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Practitioner survey on preparations for Curriculum and Assessment Reforms 2022: final report

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ALN	Additional learning needs
ALNCo	Additional learning needs co-ordinator
All-though school	Ages 3 – 16 / 19 school
Areas / AoLE	Area of learning and experience
CfW	Curriculum for Wales
CPD	Continuous professional development
eFSM	Eligible for Free School Meals
EOTAS	Education Other Than at School
EWC	Education Workforce Council
HE	Higher Education
HLTAs	Higher Level Teaching Assistants
INSET	In-service Education and Training Day
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LSW	Learning support worker: used to refer to both Teaching Assistants and Higher-level Teaching Assistants
Middle school	Ages 3 to 16 / 19 school
PLASC	Pupil-level Annual School Census
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
REC(s)	Regional Education Consortia

Executive summary

1. This report presents findings of a survey carried out by Arad Research on behalf of the Welsh Government in June and July 2021 that examined schools' preparations for the roll-out of Curriculum for Wales. It follows from the summary report published in autumn 2021 and provides more detail and analytical depth to inform policy and support for schools.[1]

Methodology and analysis

2. The findings presented in this report draw on the following research and analysis:

    - A survey of all schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) in Wales, distributed through multiple channels.[2]
    - A total of 345 responses received from headteachers and senior leaders in unique schools. An additional 222 responses were received from practitioners; these were respondents who identified themselves as middle leaders, teachers or learning support workers (LSWs);
    - Survey data presented in the report has been weighted by type of school to ensure that the profile of the sample reflects all schools and PRUs. A description of the sample profile and approach to weighting is included in Annex B.

Headline findings

3. Overall, responses from senior leaders and practitioners in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum reforms were positive.
4. The findings also indicate strong levels of commitment to the curriculum reforms among senior leaders and practitioners.
5. Senior leaders and practitioners recognise the opportunities presented by the reforms, including the flexibility to shape a new curriculum relevant to

[1] See Welsh Government (2021), *Practitioner survey on preparations for Curriculum and Assessment Reforms 2022: interim findings from primary and secondary school senior leaders*.
[2] Some non-maintained early years settings also responded to the survey. Details on the methodology are set out in Section 3.

learners' needs. Teachers reported being enthused by the prospect of working more collaboratively with colleagues.

6. Senior leaders and practitioners reported progress in relation to:
    - Collaboration to develop a shared vision for the curriculum, plan and discuss pedagogy and trial new approaches;
    - Adopting innovative teaching practices;
    - Working with learners to inform curriculum planning;
    - Accessing professional learning to give teachers the confidence and capabilities to be co-designers of the curriculum;
    - Focusing on cross-curricular and integrated learning as part of their planning and teaching practice.
7. A clear majority of senior leaders indicated that they are well-placed to design their own curriculum and make changes to their professional practice ready for the planned roll-out from September 2022.
8. A lower proportion of practitioners – around half – noted that they felt their school was ready to design their curriculum and adapt their professional practice in preparation for roll-out. There were important variations in responses by sector: primary practitioners were notably more likely than those in secondary schools to agree that their school was ready to design their curriculum and adapt their professional practice.
9. There were some recurring patterns in overall survey responses:
    - Primary school respondents were equally or more positive in their responses to all questions compared with their secondary school counterparts.
    - In virtually all areas explored in the survey there was at least a small minority of senior leaders and practitioners who indicated a lack of commitment, knowledge or readiness.
    - Knowledge and understanding of how to respond to curriculum reform were consistently lower among secondary practitioners compared with senior leaders and primary practitioners.

10. Survey data showed relatively little notable difference in the responses from leaders by region and by language medium of school.

11. Most senior leaders and practitioners reported that insufficient time had been available to them to prepare for the roll out of the curriculum. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted schools' preparations for curriculum reform severely during the 2020/21 academic year.

12. Many senior leaders and practitioners reported a need for more guidance on assessment to support learner progression. They reported a lack of knowledge about how future assessment approaches should be developed and what measures would be taken to ensure consistency of assessment arrangements and approaches to progression between schools. These concerns were raised most frequently by practitioners, particularly in secondary schools. Respondents also noted anxiety about how assessment and learner progress would be recorded and used as part of accountability processes.

13. Most senior leaders and practitioners reported that they need more support or resources to be ready for September 2022. Practitioners, particularly in secondary schools, reported lower levels of confidence than senior leaders that they will be able to access the necessary professional learning. Respondents from Welsh-medium schools were notably more likely than those in English-medium schools to report that their school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for roll-out.

Issues for consideration

i. Welsh Government and partners should consider what actions could be taken to ensure all practitioners, particularly those in secondary schools, gain the skills and knowledge they need to design and implement their own curriculum and assessment arrangements.

ii. Welsh Government and partners should support senior leaders in ensuring that all practitioners are aware of their school's curriculum vision and understand their role in helping to achieve this vision through their practice.

iii. Welsh Government should work with work with school improvement services, including regional consortia, to identify schools that are less engaged with the curriculum reform process and provide targeted support for staff at all levels within these schools.

iv. As the capacity, morale and well-being of teachers continue to be tested during the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, Welsh Government should closely monitor schools' preparations towards milestones in September 2022 and 2023 and respond swiftly to specific needs identified.

v. Welsh Government and partners could consider what additional professional learning and guidance could be provided to schools to clarify expectations in relation to assessment processes to support learner progression.

vi. Welsh Government and partners should continue to ensure that appropriate professional learning and support, including examples of good practice and other materials, are available to schools in the lead up to September 2022.

vii. In doing so, the planning of all professional learning, support and resources should take into consideration the needs of Welsh-medium and bilingual schools.

1. Introduction

1.1 This section provides and overview of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales and the purpose of the scoping study in helping to support future research and evaluation priorities.

Curriculum for Wales

1.2 The Curriculum for Wales is the cornerstone of the Welsh Government's efforts to reform education in Wales and build an education system that raises educational standards and enjoys public confidence. The four purposes of the curriculum are the starting point and aspiration for every child and young person in Wales. The OECD's Improving Schools in Wales report (2014) and Professor Graham Donaldson's independent review (2015) set out a rationale for the reforms as well as recommendations for how to design a new curriculum fit for modern day Wales. Under the reforms each school is developing its own curriculum, supported by national guidance, which will enable learners to embody the four purposes of the curriculum by becoming:

- **ambitious, capable learners** who are ready to learn throughout their lives
- **enterprising, creative contributors** who are ready to play a full part in life and work
- **ethical, informed citizens** who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- **healthy, confident individuals** who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

1.3 Under the Curriculum for Wales subjects will be organised around six Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas): expressive arts; health and well-being; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; and science and technology.

1.4 The Curriculum for Wales guidance promotes an integrated approach to learning and teaching. It encourages collaboration and cross-disciplinary

planning and teaching to enable learners to make links between the different Areas and apply their learning to new situations and contexts.

1.5 Under the new curriculum arrangements schools support the progression of each individual learner along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16. The Curriculum for Wales guidance describes principles of progression for the curriculum and for individual Areas, and progression steps which are supported by the statements of what matters and descriptions of learning. Linked to this, assessment should be formative, learner-focused and used to inform how practitioners respond to the needs of individuals and groups. A defining characteristic of the new approach is that curriculum, assessment and pedagogy are seen as parts of an integrated whole.

1.6 The curriculum reforms are supported by a national approach to professional learning; new evaluation and improvement arrangements; a transformation of additional learning needs support and provision; and the development of new qualifications.

1.7 Welsh Government has set out a series of guidance documents to schools on how to approach curriculum design and implementation, recognising the iterative process of curriculum development. The most recent publication *Curriculum for Wales: the journey to curriculum roll-out* (2021) built on earlier documents and set out the phases involved in curriculum design, which were:

- **engagement** to develop a whole-school understanding of the curriculum and a vision for the teaching and learning that supports it;
- **design, planning and trialling** – drawing on guidance and support;
- **evaluating and preparing for first teaching**;
- **first teaching**, begin to implement the curriculum, reflecting on its effectiveness over time and refining its design as learners progress.

1.8 In addition, the Welsh Government set out the principles that should underpin schools' curriculum preparation and design: development through **co-construction**; effective **pedagogy**; engagement with **professional learning** and networks; embedding the qualities of **schools as learning organisations**; considering the **wider school context**, including how the

curriculum can support the ALN Code, Cymraeg 2050 and the promotion of learner health and well-being.

About the scoping study

1.9 Welsh Government has commissioned Arad Research, in partnership with Open University Wales, to conduct a scoping study relating to the evaluation of the curriculum and assessment reforms in Wales.

1.10 The aim of the scoping study is to articulate the theory, assumptions, evidence and readiness underpinning the curriculum and assessment reforms and to use this information to develop recommendations for a robust monitoring and evaluation programme. The study objectives are to:

- assess schools' preparations for the roll-out of Curriculum for Wales, identifying key actions for supporting preparations.
- develop a programme theory for the curriculum and assessment reforms, setting out key evidence and assumptions and providing a clear picture of the system and stakeholders that will implement them.
- identify the evaluation questions and explore the extent to which they can be met credibly and reliably using existing, and new, data sources.
- recommend a detailed monitoring and evaluation strategy for addressing the evaluation questions.

1.11 This report presents findings from a survey of schools and PRUs that relates to the first of the objectives listed above. The survey was carried out in June and July 2021, and examined schools' preparations for the roll-out of Curriculum for Wales. The survey was aimed at head teachers, senior leaders and practitioners in schools and PRUs.[3] A report on the other elements of the evaluation scoping study will be published by Welsh Government in 2022.

1.12 Interim findings from the survey were published in September 2021. The paper was based on responses received from senior leaders. These

[3] Some respondents from non-maintained early years settings also completed the questionnaire.

responses are analysed in further detail in this report alongside responses practitioners (i.e. middle leaders, teachers and learning support workers).

1.13 Section 2 of this report presents the key findings of the report. The survey methodology is set out in Section 3, and sections 4-9 present the findings from the survey in a way that reflects the structure of the questionnaire (each section includes findings from the closed and open-text survey questions):

- Section 4 presents data on a series of overarching questions in relation to curriculum preparations, pedagogy and the support available to schools to prepare for roll-out.
- Section 5 presents findings relating to questions on respondents' knowledge about curriculum change;
- Section 6 presents findings on respondents' understanding of how to respond to curriculum change;
- Section 7 focuses on findings in relation to respondents' commitment to curriculum change;
- Section 8 reports findings on preparations to design, adopt and implement the curriculum;
- Section 9 sets out findings on respondents' capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum.

1.14 Conclusions and issues for consideration are set out in Section 10. The survey questionnaire is included in Annex A. Annex B presents information on the profile of the survey sample and population, while Annex C (separate document) includes the data tables produced from the survey results.

2. Summary of key findings

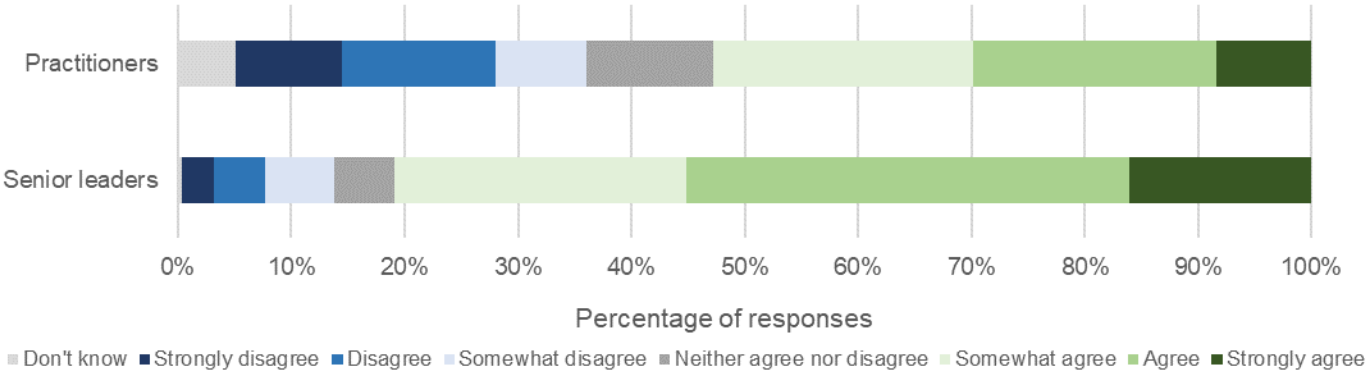
2.1 A summary of the key findings from the survey is set out below. All figures in this section refer to all sectors, unless stated otherwise.

Overarching questions on preparations for 2022

2.2 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with three key statements relating to their preparations for the roll-out of the curriculum ready for September 2022.

2.3 Senior leaders (81 per cent) were more likely than practitioners (53 per cent) to believe that their school was **well placed to design their own curriculum** ready for September 2022.

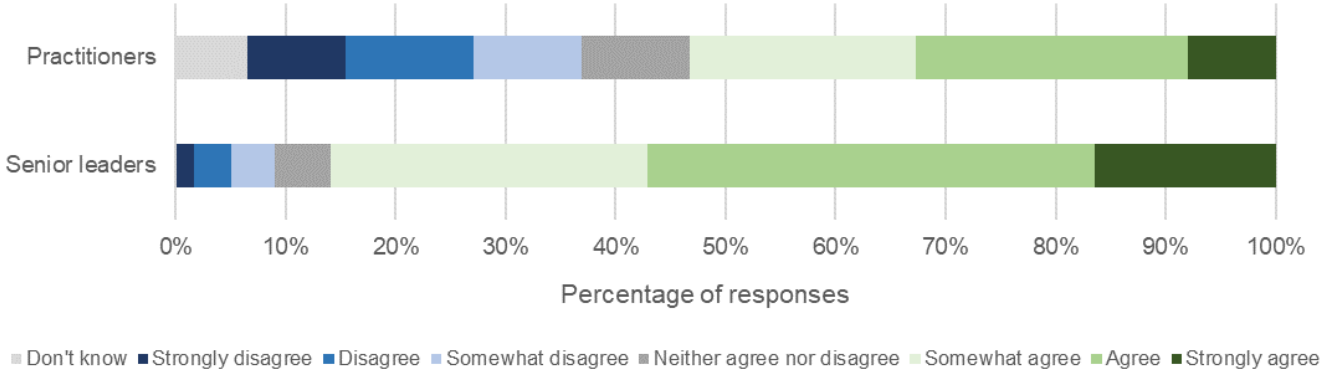
Figure 1. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



N=319 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

2.4 Senior leaders (86 per cent) were more likely than practitioners (53 per cent) to consider that their school is well-placed to make **changes to their professional practice** ready for September 2022.

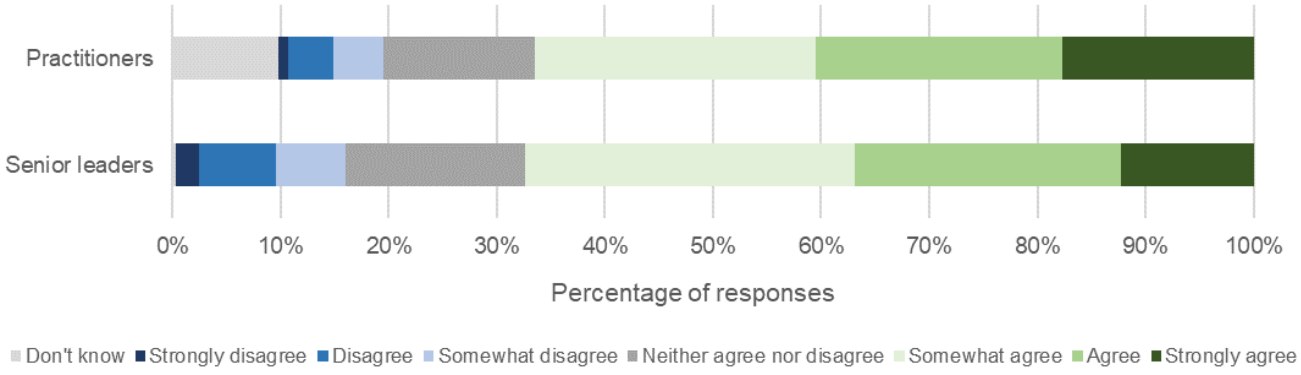
Figure 2. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



N=315 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

2.5 67 per cent of senior leaders and practitioners believed that their school was in need of **additional support or resources** to be ready for September 2022.

