

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20 July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Families), Geraint Davies (Head of Education)
Report author	Jacque Chan (GwE), Mair Herbert (GwE), James Brown (DCC) and Ruth Thackray (DCC)
Title	Curriculum for Wales Update July 2023

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report provides an update on the progress made by schools since Curriculum for Wales became statutory for all primary school learners, and those secondary schools who opted in to start in Year 7, in September 2022. Additionally, the report offers information on how secondary schools and settings have been preparing to start teaching Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 from September 2023 as per the national implementation rollout timescales.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the work that schools have undertaken as part of implementing the new curriculum, in line with [national expectations](#) published by Welsh Government.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Scrutiny is invited to discuss the details of this report and to identify any aspects of the Curriculum for Wales work which may benefit from detailed examination in the future.

4. Report details

Context

4.1 In September 2022, the new Curriculum for Wales became statutory for all learners from Nursery to Year 6. Secondary schools were given the opportunity to start with Year 7 in September 2022; one secondary school in Denbighshire opted in. All other secondary schools and settings will start with the Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023. The Curriculum for Wales is a national framework with the Four Purposes as the shared vision. The framework is based on the principles of progression for all learners and requires schools to design their own local curricula based on their learners and community.

Primary Schools

4.2 All schools have designed their curriculum in line with the Four Purposes and to meet the mandatory requirements of Curriculum for Wales and, as such, have a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of all learners. Curriculum summary documents have been developed by each school and made available to parents and local community as per the requirements of Welsh Government.

4.3 All schools are implementing their development plans to realise the new curriculum. Leaders are currently evaluating how well those plans have been delivered and using that evidence to identify priorities for the school in the next year.

4.4 The local authority has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles within Welsh Government's [Journey to Curriculum Roll-out](#). This support is through regular professional dialogue with each school's link Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIA) and a range of professional learning opportunities at both a cluster and individual school level. The network has shared their practice through GwE's support centre and more recently a marketplace sharing event in Llandudno for all regional schools where practitioners from Denbighshire schools, presented and shared their work.

4.5 There has been a strong focus on developing effective teaching and learning as part of Curriculum for Wales. This work has involved creating regular opportunities for teachers to jointly-plan examples and curriculum models to

share across schools. Many schools have made effective use of the toolkit for 3-8 year olds through attending termly networks, regional sessions and bespoke cluster training. As a result, this has had a positive impact on provision and pupil outcomes as well as reducing variation within schools.

- 4.6 Developing collaboration continues to be a priority for all schools in Denbighshire. Most clusters are committed to developing peer review for evaluation of leadership and curriculum provision through the Schools Partnership Programme. Schools are currently collaborating to self-evaluate their practice and the quality of their improvement planning. Furthermore, all clusters of schools have developed and implemented transition plans, actively engaging in professional dialogue opportunities to develop a shared understanding of assessment and progression with peers within and across primary and secondary sectors.
- 4.7 During this initial implementation phase, schools have recognised the importance of planning regular, structured professional learning for all staff and governors. Having a clear vision for Curriculum for Wales through engagement with learners, parents and local community is also of importance as this provides clear direction for designing the local curriculum offer. Many schools are sharing emerging practice where learners can apply a range of skills in meaningful local contexts. There is also an understanding that curriculum development will be a continuous process and will evolve over time, as schools monitor, evaluate and refine their curriculum provision using a range of sources.
- 4.8 When considering areas for further development, schools have identified areas such as continuing to develop and refine their curriculum provision to meet the needs of all learners to support wellbeing and reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment, develop their practices in assessment and progression, and preparing for the changes identified in the new school improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability ready for implementation in September 2024.

Secondary Schools

- 4.9 One secondary school opted to introduce the new curriculum to Year 7 in September 2023. Seven secondaries and 2 special schools will introduce this

to Years 7 and 8 in September 2023. Lessons learned during the implementation phase at the secondary school that commenced rolling out the new curriculum from September 2022 have been shared. The eight schools have been supported by GWE through a range of general, bespoke and collaborative strategies.

- 4.10 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and governors of the secondary school that commenced rolling out the new curriculum from September 2022 were keen to embark on the roll-out at the same time as the primary cluster to benefit from opportunities to work and learn together, and they worked with learners, staff, parents, governors and the wider community to develop the vision and values to support the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.
- 4.11 The school has reviewed and evaluated the curriculum plan as the year has progressed, taking a wide range of views into account. They are aware that there are opportunities to further develop independent learners. Plans have been adapted to ensure that best practice is acknowledged and shared.
- 4.12 The school has worked closely with others to share best practice in planning for progress, assessment and reporting. They have accepted a range of opportunities to learn from others and accept support. The Deputy Head has shared her experiences with the schools in the alliance and others including at the regional GwE Celebration event held on 22nd June.
- 4.13 Members of the GwE team have conducted a rapid review and also observed lessons in Year 7. They saw a pro-active approach to teaching and learning, with good planning and high levels of engagement. Examples of learners' work will be displayed for parents, Year 6 learners and others in a showcase event at the end of June.
- 4.14 GWE has provided a wide range of support for school at all stages of the implementation journey this year, including conferences to share emerging practice, support to clusters and alliances to co-develop plans such as those for assessment and planning for progression, webinars and workshops to support developing teaching and learning, feedback and pedagogical approaches.
- 4.15 Funding has been made available to all clusters and secondary schools alliances to support their collaboration into 2023/24, to continue to develop

approaches to planning, developing a shared understanding of progression and reporting to parents on progress, next steps in learning and ways in which parents and carers can support their child's learning. This is supplemented by a support plan detailing bespoke support for each school on the particular aspects it has prioritised for attention within its school improvement plan.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a healthier and happier place where young people want to live and work and have the skills to do so as identified within the Four Purposes. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can learn and make good progress in their skills, learning in a fair and safe environment. This will help ensure all learners have the best start in life and can realise their full potential.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 Implementing the New Curriculum will have minimal impact on other services. The local authority (LA) will continue to liaise with GwE to utilise Welsh Government grants to support schools in implementing the Curriculum for Wales.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. Welsh Government have impact assessed the rollout of the new curriculum.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 Through liaison with GwE, there is regular discussion with colleagues across Wales and Welsh Government to collect feedback and identify aspects for further discussion and development. Scrutiny have previously received a report on the rollout of Curriculum for Wales

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Costs will be met from existing delegated budgets to schools, Education budget and also grant funding that has been made available from Welsh Government.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The implementation of the Curriculum for Wales is reviewed by Estyn as part of their inspection work. The local authority and GwE are already working in partnership to monitor and support schools with their implementation, thereby reducing the associated risks.

11. Power to make the decision.

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Sections 7.3, 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution.