

Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

About you

Organisation: SEWC LA Improvement group

1. The Bill's general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Yes

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)

The Curriculum for Wales will offer a broad and balanced curriculum for all learners, with its cross curricular and mandatory elements and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and Digital Competency Framework. The group agrees with the child-centred approach to learner progression and accompanying progression steps. The 'what matters' statements appear to provide opportunities for rich learning experiences in all subjects.

The group supports a pedagogy that is based on authentic and purposeful experiences, providing teachers with the autonomy to deliver creative and personalised learning. The challenge comes with the ambition to provide all school staff with the experience or skills to design and deliver a curriculum that goes beyond subject knowledge to a more holistic development of the young person.

The group supports the amendments to RSE and RE education. Every child should receive RSE and RE, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality.

The focus on bilingualism within the LLC area is also supported. The establishment of one continuum of learning removing both Welsh first and second language is innovative.

Reference to what this means for English or Welsh medium schools is helpful and pragmatic.

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Yes, as it will inform schools of their statutory duties to implement the curriculum, including the teaching of RSE and RE within their school/setting.

Setting out the guiding principles and requiring schools, through legislation, to deliver on these ambitions and aspirations is essential. It also provides a consistent framework of accountability for all school settings and gives Estyn the basis for its inspection and reporting regime.

2. The Bill's implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

The most obvious barrier at the moment would be the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the group acknowledges and understands the setting of a statutory date, there may be limited time for some schools to be ready in light of potential high pupil absence due to covid related issues. Some schools may also face challenges around staffing absence and, therefore, will not have the capacity or time to engage with meaningful professional support or learning. It is acknowledged that some schools have made greater progress in their readiness for the new curriculum than others. Schools that needed additional time may never catch up due to this period of turbulent instability.

Schools may also be reluctant to teach RSE, especially in primary schools. Schools would welcome examples or further guidance on how this could be incorporated into their own curriculum.

The continuity and progression across the age range of 3-16 requires staff both within and across primary and secondary settings to be co-constructors so that concepts are developed and delivered in a co-ordinated manner. This requires schools to coordinate strategically alongside other settings.

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

No – although the current pandemic could not have been predicted.

3. Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Yes, in relation to compulsory RSE and parents being unable to withdraw their child from any lessons. We believe there maybe some uncertainties from various religious groups, as the curriculum may deliver content that goes against their religious views and beliefs. This may lead to confrontation on issues including abortion, contraception and same-sex relationships. The removal of the parental right to withdraw will cause concern which could potentially result in some parents choosing to home school their children. The group suggest there is a need for awareness raising amongst families that the teaching of RSE is to be objective, and in the case of RE, also critical and pluralistic.

4. Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

The inclusion of financial considerations is helpful. Acknowledgement should also be given to financial constraints in smaller local authorities.

5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

In light of the innovative approach taken to this curriculum, it is likely that additional legislation will be required. However, it is important that consultation remains a key part of this process. Any additional requirements should not take away the current intention to provide schools and teachers with the flexibility to produce a curriculum that best fits their own individual circumstances whilst meeting the core purposes.

6. Other considerations

6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

None

