



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board
Thursday 27th October 2022

Report of the Head of Education Development – Christopher Millis

Matter for Monitoring

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title. Curriculum for Wales Monitoring

Purpose of the Report:

To provide members with information on the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales and how Neath Port Talbot schools are being supported

Executive Summary:

This report will provide information on how the Education Development Service (EDS) monitors the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales

Background:

This monitoring report builds on the report on the EDS curriculum reform report October 2021.

Current position

From September 2022, all primary and special schools are beginning to teach under the Curriculum for Wales. Secondary schools had the opportunity to introduce the Curriculum for Wales for pupils entering year 7 in September 2022; one secondary school took up this opportunity. The remaining secondary schools will begin teaching under the Curriculum for Wales for pupils in year 7 and 8 from September 2023.

What curriculum means

The Curriculum for Wales defines a curriculum as everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and, crucially, why we teach it. An integral part of curriculum is

how we assess learning, as it ensures that what is taught, and how it is taught, supports learners to make progress and ensures they are challenged and supported in this.

The approach set out in the Curriculum for Wales Framework depends on schools and teachers being empowered to take ownership of curriculum development, within the requirements of a national framework. In order to achieve this, the Welsh Government want to see a system where leaders and professionals have the support, space to design, and implement their curricula. This space is essential to giving professionals the time to think about the learning that really matters and why, and to empower them to innovate using their professional skills and judgement.

Curriculum reform is an ongoing process – and striving for learners to realise the four purposes is a process that will go beyond the initial rollout of Curriculum for Wales. The EDS will continue to support practitioners beyond initial implementation to ensure their curricula are enabling learners to realise the four purposes. As part of this, schools and settings will need to keep their curricula under review so that they can respond to the outcomes of professional inquiry, the changing needs of learners, and social contexts and needs.

The reform journey: where are we and what next?

The Curriculum for Wales: implementation plan sets out how the wider education sector will support schools and settings to achieve expectations in accordance with the national mission commitments. This implementation plan also helps to ensure that all parts of the education system in Wales have a common direction – supporting schools and settings towards the four purposes of the curriculum, and delivering change for learners, practitioners, and the wider public.

Shared aspirations for Wales' education system

The shared aspirations set out what the Welsh Government want the education system to look like in the long-term, as a result of schools and settings designing and implementing their curricula.

Shared aspirations for the education system

1. Learners will realise the four purposes of the curriculum

This is the goal for every child and young person in Wales, and is our most important objective for curriculum reform. Everything done in the system, by all partners, should drive towards these purposes. The needs and well-being of learners are a critical part of this aspiration. Keeping these concerns central to our work helps ensure not only that learners are in the best position to realise the four purposes of the curriculum, but also that they feel supported to achieve their own ambitions throughout their lives.

2. All schools will be the designers of their own successful curriculum

These should be developed in line with the Curriculum for Wales guidance, informed by their learners, communities and local contexts. A curriculum should be clear about why specific learning matters and how it will contribute to learners' progress, with design of assessment arrangements an intrinsic part of the process of developing a curriculum. Practitioners will continually review and shape their curriculum, consistently asking 'why' and 'what next' with assessment a fundamental part of informing these discussions.

3. Every curriculum will enable all learners to progress, facilitated by appropriate arrangements for assessment

All learners should be supported to make progress throughout their education. This progression should be meaningful and appropriate, based on the approach in the Curriculum for Wales guidance. Schools and settings should collaborate to develop a shared understanding of progression, developing shared expectations of what progression looks like and the pace of progression across the continuum of learning. Assessment should be integral to the learning process and embedded in day-to-day practice. Information gathered through individual learner assessment will be for use within schools and settings only, promoting learners' progression and supporting school curricula review for evaluation and improvement purposes, not to hold individual schools, settings or practitioners to account.

4. High-quality learning and teaching underpin every curriculum

Practitioners should have the space to develop and use their teaching, agency and creativity to help realise their ambitions through the curriculum. Practitioners should provide learners with a wide range of learning experiences. These should be supported by effective and varied use of pedagogy and may be refined to reflect inquiry-based approaches. These holistic experiences should relate to the purpose of learning and support learners' progression. Such approaches will be facilitated and reinforced by increasing practitioner ownership of what and how they teach. Central to achieving this aspiration is improving practitioner well-being and empowerment in their roles, as well as the well-being of their learners.

5. Every curriculum will raise the expectations for learners and support equity and inclusivity for all

All learners in Wales should be challenged, supported and given opportunities to realise their full potential. Learning experiences should be inclusive and accessible. Curriculum design and school support should actively seek to address gaps in attainment. Schools and settings should have high expectations for all learners – challenging and supporting them to make appropriate progress, throughout the 3–16 continuum, and as they transition into post-16 provision.

