

Curriculum for Wales 2022 Feedback Analysis

October 2019

Wavehill: social and economic research

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Executive Summary

This report summarises an independent analysis of responses providing feedback on the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022. It is intended to support and inform ongoing efforts to refine and improve the curriculum before it is rolled out in classrooms across Wales.

Background

Published in 2019, the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 seeks to allow for a broadening of learning, supporting settings and schools in being more flexible in their approaches, and provides educational leaders and practitioners with greater agency, enabling them to be more innovative and creative. The Welsh Government was keen to explore the views and perspectives of the educational community towards the draft curriculum. Young people, parents, teachers and school leaders, as well as the broader community were invited to contribute their views between May and July 2019. Responses were received online, via email, by post, and in person at regional events, workshops, and focus groups.

Analysis Approach

In order to understand the issues and themes raised by respondents, in June 2019 the Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill, an independent research organisation, to conduct an analysis that set out to:

- Understand and map the **range of views and perspectives** held by respondents towards the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
- Assess how **prevalent particular views and perspectives** are across different stakeholder groups and as a whole.

Responses

Responses were received from a broad range of stakeholders with an interest in education, including practitioners, school leaders, parents, special interest groups, and public sector organisations. Alongside the contributions received through participation in workshops and focus groups, the Welsh Government received 1,680 contributions online and via email.

Children and Young People's Perspectives

Children and young people were also approached for their views of the new curriculum. There were clear themes across responses regarding what needs to change in order to improve learning and the learning experience. Having a stronger voice as learners, for example, and greater flexibility in lesson content would improve the learning experience. It was clear that the majority of 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 because they would be most affected. However, there were some concerns that adults were the experts and that such a responsibility should be left to them.

Overarching Perceptions

Overall, the respondents are broadly supportive of the structure and sentiment of the new curriculum. Many respondents, including practitioners, welcomed the proposals. Aspects such as the emphasis on the four purposes, the greater agency offered to teachers within the curriculum, and the greater role of formative assessment were all broadly supported.

Whilst the majority of respondents were supportive of the curriculum and the four purposes, many respondents presented caveats. They often raised broader concerns including practical issues such as the time, resources and support that teachers will receive in order to successfully implement the new curriculum. This suggested that respondents were reading and interpreting the draft curriculum from the perspective of what it would mean practically for themselves and their schools.

Guidance Materials

Whilst there was widespread support for the curriculum, the four purposes and the What Matters statements, 89 percent of respondents thought that the materials could be improved in some way. Furthermore, respondents offered a number of observations and suggestions as to how the guidance could be improved. They ranged from very specific and detailed recommendations to more general statements. Across more general responses, two broad themes emerged:

- Those who would like to see the guidance simplified, including in the language and concepts used to communicate aspects of the curriculum and in structure and presentation.
- Those who felt that the guidance would benefit from greater depth and detail in certain places so as to help practitioners and teachers to understand how to implement the curriculum in practice.

Expressive Arts

Of those respondents who commented on the Expressive Arts AoLE, many expressed the excitement that they felt that it had a prominent role within the curriculum. Meanwhile, a few respondents felt that the curriculum gave more emphasis to the arts than the current arrangements. Some respondents felt that there were challenges in delivering the breadth of learning and experience effectively, especially for those without expertise or experience within a specific medium or art form.

Health and Well-being

The AoLE received broad support, especially with regard to the whole-school approach to supporting health and well-being. Respondents often cited the importance of health and well-being for learners as warranting the focus in the new curriculum. Across different settings, primary schools were more likely to report positive views and secondary schools more likely to report less positive views. Some respondents felt that the guidance could benefit from more detailed information in order to help teachers and schools to implement the AoLE.

Humanities

The Humanities AoLE tended to generate mixed responses. There were concerns from some respondents who felt that grouping subjects together, such as history and geography, could dilute teaching and learning. Meanwhile, other respondents believed that the AoLE offered valuable and engaging ways of exploring the curriculum, including through cross-curricular learning.

Languages, Literacy and Communication

Respondents welcomed the structure and intent of the AoLE, including the flexibility with which to identify and plan according to the needs of learners, and the focus on holistic, cross-curricular links. Some respondents suggested that the AoLE could be strengthened by making more explicit reference to how practitioners could promote early language development. Moreover, others suggested that phonics, grammar and punctuation could receive greater attention and detail in the guidance.

Mathematics and Numeracy

On the whole, respondents appeared to support the approach adopted within the AoLE. A theme running through some responses that resonated with other feedback was concerned with the accessibility of the guidance, especially to those who are not subject specialists. There were more specific concerns surrounding the use of language in framing the AoLE, especially from respondents from nursery and primary settings.

Science and Technology

Science and Technology was generally well received by those respondents who offered views. Furthermore, respondents offered very precise feedback on the wording and content of the AoLE, suggesting that the accuracy of the guidance could be improved. Across responses there also appears to be tension between those who seek greater levels of detail within Science and Technology and those who think that it may be too prescriptive.

Cross-Curricular Responsibilities

The majority of respondents felt that the guidance supports learners in developing skills in cross-curricular responsibilities. Positive responses focused on issues such as the clarity of the guidance and how it mirrored existing good practice, and how a cross-curricular approach would be effective in supporting the development of key skills and competencies. Meanwhile, others caveated their support, suggesting that there were a range of practical concerns that could undermine teaching and learning across the different responsibilities, including in how they are embedded.

Assessment

Across the wide-ranging proposals, a key theme running through many responses was the need for more detailed guidance on how the proposals would work in practice. Whilst many were supportive of the focus on formative assessment, many respondents felt that more detail with respect to how this is achieved in practice, including exemplars, would be especially valuable.

Progression

Across different points of transition, some respondents believed that the new curriculum provides more coherent progression from the Foundation Phase into Key Stage 1. There were concerns surrounding the transition from primary to secondary education, and then again from secondary to tertiary education. Others felt that if the new curriculum were to achieve improvements in the skills and confidence of young people, then transitions would be more successful.

Professional Development

Overall, many respondents recognised the important role that professional development would play in successfully embedding the new curriculum. From this perspective, the new curriculum would require practitioners and settings to adapt their practice, both in coordinating provision and in teaching. In terms of delivering cross-curricular frameworks, for example, some respondents suggested that teachers would require more specific training.

Implementation

Respondents were asked whether they felt that there was sufficient flexibility and support to implement the new curriculum. The majority of respondents were unsure, but those who were sure expressed strong views, both positive and negative. Issues surrounding implementation were a key concern across responses, including having sufficient time, resources and training to embed the new curriculum.

Conclusions

Overall, respondents were generally positive towards the new curriculum. Most respondents felt the guidance could be improved in order to help them understand and implement the curriculum in practice. Respondents offered a range of suggestions on how the guidance could be improved, ranging from very specific wording, through to more general observations.

1 Introduction

This report summarises an independent analysis of responses providing feedback on the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022. It is intended to support and inform ongoing efforts to refine and improve the curriculum before it is rolled out in classrooms across Wales.

1.1 Background

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 was developed in response to recommendations that emerged from *Successful Futures*, which is a comprehensive review of curricular and assessment arrangements in Wales published in 2015. Drawing on the views, concerns and aspirations of people from across Wales, the review sought to communicate a vision of the future for education from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. It made a number of practical recommendations outlining how this vision could be achieved in practice.

In 2015, the Welsh Government initiated the Great Debate, which sought the views and perspectives of the educational community towards the recommendations contained within *Successful Futures*. The majority of respondents to the Great Debate welcomed the overall emphasis and direction of the recommendations. Respondents recognised and valued the purposes of education as set out in the review, which many thought provided a firm basis upon which to think about the curriculum.

Drawing on the views and perspectives generated through the Great Debate, the Welsh Government then set out to develop the curriculum in more detail. In partnership with a network of teachers, schools, regional consortia, Estyn, and other key stakeholders, a range of guidance and frameworks were developed in support of the new curriculum.

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 is the culmination of this work. The guidance is intended to provide a national framework upon which settings and schools can build in order to develop their own curricula. It is not intended to constitute comprehensive or exhaustive syllabi or a guide for organising timetables. The Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance sets out:

- What settings and schools should be taken into account in designing their curriculum
- The broad expectations for learners for each area of learning and experience at each progression point.

Scope of the Curriculum for Wales 2022

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 has been designed for all learners aged 3 to 16. The current proposals for legislation are that the new curriculum will be provided for:

- 3 to 5-year-olds who attend nursery classes in maintained schools and those attending funded, non-maintained settings
- 5 to 16-year-olds who attend maintained schools in Wales.

Moreover, the Curriculum for Wales 2022 seeks to allow for a broadening of learning, supporting settings and schools in being more flexible in their approaches, and provides educational leaders and practitioners with greater agency, enabling them to be more innovative and creative.

With the wide-ranging implications for teaching, learning and assessment, the Welsh Government were keen to explore the views and perspectives of the educational community towards the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022. Those with an interest in education, including pupils, parents, teachers and school leaders, as well as the broader community were invited to contribute their views between May and July 2019. Responses were received online, via email, by post, and in person at regional events, workshops, and focus groups.

The views and perspectives of respondents will then be fed back into the refinement of the curricular materials before they are rolled out across Wales. The feedback will be considered by educational professionals involved in its development. The revised Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance will then be made available in January 2020 - for rollout in September 2022 - for all year groups in primary school and for Year 7 in secondary school. The curriculum will roll out to Year 8 in September 2023, and then year on year until it is introduced to Year 11 in 2026.

1.2 Engagement

An extensive programme of activity was undertaken prior to and during the Curriculum for Wales 2022 consultation period. With the support of partners and networks, the Welsh Government engaged with and gathered feedback from an array of stakeholders. The following were undertaken:

- More than 110 regional consortium events were organised across Wales, which were attended by over 6,300 practitioners.
- 24 focus groups were organised and run with children and young people throughout Wales. To further and extend this activity, a toolkit was developed to support teachers and youth leaders in hosting feedback sessions on the new curriculum. The toolkit was shared with key stakeholders such as the Children's Commissioner, Sport Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS), Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales (EYST Wales), Children in Wales, TSANA, and the Principal Youth Officers' Group.
- 200+ organisations were engaged through stakeholder workshops, including those with an interest in BAME, Additional Learning Needs, belief groups, and gender equality issues. Events were also held for Youth Parliament, Youth Workers, Urdd Gobaith, art groups, and Gypsy traveller young people in conjunction with the Travelling Ahead Project.
- Attendance at Regional Skills Partnership meetings and the Institute of Welsh Affairs events so as to engage with the Higher Education and Business and Skills sectors. These were attended by Professor Graham Donaldson and the Minister for Education.
- The organisation of a bespoke business breakfast that was chaired by the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership, at which the Minister, Qualifications Wales, and teachers presented and participated in a Q&A discussion.

- The Minister for Education travelled across Wales during the feedback period in order to meet with various stakeholders and groups as part of the 'Our National Mission Roadshow'. She attended 62 events which included meeting with governors, businesses and business representatives, as well as students undertaking initial teacher training.
- Engagement with 'Team Bridgend', which comprised Bridgend's two headteacher representative groups (i.e. the Bridgend Primary Federation and the Bridgend Association of Secondary Headteachers).
- Follow-up meetings with: Race Council Cymru, Windrush elderly representatives, and TGP Cymru regarding Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

To support and drive engagement, the Welsh Government undertook continuous communications activity via social media channels, e-newsletters to schools (Dysg), the [Curriculum for Wales blog](#), and the development of a campaign website called [Education is Changing](#). This was further supported by live Q&A sessions with the Minister for Education via social media channels and the live broadcasting of key events. The draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 was hosted on the Welsh Government's [Hwb](#) website and open for all to view and provide feedback.

Four Cymru undertook social listening and monitored hashtags — #TalkCurriculum and #CurriculumforWales — from 7 May to 21 July 2019. The results are as follows:

- 14,447 mentions (67% of mentions were retweets)
- 66 million impressions
- Conversation levels in June 2019 peaked far above the average monthly volume
- Conversation was largely driven by neutral updates on the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and stemmed from educational professionals, as well as promotion and responses to events or training
- Conversation during this period was 50% neutral, 41% positive and 9% negative.

1.3 Analysis Approach

In order to understand the issues and themes raised by respondents, in June 2019 the Welsh Government commissioned Wavehill, an independent research organisation, to conduct an analysis that set out to:

- Understand and map the **range of views and perspectives** held by respondents towards the Curriculum for Wales 2022.
- Assess how **prevalent particular views and perspectives** are across different stakeholder groups and as a whole.

Responses generated a range of qualitative and quantitative information. The online questionnaire, for example, asked a number of quantitative questions as well as open, qualitative questions asking respondents for their views in more depth.

In order to make sense of the qualitative perspectives expressed by respondents, the authors conducted content analysis. This approach systematically examines each response, highlighting the themes and issues that are raised. The analysis is then able to explore how prevalent each theme or idea is throughout the responses. The issues and themes raised by respondents were then mapped against the relevant areas of the curriculum.

Because of the likelihood of self-selection, for the qualitative information we have not sought to count how many respondents held a particular view. The approach taken is largely qualitative, with the aim being to understand the range of key issues raised by respondents, as well as the reasons for holding particular views. Such information includes potential areas of agreement and disagreement between the different groups of respondents.

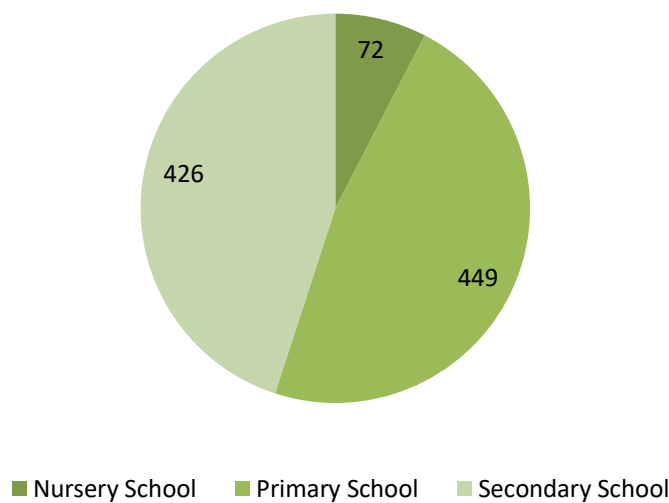
In presenting the results, we have aimed to provide a broad picture of the views and perspectives expressed in responses. A range of qualitative terms are used to express prevalence, including 'most', 'many', 'some', and 'a few', with a decreasing order of prevalence. Interpretation of the balance of opinion must be considered in the context of the questions asked, as not every respondent answered all of the questions, nor did every respondent provide enough information to determine their viewpoint accurately. In this respect, qualitative terms are only indicative of opinions that are relative to questions on the basis of those who responded. Therefore, they cannot be assumed to relate numerically back to the total number of people and organisations that responded, or to the educational community more broadly.

For a more detailed summary of the respondents, our approach to the analysis, and the limitations of the analysis, please see the methodology annex. The report now proceeds to outline the findings of the analysis.

1.4 Responses

Respondents represent a broad range of stakeholders with an interest in education, including teachers and school leaders, parents, special interest groups, and public sector organisations. They were offered a diverse range of opportunities to feed back their views and perspectives on the curriculum guidance. The Welsh Government held a number of workshops as part of a broader events programme, for example, that were designed to explore the curriculum guidance and to collect feedback (n = 27). Further focus groups were held in order to collect more specific views of broader community groups towards specific issues surrounding the guidance (n = 3). Moreover, the Welsh Government received 1,680 contributions online and via email from a diverse range of individuals and organisations. Of these contributions, a significant proportion were received from practitioners, teachers, senior leaders, and governors from nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as funded non-maintained settings:

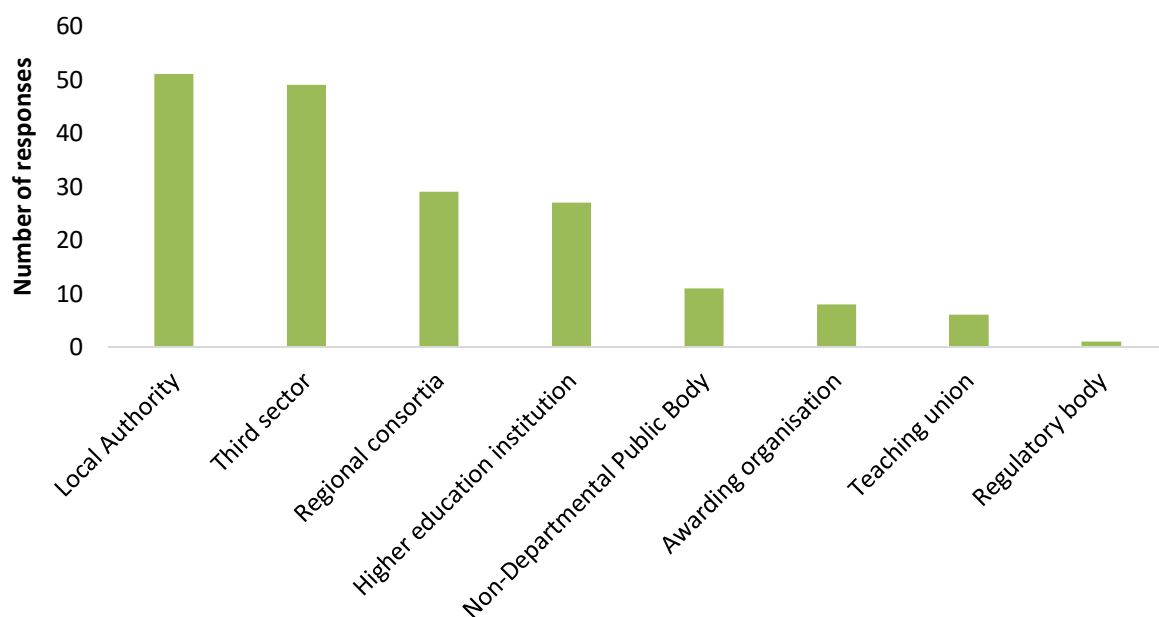
Figure 2.1: Number of responses from schools



Additionally, a small number of responses were received from members of staff from all through schools, special schools, and Pupil Referral Units.

There were also responses from individuals and organisations that support schools, including school improvement officers and challenge advisors as well as public and third sector organisations. These included a diverse range of organisations, including special interest groups, higher education institutions, and public bodies with an educational remit.

Figure 2.2: Number of responses from individuals and organisations supporting schools



Responses were also received from parents or carers (n = 69). A number of people contributed views but did not identify themselves as responding from a particular stakeholder group.

A number of similar submissions were received that suggested coordinated campaigns. This was particularly evident in respect of:

- Maintaining parental choice surrounding Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- Humanists requesting that humanism play a more prominent role in Religious Education, and that evolution be included in the Science and Technology AoLE from primary school age.
- Funded, non-maintained settings, presenting similarly worded responses that covered a range of issues, including broad support for the curriculum.
- Calls for CPR in the curriculum.

1.5 Limitations

There are a number of limitations with regard to this analysis that are important to note. The respondents contributing to the analysis are not necessarily representative of the wider educational community, or the broader public as a whole. Together, therefore, the responses should be considered to be providing an indication of the views, sentiments and opinions of the community at large, rather than a definitive statement.

2 Children and Young People's Perspectives

Dynamix were asked by the Welsh Government to provide accessible methods for children and young people's voices to be included in the feedback phase on the Curriculum for Wales 2022.

Children and young people participated in the feedback phase through an online survey, facilitated focus groups at schools and youth groups, or by youth leaders using a toolkit. A total of 423 participants from across Wales provided feedback through the online survey and the focus groups. These included young people from protected characteristic groups including those with additional learning needs, as well as members of 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 school groups included over 50% BAME students. Participants were able to participate in either Welsh or English.

This section is a summary from their report entitled **Curriculum for Wales 2022 Feedback Analysis: Children & Young People's Report. August 2019**, which can be accessed at: <https://gov.wales/curriculum-wales-2022-guidance>.

The analysis from the feedback phase with children and young people provides an insight into what the most important things for learners are with regard to their learning and learning experience, what could improve things, and what matters to them in terms of the areas of learning and experience.

