



## **EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 5TH JULY 2022**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE REPORT ON THE CURRICULUM FOR WALES**

**REPORT BY: JAMES KENT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, EAS**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Curriculum for Wales Implementation within Caerphilly Local Authority schools.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 From September 2022 all primary schools will be required to introduce the Curriculum for Wales (2022). Secondary schools had the opportunity to opt into the curriculum or defer until September 2023, to provide greater time for preparation, due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In contrast to the previous National Curriculum, the curriculum for Wales framework provides a higher-level framework providing schools with greater flexibility, with less prescribed content. This allows schools greater freedom to select approaches and contexts for learning that best suits the developmental needs of learners within each school's community. Qualifications that are supportive of the new curriculum are currently being developed by Qualifications Wales and will be available for learners in Year 10 from September 2025. This paper provides an update on Caerphilly schools' progress with the enactment of the curriculum for Wales.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are asked to receive the report for information and take the opportunity to comment.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 This report is for information only.

## 5. THE REPORT

### Caerphilly Secondary School Adoption

5.1 The following secondary schools have opted into the Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 and will therefore be subject to delivery of the Mandatory elements (see below) for pupils in Year 7 from 2022:

- Bedwas High School
- Glanynant Learning Centre
- Idris Davies School 3 - 18
- Lewis Girls' School
- Lewis School Pengam
- Newbridge School
- Risca Community Comprehensive School
- St Cenydd Community School
- Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre
- Heolddu Comprehensive School

### September 2022: What are schools required to do from September 2022?

5.2 The Mandatory guidance states that schools 'must':

- enable learners to develop in the way described in the four purposes
- provide for appropriate progression and accord with the principles of progression set out in the 'Progression Code' – which applies to all learning across all Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)
- be suitable for learners of differing ages, abilities and aptitudes
- be broad and balanced
- encompass the concepts set out in the statements of what matters in the 'Statements of What Matters Code' – the detail of the statements of what matters must be included in schools' curricula
- provide for learning and teaching that encompasses each of the Areas of Learning and Experience
- include Welsh and English from 7 years old
- deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education (including the detail of the Relationships and Sexuality Code)
- deliver Religion Values and Ethics (RVE) – schools must also consider the agreed syllabus adopted by their local authority
- deliver the cross-curricular skills (literacy, numeracy and digital competence)

5.3 Schools must also adopt their curriculum and assessment arrangements and publish a summary of their curriculum.

5.4 Schools must implement their curriculum in a way that:

- enables each learner to develop in the ways described in the four purposes
- secures learning and teaching that offers appropriate progression for each learner
- is suitable for each learner's age, ability and aptitude
- takes account of each learner's additional learning needs (if any)
- secures broad and balanced learning and teaching for each learner
- for each learner encompasses the Areas, the mandatory curriculum elements of English and Welsh, the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital

competence, RSE (which must be suitable for a learner's stage of development), and RVE. Alongside this, schools must also have arrangements for assessment in place.

5.5 There are requirements around assessments set out in the Education (Arrangements for Assessing in the Curriculum for Wales) Regulations 2022 and include:

- making arrangements for and conducting the ongoing assessment of every pupil and child throughout the school year by a practitioner
- making arrangements for and conducting on-entry assessments of every pupil and child at certain points set out in those Regulations. Subject to confirmation of the detail, schools will also be required to:
- work within school and with other schools to develop a shared understanding of progression and to plan for transition for learners between schools
- provide information to parents and carers so that they understand the progress their child is making

5.6 Finally, when schools make decisions about their curriculum, they must consider the impact on learners' mental health and emotional well-being. Secondly, schools must promote knowledge and understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to those people who provide learning and teaching, so that they understand these conventions. Thirdly, schools must co-operate with other schools, settings, local authorities and institutions, if that helps them fulfil their duties under the Act.

### **Qualifications Reform**

5.7 Alongside curriculum reform, qualifications for 14-16 year olds are also being reformed by the regulator Qualifications Wales. This is being managed through a three-phase consultation process. In the first phase (spring 2020), stakeholders were asked about the purposes of qualifications. In general respondents stated that:

- It is important to achieve an appropriate balance between qualifications that reflect the ethos of the new curriculum, and qualifications that support a smooth progression into post-16 education.
- It is important that any new qualifications retain currency and comparability with other qualifications in Wales and beyond.
- Qualifications and the curriculum are intertwined, and reform must happen concurrently.
- A variety of assessment methods should be used across the suite of available qualifications.
- There is a need to maintain an appropriate choice of qualifications, to ensure that qualifications meet the needs of a variety of different learners.

