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Welsh Government

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REPORT

Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture: a state of the nation report

The report is in response to a request by the Welsh Government to undertake a state of the nation thematic survey to review the teaching of Welsh history in schools, how diversity is taught in schools and whether the history taught in schools is representative of all of Wales' communities and their international connections.

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Summary of main findings

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Standards

In a few schools, pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of local and Welsh history.

In a very few schools, where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history is prioritised and well planned, pupils develop an extensive understanding of history from multiple perspectives.

Pupils in many schools enjoy learning about local and Welsh history and culture. They particularly enjoy activities where they learn about the significance of local events and individuals within the context of Welsh, British and global history. When given the opportunity to study Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history, many pupils enjoy studying the contribution of individuals to history. As they mature, pupils appreciate how their understanding of history and culture will help them develop as ethical, informed pupils of Wales and the world. Pupils enjoy handling artefacts and first-hand evidence, reading novels based on historical events, using digital resources and preparing and presenting arguments when considering different perspectives.

When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy learning about local and Welsh history, identity and culture. For example, pupils enjoy learning about events such as Tryweryn, Cilmeri and the Rebecca Riots. They particularly enjoy activities where they learn about the significance of local events and individuals within the context of the history of Wales, Britain and the world. When given the

opportunity to study Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history, pupils enjoy studying the contribution of diverse individuals to history such as John Ystumlynn, Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman and Nelson Mandela. As they mature, pupils appreciate how their understanding of history and culture will help them develop as ethical, informed pupils of Wales and the world. Pupils enjoy handling artefacts and tangible evidence, reading novels based on historical events, using digital resources and preparing and presenting arguments when considering different perspectives.

Provision

In a few schools, staff use local and Welsh history as a driver for their topic planning and make links between local, national and international histories to develop pupils' understanding of their place in the world.

Overall, provision of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories is strongest in schools situated in multicultural and diverse areas of Wales.

In many schools, teachers have appropriate subject knowledge for local and Welsh history and have suitable knowledge of international Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history.

Many schools plan valuable enrichment experiences for pupils, including visits to local places of interest. Many primary schools invite local residents and groups to share their experiences and the history of the area. A few secondary schools plan opportunities for local history groups or societies to engage with pupils. Where this is done well, activities stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm for local and Welsh history. Most schools make suitable provision to promote Welsh culture through curriculum activities and school events including a school Eisteddfod. Most Welsh-medium schools provide extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh language and culture, for example providing pupils with opportunities to take part in performances which

tell local and Welsh stories and legends.

The ethnic diversity of primary and secondary schools across Wales varies widely. Most schools situated in multi-ethnic communities invite local groups and individuals to talk about different cultures, beliefs, traditions and histories. A few schools in less diverse areas use digital technology to make links with multi-cultural groups and individuals and schools located in multi-ethnic communities.

Leadership

Most senior and middle leaders in the schools contacted identify that the Curriculum for Wales provides a significant opportunity to enhance and improve the teaching of local and Welsh history.

A very few schools are beginning to consider the standards and progress of pupils in local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history to identify and plan areas for improvement.

Generally, current ITE partnerships include Welsh history within university-based provision. ITE partnerships are beginning to develop their provision for the teaching of antiracism and diversity within core and subject elements.

In a few schools contacted, staff have recently engaged with external organisations and charities that promote racial equality to provide professional learning on antiracism and diversity in Wales and the United Kingdom.

Where provision is less strong

Standards

In a very few schools, pupils make meaningful connections between their local area and the history of Wales, the United Kingdom and the world.

In a majority of schools pupils do not develop a secure and cohesive knowledge and understanding of the history of their locality and Wales. This is often because opportunities to study these aspects are not strategically planned. Generally, pupils' recall of historical events and life in Wales is strongest when they have visited a museum or historical site to bring their teaching to life.

In most schools surveyed, pupils have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the histories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples and communities. Many pupils can name individuals from international history but in general have limited understanding of their historical significance.

Most pupils do not know about the history of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities in Wales.