Figure 3. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



N=317 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on additional support needed to be ready for the planned roll-out of the curriculum

2.6 Respondents were asked to specify the additional support they needed in an open-text question. The most common themes raised were as follows:

- The need for **additional time** to: develop **resources**; access tailored **professional learning** opportunities; engage in reflection and preparatory work to refine **teaching strategies**;
- A request for more guidance and support relating to expectations around **assessment and progression**;
- The need for time to be made available to **collaborate with other schools** and trial new teaching and learning practices.

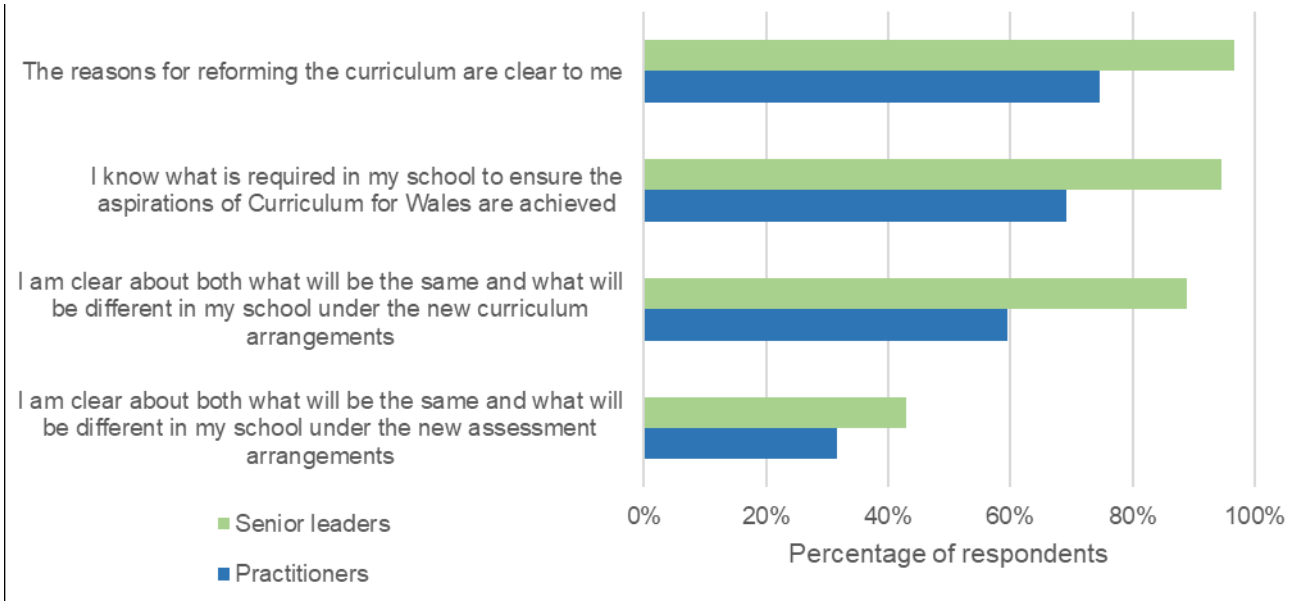
Knowledge about curriculum change

2.7 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements relating to their knowledge about curriculum change. Figure 4 below shows the percentage of respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with these statements. The full set of responses are shown in Section 5 and Annex C.

- 97 per cent of senior leaders and 74 per cent of practitioners agreed that the **reasons for reforming the curriculum were clear to them**.
- 95 per cent of senior leaders and 69 per cent of practitioners agreed that they knew **what was required in their school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved**.
- 89 per cent of senior leaders and 59 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **clear about what will be the same and what will be different in their school under the new curriculum arrangements**.
- 43 per cent of senior leaders and 32 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **clear about what will be the same and what will be different in their school under the new assessment arrangements.**[4]

[4] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

Figure 4. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with statements relating to their knowledge about curriculum change: all sectors



N = 345 senior leaders, 222 practitioners

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on knowledge

2.8 Respondents were invited to provide additional comments to support their responses to questions about their knowledge about curriculum change. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

- A lack of **knowledge about the assessment approaches** that would be in place in future. Some felt there was a lack of information on assessment or expressed concern about the consistency of future assessment arrangements across schools.
- Concerns about the **amount and clarity of information and guidance** they had received in relation to designing their school curriculum. Some requested more practical examples of how to design and implement their curriculum, including more information from schools at a more advanced stage of curriculum development.
- Challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of the **time and resources available** to implement changes.

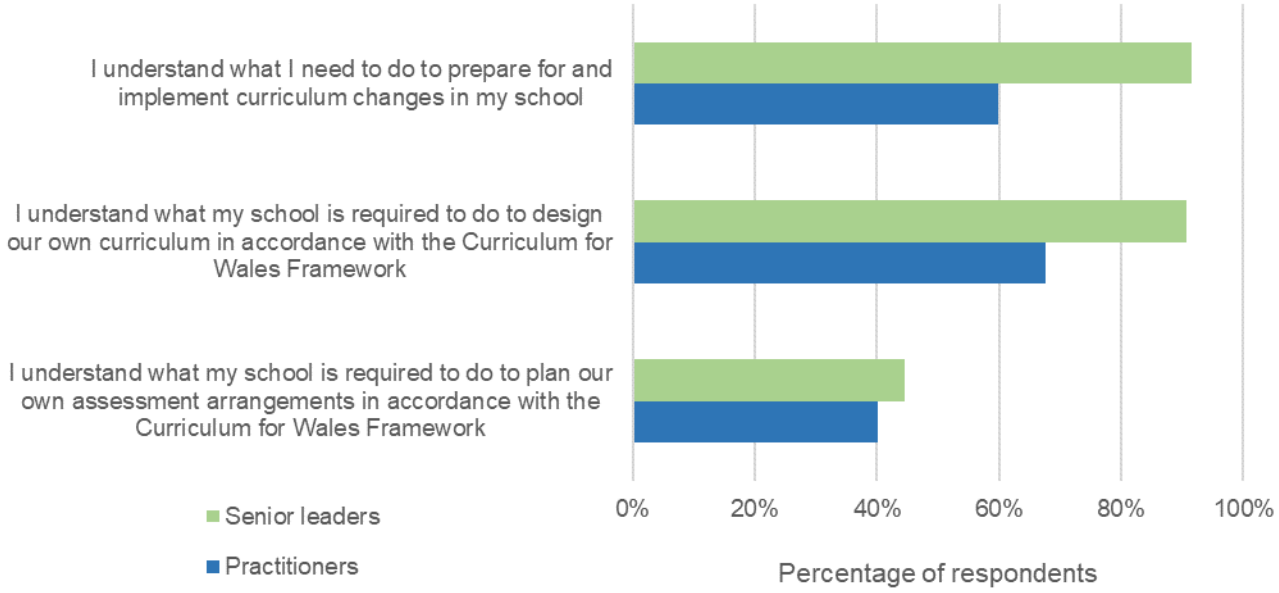
Understanding of how to respond to curriculum change

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements relating to their understanding of how to respond to curriculum change.

2.9 Figure 5 below shows the percentage of respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with these statements. The full set of responses are shown in Section 6 and Annex C.

- 91 per cent of senior leaders and 68 per cent of practitioners agreed that they **understood what their school was required to do to design their own curriculum**.
- 45 per cent of senior leaders and 41 per cent of practitioners agreed that they **understood what their school was required to do to plan their own assessment arrangements** to support learner progression.[5]
- 92 per cent of senior leaders and 60 per cent of practitioners agreed that they **understood what they need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in their school.**

Figure 5. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with statements relating to their understanding of how to respond to curriculum change: all sectors



N = 343 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

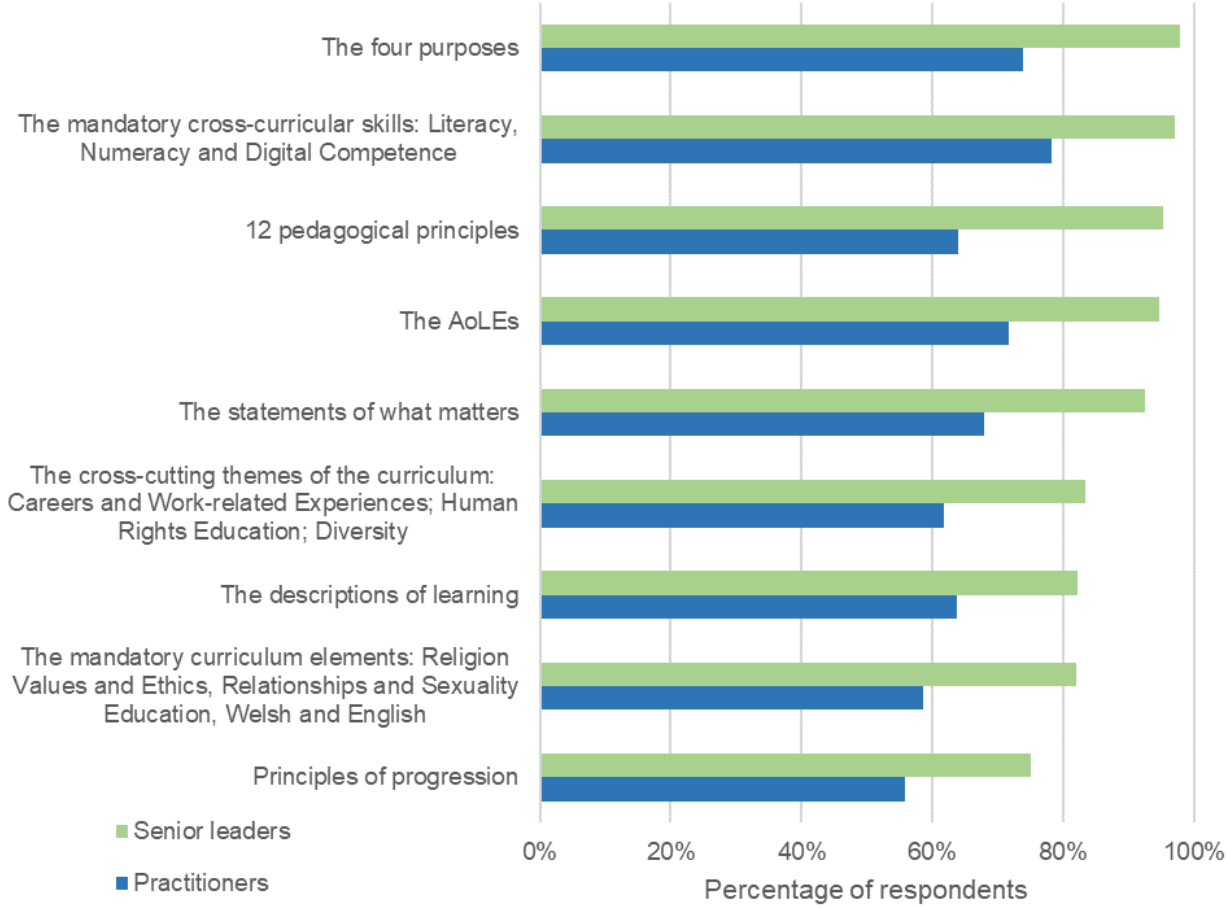
[5] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

2.10 Compared with senior leaders, practitioners were less likely to agree that they were confident they would be able to **incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into their professional practice:**

- **The four purposes:** 74 per cent of practitioners agreed they were confident, compared with 98 per cent of senior leaders**;**
- **The Areas of Learning and Experience (Areas):** 72 per cent of practitioners, 95 per cent of senior leaders;[6]
- **The statements of what matters:** 70 per cent of practitioners, 93 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The principles of progression:** 56 per cent of practitioners, 75 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The descriptions of learning:** 64 per cent of practitioners, 82 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The mandatory cross-curricular skills:** 78 per cent of practitioners, 97 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English:** 59 per cent of practitioners, 82 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The cross-cutting themes: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity**: 62 per cent of practitioners, 83 per cent of senior leaders.

[6] Areas were labelled as 'AoLEs' in the original questionnaire.

Figure 6. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with the statement 'Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022': all sectors



N=341 senior leaders, 222 practitioners

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on understanding of how to respond to curriculum change

2.11 Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments to support their responses to questions about their understanding of how to respond to curriculum change. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

- Little understanding among some of **how to design their own assessment arrangements**, including how to incorporate the progression steps within these. Others had progressed with their assessment processes but were **unsure whether these were**

appropriate to support learner progression and were unsure where to turn for reassurance;

- Concerns raised above about a **lack of time** to develop their understanding of curriculum change;
- The need for **more structured guidance** to develop their understanding of curriculum design, supported by **exemplification.**

2.12 Respondents were asked to note what were the **main things they would do to prepare** for their school's new curriculum. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

- **Collaboration** with learners, parents, governors and the local community. Some commented on collaboration within school and with other schools focused on sharing information and on transition between settings;
- **Professional learning** to prepare for the new curriculum, reiterating the importance of allowing sufficient time for practitioners to engage in professional learning opportunities;
- Preparations to **incorporate the Areas into their curriculum design**, including restructuring learning or staffing to reflect the Areas.
- **Developing a curriculum vision**, with some emphasising the importance of a vision to having a 'shared ownership' and a 'whole-school understanding' of the new curriculum.

2.13 Respondents were asked to note what the most **significant changes would be to their professional practice** in response to the Curriculum for Wales. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

- **Assessment** and **collaboration** were frequently mentioned as aspects of practice they expected to change. Some wished for greater clarity on how to develop assessment approaches and track pupil progression consistently across departments and between settings;
- **Greater innovation in pedagogy,** with more experimentation and less focus on measured outcomes.
- A **greater emphasis on learner voice** was mentioned as a further change which could lead to a more tailored learning experience that is more relevant to learners' interests;

- Greater **flexibility and freedom** to shape their own curriculum.

