



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-860 - P-05-861
Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/05436/19

David John Rowlands AM
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4 March 2019

Dear David ,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February, following on from earlier correspondence regarding the Petitions Committee's considerations on petitions on making curriculum for life lessons compulsory (P-05-860); and making political education a compulsory element of the new curriculum (P-05-861).

I will respond separately to each of the specific questions you have raised:

- ***Whether it is possible to begin to implement improvements to the teaching of life skills to pupils in schools, ahead of the full implementation of the new curriculum by 2022***

The draft new curriculum will be available to schools from April for feedback. A final version will be made available in January 2020, and it will be used in schools throughout Wales by 2022. Schools can of course engage with the new curriculum when it is initially made available and will have the flexibility in developing teaching and learning about life skills, and indeed all areas of the curriculum, in advance of the roll out of the new curriculum in 2022.

- ***How, in the context of providing flexibility to professionals, does the Welsh Government intend to ensure that all pupils receive sufficient and consistent grounding in life skills during their education?***

Each Area of Learning and Experience in the new curriculum will be underpinned with a number of 'What Matters' statements, which will be the key mechanism for planning and support in the curriculum. The 'What Matters' statements will span the breadth of

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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.

the AoLE and draw on disciplinary knowledge, skills and experiences. They will act as a starting point, along with the Four Purposes, for school-level curriculum development and will help to avoid the potential variation in school-level curriculum design, while also allowing for local flexibility. AoLEs will also include support for planning, referencing key experiences, knowledge and skills, as well as links with other areas of the curriculum. Through this, the new curriculum will provide a common framework for practitioners to design their school-level curricula, and give clear guidance on how learners should progress towards securing the Achievement Outcomes linked to the 'What Matters' statements. However, the new curriculum can not provide a comprehensive list of detailed content, which would quickly become complicated and overcrowded. It must allow professionals the flexibility to choose the specific content which meets the needs of their learners in their specific context.

By way of specific examples:

The draft 'What Matters' statements for the Health and Well-being AoLE set out that:

Understanding what influences decision-making (including knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and beliefs) supports learners to make positive, considered and informed decisions. Learners also need to develop skills necessary to enable specific decisions. Learners also learn how groups make decisions together, so developing their awareness of the role and importance of collective decisions. This includes learning about financial decisions and decisions about careers across progression steps.

The draft 'What Matters' statements for the Humanities AoLE set out that:

Learners should develop informed views about political challenges facing humanity. By engaging with fundamental questions in the Humanities, learners gain the knowledge and skills they need to form and justify their own opinions. Learners will develop empathy, resilience and respect when engaging with different values, beliefs and viewpoints.

- ***Consider swifter action to ensure that improvements to the political education provided within schools are implemented prior to the proposed extension of voting rights to 16 and 17 year-olds for the 2021 Assembly elections.***

Schools are already encouraged to deliver a broad education, including political awareness, and there are opportunities for learners to explore politics in the current curriculum through the Welsh Baccalaureate and Personal and Social Education (PSE). The 'Active Citizenship' theme within PSE allows learners to develop their knowledge on politics and their rights in a democratic society, which reflects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They also develop a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their own lives.

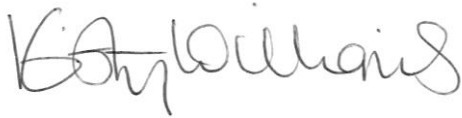
We also recognise the importance of providing support to develop learners' interest in political issues, and we have, for example, recently published resources on Hwb aimed

at encouraging learners to explore the issue of lowering the voting age to 16 for Assembly elections; these can be found at:

<http://hwb.gov.wales/news/article/48d817a6-42c6-4ce9-9bfd-67b357b2dffa>

I hope the above clarifies the position to each of your questions.

Yours sincerely

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

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg

Minister for Education

