

Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

About you

Alan Tootill
Headteacher, -

1. The Bill's general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Partly

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)

Personally, I don't see the need for complete curriculum reform compared with reviewing and updating the current National Curriculum. I agree that the 4 Purposes are an effective way of guiding the planning and delivery of our curriculum in Wales, but they are also the focus of the current curriculum. A National Curriculum has the huge advantage of providing consistency in what is taught and helping to ensure that the very best of what we know and think about our world is passed from one generation to the next. This is especially important for more disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

I am concerned at the potential loss of subject expertise and specialist teaching if schools move to AoLE models of delivery. This is more challenging for teachers and there is much historical evidence that it is less effective for pupils' learning. The notion that the new curriculum is 'skills-based' (as stated in the blurb above) is something that Professor Donaldson has been at pains to deny. However, the new curriculum is often being interpreted that way, even though evidence suggests that there aren't generic skills, only domain-specific ones which are dependent upon the specialist knowledge within that domain. In this sense, the new curriculum appears to fly in the face of much recent educational research, which is worrying.

Finally, the general looseness of the new curriculum guidance is a concern. Teachers are not experts at curriculum development; nor do they have large amounts of time to dedicate to this on top of their busy jobs. Yet each school is expected to create its own curriculum following the very unprescriptive guidance. It will certainly be interesting to see what emerges from this process. But it will mean very different curricula for different pupils in different schools. Some will be excellent, others will be below par. That is a serious worry.

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Almost certainly, to ensure that the proposed reforms do actually take place across the whole of Wales.

2. The Bill's implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

The current global pandemic is a massive barrier, because schools don't have the capacity to do much at the moment other than try to remain open and provide the best education and catch-up programme that we can for our pupils. Given the uncertainty around how long the restrictions and new ways of working that we are facing are set to last, and what exams might look like in the next two years, it is very hard for schools to put time into planning and preparing for the new curriculum. I understand that it would be very hard for Ministers to add a further delay to implementing the new curriculum, but I don't see any option unless things improve quickly.

We also don't yet know the financial impact of the global pandemic on school budgets over the next few years. This may become another significant barrier if budgets have to be reduced again after the 10 years of austerity we have lived through.

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

No.

3. Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

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4. Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

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5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

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6. Other considerations

6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

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