

**Number:** WG43537



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Welsh Government  
Consultation – summary of responses

## Curriculum for Wales: Draft Progression Code

Date of issue: September 2021

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

# Curriculum for Wales: Progression Code

**Audience** Education practitioners; maintained schools; funded non-maintained nursery settings; pupil referral units (PRU); education other than at school (EOTAS) settings; local authorities; regional education consortia; governing bodies of maintained schools; PRU management committees diocesan authorities; trade unions and Estyn.

**Overview** A summary of responses to the consultation on the draft Progression Code.

**Action required** For information.

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**Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at [Draft progression code | GOV.WALES](#)

**Related documents** The consultation documentation can be found at [Draft progression code | GOV.WALES](#)

The Curriculum for Wales Framework guidance can be found at: [Curriculum for Wales - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

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## Curriculum for Wales

1. The [Curriculum for Wales Framework](#) (Framework) is determined nationally and includes both the curriculum requirements, as set out in legislation, and a range of supporting guidance. It was published in January 2020, including overarching and area of learning and experience (Area) specific principles of progression.
2. The Curriculum for Wales guidance, and the other guidance published alongside it, is the result of co-construction. It has been developed in Wales, by practitioners for practitioners, bringing together educational expertise and wider research and evidence. It has been published primarily to help schools to design their own curriculum and to meet requirements set out in legislation. Expertise on learning progression was, in part, provided through the [CAMAU project](#) – a collaboration between the University of Wales Trinity St David and the University of Glasgow funded by the Welsh Government.
3. The Framework is designed to help practitioners to develop a more integrated approach to learning. The six Areas bring together familiar disciplines and encourage strong and meaningful links across different disciplines. Those individual disciplines still play an important role especially as learners progress and begin to specialise.
4. The Curriculum for Wales guidance promotes collaboration and cross-disciplinary planning, learning and teaching, both within and across Areas. This enables learners to build connections across their learning and combine different experiences, knowledge and skills. Progression through the 3 to 16 learning continuum is a fundamental principle underpinning the Framework and curriculum development in schools and settings.
5. There are 5 overarching principles of progression in this Framework. These are supplemented by 5 principles of progression for each Area. Setting out these principles in the Code ensures a level of consistency in curriculum design across settings and schools, as they must develop their curricula with approaches to learning progression drawing from these research-based principles.

6. Progression, supported by a variety of assessment approaches, enables the learner and the practitioner to understand where a learner is and what they need to do next.

## **The progression code**

7. The progression Code is subordinate legislation developed under section 7 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 (the Act). It sets out the 5 overarching and 30 Area specific principles of learning progression on which all maintained schools and funded non-maintained settings must base their curriculum. These principles of progression form part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework.
8. The Act requires that Welsh Ministers produce the Code, consult on its content and review it periodically. The requirement on schools and settings to use the principles of progression set out in the Code aligns with other requirements regarding the design and development of their curriculum under the Curriculum for Wales Framework.

## **The consultation process**

9. Earlier versions of the principles of progression were subject to a 12 week consultation as part of the consultation covering the whole draft Curriculum for Wales Framework guidance in 2019. This represented a significant consultation with over 2,000 wide ranging responses from practitioners, school leaders, parents, special interest groups, public sector and children and young people. Alongside input from focus groups, we received 1,680 digital submissions, plus feedback from 423 learners. A series of [reports covering that consultation](#) and responses to it have been published by Welsh Government.
10. More recently, the specific consultation on the draft progression Code was undertaken between 21 May and 16 July 2021. The consultation was promoted to a wide audience of stakeholders including schools, settings, local authorities, regional consortia, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, children's groups, Estyn, and trade unions.

11. This specific consultation on the draft Code resulted in thirty two responses in total, one of which was submitted in Welsh. Responses from practitioners accounted for around two thirds of submissions, and these were also supplemented by submissions from practitioner representative bodies, such as education trade unions. The remaining responses came from stakeholder organisations, primarily middle tier organisations (such as Estyn, regional consortia, local authorities). One third sector organisation responded, alongside commissioner's offices. A number of the stakeholder and practitioner responses were significant and detailed submissions. No parent / carer, learner, or non-practitioner individual responses were received.
12. The consultation on the progression Code comprised 8 key questions. The first 2 questions focussed on views regarding the usefulness, accessibility and clarity of the 5 overarching principles.
13. Questions 3 and 4 focussed on the usefulness, accessibility and clarity of the various Area specific principles of progression as published in draft in January 2020 as part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework.
14. Question 5 sought views specifically on what further support could be offered or needed by practitioners in their realisation of their curriculum development in line with the principles set out in the Code.
15. Questions 6 and 7 were standard Welsh Government consultation questions seeking views on the Welsh language implications of the proposals. While Question 8 provided respondents additional space to submit wider views not already covered by the consultation survey.
16. Analysis of responses to each of these questions is below.