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

- The importance of knowledge is seen by many participants as being the core reason for attending school and is linked mostly to specific subjects and life skills.
- Skills for work and skills for life are very important elements 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 of and desire for good health and well-being, 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 include friends in school, as well as the importance of trust and respect — including good teachers.
- Social skills and social behaviour were linked closely to communication for many participants, which 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 behaviour.

- 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 did not fit into any of the categories included environmental awareness, facilities, specific teachers, and life skills.

What are the three best things about your education?

- 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 very important to young people with regard to aiding learning and reducing 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 for attending school. However, there were comments made about the pressures of homework having a negative effect.

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

- There were clear themes identified regarding what needs to change in order 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.
- For a number of participants, issues surrounding strict uniform rules meant that having the flexibility (with school rules) to take blazers off during hot weather was important.
- Bullying in different forms, and to 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 so as 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 and timetables and being involved in decisions that affect learners would improve their learning and learning experience.
- A greater understanding of learners with additional needs is required and being able to adapt lessons in order to meet needs would bring about improvements.
- Environmental improvements could also be made, which is especially important for children and young people with hearing impairments and those with additional learning needs who are affected by noise levels.

What Matters in the areas of learning and experiences to children and young people

Participants in the focus groups had the opportunity to examine the 'What Matters statements' and the 'What Matters statement explanations' and to vote on whether or not they understood the statements. It was clear from the focus group analysis that children and young people found the 'What Matters statement explanations' to be easier to understand, but not everyone fully understood the explanations and concern was raised by some participants that younger children would not understand them.

Those who participated in the focus groups and the online survey were asked what was important to them with respect to 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 have been able to present the following suggested 'What Matters' to children and young people statements.

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. They provide us with skills that we will be able to use when we are adults or seeking work.
2. **Humanities** helps 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 to protect our future. It helps us to understand other people: their beliefs, societies and cultures, 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 to obtain a job in the future.
3. **Health and Well-being** helps us to understand how to live a healthy life and why it is important to look after both our minds and our bodies (physical and mental health). It builds our resilience so that we can bounce back from difficult times and provides us with skills with which to deal with problems, allowing us to 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.
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. Furthermore, it helps us to learn other subjects and prepares us for many jobs. It helps us to solve problems and understand the world better.

6. **Languages, Literacy and Communication** is concerned with being able to communicate well with people around us and from all over the world. It means that we are able to travel to other countries and understand people, which can also help us to obtain jobs that require 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 information.

Would you want to help shape the curriculum?

It was clear that the majority of 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 because they would be most affected. However, there were some concerns that adults were the experts and that such a responsibility should be left to them.

3 Overarching Perceptions

This chapter explores respondents' overarching perceptions towards the four purposes that guide the curriculum, as well as the What Matters statements that inform and define the areas of learning and experience. It also offers reflections upon the overarching concerns expressed by respondents.

3.1 The Curriculum and the Four Purposes

At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 are the **Four Purposes**, which set out the aspirations of all children and young people by the age of 16. The four purposes have guided the design and development of the Curriculum for Wales 2022. They seek to ensure that the curriculum supports children and young people in becoming:

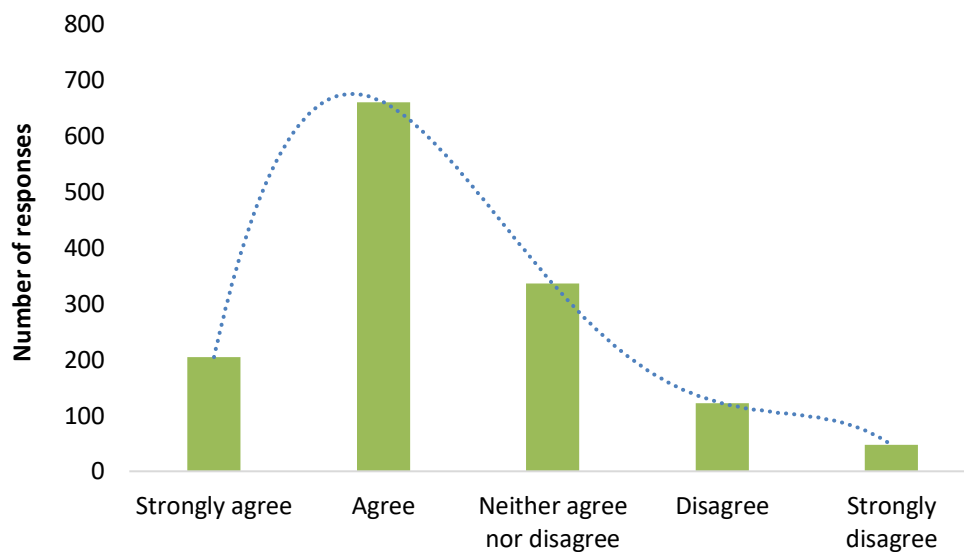
- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Overall, the respondents are broadly supportive of the structure and sentiment of the new curriculum. Many respondents, including teachers, welcomed the proposals. Aspects such as the emphasis on the four purposes, the greater agency offered to teachers within the curriculum, and the greater role of formative assessment were all broadly supported.

'The curriculum really needed a shake-up and I really appreciate the approach of involving teachers, the organic nature of the document, and the shift in focus towards a purpose-led curriculum'. - Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1377

When asked whether or not the curriculum would achieve its objective of helping children to develop against the four purposes, the respondents were mostly in agreement. This is a strong indication that there is broad support for the aims that underpin the new curriculum as set out in the four purposes:

Figure 4.1: Q7.1. A1: To what extent do you agree that the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance will help children and young people to become: ambitious, capable learners; healthy, confident individuals; ethical, informed citizens; enterprising, creative contributors?



N = 1369

A common theme driving more positive responses was concerned with the perceived limitations of the current curricular arrangements. Some respondents felt that the current arrangements were too prescriptive, for example, constraining practitioners, teachers and schools:

'The theory behind the new curriculum is exactly what we need. There needs to be larger elements of trust given to schools and groups of schools to develop the curriculum fit for their pupils.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1569**

I think this curriculum will give children a better and more relevant start to education allowing the children to shape their learning and practitioners to develop their thinking in a more free system, starting with the children at the core.'
- **Practitioner, Nursery School, Response 1953**

Some respondents also welcomed the proposals because they felt that they would improve the outcomes for both learners and teachers:

'I think shifting from the current broadly transmissive mode of teaching to a more submersive [sic], facilitative mode where children learn how to learn and follow their interests as well as to reflect on their own behaviour and performance will be a positive move. I think learners will be better engaged in their learning and will go on to achieve what they want to achieve out of life. I think this curriculum has the potential to revitalise and re-professionalise teaching, making the experience more pleasurable for teachers and learners alike.' - **Parent, Response 2006**

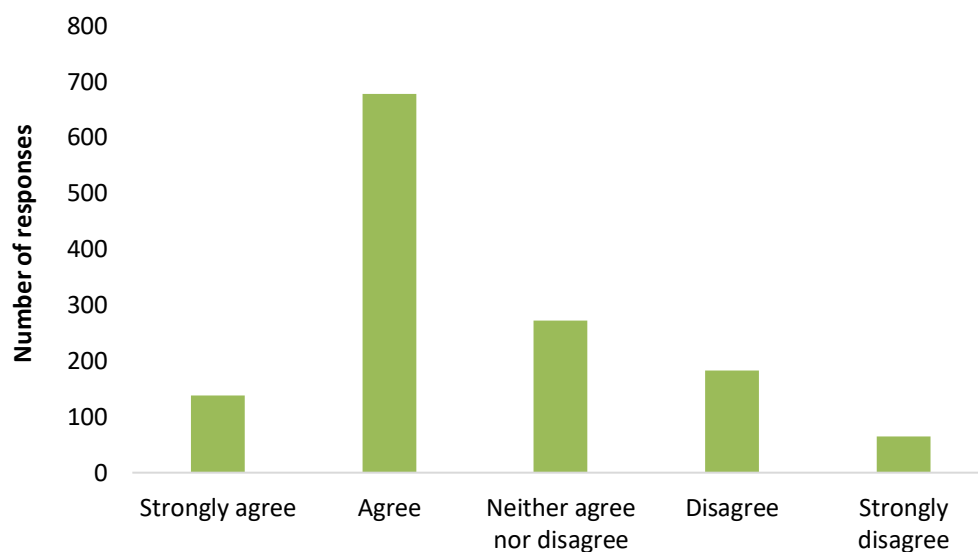
Overall, there was broad support amongst respondents from across the educational community towards the curriculum and what it is trying to achieve. Quantitatively, there were only slight differences of opinion across different groups of respondents, with those from primary settings being marginally more likely to be supportive of the curriculum and the four purposes.

3.2 The Four Purposes and What Matters Statements

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 is organised around the **What Matters** statements. Each statement outlines key learning within an area of learning and experience and builds on the four purposes. They also provide the basis for organising learning progression.

Respondents were subsequently asked for their overarching views towards the What Matters statements and whether they reflect the four purposes. Again, the respondents were mostly in agreement:

Figure 4.2: Q8.1. A2: Looking at the What Matters statements, to what extent do you agree that these sum up the priorities for children and young people's learning?



N=1336

Those respondents who responded positively and offered more detail often supported the overall approach to framing the curriculum within the What Matters statements:

'They provide a broad and balanced framework and allow schools to develop authentic learning experiences that are relevant to their context. The language used within the WM [What Matters] statements and supporting rationale makes them suitable for learners of all ages.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2016**

For those respondents commenting on specific areas of learning and experience, they often felt that the statements presented an accurate reflection of the breadth and content of the subject area:

‘With reference to the Mathematics and Numeracy curriculum, the What Matters statements perfectly capture the framework for which mathematics is built upon.’
- Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2407

Conversely, those reporting that they were in disagreement tended to express the view that the format and content of the statements did not provide sufficient detail for teachers.

Moreover, respondents from nursery settings were marginally more likely to be in disagreement than those from other schools. They often felt that the statements were not applicable to younger children of a nursery age. A common theme driving this perspective was the view that the language surrounding the statements was difficult to understand and that the breadth of guidance was difficult to navigate:

‘We agree that the statements are important and are generally appropriate. We believe that these can be adapted and interpreted for all ages. As there is so much reading and comprehension underpinning every statement it is difficult at first glance to see how these relate to a three-year old. The mountain of background reading that is required to understand everything before we can create suitable learning experiences is very challenging for practitioners and leaders in non-maintained settings.’ - **Senior Leader, Nursery School, Response 1810**

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 organises learning around six **Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)**:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology.

Each AoLE has been designed to support learners in realising the four purposes of the curriculum and provides the starting point and aspiration when developing a school-level curriculum. They encompass existing subjects and disciplines and are intended to promote collaboration and cross-disciplinary development and design of the curriculum at the school level.

3.3 Overarching Issues

Whilst the majority of respondents were supportive of the curriculum and the four purposes, many respondents presented caveats. They often raised broader concerns including practical issues such as the time, resources and support that teachers will receive in order to successfully implement the new curriculum:

*This is an inspiring and aspirational curriculum which has the potential to transform Wales and education. However, this will only be realised if sufficient resources are put into schools to enable it. Changing the content of the curriculum without changing the systems and structures that were designed to deliver its predecessor will not lead to fulfilling the potential that exists. - **Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 1871***

The prevalence of these concerns across responses suggests that the respondents are reading and interpreting the draft curriculum from the perspective of what it would mean practically for themselves and their schools. Some respondents felt that the current issues and challenges facing the educational community could present barriers to the successful implementation of the new curriculum:

*'Whilst a lot of work has been put into drafting the guidance around the curriculum, this alone will not change the education system. There needs to be funding and training opportunities to match the ambition'. - **Teaching Union, Response 2240***

We will outline these broader practical concerns in more detail in the subsequent chapters, including those in relation to professional development and implementation.

A relatively small proportion of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the curriculum and the What Matters statements delivered against the four purposes. They were more likely to raise overarching concerns that the curriculum:

- Dilutes traditional subject disciplines
- Contains a lack of prescription and depth, which they find to be problematic, or
- Should include or exclude certain bodies of knowledge or skillsets.

3.3.1 Subject Disciplines and the New Curriculum

A number of respondents highlighted the view that the new curriculum, organised around six AoLEs, would dilute traditional subject disciplines. They often felt that this presented a range of potential challenges, both in teaching the curriculum and in ensuring relative coherence between the curriculum and qualifications arrangements. A few respondents felt strongly that the curriculum undermined the parity of esteem of certain disciplines and that this may result in schools reducing or removing provision. This was often expressed through comments surrounding the wording of particular What Matters statements:

'The WM [What Matters] 'Events and human experiences' appears to come from a largely historical perspective. It takes no account of the geographical concepts of place representation. Further work on the WM [What Matters] statements to recognise the contribution geography can make is recommended.' - **Subject Association, Response 1359**

Meanwhile, other respondents felt that grouping subjects together within AoLEs would require teachers to teach outside of their areas of expertise, potentially reducing the quality and consistency of teaching and learning:

'Whilst the curriculum certainly allows teachers flexibility, they 'don't know what they don't know', and neither do their students. It is very possible therefore that only those topics with which staff / pupils are familiar will ever get discussed.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 2372**

A common theme driving these responses was the concern that grouping specific disciplines together could limit the depth of knowledge that could be achieved. This could, some argued, lead to pupils in Wales being at a disadvantage, both in progression and in life beyond school:

'I do worry how depth of subject knowledge and expertise can be obtained when subject barriers are removed, and disciplines are merged. This is likely to have an impact on how our pupils will be able to compete with their peers from other parts of the UK.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 2913**

3.3.2 Prescription and the New Curriculum

Some respondents perceived the underlying principles supporting the curriculum, which seeks to provide teachers and schools with greater autonomy and ownership over teaching and learning, to be problematic. From this perspective, the curriculum was not prescriptive enough. There were two distinct themes driving these concerns, the first of which is that the perceived absence of prescription could result in increased divergence in the content, coherence and quality of teaching and learning within and across schools:

'The commitment to these goals is positive. However, I am concerned that the varying interpretations of the new curriculum will lead to vastly different experiences for learners across schools and that it will become increasingly difficult for secondary schools to create a successful transition from Year 6 to Year 7 as a result.' - **Senior Leader, Primary School, Response 1293**

These respondents often felt that the perceived absence of prescription and increased divergence could have implications for the equality of opportunity and outcomes:

'There is already wide variation in the quality of education in Wales and the gap between those pupils affected by poverty and disadvantage is not closing at a fast-enough rate. Whilst the four purposes are a powerful and purposeful vision, in its current form, the draft curriculum will lead to greater variation in the quality, breadth and content of what children in Wales learn which will increase the gap rather than close it.' - **Senior Leader, Primary School, Response 1468**

The second distinct theme underscoring these perceptions centred on the ability of practitioners and teachers to respond effectively to greater autonomy. This concern linked to broader concerns surrounding the prevalence of skills and the confidence of teachers with respect to curricular design. From this perspective, respondents felt that the curriculum placed greater emphasis on teachers and schools to become designers of the curriculum, which they felt problematic:

'The planning for learning, learning outcomes and assessment guidance sections all lack detail. It is all very well empowering us to develop our own detailed curriculum, but some schools will lack specialist expertise, it could be difficult for inexperienced teachers, and then there is the workload issue of every school 'reinventing the wheel'.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1667**

3.3.3 Specific Subjects and Skills

Respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed that the curriculum reflected the four purposes were also more likely to highlight the absence or inclusion of certain subjects, bodies of knowledge, or skills. This aligned closely with the theme surrounding the absence of prescription within the curriculum.

A few respondents felt, for example, that there should be a greater focus on Welsh language, history and culture within the curriculum. This was often premised by the perception that there is currently insufficient attention being paid to these subjects, and that the new curriculum may not address this issue.

More broadly, including those who were more supportive of the curriculum, some respondents highlighted specific topics that they would like to see more explicit reference being made in the curriculum. A number of responses were received from organisations with an educational remit, for example. They often cited the benefits of learning about specific topics for a broad range of learning, personal and health outcomes. These included, for example:

- Human Rights Education (HRE)
- CPR
- Cycling proficiency
- Oral health
- Nutrition and hydration
- Animal welfare.

There were also a number of campaign responses that sought to highlight the relative importance of certain concepts or skills which respondents felt should receive a more prominent and explicit role within the curriculum. These included respondents who would like to see the inclusion of First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in the curriculum. Meanwhile, another group of respondents requested that evolution be included more explicitly in the curriculum, specifically within the Science and Technology AoLE for pupils of a primary age.

Other respondents believed that certain subjects or topics should be removed, or that parents should be given a greater say over what children are taught. This included maintaining the opportunity to opt out of Religious and Sexuality Education (RSE) provision:

‘As a parent I should be able to maintain the right to withdraw my child from RSE lessons from 2022. Schools should take into account the wishes of all parents and as a whole in the community the way RSE is addressed.’ - Parent, Response 1288

3.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, the substantive concerns expressed by the respondents surrounding the perceived dilution of subject disciplines, the lack of prescription within the curriculum, and the inclusion or exclusion of specific knowledge or skills were not widely held. Aside from the issues and concerns surrounding implementation that are widely held, this suggests that the overarching perceptions of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance are largely positive. This conclusion is supported by supplementary evidence, including the social media analysis and the responses generated through focus groups and workshops.

A key feature shaping the overarching perceptions is the practical lens through which many respondents have read and interpreted the curriculum guidance. Many teachers and school leaders, for example, mapped issues and concerns with respect to the current arrangements onto their interpretation of the strengths and limitations of the new curriculum. Many of the concerns expressed by the respondents have their roots in the existing issues and challenges facing the educational community, such as the existing high levels of workload. This suggests that these respondents are interpreting the curriculum from the perspective of what it will mean for them personally, including how it will shape everyday practice surrounding teaching and learning. For some respondents, practical concerns took precedent over the substantive content of the curriculum and did not offer commentary on their views surrounding specific aspects of the guidance.

A further trend shaping the overarching perceptions is concerned with the range of interpretations of the curriculum that are apparent in the responses. Respondents’ explicit and implicit interpretations of the underlying objectives, sentiment and mechanics of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 underscored many of the issues and concerns that they raised. This can be seen, for example, in the concerns surrounding the role of knowledge within the new curriculum.

Conceptually, the Curriculum for Wales 2022 represents a shift from a relatively prescriptive culture surrounding the curriculum towards a more purpose-led process that positions teachers as agents of change and professional developers of the curriculum. It espouses more

learner-centred practices than previously, based upon the development of certain capabilities. The new curriculum is therefore concerned with what children are taught — for example by providing greater balance between knowledge and skills and seeking greater coherence across the curriculum — and how they are taught, e.g. by providing teachers with greater flexibility and ownership in shaping teaching and learning.

Across responses, people have clearly given different weight and attention to different aspects of the curriculum, both conceptually and from a practical perspective. In some cases there are interpretations that may not accurately reflect the spirit or intention of the new curriculum. It is possible, for example, that some who wish to see greater prominence being given to certain bodies of knowledge or subject disciplines may not have understood the curriculum in terms of seeking to provide teachers with greater control and flexibility in how they teach them. Perspectives that seek greater depth and prescription may lie in tension with others who support the flexibility and agency that are offered through the new curriculum. It also suggests that the curriculum materials may not have effectively communicated the broader conceptual, pedagogical and practical implications of the reforms, including those that may address or allay the substantive concerns raised by some respondents. Future communicative efforts may benefit from seeking to clarify and amplify how the curriculum seeks to address the underlying issues and challenges feeding into these viewpoints.

4 Guidance Materials

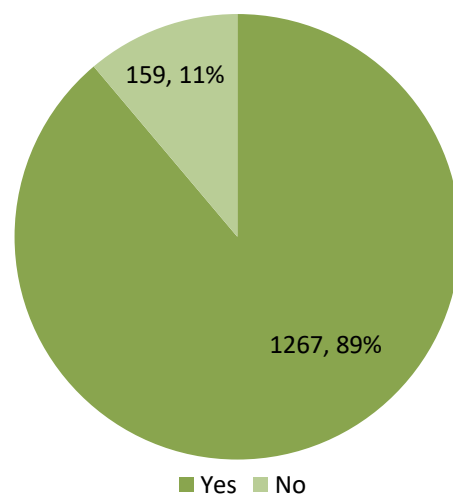
This chapter explores respondents' views towards the guidance materials that surround the Curriculum for Wales 2022, and how they could be improved.

