

Curriculum for Wales 2022 Feedback Analysis

Children & Young People's Report

October 2019





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01 Introduction to the consultation

Dynamix were asked by Welsh Government to provide accessible methods for children and young people's voices to be included in the feedback phase on the new curriculum. In order to achieve a wide response rate three feedback methods were used;

An online survey was developed to enable children and young people to respond in their own time.

Focus groups were delivered across Wales with 24 groups including Primary, Secondary and Protected characteristic groups.

A toolkit was developed which could be used by youth leaders to gather opinions with their groups. The toolkit provided detailed instructions on how youth leaders could run participative and fun activities with young people to get their voices heard.

Dynamix worked with Welsh Government to ensure that the language used was accessible to children and young people and that the methods of collating feedback were in line with participation standards.



02 About Dynamix

Dynamix is a Welsh social enterprise that provides education and specialises in giving people a voice using participative activities to engage inclusively.

Dynamix makes use of consultative, participative activities to ensure participants feel able to give their opinions. A range of techniques are used to cater to people's preferences for giving their opinions, be that physically, visually, verbally, or in the written form. This results in participants feeling comfortable and confident enough to participate fully in the experience using facilitated consultation, to feel included and to know that their thoughts and opinions count and are counted.

Dynamix methodologies are underpinned by our values of engagement through participation and enjoyment, respect, inclusion, co-operation and empowerment along with the cooperative values and principles. Dynamix is also a strong advocate of the 12 Welsh National Principles of Public Engagement¹ and the 7 National Standards of Children and Young People's Participation².



¹ <https://participation.cymru/en/principles/>

² <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/our-work/participation/participation-standards/>

03 Summary

The results from the feedback phase with children and young people provide an insight into what the most important things for learners are with regards to their learning and learning experience, what could improve things and what matters to them in terms of the Areas of Learning and Experience.

The importance of knowledge is seen for many as the core reason for going to school and is mostly linked to specific subjects and life skills. Skills for work and skills for life are a very important element of education for a high proportion of participants during this feedback phase and links are made between subjects and career opportunities. Health and fitness is linked closely to both physical and mental health for many participants. There was a clear understanding and desire for good health and wellbeing as well as a concern for those who need support. The importance of sex education and PSE was also a clear theme. Friendships are important and includes friends in school, the importance of trust and respect and also included good teachers. Social skills and social behaviour were closely linked to communications for many participants this meant that languages, including BSL were important. Building relationships, being caring, having fun, learning about other cultures and religions, behaviour and accepting others, and manners were all important elements of social skills and behaviours. Confidence was linked to being happy, having fun, the opportunity to be creative through art, drama and music, and being able to communicate in different languages. Important things for participants that didn't fit into any of the categories included environmental awareness, facilities, specific teachers and life skills.

For participants in both the focus groups and the online survey it was identified that friends were the best thing about education. This was because of the support provided through motivation, socialising and having fun. Having fun was really important to young people to aid learning and reduce stress. This also included school trips which allowed young people to share experiences with their friends and learn from visiting different places. Schoolwork was one of the best things about education for many participants as it provided opportunities for the future as well as being the reason to go to school. Yet, there were comments made about the pressures of homework having a negative effect.



03 Summary



There are clear themes identified about what needs to change to improve learning and the learning experience. Lessons can be improved by being more fun, interactive, engaging and relaxed. Positive experiences can be created through more trips, experiences and visitors to the school. This feedback phase was conducted during the summer and for a number of participants issues with strict uniform rules meant that having flexibility with school rules to take blazers off during hot weather was important. Bullying in different forms, and of varying degrees, was raised as an issue for nearly all participants – it was suggested that enforcing strict policies would improve this for learners and having a consistent approach is desired. Having support to deal with issues is something that was highlighted regularly throughout – this included support for people dealing with issues at home, bullying and for those struggling with lessons. Having a stronger voice as learners, being able to choose subjects, timetables and being involved in decisions that affect learners would improve their learning and learning experience. It was felt that more understanding of learners with additional needs is required and that being able to adapt lessons to meet needs would make improvements. Environmental improvements could also be made, this is especially important for children and young people with hearing impairments and those with additional learning needs who are effected by noise levels.

Participants in the focus groups had the opportunity to look at the ‘what matters’ statements and the ‘what matters statement explanations’ and to vote on whether they understood the statements. It was clear from the focus group results that children and young people found the ‘what matters statement explanations’ easier to understand but not everyone fully understood the explanations and concern was raised by some participants that younger children would not understand.

Those who took part in the focus groups and the online survey were asked what was important to them about the Areas of Learning and Experience. This provided descriptions of ‘what matters’ to children and young people for each Area of Learning and Experience in their own words. From this Dynamix has been able to present suggested ‘what matters’ to children and young people statements. See section 7.

It was clear that most children and young people would like to be engaged in shaping the curriculum in their school as it was felt that their voices should be heard as they would be most affected. However, there were some concerns that adults were the experts and it should be left to them.