## **Summary of response findings**

17. Key points raised by respondents to the 2021 consultation were:
  - broad support for the principles, with calls for further clarification on their purpose and use to be included upfront

- the need to emphasise the importance of effective pedagogy in learner progression
- greater recognition of early years language acquisition, and that language development can vary notably dependant on a learner's linguistic base
- greater overall emphasis on increasing effectiveness as a learner
- the need to return to the principles and the Code in time following schools' and settings' experiences of working with them.

18. Wider feedback was also captured from both consultations; this is now informing policy, programme and guidance development. The main wider points raised were:

- the need for specific, direct and sustained support for schools on realising the Curriculum for Wales, with a range of views regarding the focus of that
- further guidance and support in respect of approaches to assessment
- the need for clear links between progression and assessment, including the development of new qualifications being based on Curriculum for Wales requirements.

19. The point about the need for and importance of further and specific support on learning progression for schools and settings is a key theme running through responses to all the consultation questions posed in this survey. However, for ease of reporting contributions on this issue only considered under Question 5 in this report (which has a specific focus on further support) irrespective of where the points were raised in feedback questionnaires.

## **Question 1 – usefulness of overarching principles**

20. Full consultation question:

How useful are the principles of progression for education practitioners in designing and developing their curriculum?

And how might they be improved?

21. Of the responses submitted, respondents broadly supported the principles of progression. However, within that broad support, a number of practitioner responses highlighted that the overarching principles were a little vague and required more clarity in their use, possibly through wider support.
22. Some practitioner responses to this question on usefulness indicated they would like to see greater detail in what progression looks like within each progression step and across all the Areas. A few practitioner responses expressed views that the overarching principles, by their very nature, were ambiguous and too vague to be of direct support in curriculum design and development. Some respondents, however, found them very useful, expressing the view that having them in mind is helpful in assisting the process of curriculum development in schools and settings.

*“Could be improved by giving examples /guidance on how to use them effectively.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

23. Around a third of responses, while being broadly supportive, also offered suggestions on how the overarching statements could be improved. In the main, this feedback related more to further guidance being set out to better explain what is meant by learning progression, what the purpose of the principles are, how they relate to the statements of what matters and descriptions of learning in each Area, and how schools and settings are expected to use them in their curriculum development work.
24. However, some specific suggestions for drafting changes to the overarching principles were offered for consideration. These included, for example, the need to better recognise the application of knowledge in learning progression, alongside the acquisition of knowledge. A further example of suggested amendment was recognition of how learners will progress towards greater self-advocacy alongside the advocacy of others.
25. A few respondents also expressed the view that the principles would need to be returned to from time to time following the experiences of schools' and settings' curriculum development and greater understanding and experience of how learning progression can support that ongoing process.



## Question 2 – clarity of overarching principles

26. Full consultation question:

In terms of the overarching principles of progression, are these clear and accurate in setting out what it means for learners to progress in their learning, 3-16 across the whole curriculum?

27. Of the twenty six responses to this question, thirteen agreed that the overarching principles of progression were clear and accurate in setting out what it means for learners to progress through the 3 to 16 learning continuum. A further 7 respondents were broadly supportive, offering further commentary on the approach. While the remaining responses to this question challenged the level of detail provided in these overarching principles and their purpose within the Framework. Of those who considered the overarching principles were not suitably clear and accurate, only a few provided further commentary; this was largely based on concerns regarding the practical application of the principles in the curriculum development process.

