

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

Organisation: Venerable Edward Morgan Catholic primary school

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)

I support the new curriculum because one of the main focus is 'learning'. The process of learning for each individual is seen as a driver in this new curriculum. How learning takes place and the value of the experiences provided to pupils to enhance the learning process. I also support the new curriculum because it provides schools with a more balanced and broader curriculum, giving schools the freedom to explore different elements for learning that are more relevant to their pupils. I feel it is a purpose led curriculum that encourages schools to make connections between their communities and learners.

However I do feel the Bill fails to recognise the professionalism of the staff in Catholic schools in having the ability to deliver the new curriculum with RE at its core. The Bill fails to see the context of the Catholic community. Catholic schools shouldn't have to deliver a second syllabus. Catholic schools already teach other religions and meet the legal requirements. What and how we teach is balanced but the Bill gives the impression the government does not trust the professionalism of Catholic schools. Providing a second RE syllabus means increased workload and cost which results in Catholic school being treated differently to other schools. By being forced to provide a second syllabus Catholic schools may be put in a situation that affects the schools trust deeds.

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)

In some key areas for Catholic Schools what already exists in law is balanced and a fair. So we do not want them changed. In the new Bill there will be a burden on Catholic schools to deliver two RE syllabus. This is an unrealistic ask for schools. Current legislation recognises the trustees of Catholic Schools but under the new Bill schools will be expected to deliver RE and RVE. This goes against the legislation of the Church and therefore puts Catholic schools in the predicament of teaching something that is contrary to the Catholic Faith.

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)

I would like to refer you to the Headteachers letter sent to the Government.

The main barrier is the lack of trust in the professionals in catholic schools. It also fails to acknowledge the workload and strain on all staff due to COVID -19 and the difficulty it has casued for all staff to engage with any professional learning.

Additional barriers such as staff availability and work restrictions.

The main priority at the moment is staff and pupil well-being, and catch up for pupils. Workload issues are huge and this will only be added to if Catholic schools are forced to deliver a second syllabus.

Another barrier is the huge consequences of parent withdrawal .

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 it hasn't taken them into account as the timeline has not been adjusted to take into account the Covid crisis we are in at present.

Also as the RE consultation has not been published it is difficult to see how the Bill has any understanding of the Barriers and additional burdens faced by Catholic schools. The Bill was actually delivered to the senedd even before the consultation had process had finished.

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)

Unintended consequences are that the bill

- puts Catholic schools in the position of going against the trust deeds.
- The additional burden of Catholic schools having to deliver two parallel syllabuses at additional cost and workload.
- Provides a negative view of Catholic Education by giving the impression Catholic schools don't provide a balanced curriculum
- The negative impact on the relationships with parents and how it actually undermines the rights of parents
- could this see a rise in homeschooling

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)

I believe the following could be financial implications

- releasing of staff for professional learning which is essential if the implementation of the new curriculum is to be successful
- supply costs and costs of collaboration

- Increase of fees for new qualifications
- emphasis on experimental learning will have extreme budget burden on schools
- increased cost for Catholic schools to deliver two syllabuses which other schools will not have to do.

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)

I worry that there is the potential Welsh Government can make changes to legislation in the future that could see RE being removed as a mandatory element. For Catholic schools with RE at it's core this would have huge impact on what it means to be a Catholic school

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)

The Bill has a clear lack of listening to professionals. I am disappointed that Catholic Schools are seen as not balanced and that the professionalism of the staff is not trusted to be able to deliver RE in this way. The Bill appears to aim to remove the historic rights of Catholic schools.