04 Methodology

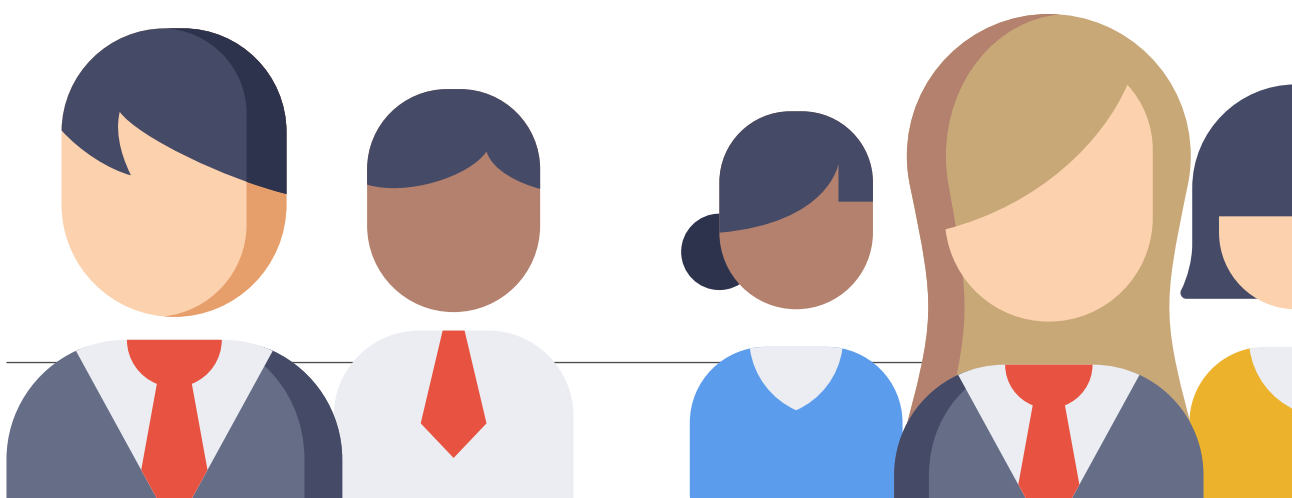
4.1 Focus groups

Each focus group was split into three sections. The first section focused on three questions that were set as a check in on the results of the Successful Futures report 2014. This gave learners a voice on what is important to them about their education and explore what would improve their learning experience.

Participants were divided into groups of 5 and asked the question ‘what are the most important things you should get from your education?’ Dynamix workers explained each category before requesting that participants sort their post-it notes into the relevant categories in line with those established in the Successful Futures report.

The next activity was dot votes and podium which provided a simple, anonymous and language free way of assessing what participants consider to be the best things about their education. Each person was given three sticky dots to vote on the categories; Schoolwork, Friends, Staff, Fun, School Trips, Facilities, Atmosphere, Cost, Breaktime and Other. After the votes were placed, Dynamix workers totalled up the number of votes and recorded participant’s comments about the three top voted categories.

In order for participants to explore things that would improve their learning experience a School Superhero was created. Participants identified what issues might affect their school superhero giving them an almost anonymous voice with which to discuss challenges faced by young people in schools. Participants then looked at what would be in the force field to protect their superhero from the issues identified. This provided an opportunity to collectively offer solutions using the hero’s protective force field.



04 Methodology

The next section focused on one of the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE). Flashcards were used as a simple and consistent way to introduce participants to the new curriculum and the AoLE that that would be focusing on. Each group then went through a series of activities to provide their input into the following questions;

1. **Why do you think it's important to learn about these things? (Based on AoLE description)**
2. **Are the following 'What matters' statements easy to understand?**
3. **Are the following 'What matters' explanation statements easy to understand?**
4. **Can you link up why you think it's important to learn about these things to the statements from the guidance?**

In order to assess participants' understanding of the 'What Matters' statements and explanations, we asked the young people to use the traffic light cards to vote on how easy each statement was to understand, using green square (fully understand), yellow triangle (sort of understand) or red rectangle (don't understand) cards. Dynamix workers recorded the number of votes along with any comments made. Participants were asked to write down reasons why they thought it was important to learn about a specific AoLE, then asked to link their comments with the relevant 'What Matters' statement and explanation. This provided an opportunity for young people to outline what mattered to them using their own words.

The final section of the focus group sessions asked about how pupils would like to be engaged in shaping the new curriculum. We asked participants to stand on the mats labelled 'yes,' 'no' and 'maybe' to ascertain whether they had any interest in helping to shape the new curriculum. Participants were then encouraged to give reasons behind their decision and all comments were recorded by Dynamix workers. The final activity gave participants the opportunity to vote on how they want to be engaged in shaping the curriculum. We used an activity called 'Money Where Your Mouth Is'; eleven cups were labelled with different ways to get involved with the shaping of the new curriculum, each participant was given up to eleven 1p coins to vote with, indicating how they might like to be involved in the future.

04 Methodology



4.2 Online Survey

The online survey asked the following questions.

