are relevant to the four purposes and to which children and young people should be entitled; and
- Require a broad range of assessment approaches.

The above aspects will be covered in Statutory Guidance (to which schools will have to demonstrate a due regard).

Examples of further scaffolding to support practitioners

Overarching guidance which provides an explanation of the AoLE model as well as guiding principles to support the embedding of the following aspects where appropriate across the curriculum:

- Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities: Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Competence (statutory to 16);
- A Welsh dimension and international perspective;
- Wider skills;
- Enrichment and Experiences;
- Welsh across the Curriculum;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education; and
- Work-related learning.

The **Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks and Digital Competence Framework** will not be statutory in the new curriculum. They will however be updated and continue to be available to support the embedding of the Cross Curriculum Responsibilities across the new curriculum.

Guidance documents on **Relationships and Sexuality Education and Work-Related Learning** to provide guidance on whole-school approaches.

AoLE specific guidance

Further guidance will be available per AoLE to support practitioners to put the new curriculum into practice. Where appropriate, this guidance will provide advice on aspects such as:

- Pedagogical approaches specific to the AoLE;
- Exemplification;
- More disciplinary-specific guidance to support integrated approaches to AoLE design;
- How learners' Welsh language skills might be further developed through the AoLE; and
- References to useful resources.

These will be set out in Non-Statutory Guidance to support to practitioners.