

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Learning & Skills Scrutiny Panel

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER: County Councillor Phyl Davies
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REPORT TITLE: Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning
(including Thematic review on curriculum)

REPORT FOR: Information

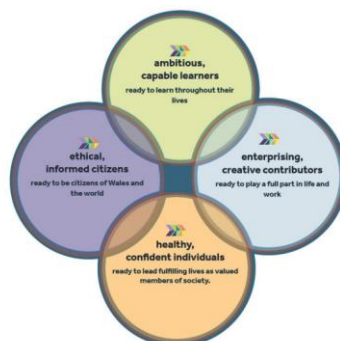
1. Purpose

This report sets out to advise the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Panel on the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales to schools and settings across Wales in September 2022.

2. National Position

2.1 For primary schools, roll-out will commence in September 2022. Secondary schools who wish to roll out the curriculum to Year 7 are encouraged to do so, but this will not be mandatory until 2023, with roll-out to Years 7 and 8 together.

2.2 Improving education is our national mission. Nothing is so essential as universal access to, and acquisition of, the experiences, knowledge and skills that our young people need for employment, lifelong learning and active citizenship. The Curriculum for Wales guidance is a clear statement of what is important in delivering a broad and balanced education. The four purposes (see diagram below) are the shared vision and aspiration for every child and young person. In fulfilling these purposes, we set high expectations for all, promote individual and national well-being, tackle ignorance and misinformation, and encourage critical and civic engagement.



2.3 A school's curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it. Curriculum development should be at the heart of practitioner, school and national efforts which seek to raise standards for all, tackle the attainment gap, and ensure an education system that is a source of national pride and enjoys public confidence.

2.4 The Curriculum for Wales guidance forms part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework. The Framework is determined nationally and includes both the curriculum requirements set out in legislation, and a range of supporting guidance. The Curriculum for Wales guidance is the result of co-construction. It has been developed in Wales, by practitioners for practitioners, bringing together educational expertise and wider research and evidence. The Curriculum for Wales guidance published on Hwb, helps schools to design their own curriculum. It contains information on legal requirements, guidance on how to develop a school curriculum, and an explanation of the purposes and principles of assessment.

2.5 The Curriculum for Wales Framework helps practitioners develop a more integrated approach to learning. The six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) are Expressive Arts, Health and Well-Being, Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Maths and Numeracy and Science and Technology (see image below) bring together familiar disciplines and encourage strong and meaningful links across them. Those individual disciplines still play an important role, especially as learners progress and begin to specialise. The Curriculum for Wales guidance promotes collaboration and cross-disciplinary planning, learning and teaching, both within and across Areas. This will enable learners to build connections across their learning and combine different experiences, knowledge and skills.



Expressive Arts



Health and Well-being



Humanities



Languages, Literacy and Communication



Mathematics and Numeracy



Science and Technology

2.6 There are 27 mandatory statements of what matters in this Framework. These ensure a level of consistency in curriculum design across settings and schools, as learners must develop an understanding of all statements. The process of exploring and revisiting these statements enables learners to develop ever deeper knowledge over the learning continuum and to progress to a more sophisticated understanding of the key knowledge, ideas and principles in each Area. This more sophisticated understanding allows learners to value how their learning contributes to these ideas and why it is important, rather than simply being able to recall isolated facts without understanding the context. This progression

should be supported by a variety of assessment approaches which enable the learner and the practitioner to understand where a learner is and what they need to do next. The Framework does not require settings and schools to develop a timetable explicitly structured along the lines of the Areas or to organise the setting or school or staffing on that basis.