1. **‘What are the most important things you should get from your education?’**

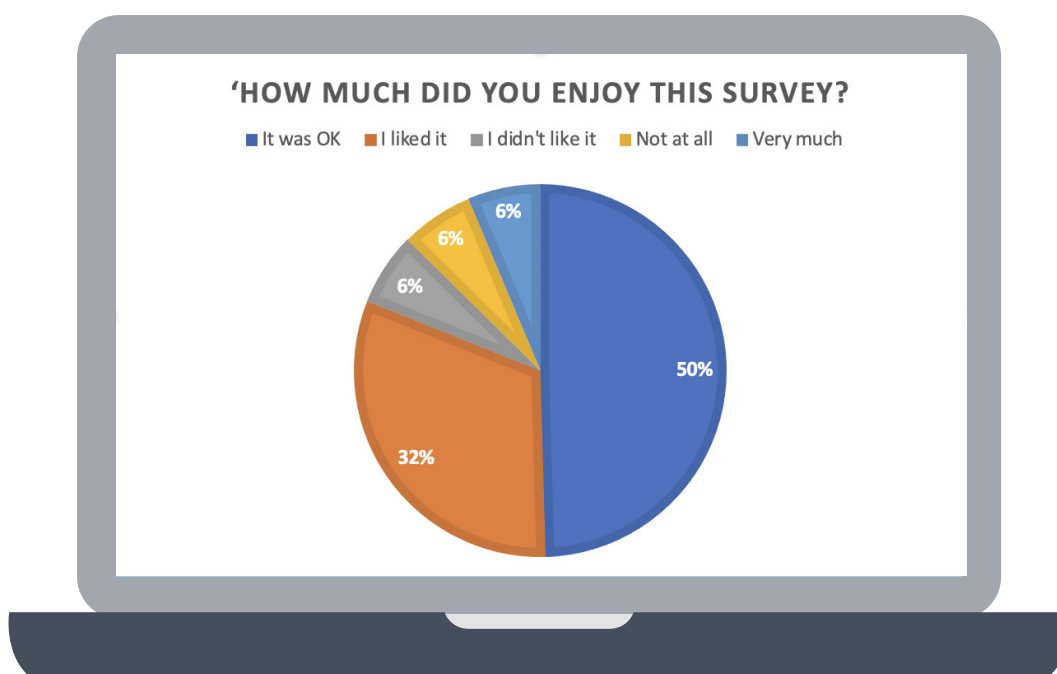
This asked participants to rate each category from 1 – 6 (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important) and it asked if there was anything missing from the choices provided.

2. **What are the three best things about your education?**
3. **Make a list of things that need to change to improve how you learn and your experience at school. What would make education better for you? List as many as you like.**
4. **Each AoLE was introduced by providing participants with a link to a video on each area. They were then asked why do you think it is important to learn about these things? Participants could answer choose to answer on one or more of the AoLE’s.**
5. **Participants were then asked if they thought it was important for learners to have a say on how the curriculum is shaped in their school and how they would want to be engaged.**

04 Methodology

In addition participants were also asked to identify which age group they were in and which county they lived in – these were not mandatory.

To gauge suitability of the survey they were also asked 'How much did you enjoy this survey?'



How much did you enjoy this survey?



04 Methodology

4.3 Toolkit

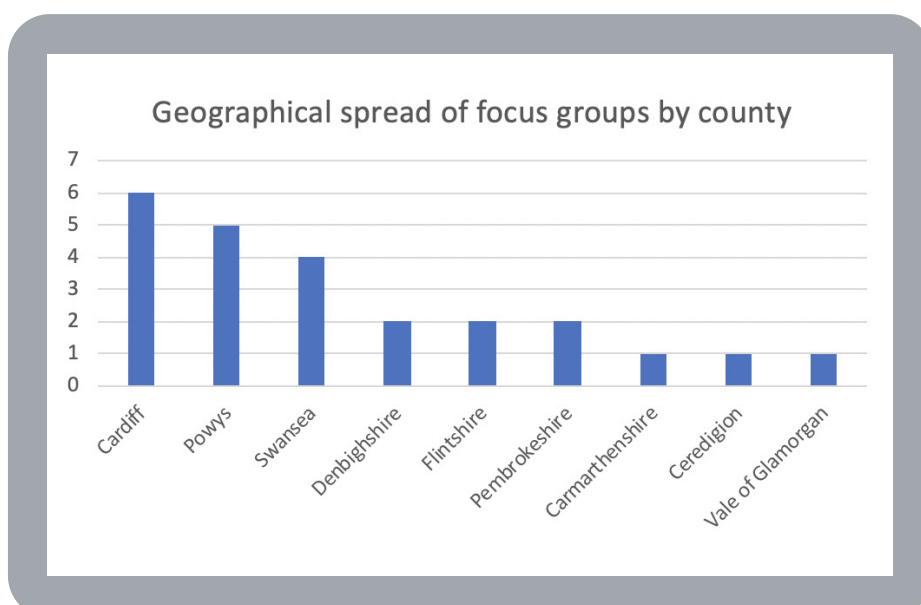
The toolkit provided easy to follow instructions for youth leaders to be able to run the focus group independently of Dynamix, at a time that was suitable to their groups. This followed the format of the focus group sessions and youth leaders could run as much or as little of the activities as they liked. See annex 1 for a copy of the toolkit.



05 Participants

Twenty four focus groups were delivered by Dynamix across Wales from June 17th – July 18th 2019 in ten Primary schools, seven Secondary schools and seven protected characteristic groups. The protected characteristic groups included three additional learning needs groups, an LGBTQ+ group, a hearing impaired group, a BAME group and a religious school. In addition to these three primary school groups and two Secondary groups included over 50 % BAME students. This information was not collated in the online survey.

Focus groups were equally spread across Wales.



A total of **423 participants** provided feedback through the online survey and the focus groups. The table below shows the geographical spread of respondents.