How much Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history is studied by pupils at GCSE and A-level is dependent on the subjects chosen by pupils and the topics chosen from the range offered by the examination board. The variance in the content of units and questions makes it difficult to judge how well pupils' understand both Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history.

Provision

In the majority of schools, curriculum planning for local and Welsh history is

limited.

In a minority of primary schools local and Welsh history is not an integral part of the school's curriculum and is viewed as a 'bolt-on' element. In many secondary schools, lessons include only cursory references to local and Welsh history. Teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to develop a cohesive knowledge and understanding of the local area and Wales across historical periods. Pupils have few opportunities to make links to events in British and international history and to develop their history skills in the context of Welsh history. Opportunities to study local and Welsh history at key stage 4 and within AS and A level history are limited to what is offered within examination specifications.

A minority of schools include Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories in their curriculum. Topics mainly focus on international history and cultural diversity in countries other than Wales. Very few schools teach pupils about the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities to the history of Wales.

Very few schools audit and map their provision for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history to ensure topics such as anti-racism, unconscious bias, prejudice and diversity are covered within their curriculum.

A lack of transition work for history in general means that teachers in secondary schools have very little knowledge of what pupils have learnt about local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history at key stage 2. In a very few cases, cluster primary schools work together with their secondary school to agree what is taught at Key Stage 2 and 3. In a minority of secondary schools, factors including the repetition of topics in key stages and a heavy focus on preparing pupils for GCSE assessments limit how much local, Welsh and Black, Asian and minority ethnic history pupils study.

Most teachers do not have the knowledge to effectively teach pupils about the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities to

the history of Wales.

Leadership

Although many leaders recognise the importance of diversity, antiracism and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture, this is not always reflected in their strategic planning for curriculum or in their professional learning offer for staff. Only a minority of schools are beginning to incorporate these aspects into their provision purposefully.

Although many senior leaders note that staff are knowledgeable about the history and culture of the local area and Wales, there is little evidence of how schools evaluate teachers' knowledge and understanding of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture.

Of the teachers contacted who undertook their initial teacher training in Wales, only a few report that they received training on Welsh history when completing initial teacher education (ITE) courses. Very few report that they received training on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture.

In most schools, teachers have very limited access to professional learning for local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture. Local authorities and regional consortia offer little specialist professional learning on these specific areas. As a result, nearly all schools rely on their own internal training for the planning and teaching of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history.

Most schools surveyed refer to a lack of suitable resources for the teaching of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. Many teachers report difficulty in finding suitable historical source material when planning authentic and meaningful learning experiences, particularly for Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils.

Recommendations

Schools and colleges should:

- recommendation 1: ensure pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the history and culture of their local area and Wales while considering different perspectives and making connections to the history and culture of the wider world
- recommendation 2: ensure pupils develop an understanding of antiracism and diversity and how they can become ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- recommendation 3: ensure pupils develop an understanding of how Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities contribute to the history and culture of Wales and the wider world
- recommendation 4: strengthen transition arrangements so that learning experiences for local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture build on those of previous key stages and avoid repetition of work
- recommendation 5: evaluate their curriculum and provision to plan how they will develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of local and Welsh history, antiracism and diversity and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture

Local authorities and consortia should:

- recommendation 6: provide suitable professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of teaching diversity, antiracism and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture within Wales and the wider world
- recommendation 7: provide suitable professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge of local and Welsh history and to share

best practice

- recommendation 8: provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop the teaching of subject specific skills in history and humanities particularly for non-specialist teachers
- recommendation 9: provide support for schools to evaluate their current curriculum and provision for local and Welsh history and culture and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture and how to plan for improvement

Welsh Government Response

Education officials will write to local authorities, consortia and partnerships to draw their attention to the recommendations placed on them and on schools in this report and will support them in meeting these recommendations.

We have also considered the report's findings as part of our preparation for the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales.

The Curriculum for Wales was built by our teaching profession working with experts and provides flexibility for schools to design their curricula to support learners, with primary schools implementing the new curriculum from September 2022 and secondary schools having the flexibility to implement from 2022 or 2023. The four purposes of the new curriculum are the shared vision and aspiration for every young person and are mandatory for school curriculum design and development. Building on this, every school will have the opportunity to design and implement their own curriculum within the national approach that secures consistency for learners across the country.