The guidance materials were developed in collaboration with a network of teachers, schools and other stakeholders from across the educational community. They were published online through Hwb and can be found at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/draft-curriculum-for-wales-2022>.

4.1 Improving the Guidance Materials

Whilst there was widespread support for the curriculum, the four purposes and the What Matters statements, 89 percent of respondents thought that the materials could be improved in some way:

Figure 5.1: Q9. A3: Do you think the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance could be improved?



N = 1429

Of those respondents that offered positive reflections towards the guidance, they often highlighted the accessibility and clarity of the materials. Some thought the videos were helpful in navigating the proposals, and that the online portal was a valuable resource:

'We are really impressed with the online interface, videos, sketchnotes and all of the training that we have attended.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1882**

Respondents offered a number of observations and suggestions as to how the guidance could be improved. They ranged from very specific and detailed recommendations to more general statements. Across more general responses, two broad themes emerged:

- Those who would like to see the guidance simplified, including in the language and concepts used to communicate aspects of the curriculum and in structure and presentation.
- Those who felt that the guidance would benefit from greater depth and detail in certain places so as to help practitioners and teachers to understand how to implement the curriculum in practice.

4.2 Language

Respondents were more likely to raise the tone and language of the guidance when they felt that these were issues. A key theme running through many responses was that the tone and language being used to communicate the curriculum across much of the guidance was difficult to understand. Some felt that the precise technical language used to frame much of the guidance meant that it was difficult to understand. From this perspective, the technical and precise language detracted from understanding the content and sentiment of different parts of the curriculum:

*‘The language is too complex and lacks clarity especially for inexperienced practitioners, e.g. NQT’s [Non-Qualified Teachers] or non-maintained sector staff and teaching assistants.’ - **Challenge Advisor, Regional Consortia, Response 2643***

A few Welsh-medium responses echoed this sentiment, requesting that the curriculum be written in simple Welsh, rather than in the technical style in which they felt that much of the guidance was framed. Overall, this perspective was more likely to be offered by respondents from nursery and primary settings.

There were also pockets of concern regarding the consistency of language across the guidance. A few respondents observed that AoLEs read rather differently from one to the next, and that their overall tone, language and, in some cases, substantive content and structure can vary. These were felt to make it more difficult to access and interpret different parts of the curriculum. Furthermore, the language surrounding specific AoLEs was highlighted by some respondents as being difficult to understand. Understanding the precise prevalence of views towards language and specific AoLEs is challenging, as the questionnaire collecting views did not present consistent questions across AoLEs. Concerns surrounding the precise language framing the Mathematics and Numeracy AoLEs do appear to have received some attention, especially amongst respondents from nursery and primary settings. One respondent offered the following reflection upon Mathematics and Numeracy:

*‘Wording of What Matters statements and progression steps needs to be more concise and easier to understand (terminology).’ - **Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 1874***

Some respondents offered suggestions as to how to address the use of language. One respondent suggested expanding the embedded signposts or definitions within digital

documents, for example, that could help readers to develop a more accurate interpretation of the guidance:

‘Clarity over terminology would be beneficial, particularly with words that can be interoperated in a variety of ways. In some instances, definitions are offered (i.e. visual literacy) with the ability to hover over specific words, this is very useful and could be used more widely with links to research.’ - Teacher, Primary School, Response 2826

More broadly, a few respondents offered specific suggestions as to how the language used to frame the guidance could be made to be more inclusive:

‘Throughout the document, could the word “speak” be changed to “communicate” as this would be more inclusive, bearing in mind non-verbal means of communication with our younger children, particularly those with additional learning needs or English as an additional language.’ - Local Authority, Response 1590

4.3 Navigation

A number of respondents felt that the volume of guidance made it difficult to navigate. From this perspective, practitioners and teachers were required to navigate and interpret a range of documents in order to understand and internalise the implications of the curriculum for teaching and learning:

‘We fully appreciate that the nature of such a large piece of work requires a great deal of detail. The presentation of the curriculum guidance has been effectively catalogued for easy signposting. However, any practitioner will still need to cross-reference and check against several documents, including other frameworks and strategies. There is some difficulty in finding a common narrative across the whole curriculum guidance. Centralising and ensuring there is a clear thread running throughout may be worth considering in order to avoid any potential key messages being overlooked.’ - Non-departmental Government Body, Response 1391

Meanwhile, other respondents felt that the volume of guidance should be streamlined in some way. From this perspective, respondents often felt that teachers would not have much time or space to give to the guidance, and that the volume of material may act as a barrier to interpreting and applying the guidance successfully:

‘The layout of the documentation is too unwieldy; practitioners and teachers will not have the time to read the entire documents. Humanities alone is 87 pages in length.’ - Head of School Improvement, Response 1938

Again, this issue was felt more prominently amongst those respondents from nursery and primary schools. A few respondents highlighted the fact that practitioners and teachers in this setting hold broader curricular responsibilities, and are therefore required to have mastery over a broader range of the curriculum and guidance:

'The format is very difficult to read through. It is very time consuming to see how each skill progresses. This is a big issue when you are working in mixed-age classes and you have a huge range of skills to plan and support.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 1670**

In offering suggestions as to how the guidance could be simplified in order to help navigation, a few respondents thought that more tailored and succinct guidance would be beneficial:

'By making the language more accessible and the documentation more user-friendly. For it would be helpful if the progression step 1s for each AOLE could be accessed in one place. So that links across the AOLES can be made more easily.' - **Foundation Phase Advisory Team, Response 2798**

'As I work in a small setting with only myself to complete and implement the new curriculum, I have very limited time to complete planning for the term. There are too many documents to look through to get the appropriate experiences. There needs to be a user-friendly document on each area and to state the rationale, progression step one and what matter statement. Having just one document to look through would help to understand the document rather than flipping back and forth. There needs to be a cross-curriculum document which is appropriate for nurseries and non-maintained settings.' - **Senior Leader, Funded, Non-maintained Setting, Response 2534**

4.4 Breadth and Depth

Conversely, many respondents felt that the guidance required greater detail in order to help them to interpret and implement the new curriculum. From this perspective, the guidance was often perceived to be strong on purpose, effectively communicating the overarching objectives of the curriculum, but could be strengthened in terms of detail. Whilst this view was widely held, it was more likely to be expressed by respondents from secondary schools.

Underscoring this viewpoint were a range of concerns. For instance, there were concerns that the open, broad nature of the guidance left teachers with considerable work to undertake in developing and delivering the curriculum. In some cases, respondents perceived the guidance to be operating at quite a high level, and that the perceived lack of detail could increase divergence in the content and quality of teaching and learning across schools:

'I think perhaps offering some indication of content to be used to address What Matters statements may help make things more equitable. Not over prescribed but some guidance. There is a real possibility that some pupils will learn a breadth of valuable knowledge and skills in a coherent fashion whereas others may not, totally depending on the school they go to... Some specific guidance may help this.' - **Senior Leader, Secondary School, Response 2666**

In seeking greater detail within the guidance materials, there appeared to be a continuum of viewpoints. At one end of the spectrum, a few respondents felt that greater prescription,

including the development of comprehensive syllabi, would be valuable in helping teachers to respond to the new curriculum. At the other end, some respondents believed that illustrative examples of how the curriculum could work in practice would be valuable. From this perspective, vignettes or exemplars of teaching and learning could help teachers to visualise the curriculum in practice, therefore reaching a better understanding. One respondent offered a perspective that is situated between the two viewpoints:

*‘Consideration should be given to a core curriculum, which would provide a genuine entitlement for all pupils in Wales while also allowing for school-level autonomy and flexibility... This would enable a firm curriculum entitlement on key knowledge, understanding and skills to all learners, regardless of background. This would help to reduce the gap between advantage and disadvantaged pupils. Only specifying a core would still allow for local choice and flexibility. Well-designed resources would also reduce levels of bureaucracy related to planning (in school and between schools) and overall teacher workload.’ - **School Improvement Officer, Response 1919***

Another area in which some respondents felt that the guidance could be improved was related to consistency across materials, including in respect of detail, content and terminology:

*‘We understand inconsistencies often happen in the drafting of such a large suite of documents and feel it could be usefully addressed before the final curriculum is published. Firstly, some of the AoLEs list potential career paths or routes for employment e.g. the humanities AoLE talks about roles in local government, law, banking and teaching. But this is not replicated for all AoLEs. We feel it would be particularly useful for the Science and Technology AoLE.’ - **Skills Council, Response 2022***

4.5 Structure and Coherence

In terms of the overall structure and coherence of the guidance, respondents often commented on the volume of guidance as being a challenge. A key theme driving these concerns was that of the apparent and sometimes subtle differences in the language, structure and content across different parts of the curriculum. From this perspective, inconsistencies in the language and structure prevented respondents from engaging with and understanding the curriculum:

*‘Varies depending on AOLE – there are inconsistencies relating to the structure of “What Matters” and steps e.g. Expressive Arts follows a developmental approach in steps and the What Matters are different which is not in line with other AoLEs. Science and Tech – it seems that this is still separated into the 3 areas of science Biology, Chemistry and Physics as it is now for primary learners and not holistic. Clashes with LNF and LLC and Mathematics. Two documents which just adds to confusion between cross curricular competencies and AOLES (LLC and Mathematics) – doubling up.’ - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1584***

Understanding the relative value of specific sections within the guidance held by respondents is difficult with precision. Respondents tended to offer isolated observations regarding whether or not a section was helpful within the broader narrative surrounding concerns or

issues relating to a specific aspect of the guidance. Judging the weight of opinion across responses therefore becomes challenging. There are, however, responses that are suggestive of the relative value of different aspects of the guidance:

‘Leaders and practitioners should understand the background and rationale to the draft curriculum that is presented in the Get Started section, as well as the overviews of each area of learning and experience. However, in its current form, this section is somewhat lengthy and ‘dry’. As a result, there is a danger that many will not read this important information before moving on to the detail of the areas of learning and experience. To avoid this happening, it may be helpful to consider a more engaging, less word-dense format, perhaps using more graphics and keeping text clear and incisive.’ - Estyn, Response 1323

4.6 Accessibility

Some respondents suggested that the accessibility of guidance itself could be improved, offering practical suggestions:

‘In the main the guidance is clear and comprehensive and draws the reader’s attention to key areas as appropriate. In addition, the format is clear and consistent across different parts of the guidance, which makes it easier to engage with... In terms of accessibility, whilst it is good that documents are comprehensive and available in different formats, we would question whether there might be too many documents in total, and whether this impacts on the accessibility of the guidance for all stakeholders. As a further point, we would ask whether consideration has been given / needs to be given to whether the use of coloured backgrounds and white script in parts of the documentation present an accessibility problem for some stakeholders.’ - Teacher, Primary School, Response 1358

There were mixed perceptions surrounding the overall accessibility of the guidance online. Of those respondents who commented explicitly on Hwb, a few thought that it was accessible and easy to navigate. Others, however, found the relevant guidance on Hwb to be difficult to locate. This perspective may be tied closely to other concerns surrounding accessibility, however, including the overall volume of guidance and the language used to frame it:

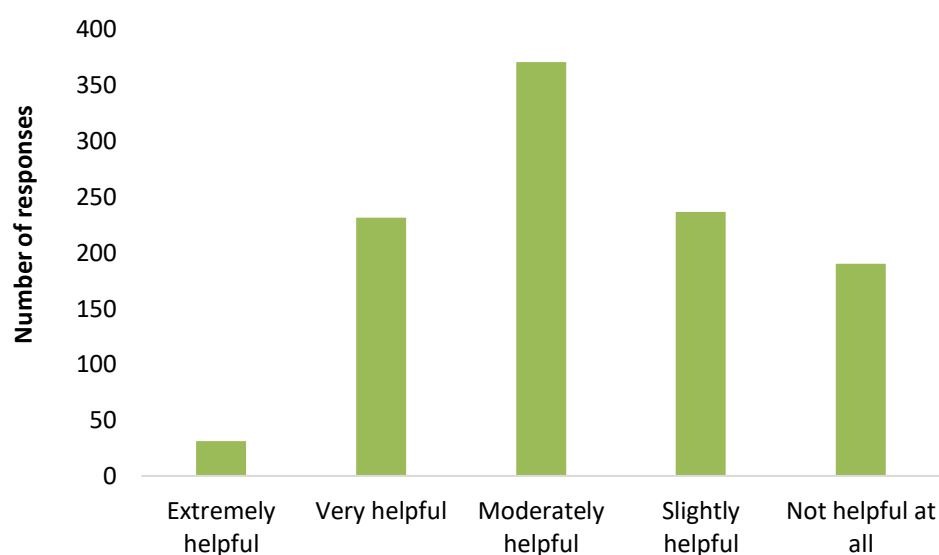
‘We have had some support from EAS which has been useful however, this is only for one member of staff per setting and it is extremely hard for that one person to understand all of the new curriculum as it is huge and very wordy and hard to use the Hwb to find the documents quickly, making it hard to use for planning when staff often have little time to do so.’ - Practitioner, Nursery School, Response 1953

What is more, a small number of respondents raised concerns surrounding digital connectivity and the role of Hwb as an online platform for disseminating the guidance. From these perspectives, poor internet connectivity in some locations was raised as being a barrier to accessing the guidance.

4.7 Supporting Delivery

In order to explore respondents’ views further, the respondents were asked the extent to which the guidance would help teachers to design and deliver the curriculum to their learners. Most respondents reported that they found the guidance to be moderately helpful. The broader distribution of responses leaned towards not being helpful at all. Respondents from primary school settings were slightly more likely to report positive views.

Figure 5.2: Q13.1. B1: How helpful would you find the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance in developing a curriculum for your learners? How helpful?



N = 1029

When asked to comment on their views in more detail, the respondents often reiterated similar viewpoints and suggestions as to how the guidance materials could be improved. These included the simplification of language and navigation, as well as making the guidance

more succinct. Again, other respondents felt that the guidance required greater detail in places, particularly in relation to the importance of including exemplars or case studies in order to illustrate the curriculum in practice:

*‘Would benefit from examples or case studies from pioneer schools.’ - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2201***

Another key theme emerging from the responses was that of more practical concerns that go beyond the guidance itself. These included the support, training, time and resources with which to implement the new curriculum:

*‘Good starting point to be built upon. It is beneficial as guidance. However, we now need to develop a school-level curriculum for the learners in our setting. This will require further support, guidance and collaboration in how to do this. The broad nature of the curriculum provides practitioners with the autonomy to develop their own meaningful opportunities for pupils in their own classes.’ - **Senior Leader, Primary School, Response 1171***

*‘I would need to rely heavily on colleagues and people around me to develop ideas, as there is limited guidance available. I also feel I would need sufficient training in some areas to deliver what is being asked of me.’ - **Specialist Teacher, Local Authority, Response 1079***

Again, these issues will be explored in more depth in the subsequent chapters, including those on professional development and implementation.

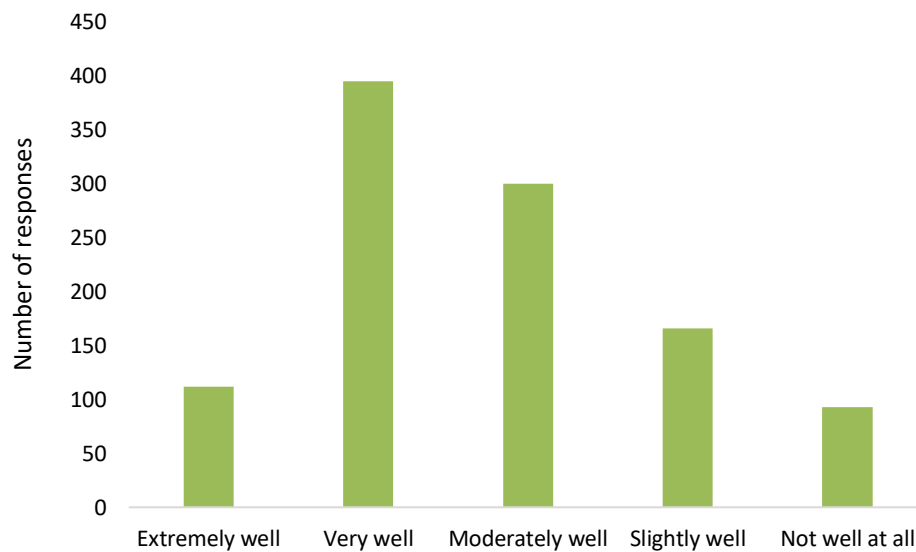
An area of concern for some respondents was the ability of the guidance to support teachers and practitioners in working with children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALNs). Reflections tended to focus on how there was insufficient guidance to support schools in implementing the curriculum for all learners. This sentiment was reflected by one respondent:

*‘The lack of any available impact assessments means the curriculum fails to show how it will be inclusive of all learners, and it is not possible to see how the needs of different groups of learners have been considered or assessed. There is no guidance for teachers to ensure this at a school level, either related to groups of learners with protected characteristics, or to closing the attainment gap, or to learners with ALN [Additional Learning Needs].’ - **Children’s Commissioner, Response 2516***

The respondents were asked a further question that explored whether or not they felt that the guidance materials allow for children and young people to gain a broad range of learning experiences. Most respondents reported that the guidance did so very well. Primary schools were again more likely to report more positive responses.

Figure 5.3: Q14.1. B2: How well do you think the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance allows for all children and young people to gain a broad range of learning experiences? You

may want to consider learning across the different disciplines and subjects which form part of an area of learning and experience. How well?



N = 956

Many respondents welcomed the emphasis on experience and learning which was contained within the curriculum. Respondents highlighted the thematic cross-curricular approach as opening up opportunities for teachers and for children and young people:

*‘Combines the different areas together very well. It doesn't compartmentalize subjects, enabling students to transfer skills between different areas of the curriculum. It encourages children to apply their skills across a broad range of disciplines.’ - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 2332***

Whilst a number of respondents were broadly supportive, again some caveated their support. Similar concerns were expressed around the potential divergence of the content and quality of learning experiences within and across settings:

*‘The framework enables schools to be flexible to develop authentic learning experiences suited to their learners/communities. Although the guidance clearly allows for a broad range of experiences this will be down to individual establishments to provide these opportunities.’ - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1643***

4.8 Conclusions

The majority of respondents felt that the curriculum guidance could be improved in some way. Comments and suggestions fell broadly into two categories, either that the materials could be simplified, including the language used to frame the guidance and the volume of guidance, or that greater detail was needed in places. Reconciling these viewpoints in refining the guidance may be challenging; however, there is evidence to suggest that different settings tend to hold slightly different views. Nurseries and primary schools are more likely to ask for the simplification of guidance materials; meanwhile, secondary schools are more likely to ask for greater detail. Whilst this finding does not hold in all cases, it could form the basis of tailoring the guidance more specifically towards different audiences.

5 Expressive Arts

The **Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience** centres on the five disciplines of art, dance, drama, film and digital media, and music. While these disciplines have a common creative process and share transferable skills, each has its own discrete body of knowledge and set of discernible skills. This area of learning and experience will ensure that learners are entitled to access all five disciplines.

Of those respondents who commented on the Expressive Arts AoLE, many expressed excitement that they felt that it had a prominent role within the curriculum. Meanwhile, a few respondents felt that the curriculum gave more emphasis to the arts than did the current arrangements:

'The Expressive Arts curriculum has a broad and exciting platform to inspire creative thinking.' - **Teacher, Pupil Referral Unit, Response 1508**

Some respondents felt that there were challenges in delivering the breadth of learning and experience effectively, especially for those without expertise or experience within a specific medium or art form:

'Expressive Arts AOLE - Planning for learning seems technical and subject specific vocabulary complicates it for the non-specialist. Definite need for specialist knowledge. We would need to develop our infrastructure in order to deliver this area. Will there be training to develop specialist subjects?' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2702**

As with other aspects of the curriculum, respondents often cited practical concerns surrounding the delivery of the AoLE. There were concerns from some respondents, for example, that the Expressive Arts would be a low priority for many schools. For others, meanwhile, the structure and content of the AoLE itself could lead to the arts receiving less focus:

'Expressive Arts. - Really like the focus on the creative process. Need to ensure that only having 3 What Matters statements does not put the arts at risk in schools. It could be considered to need the least time.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 1154**

'This is brilliant... I am passionate about this area, particularly music. However, I am concerned about the size of its content. It does feel like several subjects forced into one. All of the parts are important, but I hope schools will have the freedom to allocate time to the best effect rather than feeling that they have to give time to achieve every outcome.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2156**

'The theory behind the Expressive Arts curriculum is one that will certainly educate and develop learners to be well balanced, prepared individuals. I am concerned that putting it into practice could be problematic... If we are moving towards an even and balanced curriculum how can it be guaranteed that the relevant and

*essential amount of time is given to each AoLE? Will the benchmark of a school's performance be changed to reflect the changes in the curriculum?' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1934***

The Expressive Arts received comparatively less attention from the respondents than did other areas of the curriculum. Of those respondents who did offer their view, on the whole they were very positive.