05 Participants

County	Online	Focus group
Cardiff	9	68
Carmarthenshire	1	15
Ceredigion	0	18
Denbighshire	1	28
Flintshire	0	27
Pembrokeshire	1	27
Powys	40	65
Swansea	0	59
Vale of Glamorgan	2	7
Blaenau Gwent	1	0
Bridgend	1	0
Caerphilly	2	0
Neath Port Talbot	2	0
Newport	38	0
Torfaen	11	0
TOTALS	109	314

Focus groups were offered to those learners in years 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9. The table below shows ages of respondents;

Ages	Online survey	Focus groups	TOTALS
10 years old and under	37	130	167
11-13 years old	54	93	147
14-16 years old	18	23	41
17-19 years old	1	10	11
20 years old and over	3	4	7

Note; Not all respondents to the survey provided their age.

05

Participants

Of those who responded to the survey only two completed the survey in Welsh. Three of the focus groups were delivered at Welsh language schools and one was delivered bilingually. All schools were given the option of delivery in Welsh, English or bilingually.

Five responses were received from the toolkit. One from a secondary school in the Vale of Glamorgan, one from a Gypsy, Traveller and Romani event attended by two secondary school groups, one from a hearing impaired group in North Wales and two from Welsh language schools (one primary school in Carmarthenshire and one secondary in Clwyd).



06

Results: My education

The responses given by children and young people through the feedback phase are presented here. A wide range of responses were provided. These have been categorised to provide an overview and to draw out themes. For some questions participants categorised their own answers and for others this was done by Dynamix. A selection of quotes from young people have been included in this report.

6.1

What are the most important things you should get from your education’?

Focus groups

1	Knowledge	205
2	Skills for work	197
3	Other	153
4	Health and fitness	139
5	Friendship	130
6	Social skills and social behaviour	116
7	Confidence	59

During the focus groups, participants were asked to make a note of the most important things to them and to categorise them under the same headings of Knowledge, skills for work, Health and fitness, Friendship, Social skills and social behaviour, confidence or other. The table below shows the number of times each category was referenced in this exercise during the focus groups.

Knowledge was mentioned most frequently throughout the focus groups and included reference to subjects, the need for good grades to get jobs, ideas, learning about the world, making learning fun and suitable for everyone and life skills. An older protected characteristic group talked about the importance of making education relevant to life such as knowledge about taxes and paying bills, politics, current events and being able to form own opinions.

Skills for work were important to all groups we spoke to. For many this was about learning new skills, taking responsibilities, future planning, gaining life experiences, getting ready for the real world and being able to get a good job

06

Results: My education

to earn money. Making friends and being sociable was also seen as a skill for work. IT, cooking, PE, art, music, reading, writing, maths and qualifications in general were listed as important for skills for work. All groups felt this was important and there was no noticeable difference between different age groups.

'That I learn necessary things to help get my future dream job'

'Learn useful skills that you need to move on in life, to do with things like business, the government and money'

There were a number of important elements of learner's education that did not fit into any of the categories. Specific teachers were named as being important to pupils with additional learning needs. Facilities were listed including working elevators for learners with mobility issues. For Primary school pupils school trips were included. For those in Secondary school 'respect' was included here as well as the importance of having visitors to the school to share experiences. Members of the youth parliament group listed the following as important in this category;

'Make the report nice and colourful so it can engage young people'

'Exposure to foreign/second languages from a young age'

'Well rounded education in cultural integration'

'Coding in primary and secondary schools'

Health and fitness are also an important element of learner's education. This included food, fitness, sex education, mindfulness, play and being outside. One group highlighted that it is important that sex education should include gender education and that all genders get the same education, so everyone understands and accepts each other's bodies and decisions.

06

Results: My education

Online survey: Participants were asked to rate elements of their education on a scale of 1 – 6 (1 being the least important and 6 being the most important). The most important overall was ‘Health and Fitness’ and the least important was seen as ‘Knowledge’.

1	Health and fitness
2	Confidence
3	Social skills and social behaviour
4	Skills for work
5	Friendship
6	Knowledge

The table shows how each category was rated by participants in the survey. Participants were also asked if there was anything missing from these categories, they said;

- Helping people, happiness and kindness
- Resilience
- Environmentalism and eco awareness
- Being taught well by teachers that know their subject and are enthusiastic.

06

Results: My education

Toolkit: Those who sent in results using the toolkit answered this question by providing a list of things that were important to young people about their education. Only one group categorised their own answers the others have been categorised by Dynamix.

Other	19
Knowledge	18
Health and fitness	18
Social skills and social behaviour	14
Skills for work	12
Confidence	8
Friendship	5

Answers that fell into the 'Other' category were mostly related to skills for life such as budgeting and finances. Some included eco activities, speaking Welsh and uniform choices. For these respondents 'Knowledge' included educational trips, learning new skills, maths and clubs for studying. 'Health and fitness' included sex education and PSE as well as learning how to cook, personal hygiene and mental health awareness. Under social skills and behaviour, the important things were friendships, being kind to others and communication skills.

06

Results: My education

6.2

What are the three best things about your education?

Focus groups

1. Friends
2. Fun
3. School work
4. School trips
5. Facilities
6. Staff
7. Break time
8. Cost (free schooling)
9. Atmosphere – the feeling that school gives you
10. Other

Friends are the best thing about education for a lot of participants in the focus groups as they help with mental health, reduce stress, provide a reason to go to school, they are motivating, provide diversity, improve confidence and self-esteem, help when being bullied and friends are long lasting.

‘If you had no friends in school you’d be bored and depressed’

‘Teaches you to live in diverse community’

‘Helping with problems / worries, prefer to talk to friends rather than teachers’

Having fun at school was really important to a lot of participants as it allowed for different ways of learning, helps people to learn more, builds confidence and minimises stress.