The Curriculum for Wales also contains mandatory elements within the statements of what matters for each area of learning and experience (Area). Statements of what matters are high level key concepts for each Area in order for experience, knowledge and skills to be developed by learners.

Studying the history and the histories of Wales is also an important element in meeting the four purposes of the curriculum. Through the statements of 'What Matters' Code and the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience, Welsh history is a mandatory part of the curriculum.

We consulted widely on 27 draft statements of what matters in 2019, receiving broad support. These statements collectively represented what we want for all educated learners aged 16 in Wales.

The Welsh Government strengthened the statements of 'What Matters' for Humanities following consultation in spring 2021 to ensure the study of Welsh history is both explicit and compulsory for schools and settings.

The resulting Statements of What Matters Code was issued by Welsh Government in the autumn term 2021, alongside updates to the Curriculum for Wales framework guidance online, strengthening the statements on Welsh history and including the stories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

Taking on board the collective views and advice from experts, the statements of what matters for **Humanities** (<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters>) now state:

“ Through consistent exposure to the story of their locality and the story of Wales, as well as to the story of the wider world, learners can develop an understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies, past and present. These stories are diverse, spanning different communities as well as in particular the stories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. This also enables learners to develop a common understanding of the diverse history, cultural heritage, ethnic diversity, identities, experiences and perspectives of their local area, Wales and the wider world.

The study of Welsh history in all its diversity and complexity is both explicit and compulsory for schools and settings. In the Curriculum for Wales, learners will be required to have a consistent exposure to the story of Wales in order for these schools to fulfil their duties. To put our shared commitment to Welsh history learning beyond doubt, we will consult on further changes to the What Matters Code over the course of the coming academic year to provide explicit reference to the 'history of Wales and the world'. We will confirm that the statutory guidance underpinning this provides full support for this change.

The Welsh Government identified the publication 'History Grounded' as a useful resource for teachers and the book was provided to schools in early 2022, as part of a range of actions from the Welsh Government to support the teaching of Wales' history in schools.

The book provides a visual history of Wales over 5,000 years, covering Wales' history from early settlement and society up to the present day, taking in important points throughout our past and across communities, with maps and illustrations. The book explains the way in which the landscape of Wales has been shaped by its history. We are now looking at how we can support teachers and schools to use this book as part of their teaching.

We will commission the development of an overarching timeline of Welsh history and continue to work with stakeholders, including historians and academics, over the coming months to look at further ways of supporting teachers as we move towards the full implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the central and strengthened role of the history of Wales in all its diversity.

The National Network is exploring key issues around implementing the curriculum through conversations. These conversations are being held at national and regional levels, in partnership with Welsh Government and regional consortia and, as appropriate, local authorities. These conversations build on professional learning at a regional level, bringing practitioners together across Wales to develop approaches to national implementation issues.

The National Network conversations are led by teaching practitioners, and open to all schools and settings. The National Network brings together teachers from across schools, curriculum experts and a range of stakeholders to work together to make the most of the opportunities of reform and identify and address the barriers to, and opportunities for, the implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

The Welsh Government held a National Network conversation on Welsh history, in all its diversity, in April 2022. This conversation gathered perspectives from schools and stakeholders to develop common approaches around the teaching of local and Welsh history and how the Welsh language and diverse communities can play a vital role in identity and belonging. We are now looking at how we can further support teachers, including holding further National Network conversations focused on Welsh history and culture, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories and culture in Wales, and the history and current situation of the Welsh language in terms of national and local contexts.

Alongside the wider implementation work for the Curriculum for Wales, in 2020 The Welsh Government appointed Professor Charlotte Williams OBE to chair the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group. The group published its final report in March 2021 and all recommendations were accepted by the Welsh Government.

Addressing the recommendations made in the Estyn thematic report as part of the implementation of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group's recommendations will be integral to the teaching and delivery of Welsh history to ensure that the teaching of Welsh history, identity and culture is truly diverse, and that we are enabling learners to understand and develop a strong sense of their own identity and well-being as part of their cynefin.