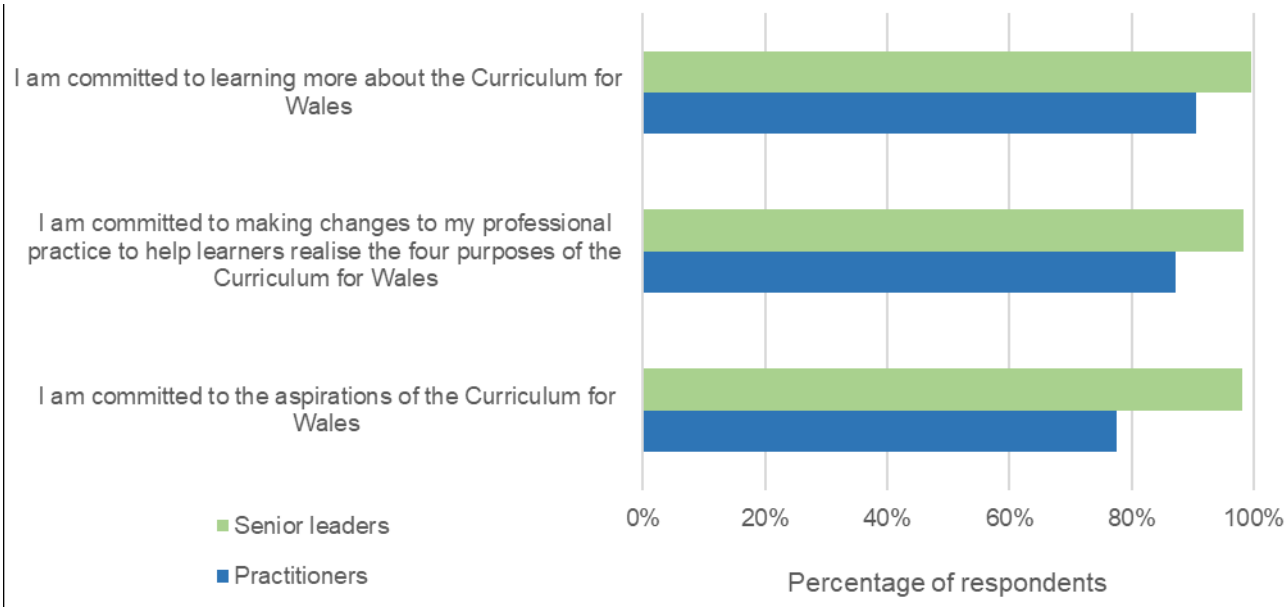
Commitment to curriculum change

2.14 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements relating to their commitment to curriculum change. Figure 7 below shows the percentage of respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with these statements. The full set of responses are shown in Section 7 and Annex C.

- 98 per cent of senior leaders and 78 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales.**
- 98 per cent of senior leaders and 87 per cent practitioners agreed that they were **committed to making changes to their professional practice** to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.[7]
- 99.6 per cent of senior leader and 91 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales**.[8]

[7] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).
[8] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

Figure 7. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with statements relating to their commitment to curriculum change: all sectors



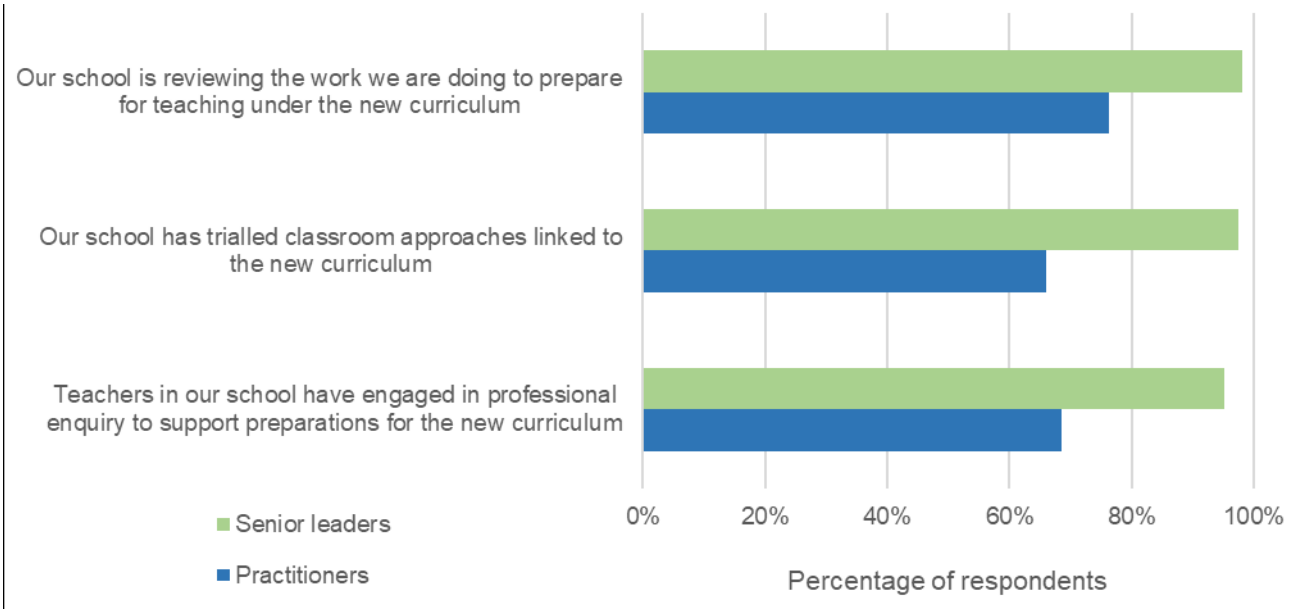
N = 326 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

Preparations to design, adopt and implement the curriculum

2.15 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements relating to their preparations for curriculum change. Figure 8 shows the percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with these statements. The full set of responses are shown in Section 8 and Annex C.

- 97 per cent of senior leaders and 66 per cent of practitioners stated that **their school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum.**
- 95 per cent of senior leaders and 69 per cent of practitioners stated that **teachers in their school had engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum**.
- 98 per cent of senior leaders and 76 per cent of practitioners stated that their **school was reviewing the work they were doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum.**

Figure 8. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who responded either 'Yes, a lot' or 'Yes, a little' to statements relating to their preparations to design, adopt and implement the curriculum: all sectors



N= 322 senior leaders, 219 practitioners

2.16 While the vast majority school senior leaders (81 per cent) reported that they had **developed a vison for their curriculum**, responses showed that **practitioners were not always aware of this**. Around half (55 per cent) of practitioners stated that their school **has developed a vision for its new curriculum.** 19 per cent of practitioners said their school had not developed a vision while 26 per cent of practitioners stated that they did not know.

2.17 54 per cent of senior leaders and 62 per cent of practitioners disagreed that, to date, **sufficient time had been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum**.[9]

2.18 Senior leaders reported that ***senior leaders*** and ***teaching staff*** had been more **actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum** than ***support staff*** and ***learners***.

2.19 Respondents were asked to what extent practitioners in their school were working collaboratively with partners to support the design of the new

[9] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

curriculum, namely collaboration with: ***other practitioners within their school***, ***other schools*** and ***HE partners***.

- 98 per cent of senior leaders and 76 per cent of practitioners stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively either 'a lot' or 'a little' with ***other practitioners within their school*** to support the design of the new curriculum.
- 89 per cent of senior leaders and 41 per cent of practitioners stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively 'a lot' or 'a little' with ***other schools*** to support the design of the new curriculum.

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on preparation

2.20 Respondents were invited to provide additional comments to support their responses to questions about their preparations to design, trial and implement their curriculum. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

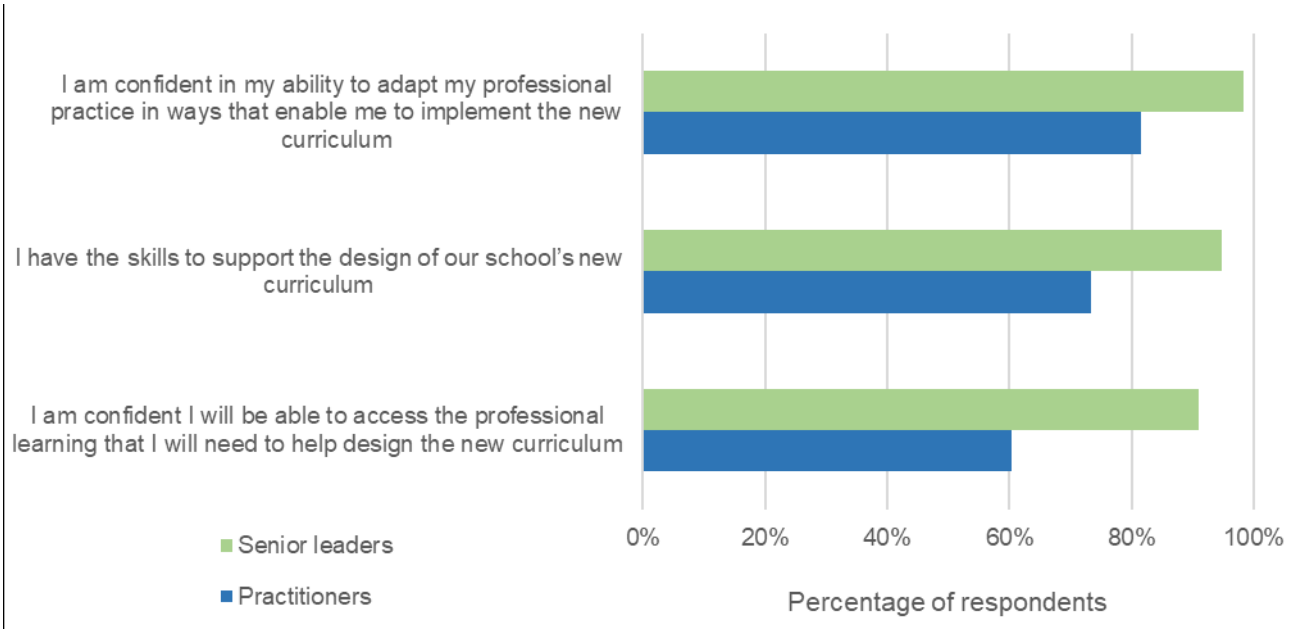
- **Time pressures** were again frequently mentioned, with respondents noting that they were committed to the aspirations of the curriculum but needed more time away from the classroom to prepare for it. Respondents emphasised the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**, highlighted the time taken to assess centre-determined grades (CDGs), manage the wellbeing of staff and learners, and comply with pandemic-related health and safety regulations. As a result some respondents reported that they were still in the early stages of curriculum preparation, mostly because of COVID-19.
- Respondents described the **professional learning** they had accessed but also commented on additional practical support they felt was needed.
- Some respondents described the **network and collaborative activity** taking place as part of their preparations.

Capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum

2.21 Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements relating to their capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum. Figure 9 below shows the percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with these statements. The full set of responses are shown in Section 9 and Annex C.

- 95 per cent of senior leaders and 75 per cent of practitioners agreed that they had **the skills to support the design of their school's new curriculum.**
- 91 per cent of senior leaders and 60 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **confident they will be able to access the professional learning that they will need to help design the new curriculum**. There was a marked difference between primary and secondary practitioners; 49 per cent of secondary practitioners agreed compared with 82 in primary schools.
- 98 per cent of senior leaders and 82 per cent of practitioners agreed that they were **confident in their ability to adapt their professional practice in ways that enable them to implement the new curriculum.** There was a marked difference between primary and secondary practitioners; 76 per cent of secondary practitioners agreed compared with 93 in primary schools.

Figure 9. Percentage of senior leaders and practitioners who strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with statements relating to their capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum: all sectors



N= 323 senior leaders, 217 practitioners

2.22 The vast majority of senior leaders (85 per cent) agreed that their **school has the hardware and digital infrastructure required to implement the new curriculum'**. However, senior leaders in primary schools (89 per cent) were more likely than those in secondary schools (66 per cent) to agree with the statement.

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on capability

2.23 Respondents were invited to provide any additional comments about their capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum. The themes which respondents raised most frequently were as follows:

- Respondents re-stated the challenges of ensuring practitioners had enough **time to prepare for designing and implementing** their curriculum;
- Concerns were raised that **practitioners lack the expertise to be able to design their own curriculum**, and that practitioners had not been trained for curriculum development;

- Some respondents reported that **practitioners were motivated and enthused** by designing and implementing their own curriculum and the professional development that was associated with this;
- A few respondents raised **concerns about support or training** and noted that they required more practical support and exemplification.

3. Methodology

3.1 This section provides detail on the research methodology. This includes detail of the research tool design process, fieldwork conducted, analysis process, challenges encountered and limitations of the methodology.

Research tool design

3.2 A questionnaire was designed by Arad's research team, working with our associates and with input from Welsh Government officials and middle-tier partners. The survey was piloted during early June with a sample of primary and secondary schools and revised following this. The survey was structured around a conceptual framework that identified five aspects of readiness for curriculum reform. This was an adaptation of a model developed by a member of the research team, Professor Claire Sinnema.[10] This model was adapted following discussions with stakeholder organisations during the design of the survey. The survey was also piloted with senior leaders and practitioners in primary and secondary schools. The survey included questions on the following:

- **Knowledge** about curriculum change
- **Understanding of how to respond** to curriculum change
- **Commitment** to curriculum change
- **Preparation** to design, adopt and implement the curriculum
- **Capability** to practice in ways that realise the curriculum

The survey text can be seen in Annex A.

Survey distribution

3.3 A link to an electronic survey was emailed to head teachers in all schools in Wales (census approach) and was publicised via Welsh Government's

[10] See Sinnema, C. and L. Stoll (2020), *Learning for and realising curriculum aspirations through schools as learning organisations*, European Journal of Education 55, pp. 9-23.

communication and social media channels, and with the support of local authority and regional consortia communications teams. The survey was aimed at head teachers, senior leaders and practitioners in schools and PRUs.[11] Headteachers who were sent the survey by email were encouraged to share the link to the questionnaire with colleagues. The survey was launched on June 16th 2021 and closed on July 17th 2021.

3.4 The sample of responses was monitored continuously, and targeted reminders were sent to schools to ensure good representation by sector, language medium, geography, size and percentage of learners receiving free school meals. The response rate was good, particularly in view of the pressures facing schools at the end of an academic year severely impacted by the pandemic.

Survey sample

3.5 In total, **620 responses were received to the survey**. This sample comprised the following groups of respondents which are analysed separately in this report:

- **345 responses from headteachers and senior leaders** in unique schools and PRUs (i.e. only counting one response per school);[12]
    - This equates to approximately 23 per cent of the total population of maintained schools and PRUs in Wales.
    - This sample is broadly reflective of the overall school population by type of school (primary, secondary, PRU, special school), language medium, geographic region and percentage of learners receiving free school meals.
        - See Annex B for the sample profile.

[11] Six non-maintained early years settings also responded to the survey.
[12] In settings where a headteacher and another senior leader responded, the headteacher's response was selected as the setting's main response for analysis in the sample of 345 unique school responses.

- **222 responses from practitioners;**
    - these were respondents who identified themselves as middle leaders, teachers or learning support workers (LSWs) from among the schools represented in headteachers and senior leader responses.
    - these included multiple responses from the same school in some cases.
- An **additional 47 survey responses were received from senior leaders** in schools where the headteacher had also responded. This sample is too small to enable detailed analysis. The results were used for comparison and validation of the main sample of responses from 345 senior leaders.
    - There were no notable differences between this sample of respondents and the main sample of 345 senior leaders from unique schools, therefore the results from this sample are not presented in this report.
- **Six respondents from non-maintained early years settings** completed the questionnaire.[13] This sample is too small to enable detailed analysis, although data tables are presented in Annex C.

A full profile of the sample is presented in Annex B of this report.

Survey analysis

3.6 The responses of senior leaders and practitioners are analysed separately in this report. Throughout the survey analysis, the following terms are used to describe respondent groups:

- ***Senior leaders*** is used to refer to respondents who stated they were a 'headteacher', 'senior leader' or in another senior leadership role (e.g. deputy headteacher, assistant head teacher);

[13] Non-maintained early years settings were not sent the survey directly but are likely to have accessed the survey via Welsh Government's communication and social media channels.

- ***Practitioners*** is used to refer to respondents who stated they were a 'middle leader', 'teacher', 'Learning Support Worker' (LSW) or another role other than senior leader (e.g. Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) student, school clerk).