‘If people have troubles at home, fun @ school may help you deal with it’

‘Without fun it might stop you from going to school, you’d be bored and wouldn’t want to go’

06

Results: My education

Schoolwork was one of the top 3 things about education but only the number one thing in one secondary school. For a lot of participants, the importance of schoolwork is about future potential for jobs and careers. Reference was made to how receiving praise for good work was the reason that schoolwork was so important to them. There were a few comments made about the pressures of homework and how this impacts young people;

'Copy Finland - produce the brightest minds. Homework doesn't exist, it takes a lot of stress away and gives them a happier feeling about school'

'You get homework when you're already doing work at school. We do enough work in school.'

Online survey

Those who answered this question through the online survey were individually asked to rate their three best things about their education. Collectively this resulted in the following ranking of the categories;

1. Friends
2. Schoolwork
3. School trips
4. Fun
5. Atmosphere (the feeling that school gives you)
6. Break time
7. Staff
8. Cost (free schooling)
9. Facilities
10. Other / anything else

Friends are one of the best things about education for support, making things fun and socialising. One participant commented that...

'without friends school would be unbearable'

Schoolwork was one of the best things about education to be able to get a job in the future, learn new things and do well.

School trips were one of the best things about education for a number of participants in the survey. For many it was about sharing experiences with friends and going to new places;

06

Results: My education

‘Having both fun and educational school trips makes school life more enjoyable. Also, you can spend time with friends and expand your knowledge.’

For one participant school trips gave opportunities that they wouldn’t have otherwise;

‘it’s because I enjoy them and at home, we don’t really go on much trips’

Toolkit

One response to the toolkit identified that schoolwork was the best thing about their education as it is the ‘reason behind school’, develops confidence and provides opportunities for the future. The staff were the second-best things as the ‘relationship with teachers effect education’. The third best thing was confidence in speaking to people, being able to be yourself and relax as well as being fun and having a sense of belonging.

One group did not get the toolkit in time for their group but provided the following feedback;

What do you like most about school?

‘Art and English, reading my book at lunchtime’
‘history, friends and reading’
‘breaks and lunch time... hanging around with my friends’

What do you like least about school?

‘Students and maths and PE and languages, I don’t like other students because they are too noisy and they scream too much’
‘Geography, bullies and Welsh’
‘I’m scared of the consequences in school, I never have them but the isolation scares me... I don’t like the quiet.’

06

Results: My education

6.3

What needs to change to improve how you learn and your learning experience?

Focus groups

During the focus groups participants were asked to come up with a spare group member and to think about what sort of issues that would affect the way that person would learn. They were then asked to think of what things might protect this person from these issues. This method allowed learners to anonymise any issues they may have and to be able to talk about them more freely in reference to a third person. The aim of the activity was to get pupils to think about things that need to change to improve their learning.

Issues that affect the way we learn			
Bullying	42	Friendship	15
Teachers	26	Don't understand	14
Peer influences	25	Health	13
Mental Health	22	Not interested	13
Family issues	19	Learning difficulties	12
Environmental	17	Money	6
Confidence	16	Abuse	4
Other			35

Issues were categorised by Dynamix, they are listed here with the number of times they were referred to during the focus groups.

Bullying is an issue that was referred to as a general term but also specifically in terms of racism and homophobia. This was not limited to face to face incidents but also through social media, online, over the phone and via letters.

This causes...

'Embarrassment - other people laughing at her stops her learning'.

06

Results: My education

Learners in an additional learning needs unit also referred to their own experiences;

‘Other kids bully us for being in this class - call us stupid’.

Issues caused by teachers were often related to attitude and standards;

‘Teachers who don’t explain well’

‘Picked on or bullied by the teacher’

‘Clashes with teachers personalities’

‘Bad teaching’

‘Threats of detention for being too gay in class’.

Peer influences generally cause issues of disruptive behaviour which impacted on the learning experiences for others.

Mental health issues referred to included depression, anxiety, worries, confidence and stress. All of which would impact on learning. It was recognised that family issues would have an impact on learners in school and that stress caused by bereavement, caring responsibilities or family breakdown could cause issues for learners. Abuse at home was also highlighted as an issue.

The physical environment of learners in school can have an impact on learners. This includes the temperature of classrooms and the uniform requirements.

‘We can’t take our blazers off in assembly or exams’.

Construction work at the schools has an impact as well as broken equipment and overcrowding. The noise levels in classrooms has even more of an impact on those with additional learning needs.

Not having friends, falling out with friends and being lonely were all highlighted as issues.

Language, culture and being a refugee were seen as issues. Being hungry, not getting enough sleep, money and having to walk a long way to school are all issues connected to poverty that participants felt some learners might be facing daily.

Protection from issues/how to improve the learning experience

Environmental; This would include air conditioning and air filters to control the temperature in classrooms. In terms of noise it was suggested that 'ear defenders' be provided and that the 'school buzzer' be changed. This was especially an issue for learners in additional learning needs units and those with hearing impairments and that more understanding was needed around the impact of background noise for these learners. Another suggestion was that there be '10 minutes quite focus time' in lessons. It was suggested that there needs to be more shade in outdoor spaces and more to space to have fun.

