Successful futures: Making sense of Donaldson’s Review

Chapter 1: Overview

The curriculum, learning and teaching needs to enthuse children and young people about learning

Improved levels of critical thinking, creativity and problem solving

High quality teaching and learning

Child centred learning

Continuity in primary education

Too many issues, too much focus on content and not context

Chapter 2: The review

Physical Activity Task and finish group

Principles of curriculum design e.g. authentic, responsive, empowering, inclusive, engaging

Shift away from subject-based curriculum to areas of learning approach or to the organising of learning around skills and/or themes

Lack of continuity between transitional points

Children and young people want lessons to be more relevant and engaging with more practical lessons, more fun, more interactivity and more out-of-classroom activities.

There is a sense that a more general enthusiasm for learning has been sacrificed in the race for qualifications.

While breath and balance are widely valued, there is a trend towards developing a curriculum that is more than a specified range of subjects or courses

Move away from learning about to learning to – application and development of higher-order skills

Build upon pedagogy underpinning Foundation Phase

Chapter 3: Purpose of the Curriculum

Common understanding of why we are doing what we are doing is a powerful starting point from which to determine what it is we need to do and how we are going to do it

Current aims:

..Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society..

even though these are worth while, in its present form it is not likely to have a direct impact on teaching and learning.

The curriculum should have a clear and agreed purpose which will directly influence decisions about curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

Developing distinctive purpose of the curriculum for Wales

From responses to the call for evidence; What are the three best things about education in
Wales? Highlighted support for

Health and well-being of our children and young people

Conclusions from task and finish groups also provided clear messages about their desired curriculum purposes:

PE core subject and pivotal to concerns around levels of physical activity and the health of the nation

Other contributors offered a range of views in relation to the purpose of the curriculum

Successful, Confident individuals
Competent adults, responsible citizens
Healthy minds and bodies: responses relating to the need for schools to foster mental and physical well-being

Frequent reference to various skills from children and young people, including

Working with others
Communication
Independence
Friendship

As well as reference to specific subjects including:

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
Confidence and pride in Wales
Learners are at the heart of all we do
Access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities

Further reference from WG:

Safe home and community which support physical and emotional well-being
Holistic approach to health and well-being

In addition the Well-being of future generations (Wales) Bill – stage 1 goals are for a Wales that is

Prosperous, resilient, healthier...

Summary of the themes to be addressed in the purposes

Active citizenship, confident, creative
Schools need to care both for children and young people’s physical and emotional needs and help them to take responsibility for their own lives, understanding the importance of, for example, diet and fitness and being confident in managing their own affairs.
Independence, self-reliance and respect for others should be fostered throughout the teaching and learning process

Recommendation - Healthy, confident individuals

Four purposes of the curriculum

Ambitious, capable learners
Enterprising, creative contributors
Ethical, informed citizens
Healthy, confident individuals who
Confidence, resilience and empathy
Apply knowledge to diet and exercise on physical and mental health in daily lives
Confidence to participate in performance
Overcome challenge
Chapter 4: Structure

Need to make connections across different aspects of their learning
International trend towards areas of learning, combining disciplinary learning

- Cross curricular priorities
- Health and physical education feature in Australian NC, NZ
- Dutch sports and movement plus health
- Northern Ireland – physical development and movement
- Scotland – Health and Well-being, plus HWB across curriculum
- Foundation phase seven areas of learning

**Six Areas of learning and experiences**

**Curriculum 3-16 organised into areas of learning and experiences and developed upon the four curriculum purposes**

Educational experience integral to curriculum, imaginations and enjoyment

**Expressive Arts**
**Health and well-being**
**Humanities**
**Languages, literacy and communication**
**Mathematics and numeracy**
**Science and Technology**

These are not timetabling devices, however approach should help with breadth and encourage decisions about balance – removing distinctions between core and foundation

This should help to address concerns about compartmentalisation by encouraging teachers to work creatively, and collaboratively, across subject boundaries in the context of four curriculum purposes

**Wider skills** – embedded into areas of learning and experiences
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Planning and organising
- Creativity and innovation
- Personal effectiveness

From 3- Welsh Bacc
Plus integration of **literacy, numeracy and digital competence** through areas of learning and experience

**The six areas of Learning and Experience**

They are listed alphabetically to signal that they are of equal importance in a broad and balanced curriculum

**Expressive Arts** – creative, explore thinking, refine and communicate ideas, engage thinking, imagination and senses creatively
Art, dance, drama, music, film and digital media

**Health and well-being** – physical well-being to thrive and engage successfully with their education
- Improving health and well-being
- Engage in different kinds of physical activity
- Physical activity and diet
- Gain knowledge and practical skills for healthy eating

Subjects and themes from PE, mental, physical and emotional well-being, sex and relationships, parenting, healthy eating and cooking, substance misuse, work-related learning and experience, and learning for life

Also concerned social, emotional, spiritual and physical health and well-being

Strong connections between Health and well-being and expressive arts and other areas

Undertake regular physical activity
Demonstrate progression through increasing competence in, and taking greater responsibility for, organising themselves, and through greater depth of knowledge and understanding about factors affecting their well-being and that of others.

14-16: although young people will choose some of their courses, there are some aspects of the curriculum that all young people should continue to study regardless of choices. These aspects include those that reflect national priorities:

- Welsh Health and well-being
- RE Science

**Humanities** – learn about people, place, time and belief

- Historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors and ethics, beliefs, religion and spirituality

- i.e. history, geography, RE, business and social studies

**Languages, literacy and communication** – essential for thinking, reflection and creativity

- Building blocks, different languages, stimulate imagination, challenge thinking and introduce new ideas

- Welsh part of this area, as to is modern foreign languages and English
- Listening and oracy, reading and writing in English, Welsh and MFL

**Mathematics and numeracy** – confidence to use and apply skills, clear focus on wider skills

**Science and Technology** – knowledge through observation and experimentation, design products

- Physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, design technology (food, textiles, resistant materials), craft design, computer science

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**Structuring learning: Progression Steps**

- Making progress in their learning
- No key stages
Transition points hinder progression and evidence of disengagement

Ceilings on expectations

Learners progress at different rates, removal of phases or stages will create improved progression and therefore potential for higher attainment by minimising transitions and shifts in purpose

Progression steps will have 5 points in the learning continuum 5, 8, 11, 14, 16

Chapter 5: Pedagogy

To be able to learn independently

Teaching and learning focus on overall purpose of curriculum

Good teaching and learning challenges – high expectations but achievable – praise and support

Blended learning – approach that reflects experience and curriculum purpose, however prominence of problem solving, making connections, creativity

Responsibility for own learning

Wider skills at the heart of learning- innovation

Building upon previous knowledge

Authentic contexts – performances, clubs and societies
Areas of learning and experience – making connections, transfer knowledge and understanding across different contexts (promote authentic connections)
Pedagogical approaches – via common approaches, questions, concepts or skills
Integration of literacy, numeracy and digital competence
Collaboration – cooperation, Hattie – cooperative learning is effective
Relationships - positive

Thinking, problem solving, metacognition – learning to learn, processes, refinement- not purely cognitive

Chapter 6: Assessment

Dissatisfaction with current assessment arrangements was one of the strongest messages

Engage students in their own assessment

Report on progress – strengthen relationship between overall purpose, curriculum and lesson planning, and assessment, and to encourage a focus on progression

Benchmarking – usefulness was limited and did not merit the disruption to teaching and learning and in some cases the level of anxiety, which they generate

Problem solving, integrated tasks require knowledge and skills from different domains. Students must work collaboratively and therefore assessment relates to both process and product

Summative and formative

Self and peer assessment – reflection and diagnose of progress

Responsibility for their own learning
Thinking about own and others performances
Understand the nature of learning
Link to Achievement Outcomes I can... I have...

