



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-516
Ein cyf/Our ref HL/02033/13

William Powell AM

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Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 16 December 2013 writing on behalf of the Petitions Committee asking for my views on making political science a compulsory part of the school curriculum.

Currently, the school curriculum for Wales provides opportunities for young people to understand the principles and system of our democracy, including how young people can influence decision making. Schools mostly cover these topics through personal and social education (PSE) and focus on developing 'Active Citizenship', which is one of the five themes within the non-statutory *PSE framework for 7 to 19-year-olds-Wales*.

PSE is a statutory curriculum requirement and forms part of the Basic curriculum for all registered pupils at maintained schools who are of compulsory school age. Decisions on the precise content and model of delivery of a school PSE programme lie with head teachers and their governors, working with local authorities and other local partners. This gives schools flexibility to focus on aspects of PSE that are particularly relevant to their situation and best meet the needs of their learners. The non-statutory PSE framework is the key document which schools use to review and develop their PSE programmes.

Within the 'Active Citizenship' element of the non-statutory PSE framework, learners should:

"Develop a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their own lives.

Learners are members of communities, from local through national to global, and can be helped to play a meaningful and active part in them. Such active citizenship implies a number of considerations. There needs to be an understanding of the nature of communities in Wales and beyond and the roles, relationships, conflicts and inequalities that affect the quality of life. Learners should explore their rights in a democratic society as underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They have a right to be involved in making decisions, and planning and reviewing any actions that might affect them. Learners should also consider their responsibilities as young citizens and be equipped to participate in community life through service and action which promotes the well-being of that community.

Finally, learners need to develop a political 'literacy' which enables them to make effective decisions and judgements in the world of political and legal systems."

I am determined to ensure that we have a curriculum for Wales that is broad, balanced and fit for the twenty first century and which addresses some of the key challenges faced by learners growing up in the modern global society. This is why on, 22 October 2013, I announced my intention to review the Basic Curriculum as part of the second phase of the review of assessment and the National Curriculum. I will be providing more details of the second phase of the review in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Huw Lewis'.

Huw Lewis AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau

Minister for Education and Skills