5.1 Progression

Progression in the Expressive Arts is not a linear process and there is not one common pathway. Learners may easily move backwards and forwards as they experience Expressive Arts activities, and different learners are likely to progress in markedly different ways.

Not many respondents commented on the progression steps within the Expressive Arts. One respondent offered the broader observation that the 'I can' statements could have limitations and unintended consequences in practice:

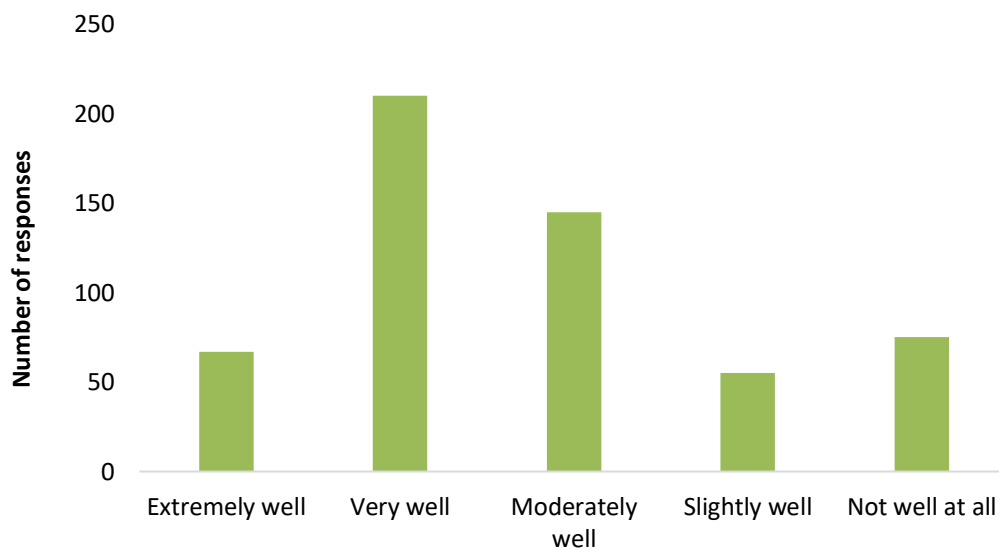
'I believe that the 'I can' statements will lead educators to treat them as a tick box exercise - which I believe is not the intention. As soon as you place 'I can' at the start of a statement then it is a yes or no statement. I can, or I cannot. This will lead management toward spreadsheets and matrices for every child. There are over 200 'I can' statements across the Progression Steps in Expressive Arts. A child could feasibly be on any one of those 'I can' statements at any age. This is unmanageable and goes against the notion of formative assessment and holistic learning.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1398**

6 Health and Well-being

The **Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience** is concerned with the physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects of our lives. It recognises good health and well-being as a key enabler of successful learning. This area of learning and experience will support learners in developing and maintaining not only their physical health and well-being, but also their mental health and emotional well-being, as well as developing positive relationships in a range of contexts. To enable this, it will build learners' capacity to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being and also to engage critically with a range of social influences which may impact upon their values and behaviour.

Another AoLE that received broad support was Health and Well-being. The respondents were asked if they felt that the AoLE guidance supported a whole-school approach to supporting health and well-being. The majority responded very well. Across different settings, primary schools were more likely to report positive views and secondary schools more likely to report negative views:

Figure 7.1: Q32.1. C5: How well does the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience guidance support a whole-school approach to supporting health and well-being? How well?



N = 556

When asked for their views in more detail, some respondents cited the importance of health and well-being for a diverse range of outcomes, including academic achievement. They often felt the holistic approach to health and well-being to be a positive step:

'I have been impressed with the Health and Well-Being AoLE. I like that the What Matters statements don't just include the expected physical activity and diet elements but actually address more serious issues such as mental health and peer pressure. I think there is a broad range to the statements and as a school we have already started experimenting with these statements.' - **Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 1959**

Some respondents felt that the guidance could benefit from more detailed information in order to help teachers and schools to implement the AoLE. This included organisational responses from public bodies and special interest groups with an interest in the well-being of children and young people. They often cited specific content, such as nutrition and hydration or oral health, that should have a more explicit role in the guidance surrounding the AoLE:

'To ensure consistency across different educational contexts it would be ideal to have specific mention of what mental illnesses would be discussed and to what extent these would be explained. Particularly in the wider skills section of this area of learning where there is mention of 'conditions that promote and impact on mental health' but no details of which conditions this would include.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 2404**

These respondents often highlighted the wealth of support available to schools from organisations with an interest in well-being. A few respondents suggested that these resources and support could be referenced more explicitly in the guidance:

'We support the definition of a whole-school approach detailed within the Health and Well-being AoLE document (p.19) and we feel that this is a significant element of the guidance for putting the AoLE into practice. Research suggests that to be effective in improving health, work in the curriculum needs to be supported by a positive ethos and environment with strong links to family and the community. However, at present we feel that this section is not detailed or informative enough to help schools fully take this on board and put it into practice. In particular, we feel that some signposting may be useful should practitioners wish to read into this in more detail.' - **Academic, Higher Education Institution, Response 2606**

A key concern amongst some respondents was the role of Physical Education within the AoLE. They felt that it should have a more prominent role in the AoLE, with a set number of hours being set aside to deliver physical activities:

'We feel that the Health and Wellbeing AoLE needs to include a mandatory requirement for all students throughout the school to take part in two hours of quality PE per week.' - **Local Authority, Response 1668**

'More guidance on inclusion of physical activity being taught by professionally qualified PE teachers to deliver activity lessons. There are not recommendations of how much time should be spent on activity in each year group or key stage and this should be made compulsory as a set amount of time or number of lessons that must be taught through the medium of activity.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2244**

Overall, the majority of respondents welcomed the structure, wording and emphasis of the AoLE.

A few respondents raised the importance of learning about risk and risk management with respect to health and well-being.

'A balanced approach to risk management needs to be included in this AoLE which learning in the outdoors can help develop.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 1413**

6.1 Progression

An important feature of this area of learning and experience is that of progression being non-linear. The movement between progression steps can be both backwards and forwards, given the changes in personal circumstances that impact upon health and well-being. There are four models of progression operating within the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience and these can be identified to varying degrees across each What Matters statement.

Only a few respondents commented on the progression steps within the AoLE. One respondent was supportive yet expressed broader concerns that the area would not receive sufficient attention.

'Progression steps succinct and child friendly although there are lots and lots of them. All pertinent and necessary, some more important than many other skills that are deemed necessary and my only worry is whether we will have the time needed to follow the curriculum fully.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 1716**

Furthermore, another respondent commented on the format of the progression steps, suggesting that a grid format may be more user-friendly:

'The change in format from grid to linear has made it increasingly difficult to understand the links between the progression steps.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, 2882**

7 Humanities

Humanities encompasses geography, history, religious education, business studies, and social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, while also having their own body of knowledge and skills. Likewise, learners and teachers may reference other complementary disciplines, such as Classics, economics, law, philosophy, politics, psychology and sociology, if and where appropriate.

The Humanities AoLE generated mixed responses. One respondent offered the reflection that they welcomed the overall approach to the AoLE:

‘The humanities AoLE strongly promotes the development of ethical, informed citizens, who understand their rights and responsibilities and are able to participate fully in democratic processes and social action. It also enables the study of the diverse cultural and historical settings of the world in which we live and makes it clear that the development of an enquiring mind that is adept at critical thinking is key.’ - Third Sector Organisation, Response 1590

Some respondents framed their views towards the AoLE around broader perceptions such as the importance of clear subject boundaries and the primacy of the depth of knowledge and understanding. From this perspective, respondents worried about the parity of esteem of their respective subject specialisation within the AoLE, often expressing their viewpoint articulating the wish to see particular disciplines, concepts or bodies of knowledge being referenced explicitly within the guidance:

‘Concerning the geographical content in the draft: There is very little by way of description of an entitlement to geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. In several respects, a stronger entitlement could and should be expressed e.g. in relation to place and locational knowledge, conceptual understanding and key geographical procedures such as the use of fieldwork and maps. By grouping geography – the subject which considers the human and physical spheres in a relational way – with humanities, several key dimensions of geographical thinking are largely absent. If the humanities are “all about asking questions about the human condition” (p.3), the importance of knowing and understanding natural processes and systems, understanding natural landscapes or understanding the impact of people on their natural environment is largely confined to one out of five WM statements. Notably, there is little or no acknowledgement in the draft of ‘the spatial’ – the geographer’s key conceptual tool.’ - Subject Association, Response 1359

'Within the vision statement of Humanities, Historical Interpretation is not mentioned. I think that does need to be incorporated into the vision statement. Also, when referencing 'interpretations' in the draft curriculum does this relate to general skill to interpret OR is it historical interpretations maybe state 'Historical Interpretations' as that is slightly different to interpret. I am worried regarding the skills needed for age 14 onwards. Currently historical interpretations and source-based skills are key as this leads into the GCSE. Will this be the case as we drive forward from age 14 and upwards?' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2966**

There were a number of themes driving these concerns, including the importance of establishing a depth of understanding and building subject knowledge in order to support development and progression. From this perspective, existing qualifications privilege structured syllabi and subject specialisation, and the proposals should maintain the relative coherence between the curriculum and the qualifications arrangements. Meanwhile, other respondents felt that grouping subjects together within AoLEs would require teachers to teach outside of their areas of expertise, potentially reducing the quality and consistency of teaching and learning:

'Whilst the curriculum certainly allows teachers flexibility, they 'don't know what they don't know', and neither do their students. It is very possible therefore that only those topics with which staff / pupils are familiar will ever get discussed.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 2372**

Furthermore, a respondent highlighted broader pedagogical concerns situating the AoLE with other parts of the curriculum:

'My concern is that the emphasis on portfolio will dominate the way the Humanities are delivered and, though I'm an advocate for enquiry, the lessons may be all about producing a project at the expense of genuine learning opportunities. I also believe in cross-curricular opportunities, but the quality of experience will be heavily dependent on local interpretation and local expertise. The depth of learning dependent on the background of the teacher's confidence and background in a particular field. It is therefore possible to envisage a situation where one aspect of the Humanities may not receive due attention, resulting in an impoverished experience.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2303**

As with other parts of the curriculum, a few respondents suggested that greater prescription within the curriculum could ensure minimum standards of provision:

'From our experience some content needs to be prescribed (some guidance needed on the what) to stop people defaulting to just what they feel comfortable.' - **Humanities Workshop 1**

A few respondents raised specific disciplines that they felt required greater prominence or clearer entitlements within the Humanities AoLE. Religious Education (RE) was particularly important to a few respondents:

'The history and geography aspects of humanities work well with good guidance for planning within the progression steps. RE is more of a challenge and could easily become a history/geography focus without a real opportunity for teachers to have prof [professional] development and relevant quality resources.' - **Diocesan Authorities, Response 2847**

One respondent went further, suggesting that specific content, specifically sources of authority, should hold greater prominence at an earlier stage within the progression steps:

'We welcome the specific focus on the role of sources of authority within the Religious Education strands of the progression steps, and also the more general focus on sources of authority within the AoLE, but we feel that it could usefully be extended [across progression steps].' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 1795**

There were further comments that highlighted very specific suggestions in respect of wording or emphasis surrounding specific elements of the AoLE. These tended to be from single respondents, and often raised a number of issues:

'The Business Studies and Social Studies sections tend to use words such as 'understand', 'engage', and 'consider'; whereas I would suggest that emphasis should be on (higher order – Bloom's taxonomy) verbs such as 'create', 'justify', and 'express' as this is what entrepreneurs need to do! The Business Studies and Social Studies sections seem a little tagged on and nonspecific as compared to the other humanities, for instance, why are these two subjects combined when history and geography aren't? (e.g. is this section meant to be economics, or social enterprise studies? As it is, combining two subjects which are not particularly related undermines them.' - **Non-departmental Government Body, Response 1891**

It is difficult to establish with precision whether or not the viewpoints expressed here are representative of the perceptions of the broader educational community. Relatively few respondents offered their views towards the Humanities. The overall conclusions drawn by those respondents who did offer their views do not always triangulate with other data. Workshop responses suggested that some participants, for example, felt more positively about the structure and content of the AoLE than the sentiments expressed through other modes of engagement. Furthermore, more general responses were supportive of the emphasis on Welsh language, culture and history within the curriculum.

What is more, response data does not allow for detailed subgroup analysis, which is due in part to relatively few respondents commenting on the Humanities in settings other than secondary schools. It is possible that the concerns expressed with the AoLE relate predominantly to how the Humanities are taught in secondary schools, where the issues surrounding the specialisation and depth of knowledge may become more urgent in the minds of respondents.

7.1 Progression

Progression in Humanities is underpinned by the idea that subject content does not get intrinsically more complex. However, it is possible to study the same topic or content area at different ages and expect different levels of depth and complexity in learners' understanding and responses.

Of those respondents who offered their views, a few felt the progression steps within the AoLE to be positive:

'The "What Matters" statements and the "Progression Steps" for the Humanities lay down clear graduated steps and show how the progression from step to step is structured. It is rightly said in the introduction to the Humanities section of the Draft Curriculum (page 10) that "subject content does not get intrinsically more complex", and that it is an evolution through different modes of study and increasing conceptual depth which enables learners to operate at more complex levels from step to step. This process of development is clearly articulated in the "Principles of Progression" at the beginning of the "Learning" section (page 21).' - **Higher Education Institution, Response 1187**

Meanwhile, other respondents echoed the sentiment that concerns with respect to the AoLE tend to focus on how the Humanities will work in secondary schools:

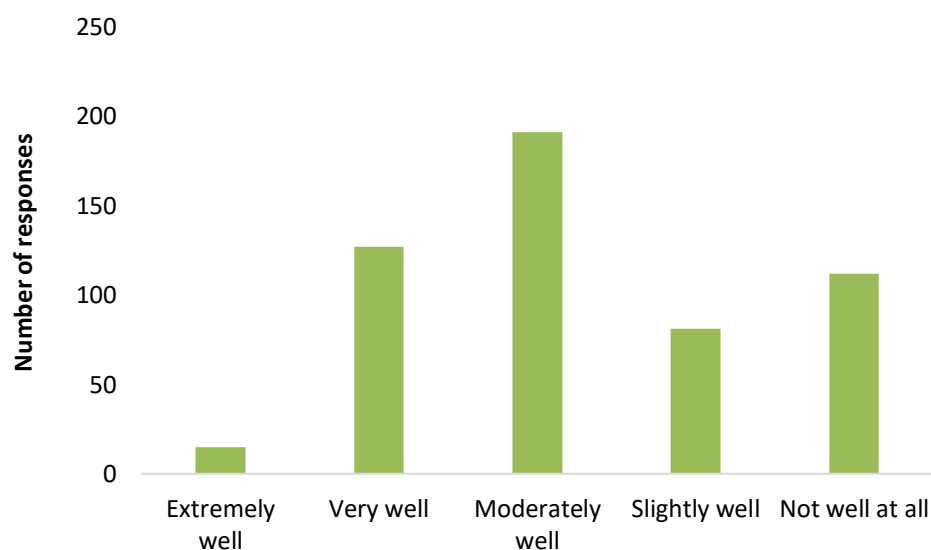
'The What Matters statements and progression steps seem to fit primary education but may be too basic for secondary level. It may make more sense for the subjects to be linked but remain separate for delivery due to the more complex needs of the higher progression steps.' - **Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 1460**

8 Languages, Literacy and Communication

The Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) Area of Learning and Experience will enable all learners to gain knowledge and skills in Welsh, English and international languages as well as in literature. Where applicable, its provision will include opportunities to learn Welsh and English as additional languages (WAL/EAL) and to learn other home or community languages, too.

In order to explore perceptions surrounding the LLC AoLE, the respondents were asked whether or not they felt that the guidance provides for the development of language acquisition and learning. Most responded moderately well. Overall, there was a non-normal distribution with a higher prevalence of responses against very well and not well at all:

Figure 9.1: Q31.1. C4: How well does the guidance within the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience provide for the development of language acquisition and learning? How well?



N = 533

Of those respondents who were more supportive of the guidance, including those responding moderately well and very well, they often highlighted the structure and intent of the AoLE as showing promise:

'It supports schools and settings to have flexibility to identify and plan according to the needs of their learners. It has a holistic approach to children's needs. There are clear cross-curricular links. The language used is more user friendly.' - **Teaching Assistant, Primary School, Response 2005**

As with other AoLEs, respondents reporting slightly or not well at all often felt that greater depth in certain areas would improve the guidance materials:

‘Overall, the guidance is vague about what development in reading, writing and spoken language looks like and what knowledge, skills and experiences in those areas contribute most effectively to learners’ success... The guidance is not precise enough, leaving schools themselves to decide what to teach in reading – and how.’
- Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1179

A group of respondents suggested that the AoLE could be strengthened by making more explicit reference to how practitioners and teachers could promote early language development:

‘No reference to early language development – which is holistic and is linked to the role of adults in supporting communication skills which include developing skills for listening, speaking, mark, making and reading. The WM statements separated into reading/listening; speaking and writing are not appropriate to early literacy learning – it is a symbiotic relationship which should not be separated out.’ - **Head of School Effectiveness, Local Authority, Response 1938**

‘Significant concerns about lack of early oracy skills as well as pre-literacy skills; listening skills have been conflated with comprehension throughout. Gross and fine motor skills need to be included in guidance for this AoLE, as they are of significant importance in writing development. Development of phonological awareness needs to be described in much greater detail. Importance of songs, nursery rhymes, text in environment, mark-making etc all undersold.’ - **Whole School Response, Primary School, Response 2655**

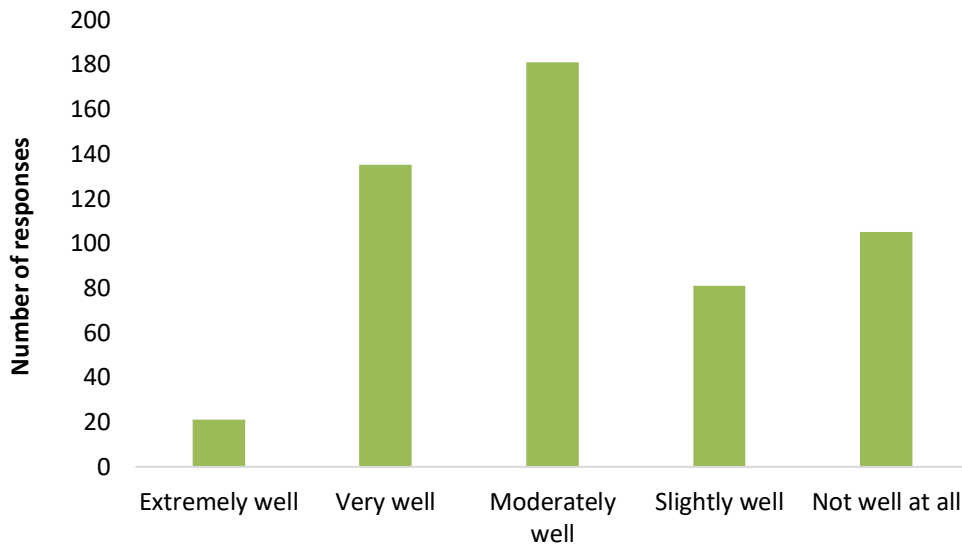
On a similar line, other respondents suggested that phonics, grammar and/or punctuation could receive greater attention in the curriculum:

‘There is not enough mentioned about the role of phonics teaching in KS2 — this needs to be added in.’ - **Newly Qualified Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2922**

8.1 Welsh and English as Additional Languages

In exploring respondents’ perceptions of the role of the English and Welsh languages in the curriculum, they were asked whether or not the AoLE guidance provides for learners to develop translanguaging skills — the process wherein multilingual speakers utilise their languages as an integrated communication system. The majority responded moderately well:

Figure 9.2: Q30.1. C3: How well do the learning sections within the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience provide for learners to develop translinguaging skills? How well?



