



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1080  
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06768/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

18 December 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November relating to Petition P-05-1080 Introduce anti-racist teaching materials to children in schools in Wales to reduce hate crimes.

We are fully committed for learning to be more inclusive and to draw on the experiences, perspectives and cultural heritage of contemporary Wales. As you are aware from 2022, there will be a new [Curriculum for Wales](#), full rollout of which will commence in September 2022.

One of the four purposes at the heart of the new curriculum is that learners should develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, who **'are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world now and in the past'**, and **'respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society'**.

The four purposes are a part of the statutory framework for the Curriculum for Wales. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify that the new curriculum will contain mandatory elements including the statements of What Matters for each Area of Learning and Experience. Every school's curriculum will be required to include learning in each of the statements of what matters. There are 27 statements of what matters in the Framework which are mandatory for schools to teach. These ensure a level of consistency in curriculum design across settings and schools, as within the Bill it is proposed that schools must include learning around all statements in their curriculum. There are statements [of what matters](#) which are explicitly linked to diversity.

These statements will be non-negotiable elements of every school's curriculum, for every learner at every stage. It will simply not be possible to ignore the central and critical role diversity in a school's curriculum. A school or setting's curriculum must therefore encompass this. If it does not, the school or setting will not be fulfilling its duties.

The Curriculum for Wales guidance and Framework published in January 2020 is clear about the importance of school curricula in general reflecting our cultural heritage and

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

diversity, our languages and the values, histories and traditions of our communities and all our people.

The Curriculum for Wales Framework is determined nationally and includes both the curriculum requirements, which will be set out in legislation, and a range of supporting guidance. The Framework gives every school in Wales the opportunity to design their own curriculum within a national approach that ensures a level of consistency.

It encourages schools to build their own vision for their learners within the context of the four purposes and the learning defined at a national level. It provides the space for practitioners to be creative and to develop meaningful learning through a range of experiences and contexts that meet the needs of their learners.

['Designing Your Curriculum'](#) guidance has been published to support schools in implementing the Curriculum for Wales framework. A defining feature of the Framework is that it requires schools to design their own curriculum and assessment arrangements. Our new approach recognises:

- within the national framework, schools and practitioners are best placed to make decisions about the needs of their specific learners, including choosing topics and activities which will best support their learning;
- The **importance** of meaningful learning. A content-focused curriculum does not guarantee meaningful learning, only that certain topics are covered to varying extents; instead, the Curriculum for Wales guidance articulates what concepts and essence of learning should underpin a range of different topics, learning activities and acquisition of knowledge;
- The **need** for innovation and creativity. Practitioners select content, enabling them to use their professional skills to drive improved learning and outcomes for their learners; and
- The **scope** for practitioners to make greater links between Areas and disciplines. Practitioners will have the licence to use topics and activities to combine meaningful learning from different Areas, disciplines and concepts.

It is for these reasons that the Framework does not try to prescribe a full list of specific topics or activities. That is not to say that the specific topics or activities are unimportant. Instead, the Curriculum for Wales's guidance sets out the essence of learning which should underpin them. It is for schools and practitioners, drawing on guidance and resources, to decide what specific experiences, knowledge and skills will support their specific learners to realise the four purposes.

Learning about human rights, equity, and diversity are cross-cutting themes which should be embedded within learning across the curriculum. The guidance on cross-cutting themes for the curriculum explains how schools and practitioners should have a methodology for designing a curriculum which incorporates, where appropriate, opportunities which allow learners to consider local, national and international contexts and to develop understanding of relationships and sexuality education, human rights education and diversity, and careers and work-related experiences.

Teachers will have the freedom to teach the many and diverse histories of Wales and the wider world and exploring the stories of the people and communities of Wales should not simply be limited to history lessons. The Curriculum for Wales encourages learners to explore themes across the curriculum; the diverse histories of the people of Wales can be taught not only in areas such as Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication, but also Science and Technology.

As you are aware Professor Charlotte Williams OBE was appointed to chair a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group in the summer. The work of the Group includes, but goes beyond, black history to consider a range of minority ethnicities as part of the story of Wales, and membership comprises experienced practitioners and contributors on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities and Welsh history.

The Group's work is being carried out in phases, which has allowed it to start feeding into teaching for this academic year. In the first phase of the project, the Working Group looked at teaching resources. They have undertaken a review of the resources currently available to support the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities and Cynefin across all parts of the curriculum, which culminated in an [interim report](#) which was published on 19 November. That report identifies initial recommendations, while the final report, due to be published in spring, will address wider issues including professional learning needs.

We've committed to engaging closely with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to ensure that we co-produce materials for the new Curriculum of Wales, and in developing the Welsh Government Race Equality Action Plan. Both are part of our work to prioritise the wide-scale cultural, economic, educational and social change required to create an equal and anti-racist Wales.

In the current curriculum in Wales for learners, there are opportunities to study diversity and diverse history, and there are resources on Hwb on subjects including Racism, Slavery and Wales, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Windrush Generation. Also in support of our 'zero tolerance' approach to racism, we have worked with Show Racism the Red Card over a number of years to produce tools and offer training to assist schools in identifying and tackling racism. This includes the development of tools, training and awareness raising conferences for education professionals, and the production of a series of anti-racism factsheets published on Hwb.

The shared expectations set out in *Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022*, published in October, reflect that schools will be in different places in designing their curriculum. It aims to guide schools' work regardless of where they are in their journey. It allows schools to move at a pace appropriate to them, allowing them to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 while also supporting them to prepare longer term for reform.

To help make sure schools are ready for the new curriculum, we will publish an implementation plan detailing the support schools can expect from Government and the wider education system in the run-up to curriculum roll-out in September 2022.

As part of the implementation plan, we'll set out our plans for a **national network** to support implementation. This will bring together teachers, experts and other stakeholders, in order to:

- Use co-construction to problem-solve and tackle barriers to implementation;
- Share understanding and expertise across the profession;
- Gather intelligence and bring together views to understand progress; identify issues and inform support; and
- Broker relationships between practitioners and wider stakeholders.

Our approach to resources for the new curriculum is set out in Our national mission is our strategy to improve the school system and an update was published in October which is available at:

<https://gov.wales/our-national-mission-0>

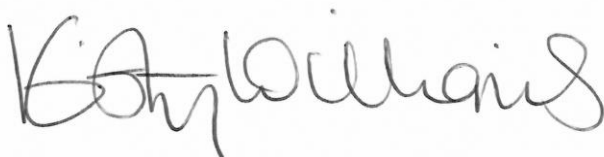
I am confident that the resources, support and guidance being developed to support the new curriculum will empower schools to deliver meaningful learning about Wales and its diverse communities in every area of learning and experience across the curriculum.

Part of the role of the national network will also be to identify gaps in resources for all parts of the new curriculum and to support schools in delivering the new curriculum. We will also need to work closely with a range of organisations who will be critical to ensure ensuring that suitable resources are made available

However, we recognise that access to good quality learning resources will not necessarily be enough by themselves, and that teachers will need to be provided with relevant professional learning and development.

I recognise that we need to continue to support teachers with their professional learning, to help them move forward with identifying resources, topics and connections. In order to allow time and space for practitioners to work together across schools to prepare for the new curriculum, we have heavily invested in professional learning, with £31 million awarded directly to schools. We will continue to build upon these strong professional learning foundations as we move closer towards 2022.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

**Kirsty Williams AS/MS**  
Y Gweinidog Addysg  
Minister for Education