3.7 Figures included in this report reflect the aggregated agree / disagree percentages for each question unless otherwise indicated. That is, agree percentages are combined *Strongly agree / Agree / Somewhat agree* responses. Disagree percentages are combined *Strongly disagree / Disagree / Somewhat disagree*. Responses to alternative question formats are indicated. Full data tables presenting disaggregated responses are included in Annex C.

3.8 As part of the analysis, survey results have been weighted where necessary to ensure that the profile of the sample better reflects the survey population.[14] Detail on the sample and population profile and the approach to weighting the data is presented in Annex B.

- Responses by **type of setting** (primary, secondary, all through schools (3-16/3-18), pupil referral units (PRUs) and special schools) are weighted for both senior leaders and practitioners;
- Responses by the language medium of setting are not weighted because they are considered to be sufficiently representative of the population (senior leaders only);
- Responses by **region** (North, Mid and West, South East, Central South) are unweighted because they are considered to be sufficiently representative of the population (senior leaders only).

3.9 As noted above, a census approach was taken to survey distribution, with a quota sampling method used for following up specific types of settings to try

[14] For headteachers and senior leaders (one response per school was included in this analysis), data were weighted to reflect the population of settings. This was done by weighting the sample so that the percentage of respondents by type of setting matched the percentage of settings in each of the following categories: primary and nursery schools, all-through (3-16 / 3-19) schools, secondary schools, special schools and PRUs. For practitioners, data was weighted to reflect the percentage of registered practitioners in each of these types of setting across the population of teachers.

and ensure the sample was as representative as possible of the population of schools and PRUs.

3.10 The chosen method and levels of non-response mean that the sample of respondents cannot be considered a probability sample, and therefore cannot be generalised to the population. Tests of statistical significance should only be applied to probability samples. As an alternative, in order to have some basis to determine noteworthy differences between different groups of respondents, and to help identify patterns in the sample, we have treated differences above a certain number of percentage points between respondent groups as being 'notable differences'.[15]. The thresholds used as a basis for presenting findings as 'notable' are detailed in the table below.

Table 1. Percentage point differences between respondent groups that are described as 'notable'

Respondent groups in which differences are examined	Percentage point difference in responses to be considered 'notable'
Differences between **senior leaders** and **practitioners**	12
Differences between **senior leaders in primary** schools and **senior leaders in secondary schools**	16
Differences between **practitioners in primary schools** and **practitioners in secondary schools**	20
Differences between **senior leaders in English-medium schools** and **senior leaders in Welsh-medium schools**	14
Differences between **geographic region of senior leaders**	22

[15] If the sample of respondents were a true random sample, then the achieved sample sizes would enable us to report the results of the survey with a confidence level of 95 per cent based on a confidence interval of 5 per cent for all senior leaders, 7 per cent for all practitioners, 6 per cent for primary senior leaders, 10 per cent for secondary senior leaders, 11 per cent for primary practitioners, 9 per cent for secondary practitioners, 6 per cent for senior leaders in English-medium schools, 9 per cent for senior leaders in Welsh-medium schools. Statistically, this would enable us to state with 95 per cent confidence that our sample responses are within these percentages of the 'true' percentage for the population of respondents. These percentages have been used as a basis for identifying the thresholds in Table 1.

3.11 Differences between respondent groups presented in the report are considered notable (as defined in Table 1) unless otherwise indicated in the text. The report presents all findings for senior leaders and practitioners as well as notable differences between senior leaders in: primary and secondary schools; Welsh and English-medium schools; and geographic regions. Where no reference is made to differences between the above groups of respondents, there were no notable differences to report (full data tables are included in Annex C).

Qualitative analysis

3.12 A framework approach has been taken to analyse the qualitative interview data. This allows structured analysis of the interview notes as well as enabling us to consider issues that emerged from the data itself and may not have been previously considered. Evidence was initially reviewed during a briefing session which involved the researchers who conducted the interviews. This enabled the researchers to reach agreement on the key themes emerging from the evidence, and informed the subsequent analysis.

Follow-up interviews with schools (Autumn 2021)

3.13 Survey respondents who agreed to participate in the follow-up qualitative research were invited to participate in an interview. The focus of these discussions was on gaining a more detailed understanding of the depth of school-level activity and the experiences of leaders and practitioners relating to curriculum reform.

3.14 In total, qualitative interviews were undertaken with 48 interviewees in October and November 2021.

Methodological challenges and limitations

3.15 In analysing the findings presented in this report, it is important to bear in mind some of the challenges encountered during the fieldwork.

3.16 The survey took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and its progress was disrupted by the challenges and frequent changes which affected the

education sector. Many settings indicated they were unable to participate in the fieldwork, often because of time pressures, uncertainty and day-to-day challenges related to COVID-19.[16]

3.17 It is important to acknowledge the risk of selection bias among the sample of senior leaders which has engaged in the survey. Senior leaders who considered that their setting had progressed further than others in their preparation activities may have been more likely to complete the survey. Equally, senior leaders who felt their settings that were less prepared than others may have considered the research to be an opportunity to highlight any issues they were facing. The evaluation sought to mitigate this risk by adopting a quota approach to distributing reminders to complete the survey, targeting types of schools (by sector, language medium and region) that were less well represented in the sample.

3.18 There is also a risk of selection bias among the sample of practitioners engaged. Although the survey was distributed directly to some practitioners via communication channels such as the Dysg newsletter, the survey also relied on headteachers distributing it internally to their staff. It is important to consider that some head teachers may have been more likely to do so if they felt their school was well prepared for curriculum reform. For this reason, the sample of practitioners should be considered a convenience sample, and results interpreted with this in mind.

[16] This was particularly the case for special schools, which remained open during much of the 'lockdown' periods in 2020 and 2021.

Sections 4-9: Detailed findings of the survey

4. Overarching questions

4.1 This section presents the findings relating to overarching questions presented in the survey relating to preparations for the planned roll out of the new curriculum from September 2022. Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to their preparations for the new curriculum. These were:

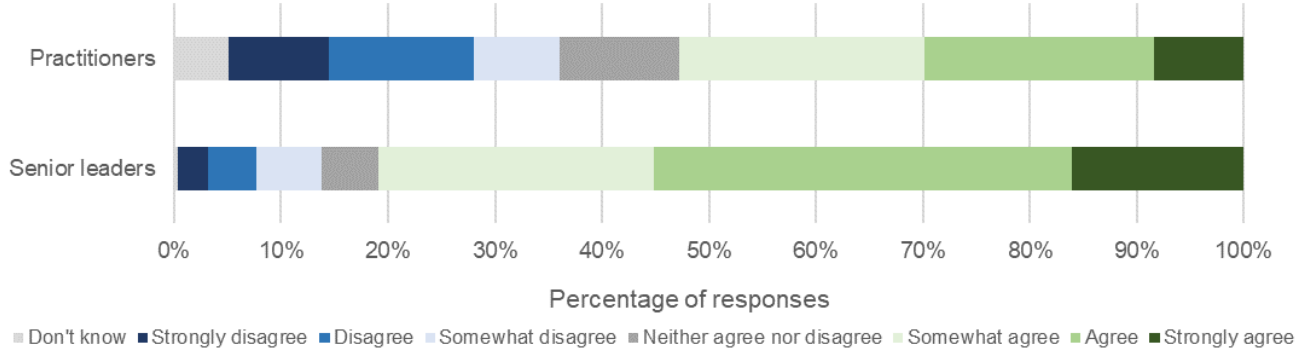
- 'My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022';
- 'My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022';
- 'My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'.

Responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'

4.2 A clear majority (81 per cent) of senior leaders and a lower percentage (53 per cent) of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out from September 2022'***.[17]

[17] The figures included in this report reflect the aggregated agree / disagree percentages for each question unless otherwise indicated. That is, agree percentages are combined Strongly agree / Agree / Somewhat agree responses. Disagree percentages are combined Strongly disagree / Disagree / Somewhat disagree. Responses to alternative question formats are indicated.

Figure 10. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



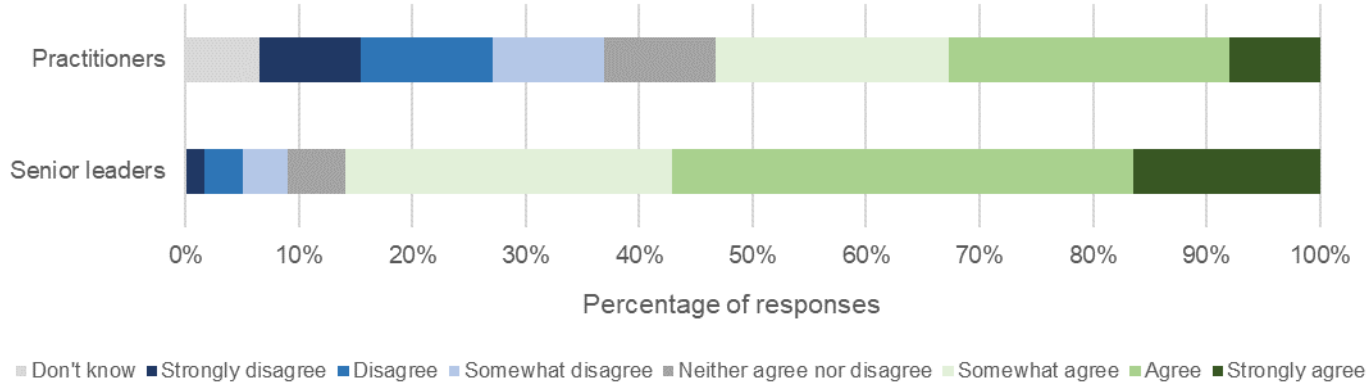
N=319 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

4.3 A clear majority of practitioners in primary schools (79 per cent) per cent agreed with the statement, compared with 38 per cent of secondary school practitioners. This reveals important differences of opinion among practitioners in primary and secondary schools regarding schools' perceived preparations for curriculum roll-out.

Responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'

4.4 The vast majority (86 per cent) of senior leaders and a lower percentage (53 per cent) of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'***.

Figure 11. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



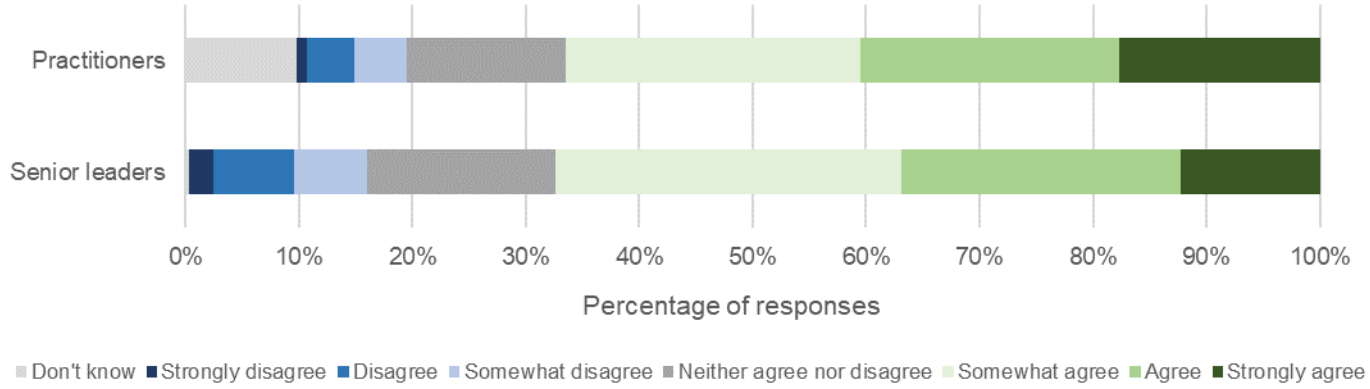
N=315 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

4.5 A clear majority (80 per cent) of practitioners in in primary schools agreed with the statement, compared with 38 per cent of practitioners from secondary schools.

Responses to the statement 'My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'

4.6 Two thirds of senior leaders (67 per cent) and practitioners (67 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022'***.

Figure 12. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022': all sectors



N=317 senior leaders, 214 practitioners

4.7 Senior leaders in Welsh-medium schools (84 per cent) were more likely than those in English-medium schools (61 per cent) to agree that their school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022.

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on additional support needed to be ready for the planned roll-out of the curriculum

4.8 Respondents were asked to specify the additional support they needed in an open-text question. In total, 155 respondents opted to provide written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

Time pressures and the impact of COVID-19

4.9 The issue raised most frequently in responses to this question was the need for additional time to prepare for the new curriculum. Senior leaders and practitioners referred to the need for additional time to:

- develop resources;
- undergo tailored professional learning relating to curriculum reform;
- ease workload burdens;

- design the curriculum;
- collaborate with other practitioners;
- pilot and evaluate;
- afford more time for practitioners away from the classroom to engage in the necessary reflection, engagement and preparatory work.

4.10 Time pressures were considered to be more severe as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on schools. Senior leaders, in particular, described that teaching staff were facing increasing workloads and were suffering fatigue.

> 'We have lost over a year of teaching time to COVID. We have had to deal with a global emergency and have not had time to give the thought that is needed to the CfW. We simply do not have enough time or support to be able to be the best we can for our learners in September 2022. We will obviously try our best but we physically do not have enough time to design and trial schemes of work. We also have the uncertainty of whether there are going to be more school closures, we have the issue of staff and pupils off isolating, and the uncertainty surrounding measures of accountability and assessment.' Senior leader, secondary school.

4.11 Linked to the issue of time pressures, respondents noted that schools had prioritised the wellbeing of staff and learners impacted by the pandemic. Consequently schools reported not having progressed aspects of their curriculum preparations as much as they had planned.

> 'Covid has definitely had an adverse impact on the stage of our curriculum development. We are regaining momentum, however, we are not as far along in our action research and development of the 12 Principles as we would have been if covid had not hit. There is still a lot to do and demands on staff are ever increasing. The whole system is in strategic change and this takes time to prepare and action properly… time and resources are essential.' Senior leader, primary school.

4.12 Whilst acknowledging the need for additional opportunities to release teachers to support curriculum development, some also noted that – during this period of recovery – it was not beneficial to withdraw teachers from classes given that learners have missed a significant amount of teaching time. Schools underlined the need for learners to experience consistency in their teaching. This represents a conflict that schools were experiencing – balancing their commitment to the vision of Curriculum for Wales whilst also trying to do the best they can to support current learners who have suffered through severely disrupted learning in recent years.

4.13 Other specific aspects of preparation which additional time (and resource) were needed to support included:

- **time to meet and develop resources** for all Areas – including resources tailored to ensure that the needs of all learners are reflected in the curriculum;
- **time and money to cover members of staff and SLT** to engage in team teaching, coaching and trialling strategies and resources collaboratively;
- **time to allow discussions, preparatory work and trialling between feeder primary schools and secondary schools**. Respondents referred to the need for whole-cluster approaches to develop new approaches to teaching and learning;
- **time to engage** with parents, governors, local partners and agencies, local businesses.

> 'We want this Curriculum to be successful and world leading, in order to do this we need time and space to design, trial, deliver and embed through excellent training and resources.' Primary school, ALNCo.

4.14 Some noted that additional time to prepare for the curriculum also requires funding, particularly to provide more pupil support in classrooms through LSWs. Respondents also noted that engaging with the community and developing or accessing new learning materials, as noted above, will require additional resources.

<u>Support linked to assessment arrangements</u>

4.15 Reflecting comments made in response to other survey questions, respondents raised the need for further support to understand and prepare for assessment to support learner progression under the new curriculum (see also sections 5.12, 6.10, 6.27). Respondents wanted greater clarity about expectations around assessment and progression, which was reported to be a source of confusion and some concern in schools – particularly among secondary school respondents. Many respondents expressed support for the emphasis on formative assessment but reported feeling that more specific guidance was needed in a number of areas. Recurring points raised in survey responses were as follows:

- uncertainty about **how learner progression along a continuum of learning should be captured**, recorded and reported;
- the need to develop understanding about the **links between the new curriculum and assessment at key stage 4** through external qualifications;
- how to **integrate new assessment arrangements with the literacy and numeracy framework** and the digital competency framework;
- uncertainty about how to ensure **consistency** in (and moderation of) assessment practices between primary and secondary schools.

4.16 Respondents noted that they felt further guidance was needed on how assessment arrangements should be developed and implemented by schools.

> 'I feel we are working well with curriculum design and trialling this effectively for our school. I am less confident about assessment and what this will look like past 2022.' Headteacher, primary school

Support for collaboration

4.17 Collaboration, or support to facilitate collaboration, was another theme that featured prominently where respondents were asked to comment on additional support needs. Many described the importance of being able to network with other schools both to share good practice and to co-ordinate within their clusters. It was felt that Welsh Government and regional partners should prioritise opportunities for schools to interact, discuss approaches, and share practical ideas and tools that can be used in the classroom. The points raised most frequently in written responses in relation to collaboration were:

- the **need for time to be made available** to collaborate with cluster schools and trial new teaching and learning practices;
- the potential to draw out the main **learning from schools who are more advanced** in their curriculum preparations, including pioneer and innovation schools;
- the **value of visits to other schools** to experience the new curriculum in action, where schools have begun implementing or trialling new approaches;

- finding time for secondary school teachers to spend in primary schools to **observe and learn from practice**.

‘[we need] time to collaborate with cluster schools and trial good practice that has not been available to us due to the pandemic.’ Headteacher, primary school.

5. Knowledge about curriculum change

5.1 This section outlines the findings of the research in relation to respondents' knowledge about curriculum change. Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to their knowledge about curriculum change. These were:

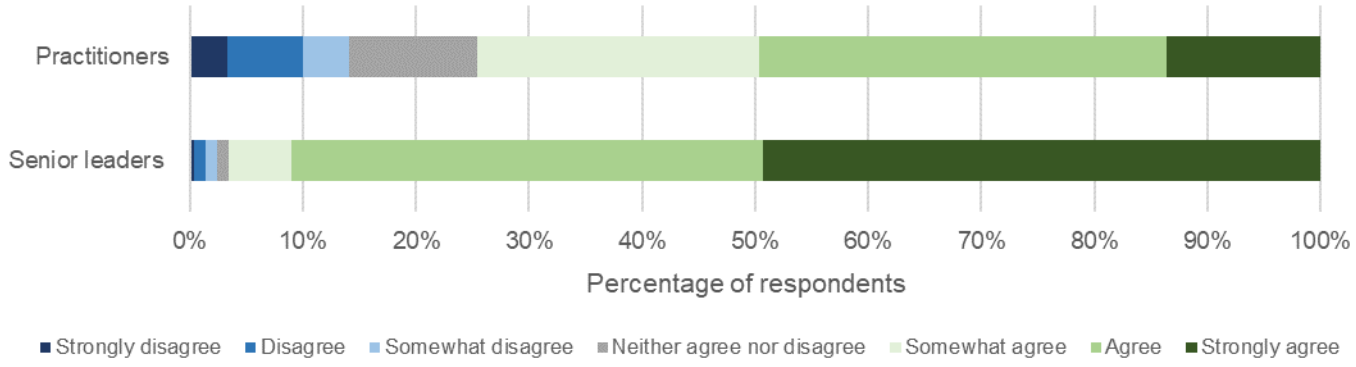
- 'The reasons for reforming the curriculum are clear to me'
- 'I know what is required in my school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved'
- 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new curriculum arrangements'
- 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new assessment arrangements'

5.2 Respondents were also invited to provide written comments to support their answers in an open text question.

Responses to the statement 'The reasons for reforming the curriculum are clear to me'

5.3 The vast majority (97 per cent) of senior leaders and a majority of practitioners (74 per cent) agreed that *'**the reasons for reforming the curriculum are clear to me'***;

Figure 13. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'The reasons for reforming the curriculum are clear to me': all sectors

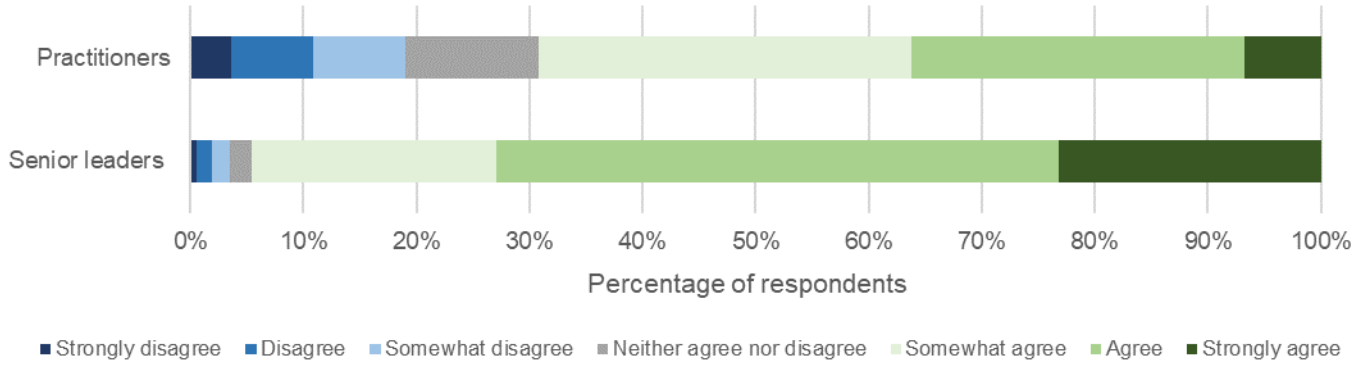


N = 345 senior leaders, 222 practitioners

Responses to the statement 'I know what is required in my school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved'

5.4 The vast majority (95 per cent) of senior leaders and 69 per cent of practitioners agreed that ***'I know what is required in my school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved'***.

Figure 14. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I know what is required in my school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved': all sectors



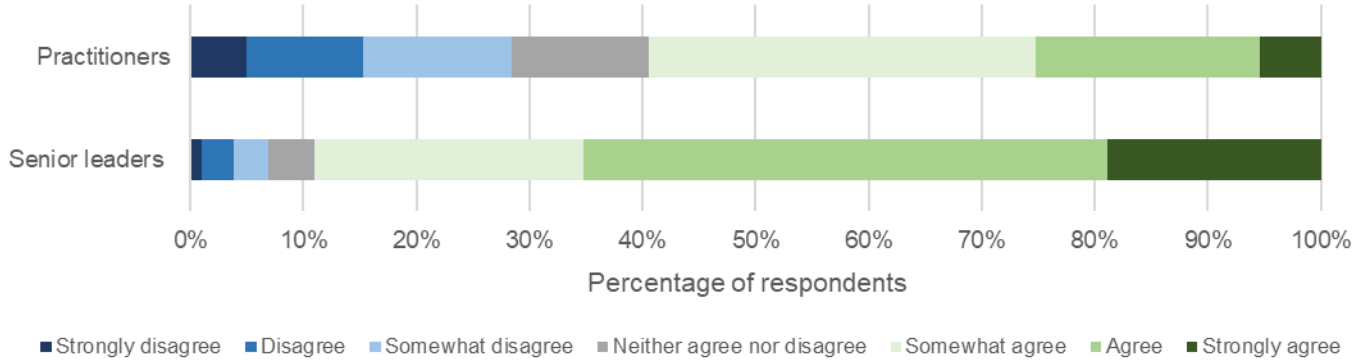
N = 343 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

5.5 Primary school practitioners (92 per cent) were more likely to agree with this statement compared with those from secondary schools (57 per cent).

Responses to the statement 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new curriculum arrangements'

5.6 The vast majority of senior leaders (89 per cent) and 59 per cent of practitioners agreed that ***'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new curriculum arrangements'***.

Figure 15. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new curriculum arrangements': all sectors



N = 343 senior leaders, 222 practitioners

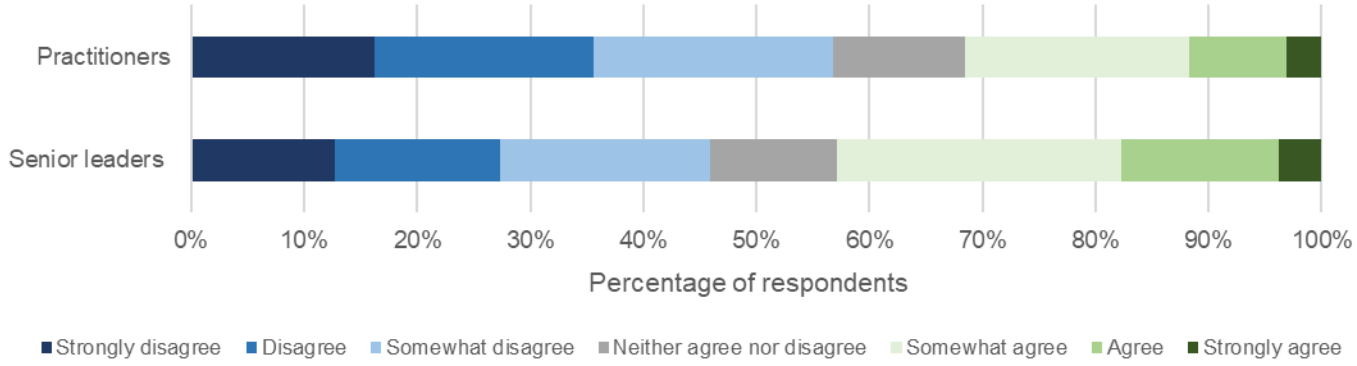
5.7 Primary school practitioners (84 per cent) were more likely to agree with this statement compared with practitioners from secondary schools (46 per cent).

Responses to the statement 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new assessment arrangements'

5.8 Just under half (46 per cent) of senior leaders and over half (57 per cent) of practitioners disagreed with the statement: ***'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new assessment arrangements'***.[18]

[18] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

Figure 16. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new assessment arrangements': all sectors



N = 343 senior leaders, 222 practitioners

5.9 Secondary school practitioners (70 per cent) were more likely than primary school practitioners (31 per cent) to disagree with this statement.

5.10 Senior leaders from the Central South region (30 per cent) were less likely than those from the Mid and West (52 per cent) and South East (62 per cent) regions to agree with this statement. Respondents from the North region were less likely to agree (36 per cent) than those from the South East region (62 per cent).

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on knowledge of new curriculum arrangements

5.11 Respondents were asked to provide additional comments in relation to the statements regarding their knowledge of the new curriculum arrangements. In total, 167 respondents opted to provide written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

<u>Knowledge of assessment arrangements</u>

5.12 A significant proportion of survey respondents indicated a lack of knowledge about what assessment to support learner progression would look like under the new arrangements. It was felt that information regarding assessment was lacking and/or unclear in comparison to other elements of the CfW framework and guidance.

Senior leaders and practitioners reported that this uncertainty made it difficult to plan for future cohorts, especially thinking ahead to assessment at GCSE level and the new qualifications being developed. Some survey responses revealed that continued questions around assessment impacted on school leaders' ability to secure engagement from staff and to progress other aspects of their curriculum preparations:

> 'I am concerned about the way in which the new curriculum is going to be assessed. When presenting to staff, it is the question that all secondary staff have and to get them on board would be easier with this information!' Senior leader, all-through school.

5.13 Commenting on questions about their knowledge of curriculum and assessment reforms, survey respondents expressed concern about how consistency would be achieved in assessment arrangements to support learner progression. This included consistency of approaches taken by teachers within the same school, consistency within clusters, and between primary and secondary schools.

5.14 Most written comments were limited to senior leaders and practitioners noting that they felt unclear and in need of further guidance. Others made reference to specific issues related to assessment, including:

- Secondary school senior leaders and practitioners expressed **uncertainty about how assessment would be carried out** to support learner progression during what is currently key stage 3;

> 'No idea how KS3 will be assessed - levels? Skill trackers? What data will be required when reporting to parents or Welsh Government?' Secondary school teacher

- A need to explain **whether and how assessment criteria will be standardised**; senior leaders in secondary schools noted that it was likely that a wide range of different assessment systems would emerge across Wales prior to GCSEs;

> 'All I know it that there are progression steps. I have no other information about national testing or about any data that will be gathered or collected, any moderation that might need doing etc.' Headteacher, primary school.

- Concerns regarding **how learner attainment and progress would be reported** for accountability purposes to Estyn and to parents;

- A lack of clarity around **how the progress of learners would be tracked** – particularly the most vulnerable groups.

5.15 Where schools had begun the process of developing their own assessment models to record learner progression, a number expressed a need for reassurance that these models were appropriate and would satisfy the needs of other partners in the system, including the Welsh Government, the regional consortium and Estyn.

> 'SLT have read curriculum guidance and used this to develop a model of progression and assessment, however we feel need reassurance and further guidance in this area to ensure we are progressing towards CfW.' Senior leader, primary school.
>
> 'The school has robust internal diagnostic assessments for spelling, reading and numeracy and a model of collating a range of information for teachers to make a well-informed judgement as to how pupils are progressing. This our own model - whether or not it suits the new curriculum we are unclear about as it does not assess directly against AoLEs [Areas].' Headteacher, primary school.

<u>Communication and information to support knowledge of CfW</u>

5.16 In response to the same question, respondents commented on the information and guidance available to support knowledge of CfW. Senior leaders and practitioners reported that the volume of information published made it difficult to navigate and use the guidance documentation.

5.17 Senior leaders reported that they had adapted and 'distilled' Welsh Government guidance for use during in-school professional learning sessions to ensure it was more accessible for teachers. Examples of this were provided by primary and secondary school senior leaders. Practitioners also noted that they had invested time in reviewing guidance and adapting aspects to enhance their knowledge. However there were pleas from some respondents for more practical guidance to support curriculum design and implementation.

> 'Schools are feeling swamped with guidance and theory. We need practical support to move forward…' Headteacher, primary school.
>
> 'Although a lot of work has been done and there's a lot of information on the web, it's not clear how schools should plan and create their own curriculum. Not

enough information on assessment has been released to date.' Practitioner, primary school.[19]

5.18 Although most were positive about the aspirations and broad principles of Curriculum for Wales, a number of practitioners – in primary but more frequently in secondary schools – noted that they were not clear about how the changes would be 'implemented in practice'.

> 'I understand the reforms, why they are happening and the aspirations, however there is a vast difference between the aspirations and the reality of what is going to be delivered.' Practitioner, primary school.

5.19 A number of senior leaders and practitioners noted disappointment that they had not received sufficient information from pioneer schools to aid their knowledge of the curriculum. These individuals felt they were "two to three years" behind those schools who had been immersed in the reform process for longer.

Impact of COVID-19 on knowledge and engagement with curriculum reform

5.20 Respondents noted that the disruption to teaching and learning during the previous 18 months, including teachers' attention being focused on adjusting to remote teaching and new models of delivery, had meant that knowledge of the new curriculum had not been developed as fully as would otherwise have been the case. A lack of collaboration with other schools and schools working in more insular ways had been a barrier to establishing knowledge of the CfW.