*“The overarching principles describe the high level thinking re progression and so it is hard to say if they are clear and accurate - they certainly outline a shift in thinking and take away the 'tick box' culture that we have become obsessed with in schools for accountability purposes. They describe what we want for all our learners to enable them to progress towards the four purposes. They will require considerable PL for staff to enable schools to really understand this move away from 'tick boxes'.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

28. Of those responses that offered further commentary, themes highlighted included that although the more open and flexible approach to progression was welcome there needed to be less ambiguous guidance clearly laying out what is meant by progression. There were views from practitioners that terms such as “increasing depth” and “intellectual skills” had to be made clearer and more explicit to be useful in helping to design their curricula.

*“In many cases, the overarching principles are clear and should help to provide a consistent framework that leaders and practitioners can use to develop their curricula. They should help to promote a collective understanding of progress across areas of learning. However, in a few cases, terms are ambiguous and would benefit from simplification or exemplification...”*

From an education stakeholder response to this question

29. Responses also suggested the need for example resources, nationally developed and professional learning to help improve practitioners' understanding of progression at a more meaningful level.

### **Question 3 – accuracy of Area specific principles**

30. Full consultation question:

In terms of the principles of progression specific to each area of learning and experience, are these clear and accurate in setting out what is unique and distinct about progression, 3-16 within each area?

31. Twenty seven responses to this question were submitted, of which ten were clear in the view that the principles specific to each area of learning and experience (Area) were clear and accurate. A further eight responses were supportive of the principles, while providing further commentary on how they could be developed or applied. The remaining nine responses disagreed, with around half of those providing further comment.

*“While I am aware that the new curriculum caters for an openness in learning with scope for creative development (which is excellent), I think there needs to clarity as to what progressions steps look like regarding achievement.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

32. Responses that considered the Area specific principles of progression were too general and unclear were generally submitted by practitioners. From those few who provided comment, it was considered they would be insufficient to be used to assess achievement and learner progression. There appeared to be an expectation that the principles would set standards for assessment and measurement of attainment. Other views included: possible inconsistencies between principles; the lack of exemplification in the draft Code; that they were too wordy; and collectively too much for schools to manage.

33. Of the some two thirds of responses to this question that were broadly supportive, several respondents (including practitioners and education stakeholders) suggested a need for realistic examples of what can be assessed, shared conceptual models of progression as well as a need for greater depth in expected outcomes for standards, skills, knowledge and experience. There were calls for greater guidance on how schools and settings should use the principles alongside the descriptions of learning, set out against each of the statements of what matters in each Area of the curriculum, in conjunction with approaches to learning assessment.

*“While I am aware that the new curriculum caters for an openness in learning with scope for creative development (which is excellent), I think there needs to clarity as to what progressions steps look like regarding achievement.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

34. A number of responses noted that the principles of progression in the mathematics and numeracy Area differed from those in other Areas, being expressed through ‘proficiencies’. Some questioned the rationale for this, while others commented very positively about the approach taken in this Area. Some considered the mathematics and numeracy approach provided the opportunity to fully express maths learning progression in a clear and Area specific way, while still relating to the overarching principles that apply across the curriculum.
35. A few responses also noted the research–base developed and used as part of the Curriculum for Wales Framework development, alongside ongoing work to support understanding of learner progression. Those (practitioner) responses were clear and supportive on how the principles relate to how learning generally develops across specific Areas.

*“I took part in research combining both the Creative Arts and the Health and Wellbeing AoLE working across and between AoLEs on a research project with the Arts Council for Wales and CAMAU and my research findings agree with the principles of progression for these two AoLEs from outcomes of pupil voice submitted to CAMAU.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

## Question 4 – clarity of Area specific principles

36. Full consultation question:

How well do the overarching principles and the principles specific to each area of learning and experience form a clear and coherent whole?

Are the specific principles consistent with the overarching ones?

37. Of the twenty two responses to this question the majority of respondents agreed that the specific principles were consistent with the overarching ones – nine were explicit in this regard, while a further eleven responses were broadly supportive, while offering further comment. However two responses disagreed that the principles were coherent, noting that there was insufficient distinction between the overarching principles and the Area specific ones in many instances.

*“The principles do form a coherent whole, and are very well worded in terms of establishing what progression means. However, realising progression in learning is about being clear on the specifics of what pupils are learning.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

38. As reported elsewhere, many practitioner responses while generally positive, called for more specific and realistic guidance on learning progression, associated assessment and monitoring of progress to avoid misinterpretation of the principles and inaccurate reporting.

