



Progress Report on the Reform Journey in GWYNEDD SCHOOLS



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WHAT ARE THE NEW CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS?

Since 2015 and the publication of Successful Futures, an independent review by Professor Graham Donaldson offering 68 recommendations to improve education within Wales, Welsh Government have embarked on a significant cycle of change to realise a new Curriculum for Wales. At the heart of Curriculum for Wales lies the four purposes:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

The new Curriculum for Wales will comprise of Six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs): Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; Science and Technology.

Welsh Government guidance on Hwb states:

'A school's curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. It is not simply what we teach, but how we teach and crucially, why we teach it.'

In line with this broader curriculum definition and as part of their preparations, all schools have engaged in activities beyond curriculum design and planning. Gwynedd schools and settings have been supported to engage with this substantial reform journey since 2017 in line with the region's Curriculum for Wales strategy. Examples of such activities include developing effective pedagogy, considering purposeful assessment including assessment for learning, developing peer review and leading change in line with the work of schools as a learning organisation.

At the end of June 2022, Welsh Government published the new guidance and information on school improvement and the new framework for evaluation, improvement, and accountability. This guidance applies to schools, PRUs, Local Authorities, diocesan authorities, regional consortia and Estyn and outlines expectations of each in contributing to sustainable school improvement. The framework is intended to drive behaviours and practices that are required by the Curriculum for Wales and the new assessment arrangements.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report builds upon the previous annual report from 2021 which considered how Gwynedd schools were responding to the Curriculum for Wales work in light of the renew and reform agenda during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. It provides an outline of where schools are currently at as they have continued to prepare for Curriculum for Wales and is based on evidence gathered by GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) as part of their work in



supporting schools during the Spring and Summer terms 2022.

The aspects in the bullet list below have been agreed with Welsh Government and the regions/partnerships as the processes that schools, and educational settings need to undertake to be prepared for curriculum realisation in September 2022.

These aspects align fully to the steps outlined in the 'Journey to curriculum rollout' document. Each region / partnership has contributed to the overall national picture shared with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language. Progress has been captured on the following:

- Identify the school's unique factors and how these contribute to the four purposes
- Review the vision, values, and behaviours to support the realisation of the curriculum
- Understanding of curriculum design considerations including mandated elements and the school's linguistic policy
- Review curriculum design models and investigate their suitability for the school
- Consider the role of progression, assessment and pedagogy in the curriculum and local context
- Design, plan and pilot the proposed curriculum models, evaluate the initial designs, and develop plans for the medium term

During the Spring and Summer terms 2022, all GwE Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have visited schools and PRUs with a focus on Curriculum for Wales. Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have worked alongside school leaders to co-construct an overview and to capture the progress the school has made in preparing for the new curriculum.

GWYNEDD PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

The work carried out during the summer term as previously mentioned in the purpose of this report has also identified the following priorities for GwE:

1. Ensure that all schools will be ready to start teaching the curriculum to meet mandatory and statutory requirements from Nursery to Year 6 settings and those secondary schools and settings that have opted in for September 2022

This will be supported by:

- Facilitating and aligning work within regional and local networks, alliances and clusters to share clear guidance on curriculum design and planning through modelling and exemplifying curriculum practice within and across all Areas of Learning and Experience;
 - Developing shared understanding of progression through focused professional dialogue;
 - Developing a range of effective assessment procedures to include assessment for learning to ensure progression in learning for all learners;
 - Working collaboratively with schools and settings to develop robust processes to evaluate Curriculum for Wales in line with holistic measures of the four purposes.
 - Promoting learner transition by ensuring effective direct engagement between secondary and primary schools.
 - Working in tandem with leaders to ensure that all settings have a clear plan for effective professional learning and to take into consideration the forthcoming National Professional Learning Entitlement to be published in September by Welsh Government.
2. Implement processes addressing schools causing concern and work with Gwynedd Local Authority to ensure schools have the appropriate level of support and challenge for their improvement in line with new evaluation, improvement, and accountability framework.
 3. Further strengthen and embed peer review to strengthen self-evaluation and the improvement planning. This should include a focus on evaluating Curriculum for Wales.



- Continue to support all secondary settings to be prepared for the introduction to Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023.

These priorities will feed into the operational business plans and GwE work programme for Autumn term 2022 onwards.

