

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

18 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 in respect of:
- what the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) is and how it differs from Curriculum 2008;
 - what the timescales and milestones are for the roll out of CfW; and,
 - what support and professional learning is available to schools and settings.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

Supporting a successful sustainable economy

Taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.

Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient

Taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

Smarter use of resources

Ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 There are many differing definitions of what a curriculum is. For the purpose of this report and to ensure a consistent understanding, the local authority (LA) has adopted the Welsh Government definition, that being:

“A school’s curriculum is 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.”

3.2 In March 2014, Welsh Government asked Professor Graham Donaldson to review the curriculum and assessment arrangements in schools in Wales. Professor Donaldson and his team had meetings across Wales for schools to have a say. They had meetings with teachers, headteachers, school managers, staff and professionals. Between March and December 2014, they visited around 60 schools including:

- nursery schools;
- primary schools;
- secondary schools;
- special schools; and
- other education providers.

They talked to children and young people, parents and carers, business and community groups and others across Wales. They looked at Estyn reports, Welsh Government policies and other reports. In total, they spoke to over 700 people, 300 of them children.

3.3 The evidence confirmed that there was a strong case for fundamental change. It was clear that there was a strong appetite for radical changes to the existing curriculum and assessment arrangements, for example to address the overload, redundancy and complexity which has resulted from successive modifications. There was an accumulation of evidence that the current curriculum was not enabling children and young people to achieve the standards they should be capable of. Similarly, assessment and accountability had become unhelpfully intertwined in ways that weaken the power of both to serve children’s learning. Very importantly, people saw a need for a curriculum that would better prepare children and young people in Wales to thrive and be successful in a rapidly changing world.

3.4 The review developed four curriculum purposes to encapsulate a vision of the well-educated learner completing their statutory education in Wales. These purposes are that all our children and young people will 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.

3.5 The main differences and similarities between the previous curriculum and CfW are best exemplified in the table below:

Curriculum 2008	Curriculum for Wales
A slightly modified version of the national curriculum 1988 published by UK Central Government	A brand-new curriculum created in Wales for the pupils of Wales
Outcome and content driven	Purpose and process driven
Specified content and outcomes – skills, range and levels	Statements of what matters – key concepts
Separate phases of learning – foundation phase, and key stage 1, 2, 3 and 4	One continuum of learning age 3 to 16
Cross curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence	Cross curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence
Non-statutory skills framework and careers and world of work guidance	Cross cutting themes have been incorporated. Integral skills underpinning
Statutory Sex Relationship Education (SRE), Religious Education (RE) and Personal Social education (PSE) frameworks.	Relationship Sex Education, Religion Values Ethics, English and Welsh remain statutory elements. PSE embedded into Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning Experience
Individual subject areas	Six areas of learning and experience

3.6 The six areas of learning and experience (AOLE) are Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; Science and Technology. The AOLEs cover the following areas:

- Language, Literacy and Communication: Welsh, English and international languages and literature.
- Mathematics and Numeracy: conceptual understanding, fluency, communication with symbols, logical reasoning and strategic competence.
- Science and Technology: design and technology, engineering, computer science, biology, chemistry and physics.
- Humanities: history, geography, religious education, business studies and social studies.
- Expressive arts: dance, drama, film and digital media, music, and visual arts linked by a common creative process and transferable skills
- Health and Well-being: physical health and development, mental health, and emotional and social well-being.

3.7 The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 became law after receiving Royal Assent in April 2021. The Act states the new curriculum requirements for all learners

aged 3 to 16 in maintained or funded non-maintained nursery education in Wales. It will replace the current national curriculum and basic curriculum.