2.7 A defining feature of the Framework is that it requires schools to design their own curriculum and assessment arrangements. It is acknowledged that this is a challenge for many schools and an even greater challenge given the circumstances schools have found themselves in over the last two years. An added element to consider for small schools is their capacity to manage the considerable workload of engaging with the wide range of professional learning required by Curriculum for Wales. This is in addition to the professional learning required by the wider reform agenda e.g. Additional Learning Needs transformation. Schools are required to work in collaboration to realise the curriculum and focus on:

- the role of leadership in enabling high-quality learning and teaching. Establishing a high-performing education system through high-quality learning and teaching depends on building its professional capacity, developing local leadership, responsibility and decision-making
- 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
- the scope for practitioners to make greater links between Areas and disciplines. Practitioners have the licence to use topics and activities to combine meaningful learning from different Areas, disciplines and concepts

3. Powys Readiness

3.1 Most schools in Powys are engagingly positively with Curriculum for Wales. Feedback from schools informs us that they consider the professional learning on offer in Powys is of a high quality and easily accessible but allocating adequate time for school staff to effectively engage with professional learning resources has been challenging given the recent circumstances schools find themselves in. The Professional Learning Team in Powys and The School Improvement Advisory Team meet regularly to discuss the readiness of all schools for curriculum rollout. This allows us to triage need and provide a bespoke menu of support for each school. It is vital that the professional learning experiences provided for schools are having maximum impact. School visits in Spring 2022 will be carried out jointly by the Professional Learning and School Improvement Advisory teams. These officers will be triangulating the impact of the professional learning to ascertain where schools are in relation to their preparedness, which is mixed, which is the case for all schools in Wales.

The Powys Professional Learning team has 6 members. All staff work collectively to support schools with Curriculum for Wales, but each team member has specific responsibility for a particular aspect of curriculum development. The Powys Professional Learning Team’s roles and responsibilities are summarised in the table below:

Name	Role
Sally Llewellyn	Service Manager for Curriculum for Wales and Professional Learning
Sarah Perdue	Lead for Professional Pathways
Huw Griffiths	Lead for 14+
Rob Walters	Lead for Digital
Christopher Davies and Mary Strong	Leads for Well-Being and Equalities

3.2 Schools in Powys have access to an extensive range of professional learning and support from the Powys Professional Learning Team working in collaboration with School Improvement Advisors. Schools across Wales are at various places along a learning continuum with regards to realising the Curriculum. This continuum is certainly reflected in Powys schools and has been impacted by the pandemic and the capacity of some of our schools to engage with this demanding workload. The Minister for Education acknowledges that September is not the end, but the beginning of the next ‘leg of the journey’ to Curriculum for Wales. These demands on schools involve a full engagement with Curriculum for Wales, developing a whole school vision, deepening their understanding of a purpose led curriculum and exploring the Statements of What Matters upon which the curriculum is based. As well as embracing the importance of the cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence, as these skills remain a significant focus-for delivering the new curriculum.

3.3 Since September, when the professional Learning team was established, practitioners in Powys have been able to access a comprehensive Professional Learning Offer of training and support which includes synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) professional learning opportunities. Sitting behind the Powys Sharepoint button on Hwb are 2 Google Sites: (1) The Powys Professional Learning Offer (2) The Powys Professional Learning Resource Repository. The Powys Sharepoint provides a one-stop shop for all education stakeholders in Powys to access professional learning that is most relevant to their needs.

3.4 Powys’ Professional Learning Offer is comprised of a wide range of professional learning workshops and training opportunities. These workshops are provided by members of the Powys Professional Learning Team as well as other middle tier organisations such as the Education Workforce Council, the National Leadership Academy, Higher Education Institutions and a Wide Range of Welsh Government Projects such as the National Pedagogy Project. At the click of a button, practitioners can join a huge range of professional learning opportunities best suited to the needs of their schools.