5.8 The second consultation (April 2020), provided 'decisions' on the shape of future qualifications, these are summarised in the 2 tables below:

## 1<sup>st</sup> Consultation

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<b>Expressive Arts</b>	<b>Humanities</b>
To not create a new qualification intended to support the delivery of the whole of this Area.	Create new GCSEs in Art and Design, Drama and Music.	Create new GCSEs in Business, Geography, History and Religious Studies.
Create new GCSEs in Food and Nutrition, Physical Education, and Health and Social Care, and Childcare.	Create a new GCSE in Film and Digital Media.	Create a new GCSE in Social Studies.
	Ensure that a choice of qualifications that assess dance continues to be available. Publish Approval Criteria for a made-for-Wales Dance qualification.	To not create a new GCSE in Humanities.
	Continue to give schools a choice of qualifications in Expressive Arts that offer a multi-disciplinary approach.	

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation

<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<b>Expressive Arts</b>	<b>Humanities</b>
Create new GCSEs in Food and Nutrition, Physical Education, and Health and Social Care, and Childcare.	Create a new GCSE in Film and Digital Media.	Create a new GCSE in Social Studies.
	Ensure that a choice of qualifications that assess dance continues to be available. Publish Approval Criteria for a made-for-Wales Dance qualification.	To not create a new GCSE in Humanities.
	Continue to give schools a choice of qualifications in Expressive Arts that offer a multi-disciplinary approach.	

5.9 Welsh qualifications were reviewed in January 2022, following consultation and these decisions were made:

- Decision 1: We will combine language and literature and create a new integrated GCSE in Welsh for learners in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools.

- Decision 2: We will discontinue GCSE Welsh Second Language and create a new GCSE for learners in English-medium settings.
- Decision 3: We will create a new additional qualification for learners in English-medium settings who are ready to progress further and more quickly in their Welsh language skills.

5.10 Following the decisions made above, Qualifications Wales are working with teachers, learners, expert advisers, employers, colleges, training providers and universities to develop proposals for the design, content and assessment of new qualifications. In Autumn 2022 Qualifications Wales will share proposals for the new GCSE qualifications. These will be consulted upon with all stakeholders.

### **Preparedness of Schools and the Impact of Covid-19**

5.11 Monitoring of progress towards curriculum for Wales as a requirement of School Improvement Partner reporting was postponed in Spring 2020, in recognition of the immediate and significant operational challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to focus on the move to both school-based hub provision and distance/blended learning.

5.12 In spring term 2022, despite the continued disruption caused by the pandemic, EAS asked all Headteachers to provide a self-assessment of their progress towards curriculum for Wales.

The outcomes of this self-evaluation revealed that:

- 95% of school leaders had or were in the process of revisiting their vision in light of the curriculum for Wales
- 95% of school leaders had considered the unique factors within their community in their curriculum design work.
- Most school leaders rated their understanding of the curriculum for Wales framework and its constituent elements as developing or good.
- 96% of school leaders were in the process of reviewing their approaches to progression and assessment.
- Nearly all schools have trialed a variety of curriculum design models (disciplinary (single subject), through to inter-disciplinary/integrated, where knowledge, skills and experiences from different subjects are combined).
- The majority of schools have engaged in enquiry to support of their curriculum design and development work.
- Support/Professional learning was requested in respect of RVE, RSE, Progression and Assessment. School leaders were also keen to see examples of practice beyond their own schools.

5.13 This survey will be repeated in the summer term of 2022, to provide Local Authorities with an update regarding schools' perceived progress with curriculum implementation. The information will also be utilised to ensure that all support and professional learning requirements are appropriately identified and brokered.

### **Cluster Conversations:**

5.14 During the Spring / Summer term of 2022, every school cluster across the EAS region was invited to attend a curriculum cluster conversation to provide an update of their progress towards curriculum for Wales and their collaborative work across the cluster. Every cluster throughout Caerphilly took the opportunity to participate. As

indicated above, school clusters are required to develop a shared understanding of progression and to plan for transition for learners between schools. In some cases, the cluster conversation was the first time that clusters had met 'face to face' since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, although all clusters have plans to develop their work collaboratively through the summer term. A summary of the key findings is provided below.

5.15 Where good 'emerging' practice was evident:

- Staff within the clusters have worked together as AoLE teams to develop a cluster approach to AoLEs.
- Planned and delivered shared insets across the cluster with joint inset days for teams to work together
- Cluster working has been used to enhance transition e.g. reviewing a series of transition points Y2, 3 and 6 and developing a cluster transition policy.
- Individual schools have come together to look at their own vision and then come together to develop a cluster vision.
- Clusters have worked together to develop common approaches to pedagogy e.g. a common language for maths, aspects of literacy e.g. oracy, breaking the Area of Learning down to understand the skills of the individual disciplines in Humanities.
- Clusters have developed shared inset days and professional learning plans
- One cluster (Blackwood) has conducted an audit of staff skills and areas of interest to provide a shared resource of expertise.

