

**The Children, Young People and Education Committee
Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales:
Implementation
11 November 2016**

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Children, Young People and Education Committee (CYPEC) to assist in the scrutiny of the implementation of Professor Graham Donaldson's Review, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales (Successful Futures)*.
2. The NASUWT is the largest teachers' union in Wales representing teachers and school leaders.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT gave a broad welcome to the recommendations contained in *Successful Futures* and to the pronouncements made by the former Education Minister that the new curriculum would be '...built for the profession, by the profession'.
4. However, the NASUWT has been disappointed to note that the involvement of the profession in building the new curriculum appears to be limited to select groups working in the Pioneer schools, with little accountability to the wider profession and/or scrutiny by the Strategic Stakeholder Group.

5. The disillusionment of NASUWT members is best illustrated in the motion that has been submitted to the 2016 NASUWT Cymru Conference:

'Implementation of the Donaldson curriculum reforms

Conference is concerned about the lack of direction and information from the Welsh Government and the Pioneer Schools regarding the implementation of the Donaldson Reforms.

Conference maintains that it would a disaster if the experiences of our members in Scotland, who implemented similar reforms which resulted in chaos, confusion and multiple interpretations of the requirements, were to be repeated in Wales.

Conference calls upon the National Executive to:

- i) press the Welsh Government to engage more fully with the trade unions in developing the proposals;*
 - ii) make clear to schools the requirements of the revised curriculum; and*
 - iii) provide the professional development identified by teachers to ensure that the new curriculum can be implemented properly.'*
6. This motion followed a meeting of the NASUWT Cymru Education Committee where comparisons were made between the Wales' *Curriculum for Life* and the *Curriculum for Excellence* in Scotland and where the experiences and concerns of NASUWT members working in Scotland were discussed.
7. The NASUWT would not wish to see the mistakes made in Scotland repeated in Wales as this led to the Union issuing an additional national action short of strike action instruction in Scotland to cover the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence, namely:
- '...to refuse to comply with Curriculum for Excellence related planning, monitoring, assessment or reporting systems which are inconsistent with the recommendation of the Curriculum for Excellence working group.'*
8. The NASUWT maintains that such a situation can be avoided in Wales, if the design of new curriculum and assessment arrangements are

workload impact assessed at every stage of development in the Pioneer schools. However, the lack of transparency and detailed information over the work being undertaken in the Pioneer schools does not inspire confidence that workload is being considered.

9. Consequently, the NASUWT urges the CYPEC to seek disclosure of all workload impact assessments currently undertaken in all of the Pioneer schools so that they can be subject to scrutiny.

Specific Comments

10. The NASUWT offers the comments and observations which follow on the four areas under scrutiny by the CYPEC.

Work of the Pioneer schools networks

11. The NASUWT has very little information about 'the work of the Pioneer schools network in designing and developing the new curriculum'.
12. The Union doubts that the workforce as a whole within the Pioneer schools network is involved in designing and developing the new curriculum as contact from members working in these establishments has been limited. It is more likely that a select few are working on aspects of the curriculum in conjunction with consortium challenge advisers.
13. Consequently, the NASUWT believes that the generality of teachers, including many in the Pioneer schools network, would feel disenfranchised from the process of building the new curriculum.

Interface with professional learning and initial teacher education and training

14. The NASUWT recognised that 'the interface with effective professional learning for the education workforce and initial teacher education and training' needs to be developed. However, for there to be such an

interface there needs to be an effective professional learning delivery model for the education workforce.

15. The Union is yet to be convinced that such a model is being developed. To date, the concentration has been on developing revised professional teaching standards to provide an accountability tool/framework for professional development, rather than looking at the needs of the education workforce in terms of the professional learning opportunities which will need to be provided to teachers, both current and those in training, to assist in the successful implementation of the new curriculum.
16. Further, there needs to be clarity and transparency over the content of, and assessment arrangements for, the new curriculum, before the training and development needs of both the current and future education workforce can be determined.

Governance arrangements

17. The NASUWT knows little of the **governance arrangements for implementation and the role of the Advisory Board, Change Board and Strategic Stakeholder Group**, apart from the latter body which, after a great deal of pressure, includes trade union representatives. However, this body appears to have been marginalised, as it does not appear to have met for some considerable time.
18. The Union questions seriously the role of these bodies and their effectiveness in monitoring the development of the new curriculum. Indeed, the NASUWT is concerned that the Change Board, which comprises the education establishment rather than the profession, may now be leading the process.
19. The NASUWT urges the CYPEC to seek disclosure of the minutes of the meetings of these three bodies which form the governance arrangements.

Other issues

20. The NASUWT suggests that 'other issues of concern and/or importance regarding the development of the new curriculum' which the CYPEC should consider are:
- i. the strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the new curriculum does not become workload intensive;
 - ii. the process for the transfer to the new curriculum;
 - iii. the delivery model for providing the professional learning opportunities which will be needed by teachers to ensure the successful implementation of the new curriculum;
 - iv. the role of the Consortia in terms of supporting the development of the new curriculum rather than leading the process;
 - v. the potential threat to subject-based learning during the first three years of secondary education;
 - vi. the lack of alignment between the new curriculum and the qualifications available at Key Stage 4;
 - vii. the view of the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) that there may be a need to reform the current Key Stage 4 qualifications to fit the new curriculum;
 - viii. the work which is being undertaken to reform the accountability regime in Wales, as recommended in *Successful Futures*, to ensure that the curriculum, rather than the requirements of the Welsh Inspectorate, guides practice in schools;
 - ix. the apparent disconnect between the rigidity of the use of skills ladders and the ethos of *Successful Futures* which accepts that learners do not progress at the same pace.



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