3.5 To support practitioners in selecting professional learning most appropriate to their needs, the Powys Professional Learning Offer is arranged into 10 sub-headings that cover the key areas listed below:

- Curriculum for Wales
- Professional Pathways
- Secondary Support
- Equity and Well-Being
- Additional Learning Needs
- Digital Learning
- Early Years and Foundation Phase
- Induction
- Governors
- Finance and Schools Service

3.6 There are hundreds of professional learning opportunities available to practitioners and each session clearly states what will be covered in the workshop and the intended audience to ensure that the professional learning is appropriate to the needs of the practitioners. It is recognised that accessing this wide range of professional learning can be difficult especially for teachers and headteachers with a significant teaching commitment. Workshops are offered at a variety of times to allow practitioners to access training at a time best suited to them. A designated Curriculum for Wales workshop is offered weekly at 3.45-4.45pm every Wednesday which has proved popular with many schools who have used the workshops as part of their weekly staff training offer. The Professional Learning Team and School Improvement Advisors provide bespoke support for schools in relation to Curriculum for Wales, signposting practitioners to the appropriate professional learning according to their school's priorities.

3.7 To further support practitioners who are unable to attend 'live' professional learning workshops, the Professional Learning Team have developed a second Google Site called the Powys Resource Repository. This site houses recordings and resources delivered during the 'live' sessions as part of the Powys Professional Learning Offer. The resource repository can be accessed by all practitioners as well as wider stakeholders including governors. School leaders are able to use these shared recordings and resources to provide training opportunities in their schools in line with their own professional learning calendar. The Professional Learning team are able to provide bespoke support for schools where required. The resources are aimed at reducing the variation between schools in the quality of professional learning undertaken however, we acknowledge the lack of capacity for some schools to engage with this professional learning or share the workload across a small number of practitioners.

3.8 Support from LA Officers for Curriculum for Wales rollout is complimented by the work of 19 Pedagogy Leads drawn from a wide range of schools across Powys. The Pedagogy Leads represent a cross section of school types including primary, secondary, all-age and special settings. Pedagogy Leads are drawn from English medium, Welsh medium and Dual Language settings. There are 3 Pedagogy Leads for each of the six Areas of Learning and Experience of the Curriculum for Wales.

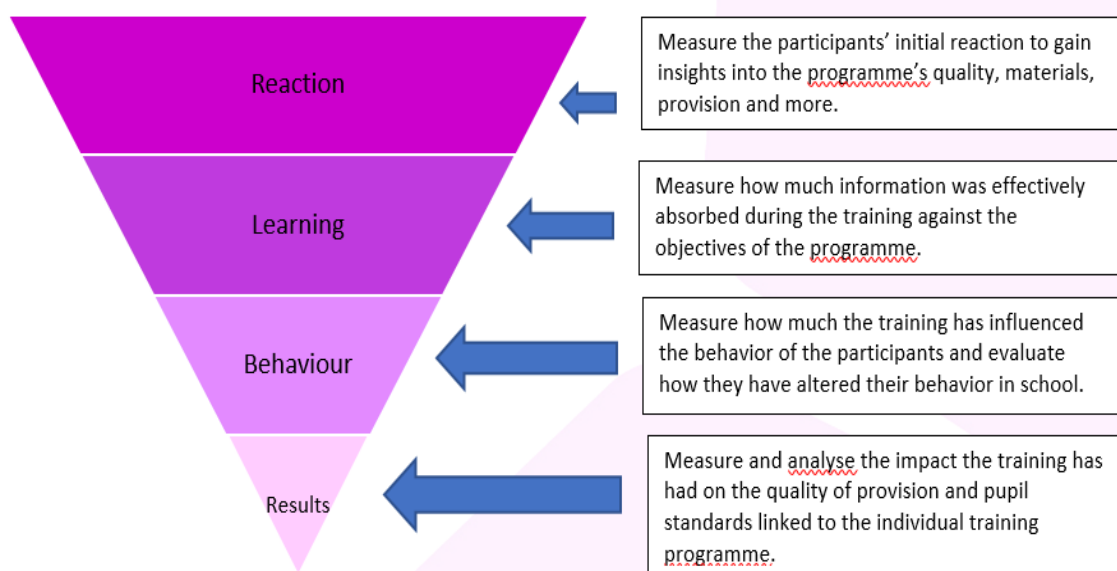
3.9 The Pedagogy Leads are following a professional learning programme of support covering all aspects of curriculum transformation and their learning is being disseminated across the county in 2 ways: (1) Cluster meetings (2) AoLE networks. These schools are also engaged in the work of the National Pedagogy Project, the National Professional Enquiry Project and the National Networks. The Mid Wales Partnership of Powys and Ceredigion

have developed a toolkit for leaders based on the Journey to Curriculum Rollout guidance and linked to the professional learning programme designed for Powys' Pedagogy Leads.