> 'Due to the pandemic it has taken roughly two years out from understanding and trying the new curriculum constantly in school, with the different ages. The pandemic has not enabled any significant action research at school in some of the new areas of the orders and therefore hampered the speed in which schools are 'New curriculum ready''. Headteacher, primary school.

5.21 Senior leaders also reported varying levels of knowledge of the changes between teachers, with this variance frequently depending on the level of discussion and leadership within Areas.

[19] Original quote in Welsh: 'Er bod llawer o waith wedi'i wneud a llawer o wybodaeth ar y we, nid yw'n glir sut y dylai ysgolion cynllunio a llunio Cwricwlwm ei hunain. Does dim digon o wybodaeth am asesu wedi cael ei rhyddhau hyd yn hyn.'

Knowledge of the vision for CfW

5.22 Mixed views were expressed in relation to the vision for CfW. In response to this question about their knowledge of the reforms, some respondents expressed support for the vision and aspirations of CfW, noting that the framework has the potential to provide children and young people with the skills and knowledge needed in a changing world. These respondents referred to excitement about the reforms and commitment to realising the vision of CfW.

5.23 A minority of respondents expressed criticism in relation to the vision for CfW, both at the national level and their school-level vision. Some practitioners said that they were unaware of their schools' vision and therefore did not know what will change with the implementation of the new curriculum. Others understood the broad principles but felt clarity was lacking on how this is expected to materialise in practice. A small number either did not understand or agree with the rationale for curriculum reform and its ability to produce the desired changes.

> 'I understand the reforms, why they are happening and the aspirations, however there is a vast difference between the aspirations and the reality of what is going to be delivered.' Practitioner, primary school.

6. Understanding of how to respond to curriculum change

6.1 This section presents the findings relating to practitioners' understanding of how to respond to curriculum change**.** Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to their preparations for the new curriculum. These were:

- 'I understand what my school is required to do to design our own curriculum in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework'
- 'I understand what my school is required to do to plan our own assessment arrangements in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework'
- 'I understand what I need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in my school'
- 'Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022'
    - the four purposes;
    - the Areas[20];
    - the statements of what matters;
    - principles of progression;
    - descriptions of learning;
    - the 12 pedagogical principles;
    - the mandatory cross-curricular skills (Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence);
    - cross-cutting themes: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity;

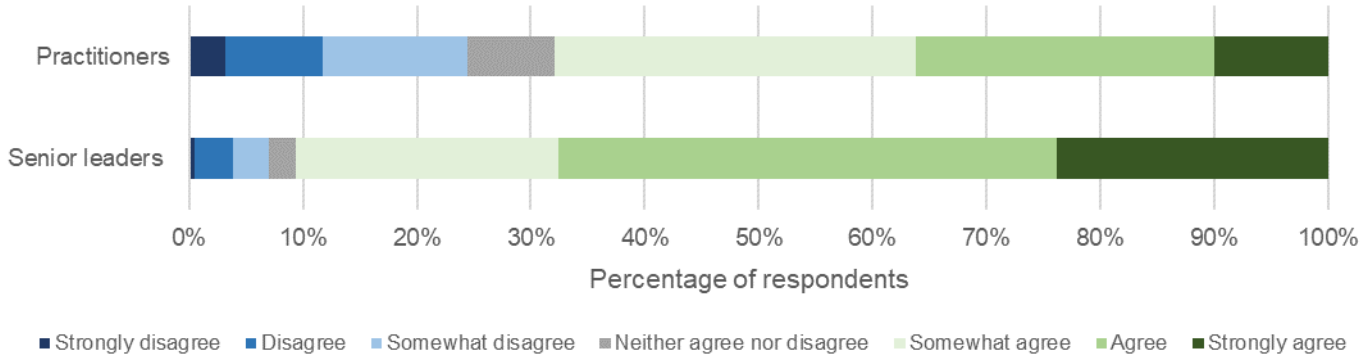
[20] Labelled 'AoLEs' in the original questionnaire.

- mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English.

Responses to the statement 'I understand what my school is required to do to design our own curriculum in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework'

6.2 The vast majority of senior leaders (91 per cent) and 68 per cent of practitioners agreed that ***'I understand what my school is required to do to design our own curriculum in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework'***

Figure 17. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I understand what my school is required to do to design our own curriculum in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework': all sectors



N = 341 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

6.3 Primary school practitioners (86 per cent) were more likely than secondary practitioners (60 per cent) to agree with this statement.

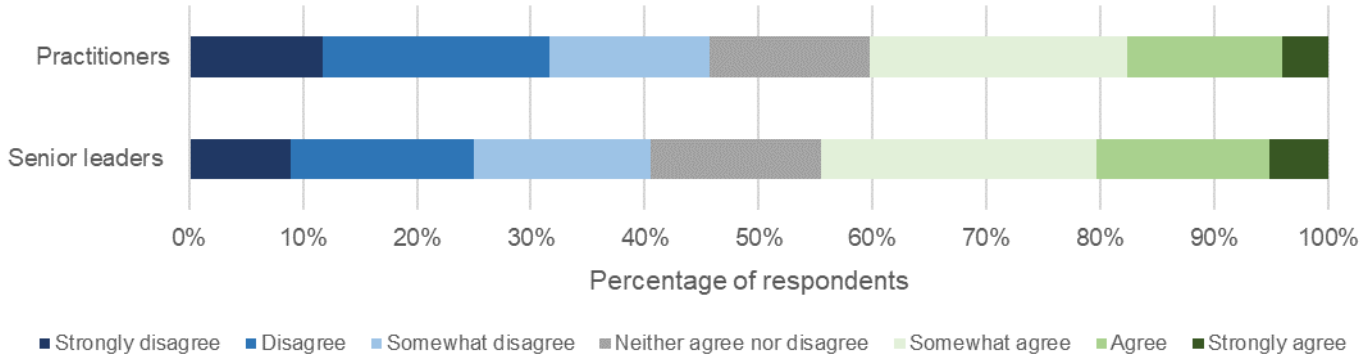
Responses to the statement 'I understand what my school is required to do to plan our own assessment arrangements in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework'

6.4 Both senior leaders and practitioners were split fairly evenly in terms of the percentages who agreed and disagreed with the statement: ***'I understand what my***

school is required to do to plan our own assessment arrangements in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework':

- 45 per cent of senior leaders agreed with this statement and 41 per cent disagreed with it.
- 41 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement and 46 per cent, disagreed with it.[21]

Figure 18. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I understand what my school is required to do to plan our own assessment arrangements in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales framework': all sectors



N = 343 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

6.5 Practitioners in primary schools (57 per cent) were more likely to agree than those in secondary schools (33 per cent).

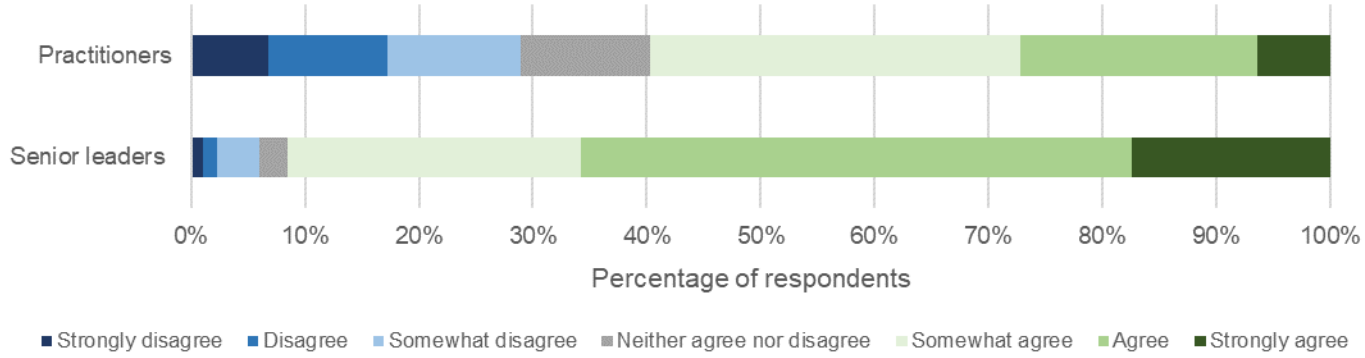
6.6 Senior leaders from the Central South region (31 per cent) were less likely than those from the Mid and West (56 per cent) and South East (60 per cent) regions to agree with this statement;

Responses to the statement 'I understand what I need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in my school'

6.7 The vast majority of senior leaders (92 per cent) and 60 per cent of practitioners agreed that ***'I understand what I need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in my school'***.

[21] This difference between senior leaders and practitioners is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

Figure 19. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I understand what I need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in my school': all sectors



N = 341 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

6.8 Primary school practitioners (81 per cent) were more likely to agree with this statement compared with those from secondary schools (50 per cent).

Qualitative responses to open-ended question on understanding of how to respond to curriculum change

6.9 Respondents were asked to provide additional comments in relation to the statements regarding their understanding of how to respond to the new curriculum arrangements. In total, 101 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

Understanding of assessment arrangements

6.10 Comments from senior leaders and practitioners in response to this question echoed many of the points raised in response to other questions, including in relation to assessment. Assessment was reported as the area of curriculum reform where senior leaders and practitioners have least understanding, with many referring to the ambiguity of expectations in relation to assessment to support learner progression.

> 'I understand what is required but [feel] this does not align… am currently unclear as to how we assess as we've been advised progression steps are for curriculum design not assessment.' Teacher, primary school.

6.11 Senior leaders, including those who felt that they had nurtured a good understanding of CfW, reported that it was ‘difficult to look further forward’ with total confidence because of uncertainties linked to assessment and progression arrangements. A number of schools reported that they had introduced or trialled new and ‘progressive’ assessment systems based on the CfW framework. They reported feeling unsure whether Estyn would understand or even ‘like’ what they are doing as a school in terms of formative and summative assessment approaches.

> ‘In my school we have looked carefully at our current assessment arrangements and we have considered which assessments tell us most about individual children and enable us to identify areas for development. We feel that this has given us a better understanding of individual and groups of learners. However, we feel that we have been 'brave' as many other schools have not yet made this leap. We hope that we are on the right track but need more information.’ Senior leader, primary school.

Time to develop an understanding of curriculum reform

6.12 Respondents reiterated concerns about a lack of time to develop their understanding of curriculum change, and that these challenges had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents speculated that if they were given more time to prepare for curriculum roll-out this would allow practitioners to be more thorough, engaged and confident in contributing to curriculum change.

Understanding the curriculum design and planning process

6.13 Some respondents referred to the process of designing and planning a curriculum. Comments revealed mixed views in relation to this. Some - mostly senior leaders – reported that there was a clear school-wide understanding of the planning process, and that they were liaising with relevant stakeholders and embedding review and evaluation into their planning. However, others felt that their lack of overall understanding of what was expected of them as part of the curriculum reform process hampered their ability to support curriculum design and planning effectively. Some respondents noted that the task of contributing to curriculum design was an entirely new experience for them and had presented challenges. These respondents noted that it would be helpful to have more structured guidance and practical exemplars to inform discussions.

‘Unsure how planning should look for long term, medium and short term plans. Wonder if there will be any planning formats shared with schools and an expectation what should be in short and medium term plans.’ Headteacher, primary school.

‘Designing a curriculum is something entirely unfamiliar to most settings. There has been a change in expectations during the process by now referring to the “Curriculum for Wales framework” which means schools/clusters are responsible for devising a curriculum before moving on to consider learning plans – however the amount of CPD available to teachers has not increased to prepare them for this. One has to recognise that the input of a curriculum specialist when designing a curriculum is essential. We are keen to prepare to implement changes but knowing how to go about this has been a constant barrier. Area leads have experimented, enquired and mapped their Areas in the secondary phase but developing a way of recording this continuum across the cluster from 3-16 in a way that is practical for teachers to use and understand has proven to be a challenge with no solution so far.’[22] Senior leader, secondary school.

Responses to the statement ‘Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022’

6.14 The vast majority of senior leaders agreed that they were confident they would be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into their professional practice from September 2022:

- **the four purposes** (98 per cent);
- **the Areas** (95 per cent);
- **the statements of what matters** (93 per cent);
- **the mandatory cross-curricular skills** (Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence) (97 per cent)*;*
- **the 12 pedagogical principles** (95 per cent).

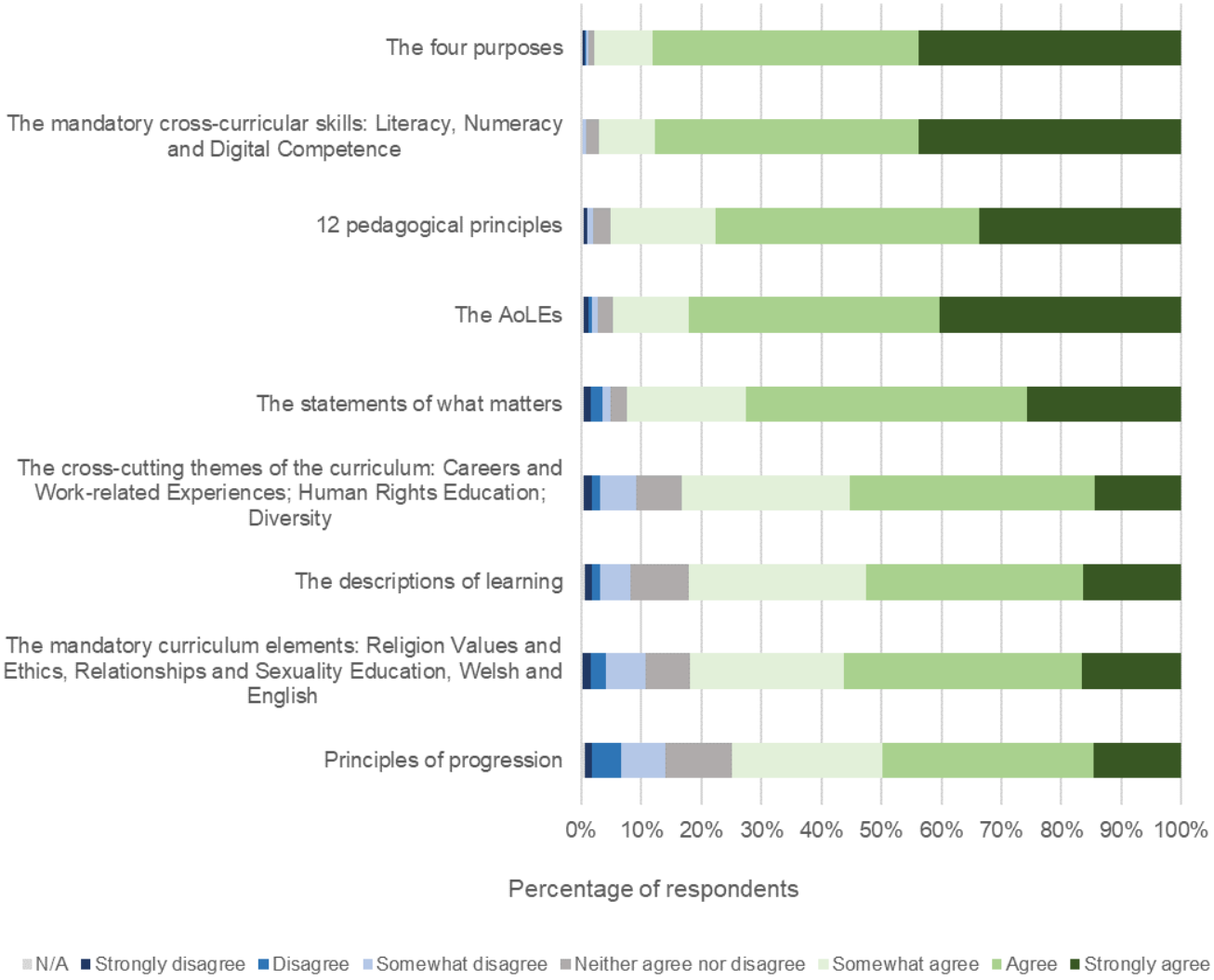
[22] Original quote in Welsh: ‘Mae dylunio cwricwlwm yn rhywbeth cwbl anghyfarwydd a newydd i'r rhan fwyaf o sefydliadau. Mae yna newid yn y disgwyliadau wedi bod yn ystod y broses wrth gyfeirio nawr at y ‘fframwaith y Cwricwlwm i Gymru’ yn golygu bod ysgolion/clystyrau unigol yn gyfrifol am lunio'r cwricwlwm cyn dechrau ystyried cynlluniau dysgu - er hynny nid yw'r gyfran o DPP sydd gan athrawon wedi cynyddu yn genedlaethol er mwyn diwallu hyn. Rhaid cydnabod bod mewnbwn arbenigydd cwricwlwm wrth lunio cwricwlwm newydd yn hanfodol. Rydym yn awyddus i baratoi ar gyfer gweithredu newidiadau ond mae sut i fynd ati i wneud hyn wedi bod yn rhwystr cyson. Mae'r Arweinwyr maes wedi arbrofi, ymholi a mapio ar gyfer eu meysydd uwchradd ond mae ceisio datblygu ffordd o gofnodi'r continwwm hwn ar draws y clwstwr ar gyfer 3 - 16 mewn ffordd sy'n ymarferol i athrawon eu defnyddio a'u deall o flwyddyn i flwyddyn wedi profi i fod yn her ac nid oes datrysiad wedi dod i'r amlwg hyd yn hyn.’

6.15 A clear majority of senior leaders agreed that they were confident they would be able to incorporate the following elements into their professional practice:

- **cross-cutting themes: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity** (83 per cent agreed);
- **descriptions of learning** (82 per cent);
- **mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English** (82 per cent).

6.16 A clear majority of senior leaders agreed that they were confident they would be able to incorporate the **principles of progression** into their professional practice (75 per cent). This lower level of agreement, compared with the other elements of the curriculum, reflects some of the points relating to understanding assessment and progression raised in qualitative responses (see also sections 5.12, 6.10, 6.27).

Figure 20. Senior leaders' responses to the statement 'Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022': all sectors



Note: For space reasons, 'N/A' is used above to abbreviate the response option 'Does not apply to me'.
N=341

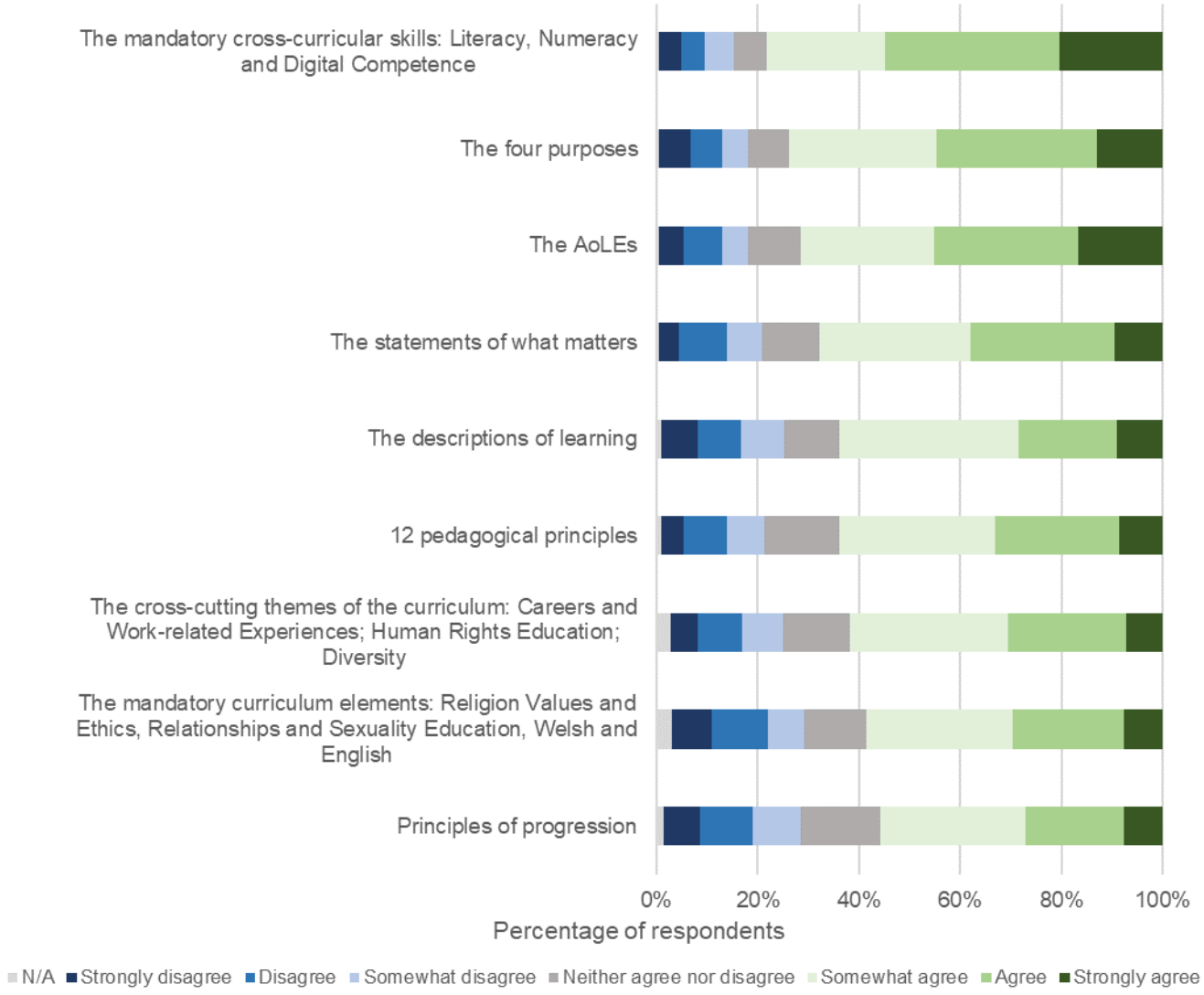
6.17 Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage of practitioners (although still a majority in each case) agreed that they were confident they would be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into their professional practice from September 2022:

- **The four purposes:** 74 per cent of practitioners, compared with 98 per cent of senior leaders;

- **The Areas:**[23] 72 per cent of practitioners, compared with 95 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The statements of what matters:** 70 per cent of practitioners, compared with 93 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The principles of progression:** 56 per cent of practitioners, compared with of 75 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The descriptions of learning:** 64 per cent of practitioners, compared with 82 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The mandatory cross-curricular skills:** 78 per cent of practitioners, compared with 97 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English:** 59 per cent of practitioners compared with 82 per cent of senior leaders;
- **The cross-cutting themes: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity**: 62 per cent of practitioners, compared with 83 per cent of senior leaders.

[23] Labelled 'AoLEs' in the original questionnaire.

Figure 21. Practitioners' responses to the statement 'Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022': all sectors



Note: For space reasons, 'N/A' is used above to abbreviate the response option 'Does not apply to me'.

N=222

6.18 Practitioners from primary schools were more likely to agree that they were confident about incorporating elements of the curriculum into their practice than their counterparts in secondary schools.

- **The four purposes:** 93 per cent of primary practitioners agreed they were confident, compared with 67 per cent of secondary practitioners;

- **The Areas:**[24] 90 per cent primary, 62 per cent secondary;
- **The statements of what matters**: 90 per cent primary, 56 per cent secondary;
- **The 12 pedagogical principles**: 84 per cent primary, 51 per cent secondary;
- **The principles of progression:** 76 per cent primary, 45 per cent secondary;
- **The descriptions of learning:** 82 per cent primary, 53 per cent secondary;
- **The mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English:** 83 per cent primary, 44 per cent secondary;
- **The mandatory cross-curricular skills: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence:** 94 per cent primary, 70 per cent secondary;
- **The cross-cutting themes of the curriculum: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity:** 78 per cent primary, 53 per cent secondary.

6.19 In terms of differences by region, senior leaders in the North region (74 per cent) were less likely than those in the South East region (98 per cent) to agree that they were confident that they will be able to incorporate the ***descriptions of learning*** into their professional practice from September 2022.

Qualitative responses to open-ended question: 'The main things I will do to prepare for our school's new curriculum are…'

6.20 Respondents were asked to complete an open-ended statement indicating the actions they would take to prepare for the new curriculum. In total, 412 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

<u>Collaboration</u>

6.21 By far the most common theme indicated by respondents were asked about the preparations they are making for implementing the new curriculum was

[24] Labelled AoLEs in the original questionnaire.

collaboration. Many mentioned plans to collaborate with 'relevant stakeholders', referring mostly to either directly surveying pupils, parents, governors, and the local community on curriculum changes or making sure all parties are aware of, and engaged with, changes. Many also reported planned collaboration with other schools, with an emphasis on sharing and observing best practice, requesting information from pioneer schools, and collaborating with cluster schools to ensure continuity in learning between primary and secondary phases. Respondents also noted the collaboration that they planned with colleagues within their school. Many senior leaders referred to the importance of involving all staff in the planning process to promote a sense of involvement and shared ownership of curriculum reform. A few respondents also mentioned working collaboratively within and between departments to be able to effectively implement new Areas.

Professional learning

6.22 Respondents referred to the professional learning that their schools had arranged to support preparations for the new curriculum. This included professional learning from external providers and regional consortia, but also in-school professional learning through during INSET days and twilight sessions. Many felt that continuous professional learning was imperative for them to feel confident in their roles to support curriculum design and delivery. Senior leaders noted that they would prioritise ensuring that there is sufficient access to professional learning opportunities for their staff, although some also noted the challenges of doing so at a time when time and resources are stretched as schools recover from the impact of the pandemic.

> 'Continue professional development of staff to ensure that we are all clear about CfW through our mapping of the curriculum and that they have the necessary skills to lead and develop it - building teacher agency.' – Headteacher, primary school

> 'Update my knowledge of the new curriculum by attending courses which will develop my own personal understanding of what will be expected.' – Learning support worker, primary school

Areas of learning and experience (Areas)

6.23 Respondents referred to discussions and plans to restructure the curriculum, moving towards the integrated curriculum set out in the CfW guidance. Many senior leaders and practitioners noted that work had begun to redevelop and restructure subject areas, ensuring that each Area has sufficient breadth and depth. Senior leaders mentioned the appointment of Area leads, guiding the process of developing a vision for each Area, working both with staff in their school and, in some cases, with other Area leads within the cluster to ensure consistency. Respondents noted that they anticipated that in their practice and in their planning they would be more mindful of cross-curricular teaching, working more closely with colleagues to identify links between Areas to ensure a 'fluid' and 'inter-connected' learning experience for children and young people.

> 'Look for links in existing schemes and then adapt in line with my AoLE [Area] and reform any work that needs to be adapted. Collaborate and innovate within the department with regards to new schemes linked to relevant Welsh and global context'. Senior leader, secondary school
>
> 'Ensuring that I can work collaboratively with all areas of learning [Areas] in order for pupils to access the depth and breadth of our curriculum and to be able to make links from subject to subject. Revisit and adapt schemes of work so that the content and skills prepare pupils for life beyond our school gates. Ensure that the four purposes are at the forefront of all my lessons and that the terminology is made explicit in order for pupils to gain an understanding of the bigger picture.' Practitioner, secondary school.

Developing a curriculum vision

6.24 Respondents described their approaches to developing a curriculum vision, with some emphasising the importance of this to developing a 'shared ownership' and a 'whole-school understanding' which respondents felt would help practitioners to co-construct their school curriculum collectively and confidently. They also underlined the importance of involving learners, governors, and the local community as part of the process of shaping curriculum reform, making sure all relevant parties are aware of changes and are engaged in the process of developing their curriculum vision.

Adapting, piloting and evaluating

6.25 Finally, respondents referred to tasks associated with developing new approaches, experimenting and evaluating their effectiveness to feed back into curriculum design and delivery. There was a recognition that curriculum re-design is a phased process which needs to be built on continuous and collaborative piloting and review. This involves reviewing current curriculum provision to assess what will stay the same and identifying gaps in curriculum 'coverage' relative to the statements of what matters across Areas. Respondents provided examples of practitioners' initial work in their schools to pilot and evaluate new curriculum approaches in preparation for rollout.

> 'Looking at the what matters statements, we have determined the areas which need to be developed. Possibility for cross-curricular links have been established. In addition, having got acquainted with the framework, we will be setting its criteria against the current SoW [schemes of work] to determine what can be kept or should be streamlined/ taken out.' Middle leader, secondary school
>
> 'Read, research and reflect on what we need to do, what we already do well and what we need to do differently. Continually plan, trial and reflect. Ensure the 4 core purposes are understood and embedded. Look at the components to the curriculum and what we need to include.' Headteacher, primary school

Qualitative responses to open-ended question: 'The most significant changes to my professional practice in response to the Curriculum for Wales will be…'

6.26 Following the same approach to the previous question, respondents were asked to complete an open-ended statement indicating the changes to their practice in response to the new curriculum. In total, 362 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

Changes to assessment

6.27 Practitioners underlined that changes to assessment and collaborative working were central to their preparations for the new curriculum. Many noted that the biggest changes to their practice would be new approaches to thinking about, and

recording, learner progression – an issue on which many felt that they needed further clarification.

6.28 Primary school respondents most frequently reported:

- that they are **working towards a shared understanding of assessment** under the new curriculum, seeking to ensure consistency of approach across different year groups. Some primary schools have started working as a cluster to share their thoughts and plans on assessment.
- that they are **referring to progression steps and descriptions of learning to inform their thinking**, and are mindful of the need to avoid a 'tick-list approach' to using progression steps and descriptions of learning;
- that they are conscious of the **need to moderate** 'what progression steps look like across the cluster', underlining the importance of involving secondary schools in these discussions;
- that, in some cases, they are continuing to use **adaptive personal assessments** for diagnostic purposes as they gradually transition away from using levels to assess learner progress.[25]
- that, where they had made progress and had begun to develop their own assessment frameworks and strategies, **they lacked confidence** and questioned whether they 'were doing it the right way'.

6.29 Secondary school respondents noted the following:

- they understand that there are **significant changes ahead** in terms of assessment, with all phases of education transitioning to more 'meaningful formative assessment' that gives teachers insights into how learners are progressing in relation to the four purposes;
- in some cases they **feel ill-equipped to discuss or plan assessment** due to a lack of understanding of what's required of them;
- in some cases they were critical that they were being asked to develop an approach to assessment without knowing 'what future qualifications will look like'.
- they echoed the concerns of primary senior leaders in terms of understanding **how to use progression steps**. Secondary senior leaders noted that where

[25] See Personalised assessments: information for parents and carers - Hwb (gov.wales)

they had begun to experiment and design their own assessment plans, this felt 'risky', and risked not reflecting approaches in other schools.