School rules; Suggestions made under this heading were mostly about school rules to tackle bullying through having a zero-tolerance policy and enforcing more reliable rules. One suggestion was made to establish 'statutory policies for ALL schools to avoid gender poverty' by having a more consistent policy across all schools written by those who are affected by these issues. Another suggestion made was to have more flexibility with school uniform rules – especially when weathers are extreme.

Experiences; These suggestions were about creating positive experiences to improve learning. This included having more trips, visitors to the school (like the police) and having more time outside.

Teachers; For learners with hearing impairments and those with additional learning needs improvements could be made by teachers having a better understanding of their needs and to adapt their lessons to be more inclusive by slowing down when they are explaining things and being more flexible to allow friends to sit together for support.

Pupil voice; Learners felt that they needed to be listened to more, have a voice in decisions that affected them and discussions on world issues.

06

Results: My education

Lessons; Lessons could be improved through being more engaging, fun and relaxed. For primary pupils there was a suggestion that there needs to be less technology in lessons. It was also highlighted that doing more physical activity and having the opportunity to be outdoors more would improve lessons.

Support; Nearly ninety suggestions were made in this category to be able to improve the learning environment for learners who were facing issues at school. Many of the suggestions made were about having someone to talk to either a teacher, ChildLine, counsellor, friends, family, informal peer support groups or having a safe place to talk. It was also suggested that teachers needed more support and training to be able to provide the kinds of support that children and young people need.

Confidence; It was suggested that learners need to build their confidence to be able to deal with issues. This could be done through speaking to parents or counsellor or being complimentary to boost confidence.

Online survey

Participants were asked to ‘make a list of things that need to change to improve how you learn and your experience at school’. The answers given have been categorised and ranked below according to number of times referred to in responses;

Rank	Category	Comments
1	The way we learn	‘make learning more fun, more support, lots more special days, more time for learning’ ‘we could use PE. to create lessons.’ ‘Learning in context’ ‘More work in groups so we can share each other’s ideas’
2	Structure of the school day	‘I’m always tired, start school later and end the school later so students like me and many others are awake.’ ‘Longer breaks - this means that you have time to eat and refuel your brain ready for work but also get some time to rest in the 6 hour day.’
3	Other pupils	‘When we have supply teachers, the behaviour tends to fall. People misbehave and it is harder to learn.’ ‘I want to improve my learning by: no distractions, more help by teachers’

06

Results: My education

Rank	Category	Comments
4	Subjects	'More lessons on the things that are very, very important.' 'music encouragement'
5	Teachers	'Being able to tell a teacher when they are being unfair to you without them being able to punish you for it.' 'For teachers to have an understanding about mental health and to be flexible' 'teachers to be fair, fun work, breaks in between lessons'
6	Equipment	'More working ipads' 'More stuff to play in the junior's area'
7	Facilities	'eat outdoors due to the facts that we have picnic tables not being used and the hall can only seat roughly 300 students, so the other 700 get detentions for eating outside, or are clueless on what to do.' 'More water dispensers throughout the school.'
8	Make it fun	'All lessons to be fun, creative, interactive and interesting'
9	Atmosphere	'A more friendly atmosphere that isn't solely focused on exams and grades'
10	Confidence	'I would like to focus more and be more confident in the subjects I am struggling with'
11	Environmental	'To be allowed to take blazers off whenever we want'
12	Bullying	'Dealing with bullying could be better in my school. more people that will help if people are mean'
13	Pupil voice	'Be able to choose your timetable, I know for certain I won't take RE so why waste two lessons a week on that when I could be learning about what I enjoy and want to do' 'We need to get more of say on our learning, and I think that this goes for all schools'
14	Equipment	'I do not know how I can make this better than it is already!'

06

Results: My education

Toolkit

Issues faced by children and young people with hearing impairments were highlighted as there being a lack of understanding of their needs, that loud noises can impact them being able to hear instructions;

‘When it’s really noisy in the class I can’t concentrate or understand what the teacher’s saying so sometimes I don’t understand the work’

‘I get upset when the teachers don’t use the FM properly because it hurts my ears, like when they shout and don’t mute it, or when they wear lanyards and walk around, it just rattles all the time’

‘the drama room, hall and sports hall are horrible, it’s too noisy and I can’t hear the teacher’

This could be improved for these learners if there was more understanding from both teachers and other learners;

‘It’s good for some of the pupils to have deaf awareness so they don’t ask me questions, but not too much because I don’t want all of the attention on me, I hate it’

For a group of Secondary school pupils in a Welsh language school some of the issues faced are

‘being picked on in front of the teachers and the teachers paying no attention to it, feeling the need to fit in, life choices, friends, lessons, GCSE’s, worrying about homework, being scared to ask, finding the lessons hard, bullying and being bullied about who your friends are or who your partner is.’

This could be improved with

‘sessions on how to revise / activities, ensure understanding, build/ promote confidence, ensure you get two sides of the story, students can build confidence, knowledge of the problems in groups, contact home/outside agencies/ appropriate teachers, respond to students, everyone should be themselves and have a right to their opinion and more input from students.’

07

Results: Areas of Learning and Experience

Each focus group looked at one of the AoLE's and were asked the same questions. The online survey and toolkit gave respondents the option to choose which AoLE they answered questions on.