39. Other issues raised by respondents included:

- too much information to hold practitioners to when teaching large numbers of learners
- concern that there will need to be sufficient funding and national programmes in place for practitioners to develop strong practices
- further guidance on how the nature of learning progression can differ between Area within the broad approach set out in the overarching principles of progression

- the presentation of the principles does not enable the connections and coherence to be understood easily – better web linking and graphical presentation could help.

## Question 5 – further support

40. Full consultation question:

What further support could be provided to help practitioners develop their approach to progression and assessment as an integral part of their curriculum, in line with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales?

41. As noted in paragraph 19 responses to this question represent a key theme running through this consultation. While the level of responses to this specific question is reported below for completeness, it should be noted that feedback on support needs have been presented by respondents across all 8 questions posed in the survey response form. Consequently, all the themes and issues relating to further support are reported under this section irrespective of where they were submitted.

*“Practitioners would benefit from seeing a few aspects of progression exemplified at different stages, i.e. what might be a common expectation for a pupil at the end of progression step 3 look like in a particular strand.”*

From a local authority response

42. All but two consultation respondents provided feedback to this question, with contributions overwhelmingly calling for additional and specific hands on support for developing a progression based curriculum. There was a view that this support should be available nationally. Respondents highlighted a number of ways the programme of practitioner support could be enhanced to help them develop their approach to progression and assessment including:

- the use of examples and case studies, including examples of learner journeys, example lesson plans, practical examples on implementing and evaluating a multilingual approach and exemplar materials

- evidence-based professional learning and professional learning in subject content, to support understanding and the link between curriculum design, progression and assessment
- the engagement of expert support, working with middle tier organisations, in the provision of hands on support to schools and settings
- specific progression workshops, also with advice and guidance on how to assess and track learner progress
- greater clarity and breakdown of the skills and knowledge needed in each Area for each year group
- professional dialogue and more opportunities to work collaboratively and network with other practitioners and schools to better develop an understanding of progression
- professional learning, time, further resources and supporting materials to aid further build practitioner understanding of learning progression in specific Areas, subjects and disciplines
- specific support for secondary cross-school curriculum design
- ways through which the interrelationships within the Framework and the underpinning concepts could be presented graphically to aid practitioner understanding of the various interconnections within the Curriculum for Wales
- improved presentation, with stronger and clearer online linking between the overarching principles of progression, the Area specific principles and other aspects of the Framework that directly relate to them
- specific support in respect of the early years and how non-maintained settings access and apply the principles of progression in their work
- further and ongoing professional learning on assessment for learning and metacognition.

*“Further training and understanding in this area highlighting the link between curriculum design and progression and assessment. Understanding of what assessment is not, ensuring that schools are moving on in thinking and analysis of pupil outcomes and next steps.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

43. Many responses recognised the importance of learning progression, and the emphasis being placed on the underpinning curriculum concept through the Code and the Framework more generally. However, some respondents highlighted the essential role of effective pedagogical approaches in realising this. First class curriculum design based on the four purposes and driven by learner progression could be undermined if schools and settings did not fully recognise the need for learning and teaching development as part of the process.
44. A very few responses called for higher degrees of national prescription within the Framework on the issue of learning progression to ensure clarity and consistency of expectation across each year. It was noted that such standards would need to be measurable and hold practitioners to account for learner progress, and should include minimum standardised outcomes for reading, writing and number.
45. As well as more practical advice for practitioners in tracking individual learner progress over time and designing their curriculum. Many practitioners also highlighted assessment as being a concern for designing and developing a curriculum and requested further guidance, support and resources to assist.
46. The majority of respondents recognised the close correlation between learning progression and assessment in the context of curriculum design, with some highlighting the importance of practitioners drawing from the advice and guidance already contained within the Curriculum for Wales Framework. However, it was also noted that in a number of instances schools and settings would require more detailed guidance and clarification.

*“The guidance clearly explains the principles of progress across the areas of learning and experience which offers guidance to schools. However, schools and practitioners need to be offered further clarity of 'how' progression looks”*

From a local authority response

47. In drawing from the principles for assessment and the principles of progression (alongside the statements of what matters and descriptions of learning at each progression step) already set out in the Framework, often quite detailed responses from practitioners and education stakeholder organisations called for further guidance in a number of specific areas, including the points set out below.