- 3.8 Schools across the LA have been involved with the review and development of the CfW. This has been supported by officers from the LA and Central South Consortium (CSC).
- 3.9 As well as the development of the CfW, education in Wales is undertaking wider reforms which include:
- a reform and update to initial teacher training;
 - the development of a national approach to professional learning;
 - the development of a leadership academy;
 - the development of new teaching and leadership standards;
 - the implementation of a new Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act;
 - a review of the GCSE qualifications;
 - the development of a national resource to support school improvement; and
 - a review of Estyn and how it undertakes school inspections.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The curriculum requirements (**see Appendix 1**), set out in legislation, and the supporting guidance from the Curriculum for Wales Framework ('the Framework'). The Framework was published in draft on Hwb (the all-Wales online learning platform) on 28 January 2020. It is a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education in Wales.
- 4.2 Welsh Government is currently working on updates to the CfW guidance to reflect the changes committed to during the Bill process. The changes are due to be published during September 2021.
- 4.3 In October 2020, Welsh Government published an update to the '[Our National Mission](#)' action plan setting out the next steps in Wales' reform journey ahead of the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales in September 2022. It also shows steps in response to COVID-19, and the response to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) independent report 'Achieving the New Curriculum for Wales'.
- 4.4 Alongside the updated action plan, the Welsh Government also published '[Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022](#)'. This document sets out shared expectations of what curriculum realisation means for practitioners and schools from 2022. The expectations were developed and agreed in discussion between Welsh Government, the regional consortia and Estyn.
- 4.5 The purpose of this document is to set out consistent expectations for the process of schools designing their curriculum and preparing to implement it from 2022 onwards:
- How should schools approach preparation for the Curriculum for Wales?
 - What steps should we take to prepare for curriculum implementation in 2022?

- 4.6 It aims to aid schools in planning their approach and sequencing activities. It recognises that schools will be in different places and the pace and focus of activity will vary. Therefore, it is not intended to dictate the pace of curriculum development. It is aimed to guide schools and provide a common reference point for all the organisations working with schools to ensure consistency in expectations and that support provided is timely for the activity taking place in schools.
- 4.7 The table below sets out the four distinct phases of the reform journey with key work that schools will need to undertake.

Phase	Time	Key work
Engagement	One to two terms	Schools will need to develop an understanding of the conceptual model of the curriculum: this will involve engaging and sense-making with materials and literature and developing or updating their vision with local stakeholders. Schools will reflect on current practice and learning from responding to COVID-19.
Design, planning and trialling	Three terms	Schools should start developing high-level curriculum and assessment design, informed by the guidance, and progress priorities to support curriculum realisation set out in their school development plan. Schools may begin trialling aspects of design, new approaches and pedagogy, using the learning to evaluate and refine their approach.
Evaluating and preparing for first teaching	Two to three terms	Schools should evaluate initial designs and trial further approaches. Schools will begin to finalise medium-term planning for primary and Year 7, and in the longer term for Years 8 to 11.
First teaching and ongoing refinement	September 2022 onwards	Schools will adopt their curriculum and begin to implement it. Secondary schools should refine their curriculum design as learners progress. Schools should reflect on the effectiveness of their curriculum and use that insight to improve.

- 4.8 To support schools in their journey towards curriculum reform all professional learning (PL) offered by CSC is aligned to timeline above.
- 4.9 The PL programme has been developed by the four regional consortia in partnership with practitioners from schools. The programme is aimed at supporting all schools in the realisation of the new curriculum and the wider education reforms in Wales. The programme aligns to the National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL).
- 4.10 While the key focus of this PL programme is the realisation of Curriculum for Wales, it is essential that connections are made across all aspects of the education reform programme. This includes consideration of the Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO) approach, the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership and our collective commitment to the Excellence, Equity and Well-being agenda. The PL programme also aligns well to ALN reform with a focus on high quality teaching being a central feature.

- 4.11 The PL programme was launched in CSC in January 2020 with briefings for senior and middle leaders across all local authorities in the region.
- 4.12 Due to COVID-19 the PL programme was paused in March 2020.
- 4.13 Governor briefings were repurposed into an asynchronous (on-demand) playlist. 93% of all respondents said completing the resources had strongly developed their understanding of the Framework. 100% stated they would recommend the programme to others and they would like to engage in further online PL.
- 4.14 A practitioner asynchronous playlist was also developed and published in May 2020. 100% of participants stated: the resource enhanced their knowledge of educational reform in Wales, the content was appropriate to their needs and skills level, and that they would recommend the resources.
- 4.15 In October 2020, following revision due to COVID-19, the PL programme was relaunched in the CSC region. The tables below highlight what is currently offered.

