

CYPE(5)-23-20 - Paper to note 4

Senedd Cymru

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg

Welsh Parliament

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Philip Blaker, Chief Executive, Qualifications Wales

Dyddiad | Date: 23 September 2020

Pwnc | Subject: **Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill**

Dear Philip,

Thank you for attending Committee last week, along with your colleague Emyr George, to give evidence on behalf of Qualifications Wales on the general principles of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

During the session there were some questions we were unable to cover. I attach these in the annex to this letter and would be grateful to receive a written response by 8 October 2020, to inform our scrutiny of the Minister later that month.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Neagle MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



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ANNEX

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT BILL: RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS

The Bill's provisions in relation to Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) mean that there are likely to be two different versions of RVE taught in schools across Wales. Community schools and other schools without a religious character will be required to teach RVE having regard to the Agreed Syllabus. Voluntary controlled schools with a religious character will be required to teach RVE having regard to the Agreed Syllabus unless a parent requests their child receives RVE in line with the trust deeds of the school or tenets of the school's faith (i.e. denominational RVE). Voluntary aided schools with a religious character will by default teach denominational RVE unless a parent requests their child receive RVE that accords with the Agreed Syllabus.

- What implications does the likely provision of more than one form of RVE have for qualifications in this discipline?

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT BILL: WELSH LANGUAGE

The Bill establishes a single learning continuum of learning Welsh in all schools, replacing the current distinction between Welsh first language and Welsh second language.

- How will qualifications in Welsh align with the different stages that learners are likely to be on along the single continuum for Welsh?
- Will there be a single qualification in Welsh or will there still be a need for two levels of qualification depending on the learner's proficiency in Welsh?

PLANNING FOR QUALIFICATIONS MORE BROADLY

Your written evidence states that the development and publication of the new Curriculum for Wales has been a 'catalyst' for you to look at how qualifications for 14 to 16 year olds will need to change. This, you explain, is in order to meet the new curriculum's aims and purposes and respond to future needs. You also outline the work you have undertaken to date on consulting on the high level approach to shaping future qualifications, and work that is yet to come.

In oral evidence, you said that the engagement undertaken so far suggests there is preference for qualifications to continue to be structured mainly around subject disciplines, rather than having individual qualifications that are seeking to cover the whole of an Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE). However, you also suggested there may be opportunities to develop more holistic and integrated qualifications to sit alongside those that are subject-specific.

- Are you able to share any further detail, at this stage, on your thinking about how the new GCSEs will look in practice, and give an indication of what any future consultation will consider (e.g. will it outline the options which should be available to young people, or will it be focused on the philosophy underpinning the approach)?

Digital assessment

During the meeting on 17 September, in relation to assessment, you stated:

“There are a number of things that we would like to progress. These are things that we were already thinking about, but maybe they should be accelerated in the thinking. Simple things like digital assessment—online assessment through tests that are delivered on screen, can be delivered remotely, can be delivered in schools, can be delivered on demand, so that you don't have the logistical issues of trying to get 200 young people into a room with computers at the same time—are all things that we're starting to think about in a more concerted way. And they're things that we'll be looking to consult on next year.”

- Can you provide more detail on your thinking to date about the role of digital assessment under the future curriculum, and an indication of how it might feature in arrangements for the awarding of qualifications in 2021 (for example as part of the response to the disruption caused by COVID-19)?