HOW PREPARED ARE SCHOOLS IN GWYNEDD FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW CURRICULUM AND HOW ARE WE MEASURING THE IMPACT AND SUCCESS

Since March 2020, Covid-19 has undoubtedly impacted on schools' ability and capacity to engage with the reform journey. As schools prioritised responding to the pandemic, most of their original timelines and plans to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum were disrupted. Covid-19 continues to be a challenge as cases rise and fall with leaders facing staff absences and limited availability of supply teachers.

Curriculum for Wales is statutory for all primary settings from Nursery to Year 6 in September 2022. Schools and settings teaching Year 7 were given the opportunity to opt in to start teaching the new curriculum to Year 7 in September 2022. Six Gwynedd secondary schools have opted in for September 2022. The eight other secondary settings will adopt Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023.

Progress that schools and settings are undertaking to be prepared for curriculum realisation has been captured at individual school and setting level and collated in the table below to show both the regional and Gwynedd overview

GwE SUMMARY	ALL GwE SCHOOLS	GWYNEDD SCHOOLS	
		Primary and Special [81]	Secondary Settings [14]
No. of Schools			
	On-track	On-track	On-track
1. Identifying the unique factors of the school / setting and how these contribute to the four purposes.	99.4%	100%	100%
2. Reviewing the vision, values, and behaviours to support curriculum realisation.	98.9%	100%	93%
3. Understanding of curriculum design considerations including mandatory elements and school linguistic policy.	98.6%	100%	86%
4. Review curriculum design models and investigate the suitability for their specific school / setting.	96.9%	98%	79%
5. Considering the role of progression, assessment and pedagogy in their local curriculum / context.	93.9%	96%	64%
6. Designing, planning and trialing their proposed curriculum model, evaluating initial designs and developing medium term plans.	93.3%	89%	79%

● Identify the school's unique factors and how these contribute to the four purposes

Nearly all schools have engaged in meaningful and robust consultation with their local stakeholders including pupils, parents, governors, and members of the local community. As part of this consultation, schools have co-constructed



the factors which make their school unique, and these factors have shaped the school's curriculum design work. Many schools have developed a range of engagement methods to gather this information, often through questionnaires or through parental forums. As a result, initial curriculum design of every school demonstrates that it is responding to its unique local factors.

Nearly all schools have engaged learners in discussions on the four purposes to understand what these mean for the school and to consider child friendly language and many primary schools have created characters so pupils can refer and identify with the aspects within the four purposes. Most schools have visual representations of the four purposes in classrooms and around the school and nearly all teachers identify opportunities for the four purposes in their planning and have woven them into their curriculum design at a suitable level for pupils to understand. All the above work to understand the four purposes has led to a clear link between the unique factors of the school and the aspirations of all stakeholders.

Many Gwynedd secondary schools have developed strong working partnerships with their cluster of local primary schools, and this has proved a key element in considering the local developments of Curriculum for Wales across the 3 – 16 learning continuum.

It is within the spirit of the New Curriculum that learners are provided with opportunities to play, learn, and develop relevant skills in the outdoors and in their local area. All schools in Gwynedd have a shared understanding of this principal and have planned suitable learning experiences for their learners with this at the forefront. Many primary schools have already extended their current outdoor provision for the foundation phase the rest of their pupils. They have woven these outdoor experiences into their new curriculum design for example one school creating an outside 'gym' to encourage fitness and keeping fit at play times and another collaborating with external agencies and experts 'Gwyrdd Ni' and 'ReNewWales to establish a community garden. One secondary school have established links with the Slate Museum in Llanberis as well as Siemens laboratories for the basis of their work with year 7 pupils. The project also involves giving opportunities for pupils to learn about the impact of tourism in the area and participate in local recreational activities such as walking, climbing, and kayaking on Llyn Padarn. A few primary schools have gone a step further by developing purpose-built outdoor classes on the school grounds; this means that the school can have a whole class working regularly on tasks in stimulating areas outdoors.

● Review the vision, values and behaviours to support the realisation of the curriculum.

Nearly all Gwynedd schools attended and engaged with GwE workshops that promoted change and offered guidance on reviewing and developing a shared vision for the Curriculum for Wales. Discussions with school leaders and Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIAs) show that almost all Gwynedd schools have made use of this guidance as a starting point for their own review and consultation.

Nearly every school's first step was to gather information from all the stakeholders about exactly what values and behaviours they would like to see the school develop through either face-to-face meeting with stakeholders or making use of questionnaires.

By the end of the summer term 2022, all schools had either modified their previous vision or drawn up a new vision for the launch of Curriculum for Wales in September 2022. These visions have mostly been developed through the direct consultations with all stakeholders and considering local context and aspirations. The four purposes are clearly evident within the visions, and this gives aim to all the schools' work. Some schools have invited local artists to work with pupils to interpret their ideas and aspirations. This work to develop the school vision has led to a shared common understanding of the school's aspirations across the community and most schools have now promoted and celebrated their renewed vision proudly, for example, on school websites.

Nearly all secondary schools and their local primary schools have established regular dialogue on developing shared or common elements within their cluster vision based on the four purposes.

The Gwynedd secondary schools who have adopted Curriculum for Wales in September 2022 have shared their vision for the new curriculum to Year 6 learners and parents as part of their transition process.



● Understanding of curriculum design considerations including mandated elements and the school's linguistic policy

Curriculum for Wales regional and local networks have established an infrastructure across the region to enable school leaders and teachers to engage in professional dialogue about curriculum design considerations. An increasing number of practitioners have engaged with these networks throughout the year and there are now 804 practitioners involved in the networks regionally, with over 90 from Gwynedd.

Membership also includes colleagues from GwE, Local Authorities and Bangor University CABAN staff. Professor Graham Donaldson continues to attend regional meetings to offer guidance and feedback on discussions and offer further points to consider for moving forward.

Curriculum for Wales networks have focused on all aspects of curriculum design which has included experimenting and trialling curriculum planning across the Areas of Learning and Experience. An increasing number of schools across all sectors have shared their practice and identified principles of the process that have been key to their settings, for example secondary and primary schools presenting their work on curriculum design and secondary schools presenting their work on developing and planning for progression in the cross curricular skills. This work of the networks has been shared wider with all schools through the GwE website and discussions with Supporting Improvement Advisors (SIAs). The work of the networks has also been shared through a series of Professional Learning online webinars aimed at Senior Leaders and Middle Leaders and teachers. Most schools and clusters have used the guidance of the network and webinars to aid their discussions on curriculum design and this discussion, at times with pupils and governors, has led to ownership of the design. For example, detailed consideration has been given to different learning models and research work has taken place in many schools to ensure the consideration of their language policy.

All Gwynedd schools have ensured that promoting the Welsh language, culture and heritage of Wales has been clearly woven into curriculum design. Since the end of the summer term 2022, GwE have worked with Bangor University to conduct a formal evaluation of the regional and local networks and the findings of this evaluation will inform next steps of the networks. Early feedback indicates that there is increased ownership of the curriculum across network practitioners with a greater understanding of the Curriculum for Wales framework. GwE have strong collaboration with partners in Higher Education Institutes to effectively support schools to develop the role of enquiry as part of developing a local curriculum.

Work to consider the mandatory elements of the curriculum also took place during the summer term and most schools have taken these elements into account in their design, taking care to weave these in to ensure authentic contexts. Nearly all schools have completed a draft high-level curriculum design document which has been owned by the entire staff and this has been accepted by the governors of schools for publication at the beginning of September. This high-level curriculum design is serving as the curriculum summary and many schools' websites are now celebrating their vision, their direction of the 4 purposes and their innovative approaches for rich learning experiences for September onwards.

● Review curriculum design models and investigate their suitability for the school

Nearly all schools have reviewed their curriculum design models following the work on setting vision and direction for the school. Having come to understand the design elements of their curriculum through GwE workshops and their own research, most schools have been discussing and considering different curriculum models.

As part of this work, Gwynedd secondary schools are taking into careful consideration the current staffing structures, including capacity within the school and timetable. Schools have also identified the necessity of ensuring sound links are created and that it is not about 'shoe horning' subjects together unnecessarily. Schools are also awaiting further information from Qualification Wales and WJEC on revised GCSEs before making plans for Years 9, 10 and 11.