N = 530

For those responding positively, they felt that it presented an opportunity to promote a greater understanding of both Welsh and English languages amongst children and young people. Meanwhile, other respondents felt excited by the idea of bilingual teaching in the classroom:

'This bit is great, there is a lot of focus on it. No-one has ever taught it before though, so we are really going to be finding our way.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1377**

As with other areas of the curriculum, respondents tended to caveat their support for the proposals:

'The Languages, Literacy and Communication AOLE was felt to provide for learners to develop translinguaging skills 'Very well'. The need to increase Further Education staff expertise across all areas of modern foreign languages was noted, as well as ongoing CPD for staff in terms of provision through the medium of Welsh to ensure that learners can progress. This was especially relevant to subject specialisms.' - **Further Education Institution, Response 2820**

A few respondents felt that more emphasis should be given to the Siarter Iaith (Language Charter) in supporting the transition to more bilingual teaching and learning. Moreover, respondents from Welsh-medium settings suggested that more specific guidance, especially in relation to delivering English as a second language, would be helpful.

The concept of translanguaging did confuse some respondents, who were unsure as to how to respond to the question. Meanwhile, others expressed the view that they felt that the quality and, therefore, the benefit of translanguaging were dependent on the mastery and dexterity of the Welsh and English languages as held by teachers. From this perspective:

'Learners' 'translanguaging' skills will be dependent on their teachers. I feel this should be the domain of the Welsh and IL areas of the AoLE, and as an English teacher I feel I would have very little to contribute to this skill as my own language skills are not strong enough.' - **Head of Department, Secondary School, Response 1504**

Many respondents raised the fact that there is a shortage of qualified staff, particularly in English-medium schools, to deliver more Welsh. From this perspective, further training or increased recruitment would be required to make all settings more bilingual. Some respondents have noted the need to ensure that teacher training courses embed some Welsh language training.

8.2 Modern Foreign Languages

A few respondents offered reflections upon the role of Modern Foreign Languages (MFLs) within the AoLE. The inclusion of three languages, including international languages, was felt to be ambitious. What is more, a few respondents highlighted practical concerns which they felt could undermine provision. These included recruiting staff with the right skills, training existing staff, and the additional responses required in order to deliver three languages effectively:

'Big concerns about MFL and Welsh. Big challenges in light of budget restraints. Huge budget needed to raise teacher skills in languages.' - **Headteacher, Response 1036**

'It must be stressed that this is about more than one international language. Schools and head teachers need guidance to ensure they give meaningful time to ensure languages are supported so pupils within schools are given plenty of time to make meaningful progress.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1489**

Other respondents raised concerns surrounding the parity of esteem across languages. A few respondents from primary school settings, for example, felt that the expectation upon delivering an MFL could have an impact on the teaching of other languages, including Welsh.

8.3 Progression

The Languages, Literacy and Communication achievement outcomes recognise that not all learners will move forwards at the same pace or with the same degree of depth. The achievement outcomes for 'Learning about identity and culture through languages prepares us to be citizens of Wales and the world' are the same for all learners in all schools.

Of those respondents who offered views towards the progression steps surrounding the LLC AoLE, they presented a mixed picture:

*‘There is a rich and thoughtful model here of language progression and clear steps. We would have preferred the integration of international languages within a continuum with Welsh and English but can understand the approach taken.’ - **Senior Leader, Third Sector Organisation, Response 2783***

*‘Greater clarity and precision is required in the progression steps. More attention to the basics of language development would be helpful.’ - **Governing Body, Response 1828***

A key theme running across responses that expressed views was concerned with the balance between progression in Welsh and English as first languages. From this perspective, it was felt that the current formulation could disadvantage Welsh language:

*‘With regard to Languages, Literacy and Communication I think it would be very beneficial if the expectations or progress steps for Welsh Second language were made very explicit, currently the progress steps are non-language specific and it is patently clear that you cannot expect a welsh language learner to be at the same progression step for their first language as they are for a second language. This would also be true for any child that has English as a second language. Progression step 3 also gives the inference that older juniors should be learning a third language and for a primary school that is a very big change in the current curriculum and would be a considerable burden upon teaching staff. I feel that this additional language should not be introduced until key stage 3 or it should be made clear in the guidance that this is not an expectation for primary schools.’ - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2090***

An additional response was received regarding the progression steps and non-verbal communication. This potentially raises broader considerations regarding the suitability and equitability of progression as a whole. When asked whether or not they thought that the draft guidance enables learners to progress at an appropriate pace, one respondent thought:

*‘Very well; however, Progression Step 1 in LLC Speaking and Writing needs exemplification for the meaning of Speaking, for pupils who are non-verbal can include using technology or sign language.’ - **Senior Leader, Special School, Response 3411***

This sentiment was echoed by the Children’s Commissioner:

*‘Government must seek expert assurance that the learning entitlements of the curriculum are accessible to all children and young people with additional learning needs, including those with British Sign Language as a first language.’ - **Children’s Commissioner, Response 2516***

9 Mathematics and Numeracy

Mathematics is an international discipline, and numeracy, which concerns the application of mathematics, plays a critical part in our private, social and civic lives, and in the economic health of the nation. It is imperative that experiences in relation to mathematics and numeracy are as engaging, exciting and accessible as possible for learners, and that they ensure that learners develop mathematical resilience (the ability to embrace challenge as a positive aspect of learning). Developing mathematical resilience contributes to the development of ambitious and capable learners.

On the whole, the respondents appeared to support the approach adopted within the AoLE:

'We agree, that if the curriculum is developed in line with the current philosophy, the four core purposes will fully enable pupils to become ambitious learners etc. There are concerns around the current content of the Mathematics curriculum. The curriculum content needs to be reduced to enable pupils to develop these core purposes through authentic, independent learning. From our initial thoughts, we agree that the "What Matters" statements are clear and appropriate to the mathematical skills that pupils need to acquire in their learning.' - **Headteacher, Secondary School, 2792**

A theme running through some responses to the AoLE that resonated with other feedback was concerned with the accessibility of the guidance, especially to those who are not subject specialists. One respondent felt that the AoLE could be improved by making more explicit reference to different pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning:

'[In Successful Futures] Donaldson (pages 63 and 65) says that his review does not support any particular pedagogy: "To be clear, the recommendations of this Review do not imply an emphasis on any particular teaching approaches"; "Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching". Page 17 of the draft statutory guidance for Maths says, "The Mathematics and Numeracy curriculum does not prescribe one particular pedagogy". However, there are many places where the curriculum does seem to prescribe a particular pedagogy e.g. Page 16 "Throughout the Mathematics AOLE there is an emphasis on actively engaging learners in their learning by reference to, for example, exploring, investigating, playing and deducing." This is one of many examples, which seem to imply that we should exclusively use constructivist / discovery / problem-based / experiential / inquiry-based methods, against Donaldson's recommendation and against the evidence of what produces best results.' - **Head of Faculty, Secondary School, Response 2978**

There were more specific concerns surrounding the use of language to frame the AoLE, especially from respondents from nursery and primary settings. These issues were raised through both online and focus group responses. The concerns centred on the technical language used to describe some of the more detailed aspects of the guidance.

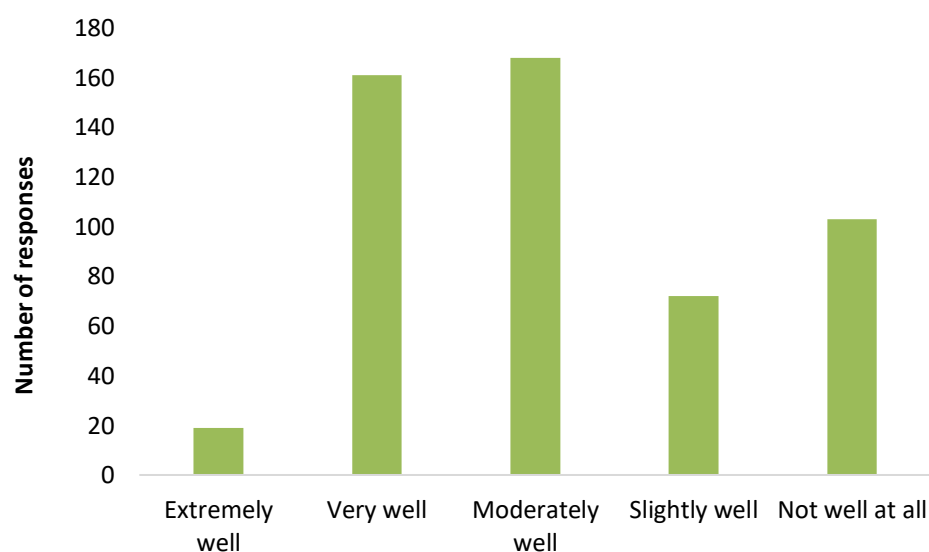
9.1 Progression

Progression in Mathematics and Numeracy involves the development of the following interconnected and interdependent proficiencies.

- Conceptual understanding: having sufficient knowledge to understand and explain a mathematical concept.
- Communication with symbols.
- Strategic competence (i.e. formulating problems mathematically in order to solve them).
- Logical reasoning.
- Fluency.

The respondents were asked how well they thought that the progression steps within the AoLE articulate the principles of progression. The majority responded moderately well or very well, which suggested that, on the whole, people felt that the guidance was accurate and useful:

Figure 10.1: Q29.1. C2: How well do the progression steps within the Mathematics and Numeracy Area of Learning and Experience articulate the proficiencies illustrated in the principles of progression? How well?



N = 529

As with other questions, those who responded more positively were less likely to expand upon their views. Of those respondents who did, it appears as though many respondents found the guidance to be helpful in understanding the AoLE:

‘Clear and comprehensive. As we work through then I feel more comments can be made as to how they could be delivered. We must remember to cover the steps and make sure the topics chosen allow for this.’ - Teacher, Primary School, Response 2393

Of the range of suggestions and observations offered by the respondents, there was one reflection upon how the progression steps would be delivered in mixed-ability classrooms:

'I feel the new curriculum leads to Maths being taught in mixed-ability classes, which would be difficult to manage as a classroom teacher. The idea of all pupils being able to progress at a rate that suits them as individuals is great. However, this could lead to some MAT and ALN pupils entering secondary school possibly working at a level two years above or below their current age group. Therefore, it would be difficult to manage this as classroom teachers.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1177**

A few respondents thought that the balance between the steps could be improved through greater consistency, as well as their coherence with the proficiencies:

'The standards required for each progression step in each of the four areas isn't consistent. Progression step five for number and algebra appears to be far more challenging to progression step five for geometry and statistics. The proficiencies within each progression step are also not mentioned.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1177**

The most prevalent concerns surrounding progression related to the accessibility of the documents, which is a viewpoint that was more likely to derive from practitioners and teachers from nursery and primary settings. Meanwhile, some respondents suggested that the guidance could be strengthened by providing exemplars of how progression could work in practice:

'Parity can be seen between the Progression steps and proficiencies illustrated within the principles of progression; however, the terminology is far too complex in the principles of progression and lack of understanding could lead to the principles not being used correctly.' - **Early Years Advisory Teacher, Response 2005**

10 Science and Technology

Science and Technology draws on the disciplines of biology, chemistry, computer science, design and technology, and physics in order to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the world. Developments in both Science and Technology have always been drivers of change in society, underpinning innovation and impacting upon everyone's lives — materially, economically and culturally. As such, this area of learning and experience will be consistently relevant in the opportunities that young people encounter and the life choices that they make.

Science and technology was generally well received by those respondents who offered views:

'I have looked at them all. I think the Science and Technology AoLE draft document is better than some of the other areas (e.g. Humanities, LLC), as you can clearly see the subjects, e.g. Biology, Chemistry and Physics (as well as enquiry), in the What Matters statements. This will allow subject specialists to be used effectively for the benefit of our learners and for the benefit of Wales.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2274**

'The easy-read versions are much more user friendly. We feel supportive of the proposed science and tech curriculum it is clear and we like the focus on knowledge which is missed from the current curriculum.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 2588**

'On the whole, the Science and Technology AoLE is agreeable. I do not think that logic gates should be part of this AoLE. The science aspect separated into three areas is beneficial and works well. It would be better to have all areas linked together - achievement outcomes, experiences, and need to be able to, perhaps in a table format.' - **Senior leader, Secondary School, Response 2743**

Given the responses, it is possible that respondents are interpreting the What Matters statements as broadly representing traditional subject boundaries. Furthermore, respondents offered very precise, almost forensic feedback on the wording and content of the AoLE:

'You are missing Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and scientific ethics. These three areas are key to development of science in the modern world.' - **Principle Examiner, Awarding Organisation, Response 2262**

*‘Should logic gates be applied to solve simple logic problems’ be in computation not the Physics section (Forces and energy determine the structure and dynamics of the universe)? Should ‘nuclear radiation’ be in Physics not Chemistry? In Physics Progression steps 4 and 5 in Experience, Knowledge and skills for Forces and Motion are exactly the same for what pupils need to know, experience and be able to do... this does not clearly show progression when the statements are so broad so clarity is required to unpick exactly what would be expected at PC4 and then PC5.’ - **Senior Leader, Secondary School, Response 1193***

*‘At a time when climate change is being increasingly spoken about as a crisis or catastrophe, we also feel that it is important that every learner has a basic climate literacy. With this in mind, we have two recommendations: firstly, we know from our work training and engaging with thousands of teachers that weather and climate is a topic they feel least confident to teach. We also know from past and current curricula around the nations that if weather and climate are not specifically mentioned on curricula, they tend not to be taught... Secondly, although we welcome the fact that climate change is specifically mentioned in the curriculum in several places, we know that teaching climate change without a good grounding in weather and climate can lead to misunderstandings and misconceptions.’ - **Subject Association, Response 2598***

*‘Referring specifically for Science and Technology, the WM [What Matters] statements do not represent the full breadth of the sciences. There is no obvious reason for including either waves or electricity in the content based on the WM statement. Furthermore, the WM statement has arbitrarily chosen two quantities in physics (energy and forces) and stated that they are the most important ones. A reasonable view of the explanations of physics is that they rely on what the universe is made of (the entities of the Universe) and how those entities behave (the interactions between them and the effects of those interactions). The statement as it stands makes no reference to any of the entities of the Universe (protons, neutrons, electrons, planets, stars, matter), the ways in which they are defined or identified (in terms of mass, charge, etc) and, of the many ways in which they interact or how we analyse their interactions, only force and energy have been included, despite both being theoretical constructs rather than actually ‘existing’. Energy no more determines the structure of the universe than distance, temperature or any other accounting mechanism does.’ - **Learned Society, Response 1685***

A few respondents were concerned that the breadth of learning across the AoLE could be difficult to deliver:

*‘The new AoLE is very comprehensive and includes all eventualities but will be a massive undertaking (given the breadth of skills needed to deliver the full set of What Matters statements). Coding and DT under the same umbrella as that of the traditional sciences will be an interesting challenge to meet.’ - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 1058***

‘All areas are well explained; however, there is lots of documentation to read through, as I only work with 3 year olds, would need to rethink on how much a child is going to achieve in all areas in the time they are in a non-maintained setting.

would like to see the 3-5 year complete document for this age.' - **Practitioner, Funded, Non-maintained Setting, Response 1844**

A few respondents suggested that the thematic approach could weaken the knowledge base that they felt would be important for children and young people to progress through the AoLE:

'In Science there needs to be explicit instructions with worked examples, followed by scaffolds that are gradually removed to increase challenge. Pupils will then become increasingly independent and rely less on expertise from the teacher. It is a concern that some primary practitioners push an agenda for a thematic approach with no structure that will not work in secondary settings, where knowledge is such an important part of pupils using their skills.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2764**

What is more, there were concerns expressed by a few respondents that the AoLE in its current formulation potentially dilutes disciplines and undermines progression in the sciences beyond the curriculum:

'We should emphasise that it is important that all learners are expected to study all of the sciences until the age of 16. Failure to do so will close doors to learners at a stage when they cannot be reasonably expected to have made judgements about which subjects they enjoy and are good at. There is also a risk that this will have a more profound effect on uptake of STEM subjects among girls and BAME students.' - **Learned Society, Response 1685**

Conversely, a few respondents felt that the AoLE contained too much detail:

'Science and Technology AoLE clearly driven by a top-down approach with no understanding of the holistic nature of young children's learning - it reads like a secondary school science curriculum; even more so than the current curriculum. It needs to be more exploratory and play based and informed by skills not prescriptive and detailed subject matter.' - **Whole School Response, Primary School, Response 2655**

As with other areas of the curriculum more broadly, there appears to be tension between those respondents who seek greater levels of detail within Science and Technology and those who think that it may be too prescriptive. There is evidence to suggest that these viewpoints may be held more prominently amongst different groups of respondents, with those from primary settings being more likely to report that the guidance contains too much information.

A few respondents raised issues and concerns that fall beyond the AoLE itself:

'My concerns are practical. There is a national crisis with regards to the recruitment of Science teachers particularly around Chemistry and Physics. There are non-specialists teaching science in most schools in Wales. There is a real worry that the new curriculum could become a vehicle to water down a science curriculum so that it can be readily taught by non-specialists.' - **Headteacher, Middle School, Response 2744**

'Some of the areas to be considered assume a high level of teaching knowledge. In the primary sector you may have a teacher with an O Level in Biology and little ICT knowledge. We are "Jacks of all trades" and some of the knowledge required will need extra training to ensure that it is taught well.' - **Senior Leader, Primary School, Response 1610**

10.1 Progression

Learner progression in Science and Technology is developed through experiencing and building knowledge in a range of related ideas, concepts and principles, all the while embedding practical and wider skills in order to define a problem, explore ideas, produce solutions and justify choices. The 'Principles of Progression' used in the development of achievement outcomes in this area of learning and experience are contained within the 'Learning' section under each What Matters statement.

Respondents offered a range of views on progression. A key theme was the volume of guidance, as well as the ability of readers to navigate the proposals:

'The science and technology document is not user-friendly. It is difficult to follow progression through this AoLE. Lots of page turning required. Good points are that there is some prescription of what needs to be covered in terms of the details in "experiences, knowledge and skills sections" This is particularly important with progression from 3-16, especially when primary schools may be unclear on what needs to be covered. The statements that - "As learners progress in their Science and Technology learning, particularly in secondary settings, there is an expectation that they will experience subject specialist teaching." And "Specialist teaching should enhance and be integral to multidisciplinary approaches to curriculum planning and is essential to ensure learners are best prepared for further learning post-16." Are encouraging.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Respondent 2232**

Some respondents felt that the progression steps were well balanced, and that the guidance surrounding them was clear:

'The sections of the draft curriculum that we have studied reflect an appropriate pace of development in the sciences, taking the progression steps as indicating approximate expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16. The guidance is clear that teachers will be expected to support learners to progress through the framework at a pace that is appropriate for them... it is less clear how this will be done in practice. The focus and reliance on teacher assessment, moderation and the emphasis on self-assessment, peer assessment and the use of e-portfolios will be a change in emphasis for many teachers. It will require training, practice and time to embed the new way of working. Setting of achievement outcomes at school level likely to require additional training.' - **Learned Society, Response 1089**

Meanwhile, however, other respondents felt that the progression steps were too vague:

'The progression steps as they stand are far too vague to be able to demonstrate impact... in several cases it is difficult to determine any clear difference between PS1 and PS5.' - **Learned Society, Response 1685**

Furthermore, the recurring theme in respect of the value of including practical suggestions and exemplars surrounding progression was raised in some responses:

'The Science and Technology AoLE What Matter statements are very wordy and quite difficult to understand. I would also like some more ideas of lessons/activities for each progression step.' - **Teacher, Primary School, Response 2842**

11 Cross-Curricular Responsibilities

Alongside and supporting AoLEs, there are a number of cross-curricular responsibilities that frame and link learning across the curriculum. This section highlights respondents' views towards these responsibilities.