1. **Why do you think it's important to learn about these things?**
2. **Are the following 'What matters' statements easy to understand?**
3. **Are the following 'What matters' explanation statements easy to understand?**
4. **Can you link up why you think it's important to learn about these things to the statements from the guidance?**

From the focus groups it was clear that the 'What matters' statements were difficult to understand for children and young people. During the first exercise it was noted that some participants appeared worried to admit if they did not understand but when it was explained that it was OK not to understand the statement, they were more open with their opinions. It was easier for groups to understand the 'explanation' statements as they felt the language used was clearer. The full results can be found at annex 2. Some of the comments made were;

'Explanation - it's like a completely different language, the last one was so complicated and this one is child friendly'

'Explanation: I get it now!'

'What do 'diverse' and 'dynamic' mean?'

'I understand the WM statement, but I don't think younger kids would. Probably, year 4 might struggle and think it's gobbledeegook.'

'Younger students won't know what atomic means, I don't even understand what that means'

'I don't understand some of the words, they are too complicated'

'Computation? Algorithms? Too hard and too complicated'

'The explanation really helped. Saying what it is about e.g. art has helped it make sense'

'Statement really difficult to understand'

'One or two words we didn't understand'

'The explanation helped lots'

7.1

What matters in each Area of Learning and Experience to children and young people

Participants were asked to describe in their own words why they felt it was important to learn about each of the Areas of Learning and Experience.

Dynamix has summarised the responses to develop the following statements using young people's words to describe 'what matters' to children and young people for each AoLE.

- 1. Expressive arts** help us to be more self-confident, strong and creative. We can express our emotions through our creative skills without having to use words. We experience and learn about other people's creativity. It gives us skills that we would be able to use when we are adults or looking for work.
- 2. Humanities** help us to learn about where we come from and about the world around us. By understanding what has happened in the past we can learn from mistakes that have been made and help protect our future. It helps us to understand other people: their beliefs, societies and cultures, it improves our social skills and helps us to question what is right and wrong. It gives us a wide range of skills that will help us get a job in the future.
- 3. Health and Well-being** helps us understand how to live a healthy life and why it's important, looking after both our minds and bodies (physical and mental health). It builds our resilience so we can bounce back from difficult times and give us the skills to deal with problems, so we know when and who to ask for help. We learn how to communicate our emotions properly. It helps us be more understanding of other people's situations and feelings. It prepares us for the future and the experiences of the wider world.
- 4. Science and Technology** is everywhere in life; it is always developing and changing our world, it helps us understand the wider world and how things work. Understanding these things means if we have new ideas, we can turn them into reality in the future. It increases our options at college and university as it is used in so many jobs.

07

Results: Areas of Learning and Experience

- 5. Mathematics and Numeracy** is a basic life skill that we use in many everyday situations: finances, understanding data, shopping, measuring, time, cooking, building etc. It also helps you learn other subjects and prepares you for many jobs. It helps us solve problems and understand the world better.
- 6. Languages, Literacy and Communication** is about being able to communicate well with people around us and from all around the world. It means we are able to travel to other countries and understand people, this can also help us to get jobs that need more than one language. We learn to read books and understand the world around us. It makes us more ambitious and motivated because we can understand more.



08

Results: Engagement in shaping the curriculum

8.1

Would you want to help shape the curriculum in your school?

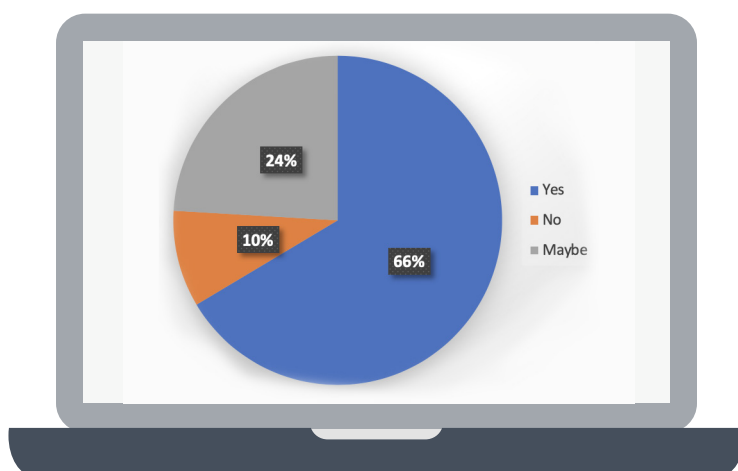
Focus groups

The majority of participants in the focus groups agreed that they would want to help shape the curriculum in their school. Learners were asked to comment on their choices.

Nearly 120 comments were made.

Of these over 40% made comments that supported children and young people being involved in shaping the curriculum. 29 comments were made about how listening to children and young people and including their opinions on how the curriculum was shaped was important. 20 comments were made about how it was important to involve young people as they were the ones being taught and needed to be involved in decisions as they were the experts in their own education.

Nearly 20% of comments didn't support engaging children and young people in shaping the curriculum. 13 comments were made that adults and teachers were the best placed to make decisions and 9 comments were made about how children and young people would not take it seriously enough or were not mature enough to make these decisions.