In June 2022 the Welsh Government published the **annual report** (<https://gov.wales/annual-report-implementation-recommendations-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities>) which sets out the progress made in implementing the

recommendations.

Progress to date includes the publication of our plan to increase recruitment of more people from ethnic minority backgrounds into Initial Teacher Education (ITE), setting out an initial series of actions. Implementation of the plan is progressing well and it is the first step in a wider strategy that will need actions from across all areas of education if we are to address fully the issues around racial inequality. We have introduced a financial incentive to attract entrants from ethnic minority backgrounds entering ITE courses from this academic year.

We recognise that there is much to be done to address inequalities and increasing diversity in the workforce remains a priority for the Welsh Government. This is not only in terms of representation in those areas with a higher ethnic minority demographic amongst learners but across all areas of Wales.

We have introduced a new category of Professional Teaching Awards Cymru named “The Betty Campbell MBE award for promoting the contributions and perspectives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities”. The award promotes and celebrates inclusion and recognises excellent awareness of the importance of an inclusive education as part of a society that confronts and addresses racism in all forms. Llanwern High School were the first recipients of the award in July.

We have held discussions with Governing Bodies to see how they could influence and lead schools to champion diversity, and a model role description for Equality and Diversity Champions was tested and evolved with governor support officers from local authorities and regional consortia. Separately, a working group of governor support officers has been established to review our school complaints guidance with a view to strengthening it in relation to complaints about discrimination. Some schools identified the need for further training and in response to the findings further support for governors has been included in the National Academy of Educational Leadership Remit Letter for

2022 to 2026 to address the gap. The National Academy for Educational Leadership will lead on the development of resources to support the Equality and Diversity Champion role on school governing bodies, with the aim of leading to a whole-school approach to celebrating diversity in schools.

In March, we commissioned new supporting materials for teachers to enable and equip them to teach the histories and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples as part of Wales'. The successful supplier is working with a range of external organisations to develop the materials for teachers that will equip them to include the teachings of ethnic minority histories and communities in the widest sense and should include, for example, Italian, Irish, Polish and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, as part of the story of Wales..We expect these resources to be available in March 2023.

We are also commissioning supporting materials to enable teachers designing their curriculum to reflect Wales' diverse history and communities. This includes the development of a timeline to support the teaching and learning of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories and contributions along with an interactive map of Wales.

The Welsh Government continue to work with a range of stakeholders on this area of work, including Estyn, Regional Consortia, and the chair of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group, who has agreed to support the Welsh Government's implementation of the recommendations in an advisory role.

Welsh Government should:

- recommendation 10: work with local authorities and regional consortia to ensure that the national professional learning offer places high priority on the development of training and resources for anti-racism, diversity and the teaching of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture

Response and acceptance

The Welsh Government is working with regional consortia and a range of other organisations and agencies to develop specific professional learning in response to the requirements of the new curriculum to support the development of new skills for practitioners for the Curriculum for Wales.

A number of recommendations were put to the Welsh Government to support practitioners in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group final report and the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan. The recommendations included the development of a range of professional learning, which included developing training covering anti-racism and inclusion, and the histories and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples to the story of Wales.

We are working in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University, the exec team and members from BAME Ed (Wales) Network and a coalition of partners all with a diverse range of expertise, lived and professional experience to develop new professional learning support for schools. A range of key partners and grass roots community organisations are contributing to this work along with other organisations such as Arts Council Wales and Literature Wales. The outreach to partners is ongoing. The official title for this project is Diversity and Anti-racism Professional Learning (DARPL).

In March 2022, the DARPL team hosted a Welsh Government Policy Insight event with 70 live attendees. This event was designed to raise awareness of the DARPL project and the highly positive grassroots developments to date to support schools to tackle significant, sensitive and complex issues and changes to support the transition to an anti-racist environment in all our schools. **A full recording of the event is available on Hwb** (<https://hwb.gov.wales/playlists/view/34da0350-6490-400a-b395-a78481e91f10/en/1>). This recording was also streamed on the Wales channel during the World Education Summit held in March.

