

Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings

Consultation response form

Your name: Hywel Iorwerth

Organisation (if applicable): Welsh Language
Commissioner

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Responses should be returned by **16 July 2021** to

Curriculum Realisation Unit
Curriculum and Assessment Division
The Education Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: curriculumforwales@gov.wales

Question 1 – Do you work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained nursery setting?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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i) If yes, in which type of setting/organisation do you work? (If no continue to iii below.)

Private day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Umbrella organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/>	Third sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cylch Meithrin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulatory body (includes inspectorate)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

ii) What is your primary role?

Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early years advisory teacher (or equivalent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of management committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

iii) If you do not work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained setting, in what capacity would you like to provide feedback?

Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child or young person (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner in a non-funded non-maintained setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student/academic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Adult 18-plus (not a parent or carer)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
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iv) Are you providing feedback on behalf of an organisation or group?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If 'yes', please specify.

Welsh Language Commissioner

Question 2 – To what extent will this curriculum support effective planning in funded non-maintained settings?

Very unsupportive	Slightly unsupportive	Neither supportive nor unsupportive	Slightly supportive	Very supportive
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 3 – Is it clear how the four purposes underpin the delivery of this curriculum?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 4 – Are the statements of what matters reflected appropriately in the developmental pathways?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer.

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Question 5 – Can you see how delivery of this curriculum will ensure children’s progression from the developmental pathways through to the descriptions of learning at progression step 1?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer.

Please see our response to question 19

Question 6 – Is the purpose of the developmental pathways clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Question 7 – Is anything missing from the statements in the developmental pathways?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If ‘yes’, please specify.

Question 8 – Are the developmental pathways inclusive for all children?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer.

Question 9 – Are the roles of the practitioner, environment and experiences clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 10 – Is the link between the pathways and the roles of the practitioner, environment and experiences clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 11 – Does this curriculum clearly explain how the developmental pathways will support development of the mandatory cross-curricular skills?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 12 – Is it clear that development of the mandatory cross-curricular skills should be embedded within holistic practice across the whole curriculum?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

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Question 13 – To what extent are the incremental statements for the mandatory cross-curricular skills helpful in supporting practitioners to understand how children develop these skills?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Question 14 – What, if any, additional information would be helpful?

Question 15 – To what extent are the separate functions of observation and assessment, as well as the link between them, clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Question 16 – To what extent is the section on enhancing practice helpful?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Question 17 – What, if any, additional information would be helpful in this section?

Question 18 – To what extent are the reflective questions included throughout this curriculum helpful in:

i) supporting planning?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

ii) prompting practitioners to consider their knowledge and skills?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

iii) supporting continual improvement in practice?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Question 19 – We would like to know your views on the effects that this curriculum would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

General comments - curriculum requirements

- As section 2.2 of the consultation document states, the curriculum must include all six areas of learning and experience and also the mandatory elements of the curriculum. As you know, the Welsh language is a key part of the Language, Literacy and Communication area of learning and experience and a compulsory element of the curriculum. As we explain further in our comments below, we do not consider that this curriculum provides adequate guidance on how the Welsh language should be introduced in nursery settings (particularly in relation to English-medium settings).

- Our concerns relate specifically to how English-medium settings should introduce the Welsh language to children. Whilst the curriculum clearly addresses literacy skills (as one of the cross-curricular skills), it does not address the development of children's bilingual skills. Whilst it is true that a significant number of nursery settings will apply this guidance in order to develop children's Welsh-language literacy skills (i.e. in Welsh-medium settings), it is also true that the majority of nursery settings will focus on English-language skills (that is, in non-Welsh-medium settings). However, these English-medium nursery settings also have a duty to develop the children's Welsh-language skills. There is no such duty on Welsh-medium settings to develop children's English language skills.
- We therefore do not consider that this curriculum reflects the requirements of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act in relation to the Welsh and English languages clearly enough. We believe that there is room for further guidance on issues relating to the language medium for teaching the curriculum. It should be made clear that the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act enables an immersion education model (where Welsh-medium settings immerse pupils in the Welsh language only), and also places a duty on all settings to start developing children's bilingual skills. We understand that the main expectations in terms of literacy and communication will be achieved primarily through the medium of English in English-medium settings. However, they need further guidance and support in terms of the national expectations of them to introduce the Welsh language as well.
- As you know, the framework guidance for the curriculum for Wales makes it clear that schools need to teach both Welsh and English, and the learning descriptions include specific stages of progress for English-medium settings in terms of the Welsh language. There is no such clarity in this draft curriculum, and we are concerned that nursery settings would be able to choose in which language they fulfil the language and literacy requirements of the curriculum. There is therefore a danger that some English-medium settings will not pay adequate attention to the Welsh language, and children will not be sufficiently prepared for the start of their journey to develop confidence in the Welsh language as part of the school curriculum. This is worrying given the Government's vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, and in particular the significant increase that they anticipate in the number of pupils in the English-medium education system who will leave school as Welsh speakers. The projection towards a million speakers is based on the premise that 50% of pupils leaving English medium schools in 2050 will be able to speak Welsh. This curriculum needs to reflect this vision, and prepare all children in Wales for starting their journey to develop into confident Welsh speakers.
- In summary, therefore, our argument is that this curriculum needs to be clearer on two points:

1. That Welsh-medium settings can continue to follow an immersion education model, and are not expected to introduce English as an element of the curriculum.
 2. If English is the main medium of teaching at the nursery setting, that there are then additional expectations in terms of introducing and developing children's Welsh-language skills. Clearly, these expectations do not equate to the more general expectations in terms of literacy and communication, and therefore a section should be included in the curriculum about the extent of these expectations, together with support as to how to achieve this.
- The easiest way to achieve the above is to include a specific section that deals with this in the curriculum for nursery settings. Rather than having to repeat this throughout the document when referring to literacy or communication, a specific section dealing with the bilingual nature of education in Wales should be included. This guidance should reflect the Curriculum and Assessment Act for Wales in relation to the immersion model of education up to the age of 7, and the statutory requirement for all nursery settings and schools to learn Welsh from 3-16 years old. This may be what section 2.4 (mandatory elements of the curriculum) would do – but this section is not included in the consultation document.

Introducing the mandatory elements of the curriculum

- Section 2.4 of the document discusses the mandatory elements of the curriculum. The document notes that *'this section will be completed as part of the refinement work which will follow this feedback stage'*.
- It is not clear why this section has not been completed or what the content and extent of this section will be. As the Welsh language is one compulsory element of the curriculum, many of the comments we raise in our response to the consultation may be things that will be included in this section. It is very difficult to respond to this curriculum with such a key section not having been included.

Five development routes

- The curriculum consists of five key development routes that are essential for all young children to learn and develop: belonging, communication, exploration, physical development, wellbeing.
- The 'communication' development route does not refer to Welsh/English. We accept that the important point here is that children develop these key communication skills, whether it be in English or Welsh. However, there is also a requirement for the education sector, including all nursery settings, to introduce the Welsh language to all children. This is not reflected here.
- As we have already noted, we believe that the curriculum needs to discuss more clearly issues relating to the language medium of teaching, in the context of the

vision to ensure an increase in the number of pupils who are confident in using Welsh and English.

Cross-curricular skills

- Section 9.1 discusses literacy, and the document states:

'All children should have opportunities to develop an awareness that Wales has two official languages and that many other languages are spoken in our communities. We have a responsibility to ensure that children develop positive attitudes towards different languages and towards the people who speak them. Language skills taught in one language should support the development of knowledge and skills in another language.'

- The requirements of the curriculum go further than ensuring that children have an awareness of both languages of Wales. All nursery settings and schools have a duty to teach Welsh to all children. Of course, there are limitations in the extent of these expectations in the context of very young children who have not yet mastered their first language(s), but nursery settings are expected at least to start each child's journey to becoming confident Welsh speakers.
- While we accept that there is a need to be realistic and proportionate about the expectations that can be placed on young children in English-medium settings in terms of their Welsh-language development, the evidence that shows that the 0-5 age range is one where language acquisition takes place quickly and naturally should be emphasised. In addition, the evidence shows that learning Welsh from the outset within the education system is key to producing confident Welsh speakers.
- As has already been mentioned, the learning statements and stages of progress for literacy make no reference to English/Welsh. This is probably because these descriptions follow a format and are co-ordinated with the statements in the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, which also do not refer to any language specifically. That is, the framework can be interpreted and applied to any language. However, it would be helpful if this section referred to the fact that English-medium settings (that is, the settings that will primarily apply the 'literacy' requirements through the medium of English) are also expected to have a duty to introduce the Welsh language to children. In line with the Welsh Government's policy on linguistic immersion, there is no equivalent expectation for Welsh-medium settings to introduce English to children. This is, of course, because children are bound to learn English naturally regardless of the linguistic medium of learning, since English is a majority language that prevails in the media and in global culture.
- Linked to the above point, the stages of progress in the curriculum framework guidance for Wales set expectations in terms of Welsh and English for all pupils. The curriculum for nursery settings clearly states that the curriculum in nursery settings should prepare and initiate each child's journey towards stage 1 of the

above framework (the framework is included as an appendix to this curriculum for this very reason). The curriculum in nursery settings should therefore reflect the fact that children will be expected to make progress in Welsh and English when starting school.

- We do not necessarily argue that this section requires much amendment, but a sentence or two could be included to reflect the requirements of the curriculum in terms of Welsh and English, and also to refer to the section in the document that expands on this.

Question 20 – Please also explain how you believe this curriculum could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

Question 21– We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: