



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Transition and pupil progression: government response

What we plan to do in response to Estyn's report and recommendations.

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Report details

Curriculum for Wales has learners' progression at its centre. A learner's experience throughout the full 3 to 16 continuum is crucial to support this ambition, including the transition from primary to secondary school.

This review considers how transition fits with the expectation for a shared understanding of progression. It evaluates how well schools are working together to develop a curriculum that ensures that learners' knowledge, skills and understanding within and across Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas) progress effectively as they transition from primary to secondary school. It considers how schools support the well-being of learners at this important transition point, enabling learners to develop the capacities and dispositions to realise the four purposes.

Summary of main findings

Leadership and transition discussions

Headteachers and senior leaders in most school clusters regularly meet to discuss the Curriculum for Wales and transition support from primary to secondary school. While these meetings help ensure effective induction and support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), they often fall short in creating a smooth continuum of learning.

Although primary schools pass on varied learning information to secondary schools, there is little clarity on expectations for learning and progress, limiting the effectiveness of these processes. Most schools focus narrowly on standardised scores without fully utilising a broad range of assessment data to fully inform curriculum design.

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Transition plan requirements

While leaders are aware of updated transition guidance, many plans lack a clear focus on ensuring continuity in learning through curriculum design and teaching strategies. In all-age schools, the best examples involve purposeful development of a learning continuum from ages 3 to 16, but some settings still treat primary and secondary phases separately and curriculum coherence and progression planning are inconsistent.

Support for Pupils with ALN

Transition support for pupils with ALN is generally strong, with early collaboration between primary and secondary schools ensuring their needs are met.

Wellbeing support

Clusters generally support pupils' wellbeing during the transition well, particularly for those who might struggle, by offering tailored activities and early visits.

Curriculum design and progression

A few clusters have worked together to identify progressive knowledge and skills across learning Areas, however, secondary schools often do not effectively use this information to build on prior learning. It is crucial that schools working collaboratively have a shared understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales Framework and what it is attempting to achieve for learner progress towards the four purposes.

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Shared understanding of progression

A minority of clusters have established practitioner groups that focus on learner progression with a view to building a shared understanding of progression. However, these efforts are still in early stages of the rollout and will require time to embed.

Professional learning

Many schools provide professional learning to support realisation of Curriculum for Wales. However, few clusters have shared teaching strategies to ensure effective and continuous progress from primary to secondary school.

Recommendations

Recommendations for schools

Recommendation 1

Develop a clearer shared understanding of progression within and across their clusters of schools.

Recommendation 2

Work more closely as clusters to ensure that approaches to information sharing, teaching, and the curriculum to support pupils to develop knowledge, skills, experiences and learning behaviours progressively from 3 to 16 years old.

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Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government welcomes this recommendation and recognises the importance of developing a shared understanding of progression and effective school to school working.

The Welsh Government guidance on **transition from primary to secondary schools** sets out the legal responsibilities around transition arrangements for all schools and settings alongside **practical illustrations from schools and clusters**. We will continue to prioritise funding to schools across Wales to support their curriculum development, including school to school collaborations and ongoing development of a shared understanding of progression in support of learner transitions. In 2024 to 2025 this school funding amounts to £6 million.

The Curriculum for Wales framework guidance will be updated annually in January of each year with clear details of what has been updated appearing on the main **Curriculum for Wales page on Hwb**.

In addition to existing supporting materials, we will continue to co-construct guidance and support for schools that is clear and practically supports a shared understanding of learner progression along the 3 to 16 continuum. This will include nationally available support and a range of tools and templates announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education in July, that will be made available throughout this academic year. Clusters can use these to design their curriculum and assessment arrangements together.

Schools should work collaboratively within their locality, in partnership with their Local Authority, to identify long-term strategies to address local 3 to 16 challenges, identifying and tackling barriers to learning at the earliest stage possible, ensuring a smooth transition in learning for all learners.

The Welsh Government will continue to facilitate opportunities for practitioners to

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influence future policy development through opportunities for co-construction such as the **Practitioner Policy Group** and **National Network conversations**. The Welsh Government will continue to work with education partners to publish and share examples from a range of schools and settings across Wales and welcome the inclusion of useful cameos in this report.