5.16 Other examples of good emerging practice included:

- Cluster based website for community engagement (Risca)
- Google Classroom being to support transition (Ysgol Cwm Rhymni)
- Equity as the underpinning focus of collaborative curriculum development work (Heolddu)
- Qualitative and quantitative data shared across the cluster to support future curriculum planning (baseline assessment data and more holistic summaries of learners' wellbeing, academic strengths and next steps in learning).
- Staff audit of skills/interests across the cluster to identify and share expertise

5.17 Support requirements identified by Caerphilly clusters:

- Progression and assessment
- Specific support for expressive arts, humanities and science
- Further development of understanding and approaches to curriculum design
- Develop knowledge of the local area, to curriculum contexts and learning experiences
- Develop a shared understanding of teaching and learning approaches across cluster schools
- Develop a shared understanding of key curriculum for Wales terminology

5.18 Each session was conducted using Agile Leadership tools developed by Dr Simon Breakspear to support each cluster's thinking. All clusters found the sessions helpful to refine their approaches, clarify any misconceptions that they had regarding the curriculum framework and re-set or enhance their forward planning as groups of schools.

- 5.19 EAS will now use the outcomes of the curriculum conversations to target support and professional learning to meet the needs of both individual schools and clusters.

### **Engagement with Professional Learning**

- 5.20 To support schools in the realisation of their curriculum for Wales development, the EAS offers a range of professional learning. The level of engagement and emerging impact of this work is set out below.
- 5.21 Secondary curriculum design sessions with Professor Mick Waters provided provocation for Secondary school senior leaders regarding key considerations for 'Macro' level curriculum design considerations e.g. use of time/space and resources. Six secondary schools from the local authority attended these sessions, with a few attending smaller follow-up group sessions. In a few cases, this has supported leadership teams to re-consider/refine their existing approaches.
- 5.22 All Caerphilly secondary schools have membership of the regional Secondary Curriculum Design Group. This purpose of this group is to support the sharing of emerging approaches to curriculum design.
- 5.23 All Caerphilly clusters attended the 4-part progression and assessment professional learning programme across the region. This provided schools with an opportunity to consider the curriculum for Wales progression and assessment guidance, both cluster and individual school-based approaches and learn from other schools across the region.
- 5.24 10 Caerphilly schools attended the cross-regional Curriculum Design Programme, which sought to develop a curriculum design process to support schools to enact the curriculum for Wales framework. All participants acknowledged that this has built their professional knowledge and skill in respect of curriculum design. In a few cases, the approaches set out during the professional learning are being taken forward to support a joined-up approach within clusters.
- 5.25 57 attendees from 40 Caerphilly schools and settings attended the recent curriculum design and principles of planning workshops. The purpose of these workshops was for schools to share their approaches to curriculum design and medium and short-term planning.
- 5.26 Nearly all Caerphilly schools and settings are represented within the Curriculum for Wales teaching and learning and Progression and Assessment networks. These networks provide opportunities for schools to share practice and develop resources, which are shared across the region via the curriculum for Wales website.

### **Supporting Schools to Develop their approach beyond 2022**

- 5.27 Working in partnership with the local authority, the EAS will ensure that schools have access to appropriate levels of support and professional learning to realise the curriculum for Wales. This will comprise:
- Support from the school's School Improvement Partner (and school to school, good school links, where appropriate)
  - Example School Development Planning guidance to assist with strategic planning.

- Access to the national professional learning programme for Headteachers and Senior Leaders
- Access to the national professional learning programme for Middle Leaders and Teachers
- The curriculum for Wales regional website will be kept updated, to share updated policy information and share emerging practice.
- Professional learning for HLTAs / TAs
- The Secondary Curriculum Design Network
- Area of Learning/Subject Networks
- Bespoke support / support for cluster working as needs emerge.
- Regular update sessions for governors.
- Support for AoLE and Disciplines
- Bespoke support for schools and clusters upon request

All support opportunities are advertised via the region's supporting our schools' site and via well-established Teams networks.

## **Risks**

- 5.28 Continued disruption caused by the pandemic makes the engagement of schools with the professional learning and networking across the cluster and other groups of schools challenging.
- 5.29 Schools will feel under pressure to fast-track their curriculum development work and miss key milestones in the sequencing of development work, as set out the in Journey to 2022 document.
- 5.30 Caerphilly secondary schools in particular have to prioritise the immediate needs of learners in examination year groups.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.31 The curriculum for Wales was published in January 2020. This is part of an integrated suite of reforms, which include changes to evaluation and improvement arrangements and changes to qualifications to learners in the 14-16 age group. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been significant, with schools required to turn their attention to the considerable operational challenge of providing in-school, distance and blended learning provision. Whilst this has meant that many have been able to focus on the development of their curriculum and work with cluster partners less, other learning and skills have emerged, which will support their efforts to realise the curriculum for Wales. EAS will continue to monitor Caerphilly schools' preparedness for the curriculum for Wales, whilst working with partners to provide a wide range of professional learning support and guidance.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1. There are no specific assumptions.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 This report is for information only, therefore no Integrated Impact Assessment is required.



## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 This work is funded through the EAS Business Plan, therefore there are no specific financial implications.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 The Consultees are noted below:

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000, Children's Act 2004, Standards and Framework Act 1998

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Councillor Jo Rao, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
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