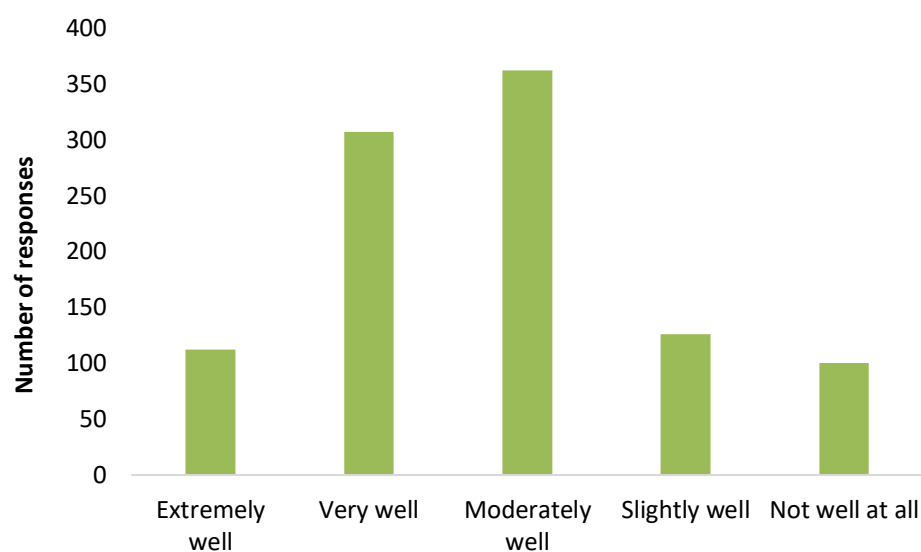
The cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence support almost all learning and are essential for learners to be able to participate successfully and confidently in the modern world.

Literacy, numeracy and digital competence need to be considered part of curricular design at the school level across all areas of learning and experience. They are embedded within the Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance, where they support the learning set out within the areas of learning and experience guidance. It will be the responsibility of all settings and schools to plan progression across the full range of literacy, numeracy and digital skills in a flexible manner, appropriate to the needs of individual learners.

To ensure that learners develop high levels of competence in these skills and have frequent opportunities to develop, extend and apply them across the curriculum, the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and the Digital Competence Framework (DCF) will continue to be available. Revision of the content of the frameworks will take place in 2019 in order to ensure that they are consistent with the progression set out in the Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance.

Respondents were asked whether or not they felt that the guidance supports learners in developing skills in the cross-curricular responsibilities. The majority answered moderately well or very well:

Figure 12.1: Q17.1. B5: How well do you think the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance supports learners to develop skills in the cross-curricular responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) and other cross-cutting themes (e.g. Welsh dimension and international perspective, wider skills, careers and work-related experiences, relationships and sexuality education)? How well?



N = 896

Positive responses focused on issues such as the clarity of the guidance and how it mirrored existing good practice:

'There is clear expectations and guidance on the range of skills that need to be incorporated. How they fit into each AoLE is articulated well to allow us to embed them effectively.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2764**

'The draft curriculum offers greater freedom to design "real-life" projects for developing literacy, numeracy and digital competency and teachers in Wales are familiar with delivering cross-curricular programmes.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 1273**

A number of respondents felt that the cross-curricular approach could be an effective approach in supporting the development of key skills and competencies:

'The draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance supports cross-curricular learning moderately well, removing the stand-alone subjects in favour of an approach that provides context and therefore potentially greater understanding of those subjects.' - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 2224**

A few respondents felt that they should be given a more prominent role in the curriculum:

'The LNF is a detailed document and has clear progression steps. I think this should be used within schools to be the driver of expectations for pupils. More weighting and importance should be placed upon the LNF and the DCF. The sheer amount of literature in each of the progression step is taking away the importance of these key skills in the curriculum.' - **Governor, Primary School, Response 1787**

Some respondents felt that the guidance could be strengthened by the inclusion of exemplars and lesson plans, as well as by simplifying the guidance in order to help readers to navigate the materials:

'I find this so confusing! Could these skills and themes not be added under the headings of the different areas of learning, even if they are repeated across different areas- as I do agree many skills should be holistically integrated across all areas of learning.' - **Senior Leader, Funded, Non-maintained Setting, Response 2085**

'The documentation permits a large degree of leeway and discretion in developing cross-curricular skills. Again, this could be strengthened through greater reference to exemplification and/or suggested blueprints to support schools to ensure that learners develop such skills and have consistency of experience throughout their learning.' - **Lecturer, Higher Education Institution, Response 1427**

'It is essential to produce one document that encompasses all guidance. As there were no early years pioneer settings to engage with, the early years sector is starting at a disadvantage for not being able to attend discussions until later than expected.' - **Early Years Advisory Teacher, Response 2005**

Meanwhile, other respondents caveated their support, suggesting that there were a range of practical concerns that could undermine teaching and learning across the different responsibilities, including how they are embedded:

'The concept is good — it will be more difficult in practice.' - **Governor, Response 2128**

'If things are correctly planned and delivered, then it will ensure that cross-curricular opportunities occur in a purposeful manner and inclusive of all needs and requirements, literacy, etc., including Welsh dimension, wider skills, careers and relationships and sexual education. The key is the need to integrate these elements, not to layer them on top of subject-specific content.' - **Other, Response 2217**

'Schools need to plan carefully on a long- and medium-term basis to cover all of the above ensuring opportunity for cross curricular experiences and learning. Opportunities to evaluate are also vital. Real life experiences underpin the

*opportunities for learners to develop in these areas.’ - **Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 2902***

Beyond the responsibilities themselves, the respondents raised a number of potential constraints in delivering against the responsibilities:

*‘Cross-curricular responsibilities must be integrated into the What Matters to ensure delivery. The Welsh-language requirement is not currently deliverable with the resources available. Teachers need to become educated in Welsh and the schools will require significantly more resources. There is also an issue for English medium schools with fitting this new requirement into the timetable. There are currently no RSE specialists and therefore this is the one area of the curriculum that needs to be centrally designed by experts. Lesson content needs to be clear in what should be delivered when. The new curriculum leaves room for inconsistency in this required subject, and without subject matter experts, the design needs to be supported centrally.’ - **Headteachers, Primary Schools, Response 2169***

*‘The potential is there, providing practitioners and teachers have access to appropriate high-quality professional learning to help them deliver on these aims.’ - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1176***

11.1 Relationships and Sexuality Education

The current proposals for legislation are that relationships and sexuality education will be mandatory in all funded, non-maintained settings and maintained schools for learners aged 3 to 16. The four purposes of the curriculum support learners in growing as healthy, confident individuals who are able to build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, and to develop their mental and emotional well-being by developing their resilience and empathy. Relationships and sexuality education is essential to supporting this, and should provide learners with the experiences, knowledge and skills with which to form and maintain a range of positive relationships.

The role of Relationships and Sexuality Education was a sensitive issue for some respondents, including those who would like to see it have a more prominent role in the curriculum, as well as those who would not.

Broadly, those respondents who would like to see it have a stronger role in the curriculum welcome how it had been incorporated into the curriculum. Within a focus group looking specifically at gender equality and the new curriculum, the principles underlying the design of the curriculum were well received broadly. However, there were concerns surrounding the possibility of varying interpretations of RSE by individual teachers and schools, and the consistency of teaching. Some respondents felt that due to the cross-curricular nature of RSE, some teachers or schools may find it difficult to teach. Furthermore, some respondents in the focus group highlighted the importance of subject sensitivity in effectively delivering RSE, and the role of professional training in helping teachers. Other respondents similarly stated that they felt that teachers were not always best placed to deliver RSE:

*‘Research shows that young people prefer Relationships and Sexuality Education to come from trained specialists, opposed to teaching staff.’ - **Youth Worker, Third Sector Organisation, Response 2756***

Conversely, there were a corresponding group of respondents who objected to the inclusion of RSE in its current formulation. A group of parents, for example, sought reassurance that they could opt out of Religious and Sexuality Education (RSE) provision:

*‘Content based on gender seems to be informed by current trends and the profile of particular movements and groups. This will prove divisive and concerning to many parents. Right to withdrawal should be protected in order to compromise with parents who have concerns. Muslim and Judeo-Christian traditions are incompatible with some content on gender/sexuality. Will this be taken into consideration?’ - **Parent, Response 1589***

Some of the substantive issues raised by those respondents against the inclusion of RSE mirrored broader and ongoing debates in education and in broader society. A few respondents raised concerns surrounding the specific inclusion of gender identity in RSE, for example. From this perspective, respondents felt that the curriculum should include a clearer and distinct biological understanding of gender.

11.2 Culture of Learning

This is a guide for schools and settings which sets out evidence-based aspects of curricular and pedagogical development for consideration when further shaping a culture of learning. It builds upon *Successful Futures*’ 12 pedagogical principles and embraces the ethos of that vision for the success of the Curriculum for Wales 2022.

Of the handful of respondents who explicitly mentioned the Culture for Learning document, they tended to view it positively:

*‘After reading a culture for learning document I feel that this may be the way forward for the draft curriculum. It is direct easy to read and good for sharing with colleagues.’ - **Preschool Leader, Nursery School, Response 1562***

Respondents tended to view the document in the context of broader concerns surrounding the perceived lack of focus upon fostering early child development in the curriculum:

'It would be useful to have a curriculum for 3-5-year olds, something that gives us the stages of child development relevant to the Early Years. We would like one document to use to view all the information we need with all our responsibilities clearly listed. We would find the 'Culture for Learning' document included.' - **Practitioner, Nursery School, Response 2604**

Moreover, there was broader awareness of the document, but the respondents were unable to offer any further reflections:

'I also believe the 'Culture for learning' document should be included as part of the curriculum guidance.' - **Support Teacher, Local Authority, Response 1435**

'There is a need for the culture for learning/learning experiences/learning environment document to be released and trained against to improve pedagogy.' - **School Improvement Officer, Local Authority, Response 1457**

'The culture for learning needs to be included with the pedagogical principles.' - **Early Years Advisory Teacher, Local Authority, Response 2005**

11.3 Human Rights Education

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 can play an important role in understanding and promoting respect for human rights and the rights of the child. Our guidance is such that this could be achieved by schools promoting:

- Learning about human rights: the acquisition of knowledge and skills with respect to human rights, and the sources of those rights including the UNCRC.
- Learning through human rights: the development of values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect human rights values.
- Learning for human rights: the motivation behind social action and the empowerment of active citizenship to advance respect for the rights of all.

Amongst the few respondents who mentioned it, there was broad support for the inclusion of a focus on Human Rights Education in the curriculum:

'I also strongly and wholeheartedly welcome the incremental development of human rights education that is articulated throughout the Humanities and Health and Well-being AoLEs. This is an essential attribute of a purpose-driven curriculum that seeks to develop children and young people as active citizens, not only of the future but in the families, schools and communities that they participate in on a daily basis.' - **Children's Commissioner, Response 1424**

With reference to the cross-cutting responsibilities, however, the respondent goes on to say:

'This list of cross-cutting responsibilities and themes is incomplete and misses the cross-cutting theme of human rights education, which is clearly articulated in the introduction to the guidance. This omission is also the case in the introductions to each of the AoLEs which detail other cross-cutting themes in relation to this area

*of learning but do not do this for human rights education.’ - **Children’s Commissioner, Response 1424***

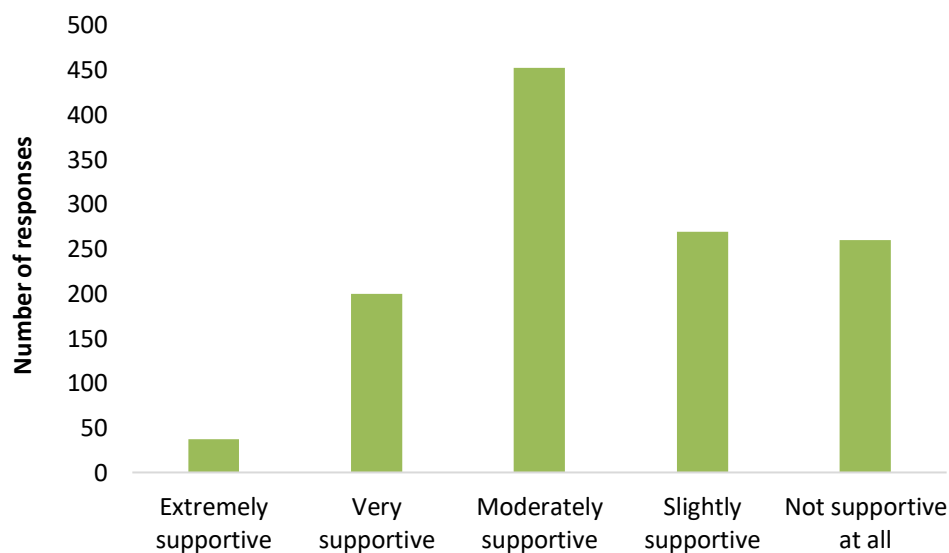
12 Assessment

The curriculum also proposes reform to the way in which children and young people are assessed. This chapter explores respondents' views towards the proposals.

In the curriculum, assessment should be based upon the intentions set out in the achievement outcomes in each progression step for each area of learning and experience. Progression steps as reference points are to be used to plan learning and teaching, and planning should recognise that there are a number of different pathways for learners' journeys, with the progression steps providing a common route map.

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt that the assessment proposals support settings in identifying learners' strengths and areas for improvement. The majority of respondents answered that they were moderately supportive, with the trend leaning towards not being supportive.

Figure 13.1: Q10.1. A4: To what extent do the assessment proposals support settings and schools to identify a learner's strengths, achievements and areas for improvement so they can support a learner's progression by identifying next steps? How supportive?



N = 1183

Of those respondents who thought that the assessment proposals were positive, they tended to agree with the principles underscoring the approach:

'There is a positive emphasis on active learner participation in both learning and assessing. The development of e-portfolios is a welcome and positive step that could potentially be used to inform parents about their child's progress throughout the year, instead of lengthy end-of-year reporting, similar to the See-Saw app used by some schools. Moderation needs to be made more robust. Reliability and accuracy can very often depend on the person either leading, or most active within the process. What assessment will actually look like in principle remains unclear, as does the role of schools, headteachers and teachers.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1406**

'We should stand alone from the rest of the UK and focus on developing a more Scandinavian approach where formative assessment is the main focus! This seems to be at the core. I just hope that headteachers and ministers have the guts to see this through and not be tied to old systems or revert back to old ways that will result in a nasty hybrid of the both. Target-driven systems do not work.' - **Learning Manager, Secondary School, Response 2243**

A key theme running through many responses, including those that were more positive about the overall approach, was concerned with the need for more detailed guidance on how the proposals would work in practice:

'The "I can" statements give a clear idea of the learning expectations. However, a great deal more support and clarification on assessment and tracking will be required. We understand that the new curriculum mustn't become a tick box exercise, but the tracking of achievement is essential.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1610**

Some respondents expressed concerns, as with any form of assessment mechanism, that the proposals could drive learning, rather than learning feeding assessment. Further concerns were related to uncertainty surrounding the qualifications arrangements and the links to assessment:

'Whilst the framework seems appropriate in terms of AFL, not knowing how the end is measured (GCSEs) is not. Whilst still years away, if [we are] to start planning efficiently then knowing how and what will be assessed at the end of the learning continuum must be finalised.' - **Senior Leader, Secondary School, Response 1846**

A few respondents raised concerns surrounding the assessment proposals and equity, including their ability to support children and young people with additional needs:

'The proposals do not explore how formative assessment will be used in a fair and equitable way to ensure that children and young people with different protected characteristics including those children and young people who use British Sign Language, and those from socio-economic disadvantaged areas, are assessed fairly. Therefore, we advise that assessment proposals need to be adapted to take into account schools' obligations to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 so that children with different needs are fully supported to participate and interact in an inclusive environment, which avoids separation or the removal from aspects of education. Assessment proposals must remove barriers to children with SEN/ALN for example, to receiving a quality education. [We] also wish to highlight the need for qualifications linked to the new curriculum in Wales, to be recognised across the UK and not just in Wales to avoid disadvantage as young people educated in Wales under the new curriculum move into adulthood, for example seeking employment or higher education opportunities outside of Wales.' - **Regulatory Body, Response 2751**

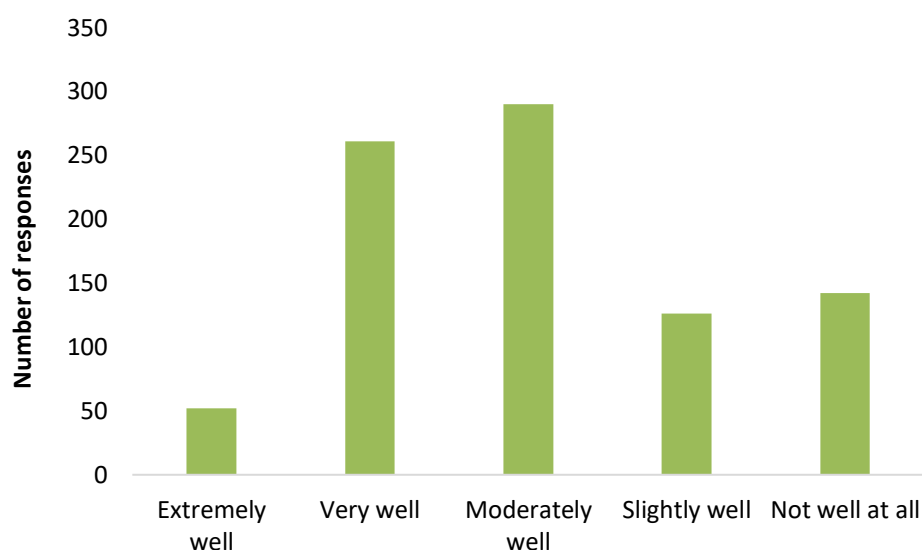
What is more, the respondents were asked whether or not there were any professional learning challenges and opportunities in enacting the assessment proposals. Of those who responded, many drew upon broader concerns regarding the importance of providing time and resources in order to ensure that teachers respond to the proposals confidently, including the effective use of formative assessment:

'The main issue really comes down to time. If planning time is given to teachers from a range of schools, then this will succeed. I feel that an additional inset day, ring-fenced for 'transition planning' or 'assessment targeting', should be implemented in all school and, depending on your role, you will be tasked to work on one of the two areas.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2642**

12.1 Formative Assessment

The proposals also seek to privilege formative assessment, as opposed to summative assessment. In exploring respondents' views, they were asked whether or not they thought that the curriculum promoted this principle effectively. The majority of respondents reported that they believed that it did so either moderately well or very well:

Figure 13.1: Q22.1. B10: Formative assessment should be given primacy in the new curriculum. How well do the assessment proposals promote this principle? How well?



N = 822

Positive viewpoints towards the proposals tended to be driven by the perception that the current arrangements were supportive neither of teaching and learning nor of the general well-being of children and teachers. Those respondents who were less supportive tended to highlight uncertainty surrounding what the proposals would mean in practice. A few respondents suggested that summative assessment could and should have a role in the new curriculum:

‘The guidance presents a false distinction between formative and summative assessment. In many instances, these processes take place concurrently. This is important as many low-stakes assessments such as class tests and quizzes, which, research evidence indicates, strengthens pupils’ learning (i.e. spacing and retrieval strategies), might be negatively perceived as just summative, when, in fact, they are rich techniques for developing formative assessment and assist committing learning to long-term memory. The guidance would benefit from making this clear.’ **School Improvement Officer, Local Authority, Response 1919**

12.2 Moderation

The respondents were then asked for their views towards moderation in the following questions:

‘The assessment proposals propose a broader approach to moderation – supporting professional dialogue regarding the nature of progression, the selection of appropriate learning and assessment activities, as well as ensuring a shared understanding of what achievement looks like in the context of the achievement outcomes. How would you envisage your setting/school putting this approach into practice? What further support do you think would be needed?’ - **Question 23 B11**

In response, Estyn highlighted the importance of moderation and made suggestions as to how the guidance could support the development of effective practice:

'The guidance should require practitioners to consider the whole range of a learner's work, including whole workbooks and drafts, during moderation within and between providers. This would enable them to gain a more rounded view of a learner's standards. It should also make clear that all practitioners should be involved fully in moderation activities so that everyone develops a good understanding of achievement within all relevant progression steps. This will help leaders and practitioners to understand and take a more useful approach to moderation so that practitioners within and across providers come to broad agreement about what effective standards and progress look like for learners of all ages and at all progression steps.' - **Estyn, Response 1323**

Meanwhile, other respondents were sceptical of the proposals. Such hesitation often stemmed from the concerns surrounding existing moderation procedures. From this perspective, the proposed approach to moderation would not necessarily address the existing issues including the significant workload:

'More trust in the educational professionals making the judgements without relying on first/ secondhand evidence for every statement as this will re-instigate 'coverage' and tick lists rather than embedded learning.' - **Pioneer, Primary School, Response 2456**

Furthermore, there were concerns surrounding the possibility of variation in how moderation is embedded in practice. Some respondents felt that this could have significant implications for monitoring progression within and across settings:

'We've had a series of wieldy almost incomprehensible progression steps in science since 2008 and they have been dreadful for pupils, staff and parents alike. They are incredibly difficult to manage and involve enormous workload. During moderation, often subject specialists with decades of experience between them find it difficult to agree on what constitutes each level due to the subjectivity of the model.' - **Head of Faculty, Secondary School, Response 2077**

In terms of further support required in order to implement proposals, three prominent themes emerged in the responses. These included the importance of effective collaboration within and across schools and settings, sufficient resources (i.e. time and funding) to develop and implement effective processes surrounding moderation, and more detailed practical guidance to support teachers in understanding and embedding the proposals.