Exploring the role that children and young people might play in the process of reporting to parents and careers

At major **transitions** face to face discussions about strengths and weaknesses and less reliance on simply transferring data

Development of framework – Achievement Outcomes

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**Chapter 7: Implications**

Provide interesting and challenging learning experiences. Enable schools to build upon successful ‘Foundation’ practice into middle and later years of primary education and beyond.

- Some schools extend ‘Foundation’ philosophy in 7-11
- Subjects seem to be barriers to creativity and flexibility in the curriculum
- Experiences may include: learning through topics, projects, thematic or research weeks, special events, considering and researching BIG QUESTIONS
- Teachers never feel constrained to work within individual areas of learning and experience.
- Able to make genuine connections between Areas
- Progression steps and Achievement Outcomes as a compass to maintain continuity and secure progression
- Within connections e.g.

*To improve their health and well-being by appreciating the joy of fresh air and walking safely in the hills to seek the source of a local stream, using a map (and being able to sustain the exercise)*

- Link to Welsh Bacc – skills and Challenges. Elements of Bac should be elements across Areas of learning and experience
- Guidance in one place – importance of sustaining challenge and depth in learning applying what is being learned across the curriculum
- Importance of working together both within and across schools will be an important part of developing expertise
- The best planning is likely to take place in collaboration, with teachers working together to address the requirements of the Achievement Outcomes, to plan team-teaching opportunities and to identify and develop resources
For example, a school could provide a Year 7 programme for a significant part of the school week that develops a wide range of skills through a themed approach, thereby aiding continuity with primary practice. This approach could involve a series of projects to cover the year, and use the thinking skills methodology of 'plan, develop and reflect' as the organising structure. Projects would cover all subjects, although specialist teaching could be provided for literacy, numeracy and areas such as modern foreign languages and PE.

Curriculum provide scope for creativity and innovation
Delivery of programmes that are relevant and meaningful
Create arms length day to day running of curriculum and assessment – new grp?

**First Tasks will be to elaborate the Areas of Learning and Experience**

- Flesh out structure, Outcome statements for each Progression Step
- Create stimulating teaching and learning contexts and activities
- Scope the boundaries of the Areas of Learning and Experience
- Decision about how best to present the various component subjects and/or strands within the Area of Learning and Experience
- Advice on teaching and learning strategies that are particular to the Area of Learning and Experience

Other areas likely to have implications for professional development are:

- **Health and well-being**
- Computer science
- Assessment

If proposals are to be successful – need for extensive well-coordinated and sustained professional learning programme that involves, all leaders, teachers and other practitioners

- Increased collaboration within and across schools, joint planning, sharing good practice and rigorous moderation of assessment

**System Capacity**

**DFES, Estyn, Consortia, QW and LA** adjust, support (change to Estyn)

Primary legislation – notion of entitlement across all 6 Areas throughout the period of statutory education

**Chapter 8: Conclusions and Recommendation**

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**4 Purpose of the curriculum**

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; and
Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society
6 Areas of Learning and Experience

Health and Well-being

Expressive Arts

Languages, Literacy and Communication
3 Cross curricular Responsibilities

Digital Competence

Cross-curriculum

Numeracy

Cross-curriculum

Literacy

Cross-curriculum
Recommendations

A continuum of learning from 3 to 16, without phases and key stages.

Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum: 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16.

Achievement outcomes for each Progression Step contributing to each purpose

Welsh Statutory to age 16 shift in focus to communicating in real life situations

Welsh medium schools to act as hubs to support the language in English-medium schools

Between ages 14 and 16 – everyone should select courses OR undertake activities from each of the 6 AoLEs

A range of pedagogical principles which relate directly to the four purposes of education.

“High quality physical education is vital to ensuring all children are given the opportunity to develop a healthy active lifestyle. We know that government investment of over £150m per year in primary PE and sport is having a positive impact on children’s health, and the quality of PE teaching. It’s important that strong foundations are built on through high quality PE at secondary school. Meaningful and high quality assessment of PE and school sport is essential and I would encourage teachers to consider these resources.”

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