In order to better understand the requirements of the curriculum almost all schools have gone through the process of unpacking the Areas of Learning and Experience. In the majority of schools, the entire staff has been part of this process which has led to a much deeper understanding of the requirements as well as an opportunity to discuss how



to weave the knowledge, skills and experience identified within an Area of Learning and Experience into authentic and meaningful local contexts. In many cases, schools have collaborated effectively with neighbouring schools to unpack the Statement of What Matters within the curriculum and have shared expertise and subject knowledge using a variety of approaches to create shared ownership and collaborative teams across the Areas of Learning and Experience, for example, shared online documentation and Google site.

● Consider the role of progression, assessment and pedagogy in the curriculum and local context.

Nearly all schools have prioritised time to focus on pedagogy, for example, staff meetings, cluster meetings and staff training days. Nearly all schools have begun trialling various methods of applying pedagogical principles into their curriculum plans.

Many schools also continue to develop aspects of Assessment for Learning (AfL) that feature strongly within the 12 pedagogical principles and also part of the methods that were shared and trialled within the GwE project with Shirley Clarke. Most schools have adopted these learning methods and used them to ensure that the pupils can work more independently and that the next steps in learning are identified. These assessment methods will also strengthen good teacher knowledge of the progress of each child.

Generally, most Gwynedd schools intend to assess by starting in the classroom with the pupils' day-to-day work. Teachers will keep track of progress and often mark stages in development. Gwynedd schools also intend to continue using the national assessments and standardised tests to track reading and numeracy standards. Many schools also plan to assess and track the children's well-being as well as their attitude to their work. Some schools are considering buying a commercial package for this, others want to trial a GwE tracking tool while many are adapting their own approaches.

Most schools and clusters are using the statutory guidance on Hwb and further examples and guidance from GwE to consider the purposes of assessment and are planning opportunities for regular professional dialogue for teachers to consider assessment and progression of learners. Most schools have identified developing a shared understanding of progression as an aspect for further development next year.

● Design, plan and pilot the proposed curriculum models, evaluate the initial designs and develop plans for the medium term

Collaboration has been a core element for schools to be designing and moving forward to plan the curriculum and there are many examples of developed and emerging cross-school and cross-cluster collaboration to be seen. There is a very strong culture of collaboration between Gwynedd schools.

The teachers who are members of the Curriculum for Wales networks have been collaborating on specific areas and have shared their work across other networks. Other schools have also benefited from this work as teachers on the networks have cascaded information and ideas during local meetings and cluster sessions. Examples of effective collaborative work developed by Gwynedd teachers in the Gwynedd local networks have been shared regionally.

All Gwynedd schools have identified curriculum development as a key priority for further professional learning for staff. Creating opportunities for schools to share their differing approaches with each other will continue to be a priority this academic year.

SUMMARY OF GwE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS, LEARNERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

The delivery of effective professional learning programmes has supported schools across all sectors with developing their initial curriculum plans. All schools have access to a comprehensive professional learning offer which includes a national, regional, and local offer focused on the development of whole school approaches, Area, and subject discipline development where appropriate. This offer which includes pedagogy, curriculum design and planning, assessment, and progression, is clearly aligned to the phases of 'Journey to curriculum roll-out' to ensure that schools are equipped to improve the quality of teaching and learning and implementation from September 2022.



Regular consultation with headteacher allows for the needs of schools to feed through to the regional professional learning offer. Co-construction remains a core component of regional working to provide practical professional learning opportunities that support leaders and teachers to understand better how they can design, adopt, and implement their curriculum.

During the Spring and Summer terms 2022, GwE's professional learning offer has focused on a series of online webinars for senior leaders, middle leaders, and teachers to support schools in their preparations for the new curriculum. These virtual sessions were well attended by Gwynedd schools, with many schools taking the opportunity to engage as full leadership teams and/or as full staff meeting. The sessions were recorded and shared with all schools to enable school practitioners to engage at a time most appropriate to them. Furthermore, all schools have had the opportunity for follow up conversations with their Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIAs) and many Gwynedd schools and clusters have requested bespoke sessions to develop this work further. Many Gwynedd schools have contributed to the sessions, sharing emerging practice and local exemplars and as result, schools are able to see theory in practice.