- Further advice and guidance on the role of the principles of progression in curriculum design and development and how practitioners should use them in that process.
- There was recognition of the importance of developing a shared understanding of progression within and across schools and settings – though some respondents considered further guidance was needed on how that might be taken forward at the local level.
- There were calls for further guidance on what, if any, statutory requirements would be placed on schools and settings regarding approaches to assessment (for example, will there be any statutory baseline assessments?).
- There was a view that tracking learning effectively should help schools and settings monitor learners' progress, which was essential in supporting decisions on the next steps of learning. There were calls for support to help schools and settings develop these systems and processes.
- Calls were made in a few practitioner and stakeholder responses on the need for further guidance and information regarding approaches to assessment and monitoring learner progress for the purposes of learning, and reporting in respect of school accountability.
- Guidance from Estyn on their expectations for curriculum design, including what they expect to see regarding schools' use of the principles of progression.



48. A further theme to be drawn from responses on the question of further support, was the issue of consistency of message, support interventions and narrative across the education system nationally. Practitioners in particular recognised the need for coherence in the advice and guidance from Welsh Government, regional consortia, Estyn and local authorities in particular.

## Question 6 – impact on Welsh language

49. Full consultation question:

We would like to know your views on the effects that the Curriculum for Wales Framework Progression Code would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- I. opportunities for people to use Welsh
- II. treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

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

50. Only 12 responses were received on this question, of which three commented negatively on the mandatory nature of Welsh language learning in Wales. Other respondents broadly agreed that the progression Code would be positive in respect of opportunities to use Welsh, and treating the Welsh language no more favourably than the English language. However, concerns were raised with regards to the availability of Welsh speaking practitioners, workload placed on them and the availability of time to teach basic Welsh skills.

*“We feel that the Curriculum for Wales Framework Progression Code should have a very positive effect on the Welsh language. We welcome the fact that the progression in Languages, Literacy and Communication Area is represented as a coherent continuum. The continuum of learning will hopefully enable all learners across Wales to build on basic linguistic skills in order to develop a capability that will consequently enable them to become fluent Welsh speakers.”*

From a local authority response to this question

51. The move away from 'Welsh as a second language' in the curriculum and qualifications, alongside the development of a language continuum to facilitate this for all learners, was seen as a positive step. Further suggestions to increase the positive effects included maintaining a focus on the development of oracy, keeping learning engaging and fun via songs and games. This alongside the ongoing simultaneous publishing of all resources in Welsh as well as English.

## Question 7 – improving Welsh language

52. Full consultation question:

Please also explain how you believe the proposed Curriculum for Wales Framework Progression Code could be formulated or changed so as to have:

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

53. Only eleven responses were recorded in answer to this question. Some respondents suggested changes to increase the positive effects on opportunities for people to use Welsh Language, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English and ensuring no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

*“It would be important to enhance the cultural element of language learning in the principles of progression. This would further enable learners to build stronger connections with Welsh and help them understand their multilingual local environment.”*

From a practitioner response to this question

54. Suggestions provided in response to this question included:

- enhancing the cultural element of language learning in the principles of progression

- ensuring all materials and guidance reflect the principle of subsidiarity and the varying contexts of schools across Wales, including bilingual publication
- raising the status of the Welsh language as learners 'respond' in the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area
- ensuring the principles reflect the ability to use Welsh and English in order to give equal status to each language
- a clearer link between the Welsh Government's commitment to develop a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

## Question 8 – additional information

55. Full consultation question:

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

56. Seventeen respondents added further commentary under this question. These were a mix of practitioner and stakeholder responses, and in the main represented a series of questions (some of which have been raised earlier in this report). The points raised under this question are summarised here for completeness and to aid support planning.

- How will schools be judged / assessed on their curriculum design and realisation?
- When will insights gained by Pioneer schools be shared more widely?
- When will further guidance on assessment be available, including on how it links with accountability?
- How do the principles of progression link to descriptions of learning, and how does that support learner assessment of progress?
- When can we expect further support on curriculum design, progression and assessment arrangements?

- How do the principles of progression relate to the enabling pathways guidance being developed? There needs to be a clear reference to this and to Routes for learning.
- Threshold statements and guidance should be added for learners with advanced ALN needs.
- Practitioners should have more extensive training on disability and neurodiversity than they currently receive.