A new Diversity and Anti-racism Professional Learning (DARPL) **virtual campus** (<https://darpl.org/>) (DARPL website) has been developed and launched providing a central hub for schools to promote forthcoming events, new research and resources, and to showcase partners involved in DARPL.

The Regional Consortia and partnerships have been key partners in the DARPL project, offering professional learning, advice and support, peer reviewing materials and supporting promotion of programmes.

Additional funding will also be allocated to the regional consortia to engage their support in the development and delivery of national professional learning programmes linked to key areas and ensure their engagement in support for these important areas of Professional Learning moving forward.

Other funding will enable wider organisations and agencies (including third sector organisations) to be engaged and supported to develop specific professional learning offers responding to the requirements of the new curriculum as appropriate.

National Network conversations on Welsh history and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories were held with teachers in April. The feedback gained from these sessions is helping to inform the Curriculum for Wales, which is under continuous review, and specifically the Welsh Government's programme of professional learning. We are now looking at how we can work with external stakeholders, including universities and historians, to create further learning support for teachers.

- recommendation 11: work with Qualifications Wales to ensure that future GCSE and A-level qualifications include opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture

Response and acceptance

Qualifications Wales' review of existing qualifications and development of Wales' new suite of general qualifications is being taken forward under the project banner of "Qualified for the Future". Qualifications Wales continues to work closely with the sector and wider stakeholders to co-construct a high quality set of qualification proposals which are aligned with the philosophies of the new curriculum, and to capitalise on emerging opportunities around assessment methods. Qualifications Wales are undertaking a public consultation to further test and help refine these draft proposals. The reform of qualifications for 14 to 16 year olds (GCSEs and wider qualifications) plays an important role in ensuring the successful implementation of the new curriculum and to enable the opportunities presented by the Curriculum for Wales to be fully realised.

Raising the profile of Welsh history in schools is a top priority for Welsh Government which has been given greater attention through inclusion in the co-operative agreement with Plaid Cymru. The Curriculum for Wales, across all areas, emphasises the importance of placing learning in its local and national contexts. The Humanities Area outlines a methodology for selecting content for history, referring schools and settings to the need for consistent exposure to the story of learners' locality, Wales and the wider world.

Qualification Wales is leading the significant reform project for our qualifications system. This includes, ensuring that GCSEs and the wider 14 to 16 qualifications (qualification content and assessment methodologies) reflects and can support the Curriculum for Wales Framework and meet the future needs of learners.

As part of the co-construction process all subject level working groups tasked with coming up with ideas for the qualification requirements for individual subjects were provided a common set of background information papers on aspects of future qualifications that they will be required to consider. This

included an outline of Welsh Government's expectations in terms of how Wales' new suite of qualifications will contribute towards our ambitions and commitments. Explicit expectations are included that the interdependent, complex and diverse nature of Welsh history, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories, is fully reflected in this exercise. For example; one of these papers has a focus on multiculturalism and diversity and ensuring that these considerations are embedded in the design of new qualifications across all subjects not just in obvious ones such as history. This paper will make explicit reference to the work and recommendations in Professor Williams report.

Qualifications Wales have and continue to engage with the latest research evidence around issues of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation in the curriculum and qualification such as the recent **literature in colour report published by the Runnymede Trust** (<https://litincolour.penguin.co.uk/>) and using the findings from such research to help shape their thinking.

As part of their stakeholder engagement during the co-construction process Qualifications Wales continue to ensure that they engage with a wide range of groups representing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. This is to ensure that these representative groups can input their views, experience and perspective throughout the qualification development process.

Qualifications Wales is committed to exploring the potential to incorporate greater flexibility into qualification content and assessment and encouraging awarding bodies to reflect this in specifications. This should allow schools to have greater autonomy and freedom in the topics they choose to teach. This should encourage schools to provide diverse teaching and learning experiences, including around Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, within the qualifications phase.

Publication details

The report was published on 7 October 2021 and is **available on Estyn's website** (<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-report/teaching-welsh-history-including-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-history-identity>).

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