All Gwynedd Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) have worked closely with their schools and have supported schools in a variety of ways to meet the needs of schools and clusters. Examples of support include:

- Early in the autumn term 2021, each SIA collaborated with clusters or individual schools to formulate a priority for introducing the curriculum within their school development plan. During their visits, the SIA discussed the implementation and impact of the plan as the year progressed;
- SIAs has been involved in leading the schools through various workshops on leading change, planning the journey towards 2022, a school vision workshop, assessment and progress, and designing a higher-level curriculum model. All schools were provided with access to recordings of these presentations in addition to a comprehensive range of resources on the GwE website;
- SIAs have met with headteachers to share the resources that have been developed by GwE to support schools with the process of curriculum design and to ensure that a strategic direction is in place to guide the planning and delivery;
- Many clusters have benefited from the support of their SIA to lead whole school sessions during training days and twilight sessions for example guiding schools through the requirements of Curriculum for Wales, to understand and unpack the Areas of Learning and Experience and to discuss strategies for designing and planning of the curriculum;
- SIAs have also attended headteachers' meetings which have included local curriculum items on their agenda. This means that headteachers receive regular updates on the next steps in the curriculum roll out;
- SIAs have provided bespoke support to many schools to develop their understanding of the purposes of assessment within Curriculum for Wales and have shared exemplars of how schools are developing their approaches;
- As well as the headteachers and teachers in schools, the teaching assistants in many schools have also been part of these meetings and workshops with the SIAs. Some schools have also received bespoke Curriculum for Wales training by the Teaching Assistants' Learning Pathway team. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Teaching Assistants have been upskilled and empowered to adopt more prominent roles in school, for example, contributing to the curriculum planning process;
- In terms of support for governors, GwE has held specific Curriculum for Wales sessions for governors in 2021 and 2022 with over 100 governors attending. The feedback to these sessions has been very positive with the effect that the governors are in a much better place to understand the new curriculum, to understand what the schools are doing and why, and importantly to be equipped to question and support the school. In almost all schools the governors have been part of the process of shaping the vision and playing an important role in local curriculum design. SIAs have also provided support to the governors of individual schools on curriculum developments.
- SIAs have provided bespoke support on aspects of teaching and learning to include revisiting the 12 pedagogical principles;
- By the end of the summer term, following input from SIAs, including workshops and GwE models, nearly all schools have drafted a high-level curriculum design model and most governing bodies have discussed and adopted the design;
- SIAs have met with Headteachers and members of Senior Leadership Teams in all schools to support with evaluating the school's curriculum design and planning and to identify further support requirements;



- Subject SIAs have supported the majority of schools with Area of Learning and Experience planning and developing cross-curricular skills across the school;
- All schools have received recordings and resources from the curriculum design and assessment webinars;
- SIAs have supported and facilitated cluster and alliance work where appropriate;
- SIAs have enabled schools to develop the role of peers within self-evaluation and aligned this to Curriculum for Wales foci where appropriate.

AREAS THAT NEED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Gwynedd schools across all sectors in consultation with SIAs have identified the following areas where they would like further support for development:

- Further develop a shared understanding of progression - within a school and between schools;
- Refine and improve assessment processes and assessment tracking systems to ensure progression of all learners;
- Continue to develop pedagogy and improve the quality of aspects of teaching and learning identified within individual schools;
- Further support for leaders with strategic whole school progressive planning of literacy, numeracy and digital skills;
- Further support for middle leaders with classroom planning for literacy, numeracy and digital skills;
- In line with expectations of the new evaluation, improvement and accountability framework:
 - develop effective evaluation of curriculum processes including pupil and parental voice;
 - refine long term curriculum planning;
 - continue to develop collaboration and peer review through the School Partnership Programme;
- Continue to develop curriculum design with bespoke support for leaders and middle leaders across the Areas of Learning and Experiences, integral skills and cross-cutting themes;
- Further develop the priority of whole school well-being – including developing and evaluating the Health & Wellbeing AOLE;
- Further strengthen transition work with particular focus on Years 6-7 through strong collaboration and focused professional dialogue between secondary and primary feeder schools;
- Provide bespoke support where needed for secondary schools and settings to start Curriculum for Wales with Years 7 and 8 in September 2023;
- Continue to engage with Supporting Improvement Advisers (SIAs) to facilitate cluster and alliance discussions, share innovative and emerging practice and support staff professional learning through INSET (training) days.