6. At every level, there will be a shared understanding and realisation of curriculum across Wales

A curriculum should be supported by the whole education system as well as wider partners and stakeholders. Different sectors should be more connected to the process of curriculum development at a national, regional and local level while we must enable the public to clearly understand and support reform and its purpose. Schools and settings should co-construct their curriculum, working with learners, families and the wider community. Enabling partners, including Estyn, regional consortia and local authorities, will each provide distinct support for schools and settings to develop their own curriculum. They should actively remove obstacles to realising these objectives. Schools and settings should be supported to connect with national strategies and priorities so that curricula reflect changing priorities and social challenges.

Our roles and responsibilities

During the implementation stage of the Curriculum for Wales, it is crucial that we are clear with schools and settings on how we will support schools and settings.

The EDS:

- Provide a professional learning programme for practitioners across all leadership milestones and the wider workforce, to support the realisation of Curriculum for Wales.
- Offer bespoke support for schools and settings in developing an inclusive curriculum for all learners and on the basis of identified needs in line with the vision of the four purposes of the curriculum.
- Actively engage with all schools and settings to support the development and preparations for Curriculum for Wales through regular communication as further guidance becomes available.
- Facilitate opportunities for schools, settings, clusters, networks and alliances to reflect on their current curriculum provision and support strategic planning for 2022 and beyond in line with system expectations.
- Share emerging practice in school improvement planning to enable successful implementation and realisation of Curriculum for Wales in schools and settings.
- Encourage schools and settings to share innovative and effective practice with others, creating learning communities which reflect a sense of cynefin.
- Support school improvement through a holistic and integrated approach to the wider reform.
- Enable networking opportunities for practitioners that provide a range of opportunities to develop a shared understanding of progression at individual school and funded settings and at cluster level across the 3–16 continuum.

- Support all schools and settings to develop as learning organisations, to be adaptive; leading and planning for change while responding to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Build capacity for professional enquiry so schools and settings can be research informed in their approach to curriculum; support practitioners to actively engage in the Qualified for the Future review and provide support in planning for implementation of future qualifications.
- Collaborate with the Welsh Government and partners to develop a wider network of support for schools and settings for the development of aspects within curriculum, e.g. links to third sector organisations and businesses to enhance community development.
- Further, develop positive relationships with schools and settings to inspire them to develop their autonomy as they design an authentic, meaningful curriculum to engage and excite all learners.
- Promote collaboration so that schools and settings are able to work together with increased ownership and with high trust, using effective balance of coaching and mentoring.
- Contribute to equality of opportunity for all schools and settings to access professional learning across the region.

Additional information

Aspects of the curriculum and learning and teaching relating to Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) must accord with the locally agreed syllabus in schools without a religious character. There are additional requirements for RVE for foundation, voluntary-controlled and voluntary-aided schools that have a religious character. These requirements are set out in the RVE guidance, on which a public consultation has been carried out.

The Curriculum for Wales aims to make learners healthy, confident, ethical and informed. It is designed to help make learners and Wales healthier, resilient and globally responsible.

NPT EDS recognises that Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is about:

- keeping children safe from harm
- protecting their mental and emotional well-being.
- Helping children to develop healthy relationships with others

- Society is changing quickly. The internet exposes children to risks of unsafe and harmful situations and relationships
- RSE is about protecting children's rights
- RSE is legally required to be developmentally appropriate – meaning children must not be exposed to learning they're not ready for

Informal feedback from Estyn during thematic review on support for NPT schools

- NPT has a strong, shared vision for the Curriculum for Wales
- It makes sense and is clearly articulated
- There is a strong moral purpose at its core and there is a clear focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged learners
- There is a clear link between the language of the purposes and the language of metacognition
- The NPT team have shown bravery in asking schools to re-think and review their curriculum with a focus on the why
- There is a clear approach to deepening thinking in NPT schools
- There are useful links with partners in particular a symbiotic relationship with Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and the Inclusion services
- Powerful examples of how hugely helpful partnerships exist with external and internal partners when discussing curriculum design
- There is clear recognition of the need to support and improve teaching
- There is a strong emphasis on learning

Financial Impacts:

No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment:

'There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring purposes'.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

All schools are involved in this process

Workforce Impacts:

No implications

Legal Impacts:

No implications

Consultation:

'There is no requirement for external consultation on this item'

Recommendations:

Matter for monitoring – no recommendations required.

Implementation of Decision:

Matter for monitoring – no recommendations required.

Appendices: No Appendices are attached to this report

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