Headteacher/Senior leader modules

Theme	Dates	Module
Leading change	December 2020 – March 2021	Six live sessions and asynchronous recording
Establishing a shared vision	March 2021	12 live sessions and asynchronous recording
Leading pedagogy	April 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)
Making time and space for professional learning	May 2021	12 live sessions and asynchronous recording
Curriculum design and development – 3 parts	May and June 2021	Three x five live sessions and asynchronous recordings

Middle leader/practitioner modules:

Theme	Dates	Module
Engaging with the Curriculum for Wales Framework	January 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)
Engaging with Areas of Learning	January 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)
Thinking about AoLE vision	January 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)
Engaging with the wider reform elements	January 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)
Leading pedagogy	Apr 2021	Asynchronous resource (playlist)

Curriculum design – six parts	Autumn term 2021	Live sessions and asynchronous recordings
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- 4.16 Beyond the cross-regional CfW programme, there are also range of regional PL opportunities that support school leaders and practitioners in more specific elements of the realisation of CfW. These include a wide variety of PL programmes, modules and events. Also, network meetings and collaborative projects as detailed below;

National Professional Enquiry Project (NPEP)

- 4.17 To support the development of the new curriculum, Welsh Government is working with regional consortia and higher education institution (HEI) partners to develop a national programme of teacher professional enquiry. This programme is supporting a growing network of schools to develop a range of enquiry skills by leading enquiries in their own setting exploring professional learning requirements for the new curriculum. Following the 2020-2021 enquiry cycle, these lead enquiry schools will be equipped to support the wider schools' network to begin to develop as professional enquirers in readiness for 2022.

Areas of learning experience (AoLE) network meetings

- 4.18 Meetings for both Welsh and English-medium settings are held each term for each AoLE. These are facilitated by CSC strategic staff in partnership with AoLE lead practitioners.

Coordinator/Heads of department network meetings

- 4.19 Termly meetings are held for many curriculum areas facilitated by CSC strategic staff and schools across the region. These include a foci related specifically to CfW, for example:
- Foundation Phase Leaders Network meeting 17 March 2021 – CfW focus on engaging with the framework and establishing vision.
 - Digital Competence Framework DCF in Depth network meeting series during the week commencing 8 March 2021 (10 sessions total) – CfW input on how to engage with the framework, and the place of the DCF within curriculum design.

Relationships and sexuality education (RSE) programme

- 4.20 This programme is designed to support schools in preparing for the new curriculum and forthcoming statutory guidance. The action inquiry work undertaken so far across CSC has already enabled researchers to identify some key priorities for developing RSE provision in the future. There is a need for PL to address low confidence, knowledge and skill levels among practitioners and for schools to be given better access to high-quality research-informed resources and input from expert external providers.

Creative Pedagogy Network

- 4.21 Schools were invited to be part of a new network designed to train and offer support to schools who have previously participated in the Lead Creative Schools scheme across the CSC region. The intention is to ensure sustainability and a legacy to the creative learning work schools did as part of their Lead Creative Schools project. Also to provide a platform to support and broker coaching opportunities in how to develop creative learning pedagogies and innovative approaches to each setting's realisation of CfW.

Health and Well-being pilot project

- 4.22 Practitioners from 28 schools participated in a pilot project in the spring term 2021, focused on understanding the key considerations and processes involved in developing a whole-school approach to health and well-being. Through engagement with a range of professional learning modules, participating schools have gained an understanding of how to develop a shared vision for health and well-being, as well as planning for and enacting change in relation to their school's identified priority areas. Feedback indicates that their involvement with the pilot project has had a positive impact within their schools, including changes to systems, structures, roles and responsibilities, as well as provision and practice. Outcomes from the pilot project have helped inform the development of the regional health and well-being curriculum strategy and supported the identification of further regional professional learning needs. In addition, the professional learning modules that have been developed, have been enhanced with high-quality exemplification materials from the pilot schools, which will now be shared with all schools across the region.