12.3 E-Portfolios

E-portfolios are ways in which learners can be encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning. An e-portfolio is a digital record which reflects the experiences, achievements, and learning journey of an individual learner. It supports learners in gathering and capturing examples of their progression and notable achievements, both within and beyond the classroom, reflecting upon what matters to them within the context of the four purposes of the curriculum.

There are broader proposals to introduce e-portfolios as a platform upon which to coordinate the assessment process. The questions presented to respondents did not ask them explicitly for their views towards e-portfolios. This reduces the accuracy of the analysis in communicating the prevalence of views held by the respondents as a whole. Comments and suggestions were also often embedded in broader discussions surrounding the assessment process.

Amongst those respondents who did raise e-portfolios, there appears to be broad support for the use of such a system in assessment. This viewpoint tended to be held by those respondents who were more supportive of the overarching assessment proposals:

'We believe that the way [assessment is] proposed is excellent, vital and complementary to the new curriculum. It's great to see that teachers, children, young people and parents can inform the assessment depending on their needs. As this is a new way of working for Schools it will require training and time to put this together and also to make sure that the standard of Schools is consistent across Wales. It will be essential that schools have a validation system both internally and externally. This is a great way to enable an individual to be assessed in a way that suits them. I'm a favorite of the 'assessment basket' on an e-portfolio. The e-portfolio is dedicated to learning this skill that will be needed throughout life. It is great to see reflection and self-assessment as an essential part of this uniquely individual process.' - **Practitioner, Response 1595**

As with other parts of the curriculum, a common theme across responses was concerned with the need for more information on how the system would work, and how it would be embedded in the assessment process:

'Until the e-portfolios are shared, it is difficult to comment on how these would contribute to learner input into the reporting process. Hwb passwords/emails have been difficult for our youngest children to access... How will the system cope with all children running an e-portfolio?' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1548**

'It is broadly accepted that teachers will need to provide the kind of high-quality feedback to learners that comes from good, formative assessment. Therefore, the proposals could more clearly indicate what activities such as cluster moderation, baseline assessment and e-portfolios will look like; in other words, some of the

proposals would benefit from greater detail.' - **Government Association, Response 2074**

A few respondents also raised concerns surrounding the practical implementation of the proposals. These tended to focus on the infrastructure and resources required in order to embed the system effectively:

'What are the expectations of the e-portfolio's and their purpose? We are concerned re capacity to do this in terms of IT infrastructure and resource.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1723**

12.4 Reporting and Parents and Carers

Information on a learner's progress and achievements should be shared effectively so as to engage the learner, his or her parents/carers, and other practitioners in identifying and supporting their next steps. This can include formal reports, discussions at parent/carer evenings, correspondence at home, and invitations to discussions. Learners should contribute to reporting by gathering and selecting evidence, articulating their own progress and achievements, conveying their aspirations and participating in dialogue between practitioners and parents/carers.

Respondents were often positive about the proposals to support greater involvement of parents and carers in exploring and understanding their children's progression, often citing the value of building links between homes and schools, as well as the potential benefits of greater parental and carer involvement in children's education:

'I believe it is an exciting prospect to include pupils in their own reporting process. It really does ask them to reflect upon their own performance and find evidence of this. Parents should be informed and updated and I think they should be given suitable questions they could ask teachers, and their own children, about the work in the classroom.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1847**

'I think it is so important to have the learner voice in there and to involve a range of other stakeholders such as parents and carers. Parents/carers can provide a comprehensive overview of their child's likes, dislikes and routines before they start at a setting. Then the school needs to provide regular updates on how their child is doing and the child to also be asked their opinions throughout the school year. This could be collated an online portfolio to be shared with parents at key times during the year.' - **Lecturer, Higher Education Institution, Response 1971**

A few respondents suggested that the proposed approach was not unproblematic:

'Positive for learners to state their achievements but also know their next steps! Parental involvement sounds positive but have concerns how this will work in schools with areas of high deprivation? Information to be included would be academic and personal achievements, next steps in AOEL's.' - **Teacher, Response 2003**

'Information should be freely available to parents, but they do not need to be bombarded by it. Many parents have their own learning difficulties and so may not understand, other parents may focus obsessively on their children obtaining targets. Great care needs to be taken.' - **Paediatrician, Response 1311**

Parents themselves offered differing views. Some were supportive, while others felt it to be unnecessary:

'I know what my child thinks and what I think. I just want to hear what the teacher thinks in order to help my child progress.' - **Parent, Response 3000**

'Critical reflection is an important tool in aspects of the children's lives. I strongly agree that children should give their feedback! I'm not sure on what I would include yet but as a parent I would be happy to be part of the reporting process.' **Parent, Response 2843**

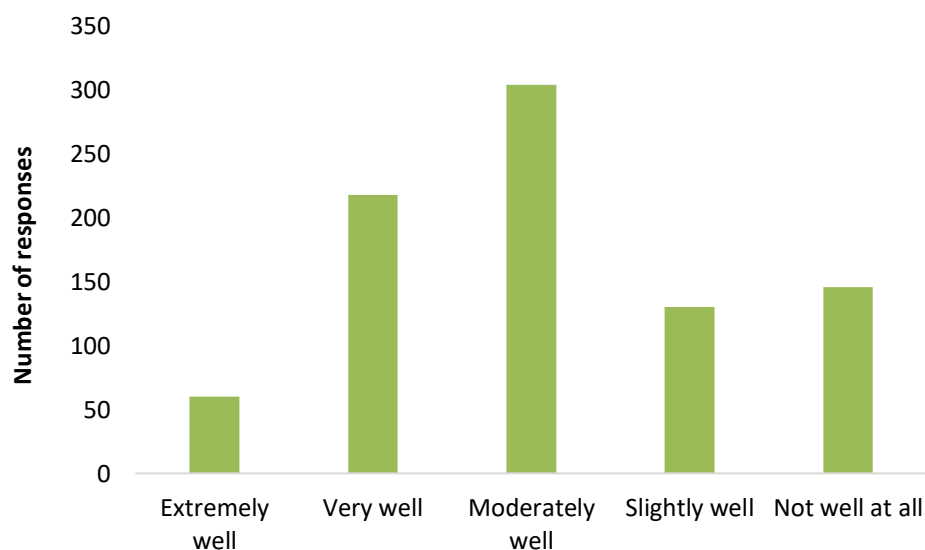
13 Progression

This chapter explores respondents' perceptions of progression through the curriculum, including onto further education and beyond.

The intention is that learners will progress along the same continuum of learning for each area of learning and experience from ages 3 to 16. Progression is signalled through the progression steps at five points on the continuum of learning, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16. The pace at which they progress along the continuum may differ — allowing for a variety of diversion, repetition and reflection as a learner's thinking develops over time to new levels of sophistication.

Respondents were asked to what extent the curriculum guidance surrounding each of the six AoLEs supported children during the Foundation Phase. Most responded with either moderately well or very well:

Figure 14.1: Q19.1. B7: How well do you think the guidance for each area of learning and experience will support children during the Foundation Phase years? How well?



N = 800

When asked for their views in more detail, respondents often cited the similarities and relative coherence of the Foundation Phase with the new curriculum as being a strength:

'The foundation phase is the natural place to start with this new curriculum. Schools could learn a lot from looking at FP processes and practice. We have taken the FP into year three already and this was commended by Estyn inspectors. It supports the new curriculum and what we should be developing.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2231**

'We feel that the AoLE guidance now better matches the philosophy and pedagogy of the Foundation Phase. In fact, we now plan to roll these out across the whole primary phase.' - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1882**

'The WISERD evaluation of the Foundation Phase identified the curricular transition at the end of the Foundation Phase to be problematic in light of the relative disjuncture between the approach adopted within the Foundation Phase and that adopted in subsequent phases. These problems are likely to be ameliorated with the introduction of the new curriculum, given the greater consistency in the approaches adopted'. - **Third Sector Organisation, Response 1126**

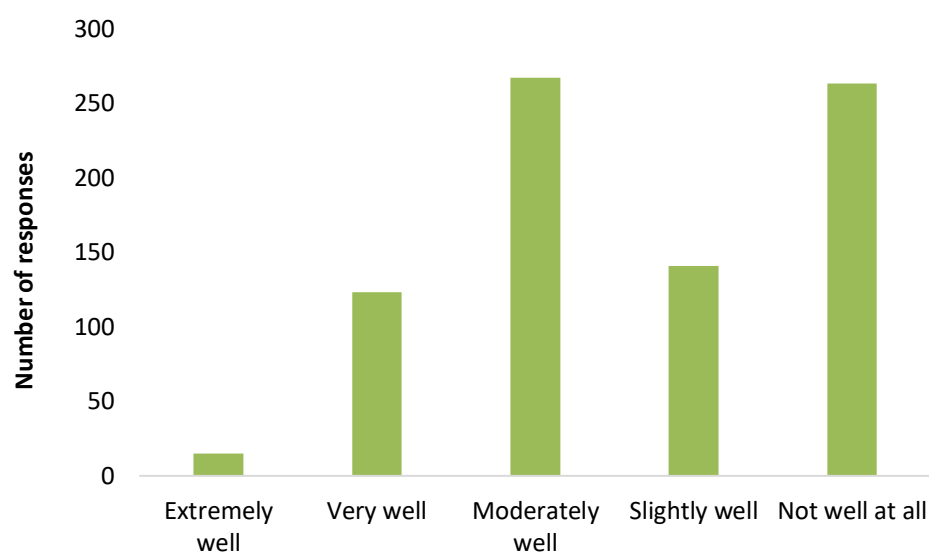
'Because there is specified content in the What Matters statements and achievement outcomes, it will ensure more focused teaching and consistency across the foundation phase. This will allow better progression into the learners next progression step.' - **School Improvement Officer, Regional Consortia, Response 2977**

The guidance for early years was particularly unclear, with many questions being flagged by practitioners around the baselines for 3-year-olds. The guidance in this area was typically viewed as being confusing, and practitioners asked for this to be condensed into one early years guide. Furthermore, there were broader concerns surrounding whether or not the guidance effectively addressed issues relating to supporting early child development:

'Not enough emphasis on songs and rhymes as a key strategy to develop children's early language skills throughout the progression steps. No mention of the importance of early mark making as a precursor to writing in progression step one. More information needed on early child development stages throughout the document. It is generally difficult to find the key elements of the curriculum. The principles are sound, but it is not very user-friendly.' - **Local Authority, Response 1590**

Respondents were then asked for their views on whether the guidance allowed for all children to specialise from the age of 14. A significant proportion of respondents thought that the guidance achieved specialisation moderately well (n = 265), whilst a similar proportion thought that it achieved specialisation not well at all (n = 263).

Figure 14.2: Q15.1. B3: How well do you think draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance allows for all children and young people to specialise from age 14 in a particular discipline or subject? How well?



N = 796

A few respondents highlighted particular routes into greater specialisation contained within the curriculum:

'The Expressive Arts AoLE prepares learners for the Art and Design specifications at GCSE level. The GCSE attainment objectives mirror Explore Respond Create. Learners will naturally progress to the formal qualification with ease.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 2477**

Some respondents thought that if the new curriculum were to achieve improvements in the skills and confidence of young people, then transitions towards specialisation would be successful:

'The skills will help progress within specialist subjects. They will have the wider holistic view as the foundation for the subject, which will enable them to learn the subject-specific content required for future qualifications in whatever form they take.' - **Other, Response 2217**

Of those respondents who expressed not well at all, they offered a range of perspectives underlying their judgment. A number of concerns were raised surrounding the lack of defined content, and whether this would lead to students missing out on key texts, therefore disadvantaging them against peers at English institutions. For some respondents, the importance of the portability of qualifications was deemed to be important, and they felt that young people may not be well prepared to succeed within more specialised examinations:

'The disciplines are there for learners to specialise from 14 but a strategy will need to be implemented to translate AoLEs into "subjects" so that Welsh pupils are not disadvantaged when competing nationally (UK) and internationally - our system

*going forward needs to be transferable.’ - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 1584***

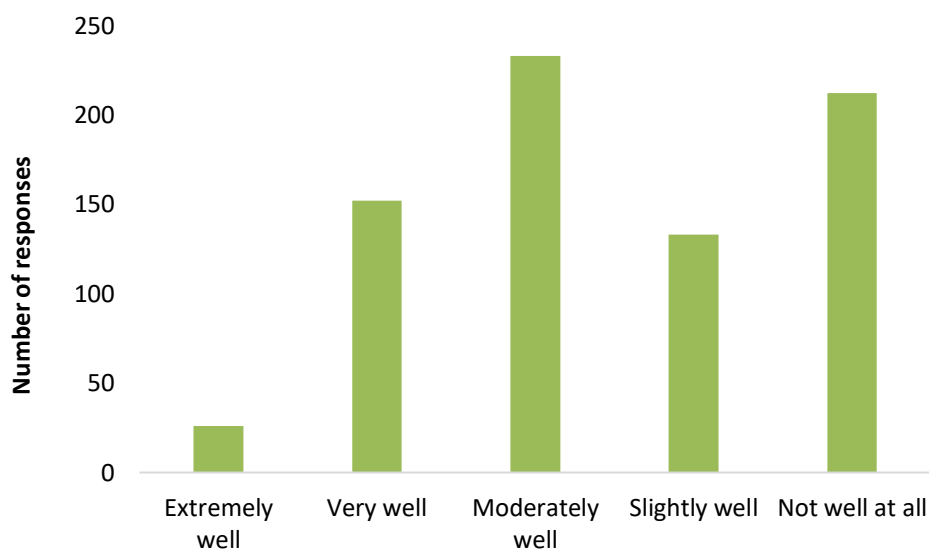
Respondents often cited uncertainty surrounding future qualifications arrangements as driving some of their concerns:

*‘This is an area which may need to be further addressed. Particularly with regards to which qualifications will be available and what they can specialise in. If the pupils are being taught all AoLEs will there be enough coverage within to provide a strong platform for specialism in particular ‘subjects.’ - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1643***

*‘Unclear what future GCSE qualifications will look like. Will discreet subjects such as Geography or History exist? How will this affect post 16 choices and validity and progression to HE and access to universities outside Wales? Do not know the direction of travel for examinations.’ - **Headteacher, Cluster, Response 1036***

In thinking about transitions into further education, the respondents were asked for their perception of the curriculum’s ability to support young people beyond the age of 16. A similar trend emerged, with significant proportions of respondents reporting either moderately well or not well at all:

Figure 14.3: Q21.1. B9: How well do you think the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance will provide a basis to help young people progress beyond the age of 16? How well?



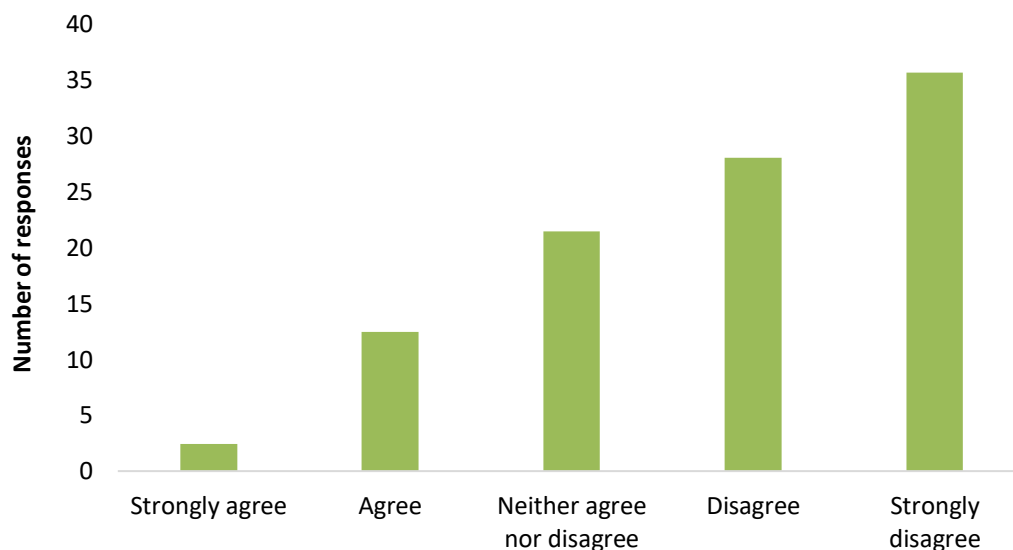
N = 732

*‘Keeping the four purposes central to curriculum design and delivery should help ensure pupils are well prepared as citizens and individuals. Beyond 16 and into higher and further education will depend upon accreditation and equivalence. Focusing and specialising learning after a broader learning experience may be challenging for some pupils.’ - **Senior Leader, Special School, Response 1027***

*‘We consider that there is potential here if we manage to create these capable learners — but as we have no idea what the qualifications will be at 16 it is difficult to know if they will be suitable for progression. We are concerned that the assessment tail shouldn’t wag the curriculum dog – but in order to allow Welsh students to access English universities it may ultimately have to.’ - **Education Forum, Response 2242***

These concerns surrounding transitions to further education were felt much more acutely by respondents from secondary schools:

Figure 14.4: Q21.1. B9: Secondary school respondents: How well do you think the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance will provide a basis to help young people progress beyond the age of 16? How well?



N = 289

13.1 Careers and Work-Related Experiences

Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE) is an essential component of the curriculum and is crucial in supporting young people to become enterprising, creative contributors, who are ready to play a full part in life and work. Engaging with Careers and Work Related Experiences supports young people to challenge the stereotypes and preconceptions that may cause them to limit learning and work choices, allowing them to effectively engage with learning, understand the full range of opportunities available and make effective and sustainable decisions at key transition points and throughout life.

Another aspect supporting young people's progression beyond the curriculum is that of careers advice. Of the few respondents who offered reflections upon the role of careers advice within the curriculum, some viewed the positive contribution that the curriculum would have made to developing rounded, work-ready individuals:

'Welsh Government has clearly already listened to the construction and built environment sector in the development of this draft statutory guidance and included some of the key asks we have been calling for. There is now a clear focus on work skills and readiness, including in the integration of wider skills into the curriculum, like critical thinking, problem solving, and planning and organisation. This is something those entering the labour market have been lacking, according to construction employers in Wales. We welcome the explicit references to learners developing an understanding of all post-16 routes, including work and vocational education. We are particularly pleased to see such emphasis placed on preparing for careers and post-16 education, including careers advice across age groups, the use of work experience, and contact with industry, employers, experts and people in the community throughout AoLEs and stages of the curriculum.' - **Skills Council, Response 2022**

Another respondent felt, however, that careers advice could be strengthened by closer links to local businesses:

'The curriculum makes reference to Welsh Government's careers education strategy however should the document should be more prescriptive in stating schools should develop partnerships with local enterprises and businesses to provide more practical experiences for pupils to learn about work. Shadowing and volunteer opportunities with creative, leisure agricultural or health and social care organisations should be a staple part of the new curriculum.' - **Voluntary Organisation, Response 1407**

More broadly, some respondents suggested that the curriculum itself could be limited in developing entrepreneurial skills. A few respondents highlighted the possibility that funding pressures and priorities may reduce relative provision:

'Some schools will take this opportunity to reduce the delivery of creative and entrepreneurial subjects like product design due to the comparative higher costs.' - **Teacher, Secondary School, Response 1363**

Meanwhile, other respondents felt that the curriculum did not go far enough:

‘With a very few exceptions, the current version of the curriculum provides very little explicit reference to or guidance for encouraging learners’ entrepreneurial and political awareness and understanding to help them become ‘informed citizens’ and ‘enterprising contributors’. These elements should be reflected more strongly, for example, in the Humanities and Health and Well-being Areas of Learning and Experience at all progression steps, as well as through the cross-cutting elements and considerations section.’ - Estyn, Response 1323

14 Professional Learning

This chapter considers the implications, as raised by the respondents, of the new curriculum for professional learning.

