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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1098
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/06840/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair of Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

15 December 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 30 November relating to Petition P-05-1098 Make Wales' role in British colonial history a compulsory school subject.

It's important that learners in Wales are aware of the role Wales played in British colonial history including the sometimes uncomfortable truths about our past.

One of the four purposes in our new curriculum in Wales from 2022 is for all children and young people to develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, who are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world now and in the past, and also respect the needs and rights of others as a member of a diverse society.

These four purposes, are a part of the statutory framework for the Curriculum for Wales. The Curriculum for Wales framework includes mandatory elements, including statements of What Matters for each Area of Learning and Experiences (AoLE).

One of the statements of What Matters for Humanities, is "Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs". Learners will explore how places, communities and societies evolve over time, experiencing continuity and change that has affected, and continues to affect, their own and other people's lives. This will help learners build an understanding of the causes, consequences and significance of the changes and interrelationships that have shaped societies at different levels of development.

Another statement of What Matters for Humanities is "informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action". This aspect of the Area encourages learners to explore concepts including citizenship, authority and governance, interconnectedness, justice and equality, enterprise, rights and social action and responsibility.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The first iteration of the Curriculum for Wales guidance and Framework published in January 2020 is clear about the importance of school curricula in general reflecting our cultural heritage and diversity, our languages and the values, histories and traditions of our communities and all our people. Full rollout of the new curriculum will commence in September 2022.

The Curriculum for Wales Framework is determined nationally and includes both the curriculum requirements, which will be set out in legislation, and a range of supporting guidance. The Framework gives every school in Wales the opportunity to design their own curriculum within a national approach that ensures a level of consistency.

It encourages schools to build their own vision for their learners within the context of the four purposes and the learning defined at a national level. It provides the space for practitioners to be creative and to develop meaningful learning through a range of experiences and contexts that meet the needs of their learners.

It is for schools and practitioners, drawing on guidance and resources, to decide what specific experiences, knowledge and skills will support their specific learners to realise the four purposes.

The new curriculum **will** contain mandatory elements including the statements of What Matters for each Area of Learning and Experience. Every school's curriculum will be **required** to include learning in each of the statements of what matters.

Within the Humanities Area, this must include:

- cultivating a sense of 'Cynefin', a place and sense of belonging;
- an appreciation of identity and heritage;
- a consistent exposure to the story of their locality and the story of Wales, developing an understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies, past and present; and
- engagement with the past, contemporary and anticipated challenges and opportunities facing them, their communities and Wales.

These will be non-negotiable elements of every school's curriculum, for every learner at every stage. It will simply not be possible to ignore the central and critical role of all histories – our local and national history – in a school's curriculum. A school or setting's curriculum must therefore encompass this. If it does not, the school or setting will not be fulfilling its duties.

Schools will be supported, to engage with heritage professionals, museums and galleries, as well as community and cultural leaders when designing their curriculum, in order to enrich the learning and experiences for all learners. Within the parameters set out in the guidance, teachers will have the flexibility to tailor the content of lessons to allow learners to explore their Cynefin. We believe that this is the best way for them to understand how their local identities, landscapes and histories connect with those on the national and international stage.

Teachers will have the freedom to teach the many and diverse histories of Wales and the wider world and exploring the stories of the people and communities of Wales should not simply be limited to history lessons. The Curriculum for Wales encourages learners to

explore themes across the curriculum; the diverse histories of the people of Wales can be taught not only in areas such as Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication, but also Science and Technology.

Learning about human rights, equity, and diversity are cross-cutting themes which should be embedded within learning across the curriculum. The guidance on cross-cutting themes for the curriculum explains how schools and practitioners should have a methodology for designing a curriculum which incorporates, where appropriate, opportunities which allow learners to consider local, national and international contexts and to develop understanding of relationships and sexuality education, human rights education and diversity, and careers and work-related experiences.

As you are aware Professor Charlotte Williams OBE, was appointed to chair a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities (BAME), Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group in the summer. The work of the Group includes, but goes beyond, black history to consider a range of minority ethnicities as part of the story of Wales, and membership comprises experienced practitioners and contributors to BAME and Welsh history.

The Group's work is being carried out in phases, which has allowed it to start feeding into teaching for this academic year. In the first phase of the project, the Working Group looked at teaching resources. They have undertaken a review of the resources currently available to support the teaching of themes relating to BAME communities and Cynefin across all parts of the curriculum, which culminated in an [interim report](#) which was published on 19 November.

The shared expectations set out in *Curriculum for Wales: the journey to 2022*, published in October, reflect that schools will be in different places in designing their curriculum. It aims to guide schools' work regardless of where they are in their journey. It allows schools to move at a pace appropriate to them, allowing them to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 while also supporting them to prepare longer term for reform.

To help make sure schools are ready for the new curriculum, we will publish an implementation plan detailing the support schools can expect from Government and the wider education system in the run-up to curriculum roll-out in September 2022.

As part of the implementation plan, we'll set out our plans for a **national network** to support implementation. This will bring together teachers, experts and other stakeholders, in order to:

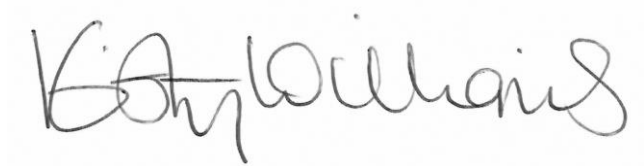
- Use co-construction to problem-solve and tackle barriers to implementation;
- Share understanding and expertise across the profession;
- Gather intelligence and bring together views to understand progress; identify issues and inform support; and
- Broker relationships between practitioners and wider stakeholders.

The resources, support and guidance being developed to support the new curriculum will empower schools to deliver meaningful learning about the histories of Wales and its diverse communities in every area of learning and experience across the curriculum. Part of the role of the national network will also be to identify gaps in resources not only for BAME contributions and experiences and the Histories of Wales, but all parts of the new curriculum and to support schools in delivering the new curriculum. We will also create further

resources, which will refer to key events and topics in the histories of Wales and the world. These resources will enable teachers to develop their own curricula.

Estyn will also report to Welsh Government on their review of the teaching of Welsh history and diversity in schools next year. Its findings will help us to commission further resources, which will refer to key events and topics in the histories of Wales and the world to ensure that teachers have the support they need to deliver the new curriculum successfully.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kirsty Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'W'.

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