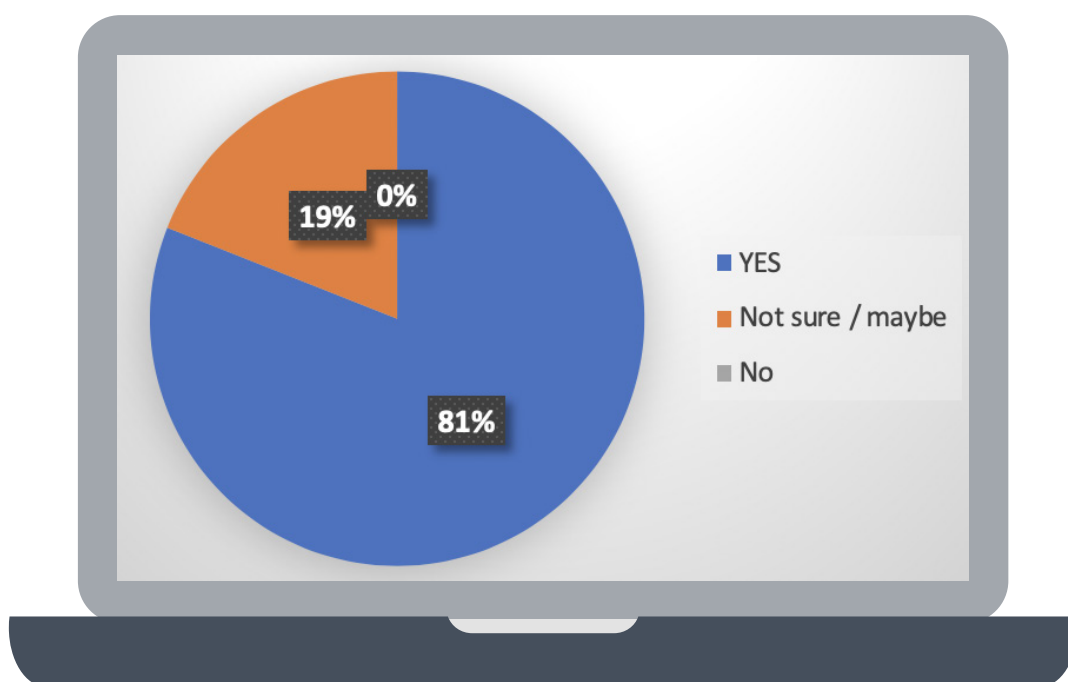
A few participants felt that they would not be listened or taken seriously if they did give their opinions.

08

Results: Engagement in shaping the curriculum

Online Survey

Over 80 % of the respondents to the online survey said they would want to be involved in shaping the curriculum. No one said that they did not want to be involved. Some of the comments made included;



‘I go to a pioneer school and we have not been asked it is just what the teachers think. I don’t think that is fair.’

‘It is their education, and they know how what their lessons are like more than anyone else. They need a say. Not just surveys that make us comment on specific things that have already been decided on!!!’

‘They are the people who are learning it and if you want them to learn well then you need to listen to them.’

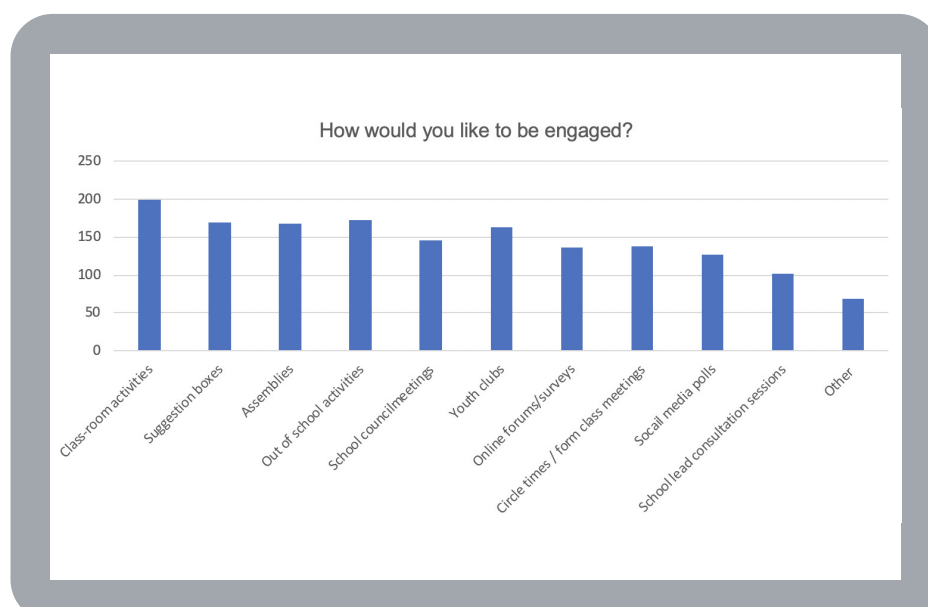
08

Results: Engagement in shaping the curriculum

8.2

How would you like to be engaged?

This question asked participants to vote on ten different ways they could get involved in shaping the curriculum as well as providing an opportunity to comment or provide other suggestions. The chart below shows combined results from the online survey and the focus groups.



08

Results: Engagement in shaping the curriculum

Comments made by participants through the online survey

'Any opportunity for learners to give feedback is good.'

'Anything that includes students in person.'

'Private meetings or online surveys may not be that affective.'

'As many ways as possible, but I am in High School and we have not been asked at all.'

'I think any of these would work for different people.'

'The only reason they don't work now is that head teacher don't listen they just have them to tick a box Information board'

'Listen to the children because these videos show you have not'

'So you get chance to speak and be happy'

OGI

Digital ISBN 978 1 83933 299 9
Curriculum for Wales 2022 Feedback Analysis
Children & Young People's Report August 2019
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WG38065