Alongside the Curriculum for Wales guidance, the Welsh Government have introduced the National Approach to Professional Learning. Launched in 2018, the National Approach aligns closely with the new Professional Standards and the Schools as Learning Organisations model in order to ensure that all practitioners receive the support they need to effectively deliver the new curriculum. This includes additional resources and time for practitioners to access and engage with high quality development opportunities. For more information, please see:

<https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development> or <https://hwb.gov.wales/datblygiad-proffesiynol>

Overall, many respondents recognised the important role that professional learning would play in embedding the new curriculum successfully. From this perspective, the new curriculum would require teachers and schools to adapt their practice, both in coordinating provision and in teaching:

*‘Building a curriculum is a challenging task and one that schools have not had to do before. Whilst we are enthusiastic and keen, we are concerned that we do not have all the skills and competences to approach this task.’ - **Headteacher, Primary School, Response 2511***

The shift from consumers to designers of curricular content was often cited as being a key factor driving respondents’ perceptions of the importance of professional learning:

*‘More specific guidance and training for teachers to become "curriculum makers" is needed. They need to understand the different manifestations of curriculum and a more robust engagement with the philosophies of education that organise curricula. Teacher education in Wales has not emphasised philosophy of understanding the values and beliefs that undergird pedagogy, this limits teachers' ability to engage with meaningful questions about the aims of education and the objective that support them.’ - **Lecturer, Higher Education Institution, Response 1429***

'The new curriculum seems to be generally a positive step in the right direction, but it will require investment in professional development for school staff and other educational professionals. It will also require a thorough review of Initial Teacher Education [ITE] so that they are properly equipped to provide learning opportunities indoors, outdoors and in a range of contexts and out-of-classroom settings. It also needs a shift in focus especially at Secondary level ITE from subject specialism to skills and experience focussed learning pedagogies and approaches.'

- Training Provider, Response 1327

'Huge implications for Professional Learning particularly with the learning of Welsh and implementing an international language. More concerned about how secondary schools are going to be able to develop connected learning and are really going to take this pedagogical shift seriously and purposefully. A lot of good practice is going on and so schools need release time to visit and view best practice as well as access training opportunities. Money and time are precious!' - **Senior Leader, Primary School, Response 1712**

Within and across responses there were also more specific examples of the important role that professional learning would have in supporting the implementation of the new curriculum. In terms of delivering cross-curricular frameworks, for example, some respondents suggested that teachers would require more specific training. This was apparent in responses in relation to the delivery of sensitive and effective RSE provision, for example.

Furthermore, a diverse range of organisations offered support to teachers and schools in helping them to address and deliver specific aspects of the curriculum. This included special interest groups and non-departmental government bodies.

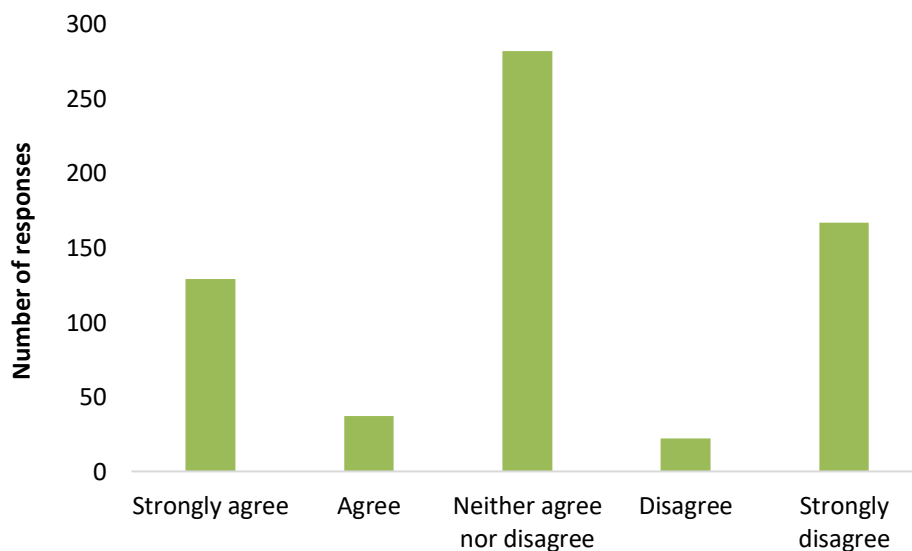
15 Implementation

This chapter explores respondents' views towards implementing the curriculum, including the factors that would ensure that the new curriculum is embedded successfully in teaching and learning.

15.1 Support

The respondents were asked whether or not they felt that there was sufficient flexibility and support to implement the new curriculum. The majority of respondents were unsure, but those who were sure expressed strong views, both positive and negative:

Figure 16.1: Q16.1. B4: The draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance is intended to support practitioners and teachers to design a curriculum specific to children and young people. To what extent will practitioners and teachers have the flexibility and support to do this? Practitioners and teachers have flexibility and support.



N = 509

Of those respondents who reported that they agreed or strongly agreed, they were more likely to view the overall approach to the curriculum itself as providing greater flexibility to teaching and learning. Moreover, the guidance materials were deemed to be supportive, helping respondents to understand the implications of the curriculum for teaching and learning:

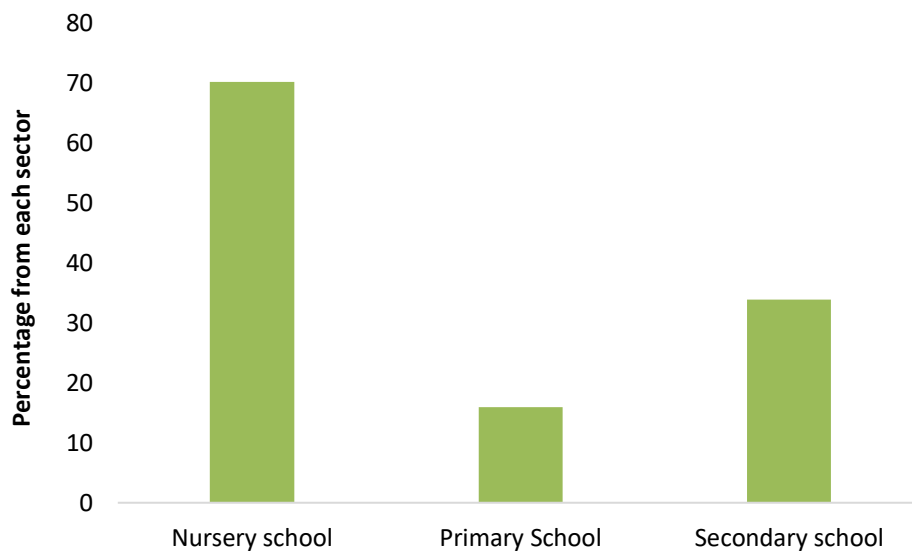
This curriculum allows the flexibility to really design a curriculum suited for your learners and the guidance provides a great deal of support to help schools achieve this. - Teacher, Primary School, Response 1033

Whilst other respondents echoed this sentiment, they suggested that some may need more support than others:

‘The concept is flexible and designed to allow teachers to ‘do what they need to do’ and be driven by purpose rather than accountability. This is exciting for many practitioners who will relish this challenge, but teachers who are more inflexible will need more extensive and in-depth support, advice and guidance and a range of resources on offer to start.’ - Headteacher, Secondary School, Response 2049

Those respondents who reported that they disagreed that there is sufficient flexibility and support were more likely to cite factors that were external to the curriculum itself, such as the support, time, training and resources that will be made available to practitioners and teachers. Exploring views further, those reporting that they strongly disagree were significantly more likely to be respondents from nursery settings:

Figure 16.2: Q16.1. B4: Respondents reporting strongly disagree by percentage: The draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance is intended to support practitioners and teachers to design a curriculum specific to children and young people. To what extent will practitioners and teachers have the flexibility and support to do this? Practitioners and teachers have flexibility and support.



N = 129

15.2 Time and Resources

In the responses to this and other questions surrounding the curriculum, a key theme was the importance of time and resources in implementing the new curriculum successfully. Many respondents caveated their support, suggesting that whilst they were broadly supportive of the curriculum, they held concerns beyond it:

*‘We question the assumption that teachers have the time and professional support needed to work with such a lengthy and open-ended document to create a new curriculum in every school. While there may an expectation that schools share and support each other during this process, the reality is that the development and sharing activity undertaken by Pioneer [Innovation] schools will be very difficult to scale up and replicate across all schools.’ - **Teachers, Secondary School, Response 2320***

Many respondents raised concerns surrounding the extra resourcing levels that they would require in order to deliver the breadth of the curriculum effectively, and whether teachers would have sufficient time to develop their own curriculum for each area.

What is more, a number of respondents raised concerns surrounding the different levels of resources between innovation schools and mainstream settings. From this perspective, the examples and experiences of innovation schools in implementing the curriculum were not representative, which could undermine the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Another concern was the impact of the new curriculum on the workload. The assumption from this perspective was that the role of teachers and schools as designers of the curriculum could add to workloads which some felt were already unmanageable. In addressing some of these issues, there were suggestions that in some areas it would be useful to have a shared curriculum, particularly to improve consistencies between feeder schools and prevent duplication of content at different stages.

15.3 Equality of Opportunity and Outcomes

Another concern driving responses with regard to the successful implementation of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 was the potential for variation in the quality and content of provision across settings:

*‘There are both advantages and disadvantages to taking a flexible approach to curriculum delivery. While there is the ability and scope to adapt learning to specific individual needs, we would note that without a more detailed framework there is a very real danger that this allows for subjective interpretation across Wales. Thus, we would suggest this risk is highlighted.’ - **Governing Body, Response 2596***

*‘Unfortunately, the language used means they are ambiguous and open to interpretation. Could be a gap between intended curriculum and received curriculum.’ - **Response 1504***

'While we understand the rationale for the curriculum not being too prescriptive, the absence of detailed guidance and clarity does mean that the teaching profession will need the time and skills to develop what is required. This inevitably has training and personal development as well as additional work implications for staff... If these are not addressed, then we have concerns about the prospect of the proposals being fully and properly implemented and, as has been reported elsewhere, could consequently result in actually widening the achievement gap between different groups of pupils and not close it.' - **Response 1583**

16 Conclusions

Overall, the respondents are broadly supportive of the structure and sentiment of the new curriculum. Many respondents, including teachers, welcomed the proposals. Aspects such as the emphasis on the four purposes, the greater agency offered to teachers within the curriculum, and the greater role of formative assessment were all broadly supported.

In terms of improving the curriculum guidance, respondents offered two distinct suggestions:

- Those who would like to see the guidance simplified, including in the language and concepts used to communicate aspects of the curriculum and in the structure and presentation.
- Those who felt that the guidance would benefit from greater depth and detail in certain places so as to help practitioners and teachers to understand how to implement the curriculum in practice.

Across responses there was widespread recognition of the work undertaken by the network of teachers, schools and organisations in the development of the curriculum Welsh Government:

*‘Thanks to everyone for all their hard work on this curriculum so far.’ - **Education Organisation, Response 1600***

Appendix 1: Methodology

Across engagement, responses generated a range of qualitative and quantitative information. The online questionnaire, for example, asked a number of quantitative questions as well as open, qualitative questions asking respondents for their views in more depth.

Qualitative Responses

Across all formats and methods of engagement, responses were read and coded using thematic analysis. Comments given at each open question were examined and, where questions elicited a positive or negative response, they were categorised as such. For most of the questions, respondents were also asked to state the reasons for their views, or to explain their answers. The main reasons presented by respondents were reviewed, alongside specific examples or explanations, alternative suggestions, caveats to support, and other related comments. Verbatim quotes were extracted in some cases to highlight the main themes that emerged.

Because of the likelihood of self-selection, for the qualitative information we have not sought to count how many respondents held a particular view. The approach taken is largely qualitative, with the aim being to understand the range of key issues raised by respondents, as well as the reasons for holding particular views. Such information includes potential areas of agreement and disagreement between the different groups of respondents.

In presenting the results, we have aimed to provide a broad picture of the views and perspectives expressed in responses. A range of qualitative terms are used to express prevalence, including 'most', 'many', 'some', and 'a few', with a decreasing order of prevalence. Interpretation of the balance of opinion must be considered in the context of the questions asked, as not every respondent answered all of the questions, nor did every respondent provide enough information to determine their viewpoint accurately. In this respect, qualitative terms are only indicative of opinions that are relative to questions on the basis of those who responded. Therefore, they cannot be assumed to relate numerically back to the total number of people and organisations that responded, or to the educational community more broadly.

Quantitative Responses

Closed question responses were quantified and the number of respondents who agreed/disagreed with each question were reported through frequency tables with narrative to describe trends in the data.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance: feedback

Introduction

We welcome your feedback on the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance.

The feedback period is open from 30 April and closes on 19 July 2019. We will review the feedback we have received and respond to the themes of the feedback following this time.

We will use this information to help us further refine draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance ahead of making it available in January 2020.

There are both general and more detailed questions which you can feedback upon.

If you work in or support the delivery of education, you may wish to respond to more detailed questions around the new curriculum and assessment arrangements, and professional learning. These questions start broad and become more specific the further you progress.

We recommend you read the following before you respond:

- **A guide to Curriculum for Wales 2022**
- **The area(s) of learning and experience you want to feedback upon**
- **Assessment proposals to inform the development of statutory guidance**

If you complete this survey online, you can save your feedback and return to complete it at any time. You will need to provide a name and email address for this purpose only. All published feedback will be kept anonymous. Keeping your personal information safe is important to us. Our website **privacy policy** explains how we use your information.

If you need assistance with this survey, please e-mail CurriculumForWales2022@gov.wales

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response, then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- To be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- To require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- To (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- For (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- To (in certain circumstances) data portability
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer: Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ e-mail: Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales	The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF Tel: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113 Website: https://ico.org.uk/
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Audience

The following questions help us to understand your relationship to the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance.

Do you work in or support the delivery of education?

Yes		No	
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If yes, what is your organisation? (if no continue below)

Welsh-medium school (Primary)		Higher education institution	
Welsh-medium school (Secondary)		Diocesan authorities	
Welsh-medium school (Special)		Regional consortia	
English-medium school (Primary)		Local authority	
English-medium school (Secondary)		Private training provider	
English-medium school (Special)		Third sector	
Bilingual school (Primary)		Government	
Bilingual school (Secondary)		Adult community learning	
Welsh-medium middle school		Awarding organisation	
English-medium middle school		Teaching union	
Pupil referral unit (PRU)		Regulatory body (includes Inspectorate)	
Special school		Governing body	
Funded non-maintained setting		Other (please specify):	
Further education college			

What is your primary role?

Headteacher		Chancellor/Vice-chancellor	
Teacher		Lecturer	
Practitioner		Pioneer	
Newly qualified teacher		Governor	
Teaching assistant		Challenge Advisor	
Senior leader		School improvement officer	
Supply teacher		Inspector	
Principal/Vice-principal		Other (please specify):	

If you do not work in or support the delivery of education, in what capacity would you like to provide feedback?

Parent or carer		Employer	
Adult 18+ (not a parent or carer)		Apprentice	
Child or young person (under 18)		Other (please specify):	
Student/academic			

Are you providing feedback on behalf of an organisation or group?

Yes		No	
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If 'yes' please specify

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Section A – General questions

A1. To what extent do you agree that the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* will help children and young people to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners
- Healthy, confident individuals
- Ethical, informed citizens
- Enterprising, creative contributors?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Comments:				

A2. Looking at the *what matters statements*, to what extent do you agree that these sum up the priorities for children and young people's learning?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Comments:				

A3. Do you think the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* could be improved?

Yes		No	
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If yes, how do you think it could be improved?

--

A4. To what extent do the *assessment proposals* support settings and schools to identify a learner's strengths, achievements and areas for improvement so they can support a learner's progression by identifying next steps?

Extremely supportive	Very supportive	Moderately supportive	Slightly supportive	Not at all supportive
Comments:				

A5. In relation to reporting to parents and carers, please tell us your views on:

- The role of the learner in contributing to the reporting process
- The role of the parent/carers in the reporting process
- The information you would want to include.

--

Section B – Detailed questions

B1. How helpful would you find the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* in developing a curriculum for your learners?

Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Slightly helpful	Not helpful at all
Comments:				

B2. How well do you think the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* allows for all children and young people to gain a broad range of learning experiences?

You may want to consider learning across the different disciplines and subjects which form part of an area of learning and experience.

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B3. How well do you think *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* allows for all children and young people to specialise from age 14 in a particular discipline or subject?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B4. The *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* is intended to support practitioners and teachers to design a curriculum specific to children and young people. To what extent will practitioners and teachers have the flexibility and support to do this?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Comments:				

B5. How well do you think the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* supports learners to develop skills in the cross-curricular responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) and other cross-cutting themes (e.g. Welsh dimension and international perspective, wider skills, careers and work-related experiences, relationships and sexuality education)?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B6. How could the cross-curricular frameworks (*National Literacy and Numeracy Framework and the Digital Competence Framework*) be refined to support the development of literacy, numeracy and digital competence across the new curriculum?

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B7. How well do you think the guidance for each *area of learning and experience* will support children during the Foundation Phase years?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B8. How well do you think the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* supports and enables learners to progress at an appropriate pace for their development within the area of learning and experience from ages 3 to 16?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B9. How well do you think the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* will provide a basis to help young people progress beyond the age of 16?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B10. Formative assessment should be given primacy in the new curriculum. How well do the *assessment proposals* promote this principle?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

B11. *The assessment proposals* propose a broader approach to moderation – supporting professional dialogue regarding the nature of progression, the selection of appropriate learning and assessment activities, as well as ensuring a shared understanding of what achievement looks like in the context of the achievement outcomes.

How would you envisage your setting /school putting this approach into practice? What further support do you think would be needed?

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B12. What practical issues for settings and schools do we need to be mindful of if the *assessment proposals* are to be made a reality?

B13. What implications do you see from the *draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 guidance* for you and your colleagues' *professional development* needs in respect of the:

- Impact on pedagogical practice

- Implications of planning for a purpose-driven curriculum
- Professional learning requirements linked to pedagogy
- Developing in-school and cross-school collaboration
- Specific areas of professional learning aligned to the areas of learning and experience
- Opportunities for professional enquiry approaches support delivery of the new curriculum?

B14. What are the professional learning challenges and opportunities to enact the principles in the [assessment proposals](#)?

Section C – Specific: Areas of learning and experience

C1. If you would like to provide specific feedback relating to one or more specific areas of learning and experience, please make a selection and add your comments below.

Expressive Arts		Language, Literacy and Communication	
Health and Well-being		Mathematics and Numeracy	
Humanities		Science and Technology	

Comments (if you choose more than one area of learning and experience please label each comment):

C2. How well do the progression steps within the [Mathematics and Numeracy Area of Learning and Experience](#) articulate the proficiencies illustrated in the principles of progression?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

C3. How well do the learning sections within the *Languages, Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience* provide for learners to develop translinguaging skills?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

C4. How well does the guidance within the *Languages Literacy and Communication Area of Learning and Experience* provide for the development of language acquisition and learning?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

C5. How well does the *Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience* guidance support a whole-school approach to supporting health and well-being?

Extremely well	Very well	Moderately well	Slightly well	Not well at all
Comments:				

Is there anything else you would like to add or feedback on?

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Return by 19 July 2019



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