

Responses to the Recommendations of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report on the Teaching of Welsh History, Culture and Heritage

Detailed Responses to the report's recommendations are set out below:

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends:

That the Welsh Government should remit Estyn to undertake a thematic review of the teaching of Welsh history in schools. The Committee would like evidence of the extent to which schools are meeting the requirements of the GCSE, AS and A level specifications on teaching Welsh content.

Response: Accept

My officials are working with Estyn to agree the remit of the thematic review of the teaching of Welsh history in schools and the Committee's recommendations will inform the basis of this review. The findings of the review will be published once completed by Estyn.

Financial Implications: Nil (Estyn have confirmed they have capacity for this review in 2019/20)

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends:

That the Curriculum for Wales 2022 should include guidance which sets out a common body of knowledge for all pupils studying history. These key events and topics will allow all pupils to have an understanding of how their country has been shaped by local and national events within the context of Welsh, British and international histories

Response: Reject

Curriculum for Wales is a purpose-led curriculum which moves away from specifying lists of 'topics / content' to be taught. Curriculum for Wales provides a clear articulation of the conceptual understanding required to progress in learning. History will form part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE).

The Humanities AoLE guidance outlines a methodology for selecting content and refers to the need for consistent exposure to the story of learners' locality and the story of Wales, as well as to the story of the wider world, to enable learners to develop an understanding of the complex and diverse nature of societies, past and present.

However, we will be working with practitioners to commission new resources, which refer to key events and topics in the histories of Wales and the world. The flexibility of the new Curriculum will enhance this learning by allowing teachers to deliver lessons in more creative ways better suited to the learners they teach.

The curriculum guidance will also be clear about the importance of school curricula in general reflecting Wales, its cultural heritage and diversity, our languages and the values, histories and traditions of our communities and all our people.

Learners should be grounded in an understanding of the identities, landscapes and histories that come together to form their 'cynefin'. This will not only allow them to develop a strong sense of their own identity and well-being, but to develop an understanding of others' identities and make connections with people, places and histories elsewhere in Wales and across the world.

Financial Implications: Nil

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends:

That the Curriculum for Wales 2022 should have diversity as a core element. There is a risk that the proposed flexibility for schools and teachers may not ensure that all pupils in Wales know the story of our diverse ethnic and religious communities.

Response: Accept

The new curriculum will be broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging. One of the four purposes outlined at its heart is to ensure that children and young people develop as ethical, informed citizens, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.

The curriculum will provide learners with about their culture, community, society and the world, and respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society.

Financial Implications: Nil

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends:

That to ensure that history is representative of all of Wales' communities and their international connections, the thematic review of history teaching by Estyn, recommended in this report, should assess how diversity is currently taught in schools

Response: Accept

Please see response to recommendation 1.

Financial Implications: Nil (Estyn have confirmed they have capacity for this review in 2019/20.)

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends:

That the Welsh Government should consider how they can expand the work of the Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team Wales and the Race Council Cymru to all students and teachers in Wales.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government has utilised the EU Transition Fund to develop the Hate Crime in Schools project and the Hate Crime Minority Communities Grant. The £350,000 Hate Crime in Schools Project, which the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) will lead, will be delivered in 100 schools across Wales. It will seek to build children's critical thinking skills and ability to recognise and challenge hate speech online or offline. Local authorities have been consulted on which training provider they would like to use in their area and the WLGA is currently considering options for delivery during this academic year.

The £480,000 Hate Crime Minority Communities Grant was developed in consultation with the Wales Race Forum to ensure key stakeholders could deliver projects related to tackling crime experienced by ethnic minority and minority faith communities. Eight organisations have been funded to deliver the Grant objective, which include either:

- Direct awareness raising activities with minority community members (e.g. increasing understanding of hate crime, how to report it and what to expect etc.)
- Direct awareness raising activities with the wider community (e.g. school-based classes, training sessions, work with local taxi companies etc.)
- Fostering good relationships to heal divisions.

Although just two of a number of providers, Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) Wales and Race Council Cymru were both successful in receiving funding through the grant. EYST Wales' proposal will work in schools in South West, Mid and West Wales to deliver their 'Don't Hate, Educate' Project to train people from diverse backgrounds and protected characteristics to deliver Hate Crime Awareness and Challenging Hate Attitudes awareness workshops to school children (Key Stages 2 & 3) and teachers & teaching assistants. Race Council Cymru's Community Support project will include awareness training in schools in North and South West Wales.

Financial Implications: Nil; these projects are already committed to through the EU Transition Fund.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends:

That it is vital to ensure that the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 will be properly supported with teaching materials which reflect the ambition to teach the history of Wales from the local and national perspectives. The Welsh Government should set out how they will ensure that such resources are widely available.

Response – Accept

My officials have recently undertaken a review of all presently available resources to support the teaching of Welsh history in schools, which will identify any gaps in these resources. The commission of further resources to support the teaching of the new curriculum will be informed by the outcome of the Estyn review.

Many teaching resources are currently available on Hwb, and my officials will consider how best to ensure that existing and new resources are made as widely available as possible.

Financial Implications: Nil: Funding for the development of resources has been identified within existing budgets.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends:

That the Welsh Government should set out how they will ensure that initial teacher education and continuous professional development will enable all those teaching history to know how to access and deliver the history of Wales. The Welsh Government should set out their efforts to increase the number of BAME teachers in Wales and how successful they have been.

Response: Accept in Principle

The first part of this recommendation relates to initial teacher education and continuous professional development.

Professional learning will be instrumental to ensuring that all school staff have the professional knowledge and skills to deliver the new curriculum for Wales.

The programmes for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) that are being delivered from September 2019 have been developed and accredited against the new Criteria for Accreditation. We do not prescribe the content of individual programmes but they are required to provide clear evidence that they meet the criteria in order to achieve accreditation.

Teachers should be able to help children and young people to make links across their Learning under the six Areas of Learning and Experience. Programmes of ITE, therefore, need to ensure that student teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are at the level they need to engage with the Areas of Learning and Experience and to ensure that pupils/students experience high-quality education. For secondary subject specialist areas programmes must provide sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge for the area or areas that the student teacher intends to teach. These programmes must also include discipline-specific curriculum and pedagogical studies for each area the graduate intends to teach across the full age-range of the secondary school.

Our bespoke National Approach for Professional Learning (National Approach) to support the realisation of the new curriculum was launched in 2018 and is now recognised as the national framework within which all professional learning should be designed and delivered. The National Approach has been designed to be responsive to school, local and national priorities and encourages all school staff to take responsibility for their own professional learning. It will support all education professionals to translate and design the new curriculum in their own local context.

We are working with our delivery partners, regional consortia, to ensure the relationship between lead enquiry schools and the wider community of schools delivers across the system to ensure that immediate development needs for the new curriculum are addressed through the wider professional learning offer. This work will also support the move to a national programme of teacher professional enquiry, initially developed in ITE.

We are heavily investing in professional learning, with an enhanced £24m funding allocation to ensure all practitioners are prepared for the roll-out of the new curriculum in Wales. This funding can be used flexibly to allow schools to work together in ways that suit their own circumstances and to create the time and space for practitioners and leaders to work across schools and networks to prepare for the new curriculum. To strengthen the professional learning infrastructure, we are also working with practitioners to develop digital resources to support a common professional learning programme for curriculum reform, available on Hwb from 2020.

A key part of our National Approach will be establishing new National Networks aligned to each of the Areas of Learning and Experience, together with a network specifically focused on pedagogy. These networks will be conduits to engage with the wider sector to ensure that all practitioners have support to further develop their skills and knowledge to deliver the new curriculum.

The second part of this recommendation relates to the Welsh Government's efforts to increase the number of BAME teachers in Wales.

As part of our efforts to diversify the workforce our new alternative routes into teaching have been developed to support talented potential teachers unable to access traditional ITE to enter the profession.

Welsh Government Officers are working with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to develop an action plan to address two questions. The first is the situation regarding the degree to which the teaching workforce in Wales is reflective of the communities it serves. The second is the range and depth of diversity in the workforce. The action plan includes: a rapid research project to determine international best practice; a policy-level response to the Welsh context; and an action plan to address issues raised by research and policy development.

Financial Implications: Nil: Funding for this work has been identified within existing budgets.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends:

That histories of Wales' racial and religious diversity should be included in initial teacher education and reflected in teaching materials for the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience.

Response: Accept in Principle

My officials will work with the ITE Providers as they develop their programmes content in response to the new Curriculum to ensure our future teachers are able to access and teach the diverse histories of Wales.

My officials have recently undertaken a review of all presently available resources to support the teaching of Welsh history in schools. The commission of further resources to support the teaching of the new curriculum will be informed by the outcome of the Estyn review.

Financial Implications: Nil: Funding for this work has been identified within existing budgets.