Recommendations for the Welsh Government

Recommendation 3

Provide clear guidance on the practical application of how to develop progression through and across the curriculum.

Welsh Government response

In 2022 the Welsh Government published **guidance on transition** within the Curriculum for Wales and a range of **supporting materials** and **case studies** on establishing effective transition processes within and across schools and settings. In addition, this year we published further **supporting materials** on establishing processes for a shared understanding of progression and effective cluster working.

In January, the Welsh Government published updated statutory guidance on the process for curriculum and assessment design. The '**continuing the journey**' section is designed to support all practitioners within schools (including pupil referral units (PRUs) and those responsible for the provision of education other than at school) with the practical steps of designing, implementing and maintaining the ongoing review of their curriculum. It provides guidance on how schools should plan and organise their approaches to realising the expectations of the curriculum and a shared understanding of progression.

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While this shorter, simpler guidance has been well-received by schools, we recognise that further support on the practical application of progression across Curriculum for Wales would be useful for schools. On 2 July, the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced a range of nationally available support for Curriculum for Wales, including further detail and exemplification of approaches to progression and assessment, and evaluating and communicating the progress learners are making.

The Welsh Government will co-construct this detail and scaffolding with schools and partners to ensure its appropriateness, and ensure schools have the support to put this into practice. The first of these will be published in the spring term. We will also help schools see examples of curriculum design, progression and assessment, by promoting and sharing effective practice developed through school-to-school collaboration.

Recommendation 4

Ensure that there is sufficient support to enable leaders and teachers to develop a coherent and progressive curriculum that sets high expectations for all pupils.

Welsh Government response

The **Camau i'r Dyfodol** project has brought together practitioners, school leaders and partners across the education system to co-construct new knowledge and approaches to support curriculum realisation, and in particular, progression. A range of supporting materials were published in September 2023 to support practitioners across Wales to:

- undertake the same process of learning and thinking about curriculum and progression
- access materials created by the project's participants, designed to support

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practical understanding and realisation of progression in the Curriculum for Wales

Further nationally available support for curriculum and assessment design is available from September. This will provide schools leaders and classroom practitioners with support in utilising guidance effectively, practical understanding of the curriculum design process, that is coherent with Curriculum for Wales, and planned opportunities for collaboration within and across schools to support processes for coherent and progressive curriculum design.

In addition, the Welsh Government and education partners will provide a range of support for literacy and numeracy, and for the planning of learning within and across the areas of learning and experience. This Area-specific support will help professionals plan progression in each Area, select purposeful and stretching content that challenges and engages learners, helping practitioners to plan the development of relevant knowledge and skills that supports the progress of their learners. We will begin to trial this support in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Recommendations for Local Authorities

Recommendation 5

Encourage and support stronger collaboration among clusters to address the recommendations we have identified for schools, focusing on establishing well-defined clusters with specific and clear objective.

Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government welcomes this recommendation, noting the crucial role of Local Authorities working in partnership with school leaders, to deliver

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effective collaboration among schools and clusters.

Our vision is for connected local communities with a collective purpose, school leaders and practitioners belong and contribute to an open, inclusive and supportive local environment. School leaders and Local Authorities have a clear vision and shared moral purpose to ensure the progress of all learners across all schools.

The Welsh Government will publish refined School Improvement Guidance in the new year outlining the role of Local Authorities and schools in supporting clear processes for identifying effective working relationships within and across schools and settings in line with the **Ministerial Direction for developing a shared understanding of progression**.

As **announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education on 2 July**, nationally available support will be provided from autumn 2024 to ensure that a coherent package of support is provided to schools within and across clusters of schools to ensure a shared understanding of learner progression.

We will work closely with local authorities to build capacity across our system on a range of curriculum areas vital to securing purposeful transition for all learners. Building on the range of support already offered by education partners, there will be a particular focus on developing effective processes for collaboration that prioritise shared approaches to understanding learner progression and raising attainment for learners across Wales.

Publication details

The report was published on 18 September 2024 and may be **accessed on the Estyn website**.

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