Remote Asynchronous Learning Design and Synchronous Learning Experiences Project

- 4.23 CSC is working with practitioners in the region to support the development of professional learning linked to learning design. This will form a firm foundation of knowledge and understanding for practitioners in preparation for curriculum design within CfW.

Bespoke support to individual schools and clusters

- 4.24 CSC also offers individual and bespoke support to schools and cluster across the region as required, aligned to the phases of 'Journey to 2022'. A good example of this being the bespoke support being given to the CCYD cluster of schools in Bridgend.
- 4.25 During the summer term 2021 improvement partners (IPs) worked with school leaders to complete a CfW survey. The purposes of this survey are:
- to report to LAs on their schools' current readiness in the realisation of CfW;
 - to support school self-evaluation and planning related to the realisation of the new curriculum specifically related to the 'Journey to 2022' document;
 - to identify and share emerging practice from schools across the region;
 - to inform CSCs professional learning offer and support for schools for the autumn and spring terms; and
 - to inform discussions with Welsh Government and other partners on CfW.
- 4.26 At the time of writing this report the outcomes of the survey had not been compiled and completed. CSC will ensure that the outcomes are shared with the LA when they are available.
- 4.27 The PL programme offered by CSC continues to be modified to meet the changing demands of schools. The Central South Wales Challenge (CSWC) is the partnership of all schools and settings across the CSC region working together to develop a self-improving system. The CSWC includes a number of components that support the self-improving school system including clusters and school improvement groups (SIGs).

- 4.28 For 2021-2022, the model has been refined to further support collaborative working within and beyond schools. All schools will be allocated collaboration funding to support participation in regional professional learning and collaborative working as their school improvement priorities deem most appropriate, and in particular in relation to the curriculum reforms.
- 4.29 For 2021-2022, the formula to distribute this funding is a lump sum of £6k for all schools and £100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher. The Welsh medium primary and secondary networks, Y Ffed and Gyda'n Gilydd, and the special schools' network also receive an additional £30k funding to facilitate PL opportunities to meet the specific needs of their sectors.
- 4.30 For primary schools, roll-out will commence in September 2022. Secondary schools who wish to roll out the curriculum to Year 7 are encouraged to do so, but this will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll-out to Years 7 and 8 together. Secondary schools should begin conversations internally and with regional consortia about their plans for 2022.
- 4.31 In the 2021 to 2022 academic year, all secondary schools should be undertaking work in all 3 phases. Secondary schools who plan to roll out from 2023 should continue, expand and conclude this work in the 2022 to 2023 academic year. During this time, they should work very closely with their cluster primary schools to understand their experiences and the nature of learners' progression, planning for transition.
- 4.32 The new curriculum will be taught to those up to Year 6 from September 2022. Year 7 and 8 will all be taught with it from 2023 and it will then roll out year by year until it includes Year 11 by 2026. This is a careful and considered roll out rather than 'big bang' approach.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals and principles prescribed for within the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 connect directly to the approach to supporting schools. The approach to supporting schools is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle and more specifically as follows:

Long-term	The approach to school improvement focuses on meeting the needs of children and young people from the age of 0 to 25.
Prevention	The focus of the school improvement is upon early identification of need and ensuring that there is appropriate learning provision in place to meet individual needs.
Integration	The approach to school improvement addresses the need for a coherent delivery of economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes.
Collaboration	A fundamental principal of the approach to school improvement focuses on improving collaboration and creating a unified system.
Involvement	Ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers are at the heart of the system and that needs are discussed in a person-centred way.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The committee is requested to:

- consider the content of this report; and
- provide feedback.

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