4. Impact

4.1 Powys have invested in professional learning and provided their practitioners with a high-quality entitlement that is easily accessible. Analytics of the Powys Professional Learning Offer Google Site record 1,600 different users between October 2021 and February 2022. The total number of page views exceeds 10,000. The Curriculum for Wales page of the site has received the highest number of views at 1,716 suggesting the level of practitioner interest in this area. User friendly short recordings have been produced to explain how the site can be accessed and navigated. These recordings have been shared with a wide range of stakeholders from headteachers to governors. Professional Learning opportunities are also advertised through the weekly Education Newsletter and through the Powys PL Team Twitter account which has 109 followers. However, the Professional Learning team are focussed on ensuring that all practitioners are accessing professional learning as their entitlement. Ensuring teachers have the time for professional learning is a challenge and can increase workload significantly for teachers with one or more Areas of Learning and Experience to lead.

4.2 Evaluation surveys using the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation (see diagram below) are completed after each training event to ensure that the workshops are appropriate to the practitioner's needs and are having the desired impact. The professional learning team analyse these evaluations and provide reports that explore 4 stages of impact. These 4 stages include reaction to the training, learning from the training, behaviour changes following on from the training and results of the training on learning and teaching.



4.3 On the Powys-wide INSET day that took place on the 4th January 2022, the professional learning team provided 17 different online workshops from 9am-3pm covering a wide range of training relating to the new curriculum. The team received nearly 700 applications for training that day and the impact of all 17 sessions was evaluated. The team received 250 responses to the evaluation requests. The quantitative data generated by these

surveys is summarised below. The questions that generated qualitative responses have been analysed by the team and summative reports written to plan for next steps in professional learning:

94% of participants agree or strongly agree that the professional learning improved their knowledge of the subject.

93% of participants agree or strongly agree that they would recommend the professional learning to others

92% of participants agree or strongly agree that the professional learning provided content relevant to my role.

91% of participants agree or strongly agree that the content was appropriate to my needs and my skill level.

The average number of stars awarded was **4.2** from a maximum of 5 agreeing that the learning from the training would have a positive impact on practice.

4.4 The views of the 19 Pedagogy Leads have also been sought to explore the effectiveness of the Pedagogy Leads programme to date. The programme commenced in September 2021 and data was collected through a survey in December 2021 to evaluate the impact of the programme at the end of the first term of rollout. Recommendations made by participants in response to the survey have led to changes in the way the programme will run from February to July e.g. Pedagogy Leads workshops will increase from 1 hour to 1.5 hours to allow for deeper discussion but will be held fortnightly rather than weekly. The main quantitative findings were as follows:

100% of participants agree or strongly agree that the professional learning improved their knowledge of the subject.

95% of participants agree or strongly agree that they would recommend the professional learning to others

100% of participants agree or strongly agree that the professional learning provided content relevant to my role.

100% of participants agree or strongly agree that the content was appropriate to my needs and my skill level.

The average number of stars awarded was **4.5** from a maximum of 5 agreeing that the learning from the training would have a positive impact on practice.

5. Next Steps

5.1 A much deeper understanding of the impact of our work of the professional learning team will be gleaned through spring visits to schools with school improvement advisor partners. This will provide us with the opportunity to speak in person with practitioners and learners, experience the school's culture and explore the learning that is taking place in classrooms resulting in bespoke support and intervention for those schools who will need the provision ready for September 2022.

5.2 By the end of the summer term the aim is for all practitioners to have accessed a wide range of professional learning workshops delivered by the Powys Professional Learning Team and a range of external providers.

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