'The lack of guidance in terms of assessment is a real concern. Colleagues worry about workload and the likelihood of high accountability stakes. Parents and pupils are concerned about measuring progress against other schools and against national standards.' Senior leader, secondary school

Innovation in teaching practice

6.30 Practitioners noted in their responses the need to (continue to) adapt to new teaching practices, with 'innovation' and 'experimentation' mentioned frequently. They described a general shift in pedagogical practice that enables leaders and practitioners to be more innovative, experimental, and risk-taking as opposed to focusing on measured outcomes. This involves a creative and fresh-thinking approach to pedagogy. It also entails cultivating confidence among practitioners to be reconsider their roles, and to shift towards being 'facilitators of learning'.

'I will have to think afresh about what I am teaching, how I teach it and what I want the pupils in my class to learn. I think that there will be a greater freedom to be creative with the new curriculum and to develop new skills and approaches.' Teacher, primary school

6.31 Related to this, senior leaders recognised the need for them to develop confidence among teachers to experiment, to adopt new styles of teaching and to move towards a situation where 'every teacher is a leader', driving change. Senior leaders referred to the importance of promoting teacher agency and ownership of the new curriculum. Responses underlined the importance of ensuring that teachers feel that they are able to influence and have genuine input into the reform process.

'This cannot be a top down approach. It has to permeate every member of staff, pupil, parent and governor if it is to become an authentic and relevant curriculum.' Headteacher, primary school

6.32 Senior leaders and practitioners alike frequently discussed the new freedom and flexibility that is afforded with curriculum changes. This was often noted in contrast to teaching to a more fixed curriculum framework, whereas practitioners welcome the opportunity to think freshly about what they are teaching. Having the freedom to shape the curriculum was important to several respondents, allowing them to draw

unique and creative links between Areas and in relation to local and global contexts. From the perspective of leaders, this also involves cultivating new work culture to introduce a confidence with this new freedom in designing their own curriculum. Many mentioned a new 'autonomy' to teachers which allows them also to pursue their own interests through teaching.

Wider points raised in response to this question

6.33 Senior leaders underlined the need for a phased and sustained approach to promote understanding of CfW at a whole-school level. The examples given included awareness-raising activity, assigning responsibility to individuals to research and explore specific aspects of the CfW framework; and regular opportunities for internal dissemination and discussion. In some cases, schools reported that this process had begun three years ago, having recognised the scale of the reform programme and the need for a sustained lead-in that engaged staff at all levels.

6.34 Senior leaders noted that setting aside time for in-school professional learning sessions to discuss and plan their new approach to the curriculum had aided the process of developing an understanding of the reforms. Examples of activities introduced in schools include:

- **Familiarisation and information sessions** focusing on various aspects of the guidance. This included spending time during INSET and regular staff meetings looking more closely at the pedagogical principles, the statements of what matters, and descriptions of learning.
- Encouraging teachers to keep **journals**, reflecting on how they were incorporating the pedagogical principles in their teaching, and sharing their thoughts and experiences with colleagues;
- **Allocating responsibility to staff to lead on Areas**, often in small groups. In many cases, Area leads were encouraged to interact and collaborate with those in other Areas in order to learn from each other's approaches and share insights.

6.35 A range of other points were raised by senior leaders and practitioners, noting actions they had begun or planned to take to aid preparations for the new curriculum. These can be summarised as follows:

- Placing **greater emphasis on learner voice** to inform curriculum planning and delivery in order to ensure a more tailored and relevant learning experience that is more relevant to learners' interests. Senior leaders and practitioners noted the importance of ensuring learners have a greater say in leading their learning journey.

'Working in a much more flexible way – responding to local, national and worldwide events. Ensuring that pupil voice is stronger than ever. Taking advantage of the opportunity to follow the learners' direction – a curriculum that's not too prescriptive.' Headteacher, primary school[26]

- **Ensure that professional learning opportunities are available for teachers to give them the capability and confidence to be co-designers of the school curriculum**. Senior leaders acknowledged that this needs to be a combination of school-led activity and professional learning accessed through national and regional programmes, and from external providers.
- **Plan strategically with appropriate leadership and governance arrangements in place**: schools reporting good progress in their curriculum planning frequently referred to having a strategic leadership team in place overseeing developments, supported by Area leads or teams who met frequently to discuss developments, emerging curriculum plans and to review approaches being trialled.
- Linked to the point above, senior leaders and practitioners stated that they understood the need to **place a greater focus on cross-curricular learning as part of their planning and teaching practice.** Many primary schools and some secondary schools reported that topic-based approaches provide opportunities to deliver a curriculum that links Areas and provides a more integrated learning experience for pupils.

'Collaborating with staff across the school to ensure that there is complementarity and an understanding across the school of how the AoLEs [Areas] are developed.' Headteacher, primary school[27]

[26] Original quote in Welsh: 'Gweithredu mewn ffordd llawer mwy hyblyg - ymateb i ddigwyddiadau lleol, cenedlaethol a byd eang. Sicrhau bod llais y disgybl yn gryfach nag erioed. Manteisio ar y cyfle i ddilyn trywydd y dysgwyr - dim cwricwlwm rhy rhagnodol.'

[27] Original quote in Welsh: 'Cydweithio â staff ar draws yr ysgol i sicrhau bod yna gydblethu a dealltwriaeth ar draws yr ysgol o sut mae'r meysydd dysgu a phrofiad yn cael eu datblygu.'

‘[I need to…] ensure that I can work collaboratively with all areas of learning [Areas] in order for pupils to access the depth and breadth of our curriculum and to be able to make links from subject to subject. Revisit and adapt schemes of work so that the content and skills prepare pupils for life beyond our school gates. Ensure that the four purposes are at the forefront of all my lessons and that the terminology is made explicit in order for pupils to gain an understanding of the bigger picture.’ Practitioner, secondary school

- **Ensure a focus on well-being during discussions about the design of the new curriculum** and discussions about approaches to assessment.
- Plan a curriculum that takes account of and **is aligned with the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation programme**: practitioners expressed concern that the work involved in curriculum reform alongside the need to transform the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with additional learning needs was time-consuming and was placing a strain on capacity.
- **Strengthen engagement with external agencies** – public organisations, voluntary sector organisations and other employers to ensure that careers and work-related experiences are embedded within the curriculum.

7. Commitment to curriculum change

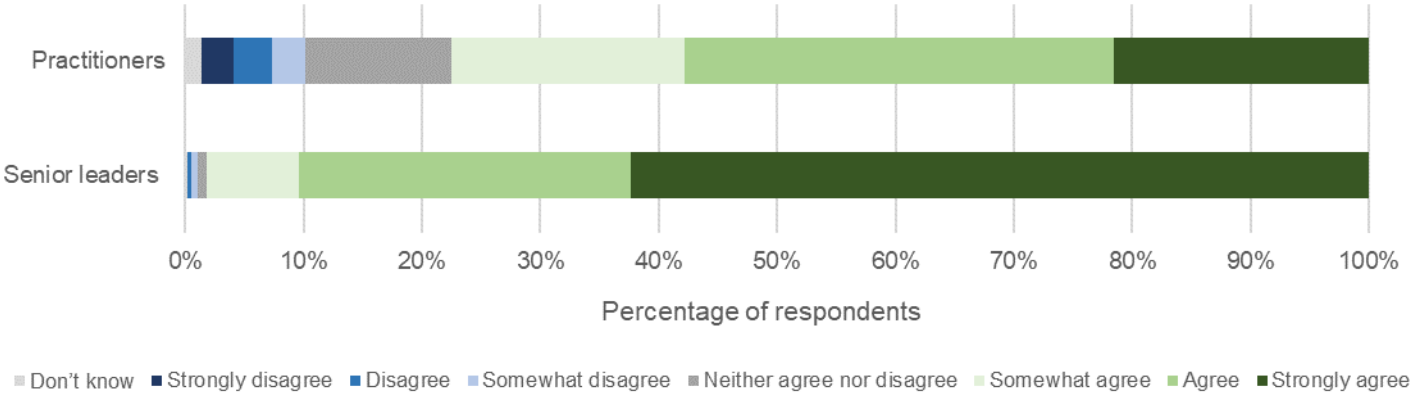
7.1 This section presents the findings relating to practitioners' commitment to curriculum change. Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to commitment to curriculum change. These were:

- 'I am committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales'
- 'I am committed to making changes to my professional practice to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales'
- 'I am committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales'

Responses to the statement 'I am committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales'

7.2 The vast majority of senior leaders (98 per cent) and 78 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'I am committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales'***.

Figure 22. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales': all sectors



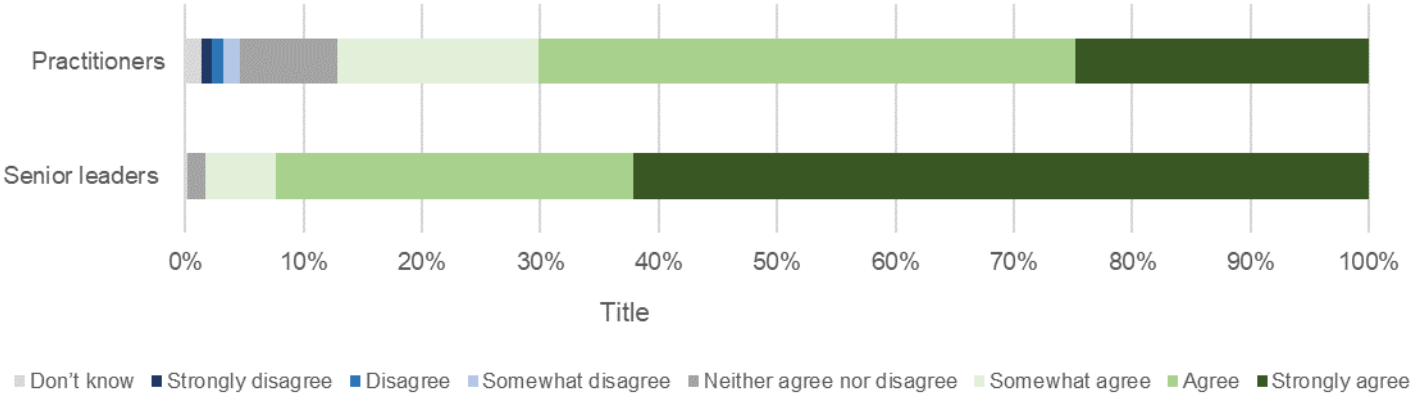
N = 324 senior leaders, 218 practitioners

7.3 The vast majority (95 per cent) of primary school practitioners agreed with this statement compared with 68 per cent of secondary school practitioners.

Responses to the statement 'I am committed to making changes to my professional practice to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales'

7.4 The vast majority of senior leaders (98 per cent) and 87 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'I am committed to making changes to my professional practice to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales'***.[28]

Figure 23. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am committed to making changes to my professional practice to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales': all sectors



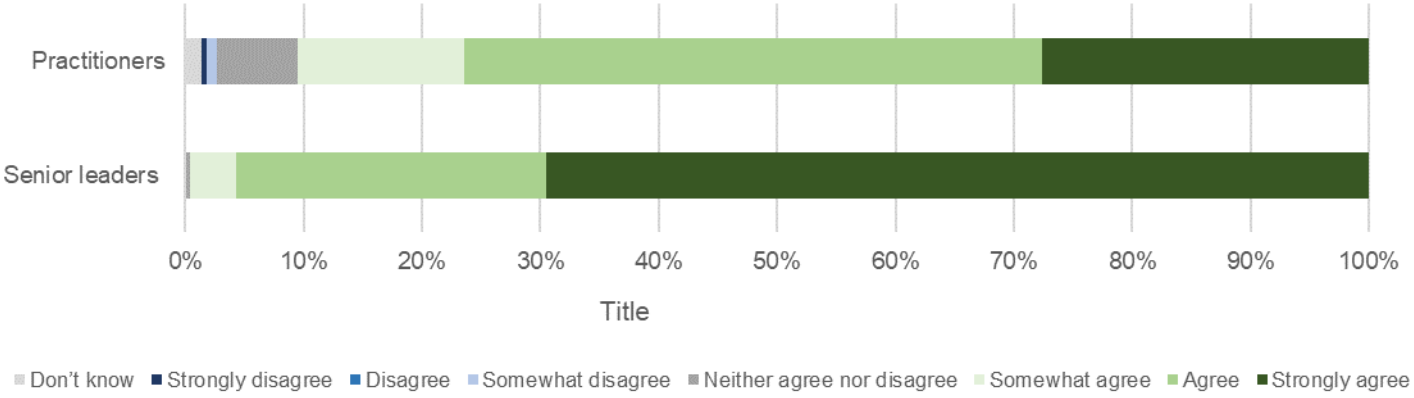
N = 326 senior leaders, 218 practitioners

Responses to the statement 'I am committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales'

7.5 Almost all senior leaders (99.6 per cent) and 91 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'I am committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales'***.[29]

[28] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).
[29] This difference is not considered notable (See Section 3 for a definition of notable differences).

Figure 24. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales': all sectors



N = 325 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

Qualitative responses to open text question about commitment to curriculum reform

7.6 Respondents were asked to provide further comments to support their answers to the statements in relation to commitment to the curriculum reforms. In total, 104 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

<u>Clear commitment to the reforms</u>

7.7 Comments from senior leaders and practitioners largely reflected the positivity and commitment to the reforms seen in the data presented above. Respondents noted the opportunities presented by the new curriculum to enrich pupils' learning experiences and develop them as citizens. Many said that they felt the reforms as a move towards creating a more progressive education system in Wales.

> 'The new curriculum gives practitioners the scope to help our learners prepare for the demands of a world which needs citizens who are able to contribute to our rapidly changing world.' Headteacher, primary school

> 'I fully believe that the Curriculum for Wales is taking education in Wales in the right direction. Pupil experiences in school today should not be the same as their parents' experiences in the past. The school's own curriculum needs to evolve and adapt constantly to ensure it is relevant and appropriate for the pupils at that time.' Headteacher, primary school.

Concerns about time and resources

7.8 However, many respondents noted that their commitment and enthusiasm for the new curriculum was tempered by a lack of time to be able to dedicate to preparations in the face of other priorities and challenges. Some noted that they would feel more committed to the changes if they had more time away from the classroom so that preparations did not feel as rushed. This feeling of having insufficient time to prepare 'properly' had, it was suggested, been exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.

> 'Whilst many of the aims of the Curriculum for Wales are good in theory, in reality there is not sufficient time to prepare thoroughly, due to the impact of a global pandemic.' Middle leader, secondary school
>
> 'Commitment is one thing but the reality of the past year has been a different matter – it is possible to realise commitment during 'normal' times but at the moment health and safety issues and grading arrangements are drowning the time available for other key developments.'[30] Senior leader, secondary school

[30] Original quote in Welsh: 'Mae ymrwymiad yn un peth ond mae realiti'r flwyddyn ddiwethaf wedi bod yn rhywbeth gwahanol - mae modd gwireddu'r ymrwymiad mewn amser 'normal' ond ar hyn o bryd mae materion iechyd a diogelwch a threfniadau asesu graddau yn boddi amser datblygiadau allweddol.'

8. Preparation to design, adopt and implement the curriculum

8.1 This section outlines the findings of the survey in relation to schools' preparation to design, adopt and implement the curriculum. A number of questions in different formats was posed in this section of the questionnaire.

8.2 Survey respondents were initially asked if their school 'has developed a vision for your new curriculum?'.

8.3 Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

- 'To date, sufficient time has been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum'

8.4 Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent various categories of individuals had been actively involved in designing or informing the new school curriculum. These were: senior leaders in the school; teaching staff; support staff; governors; learners; parents and carers; other representatives of the local community.

8.5 Next, respondents were asked to note to what extent practitioners in their school were working collaboratively to support the design of the new curriculum (this included collaboration by practitioners within the school; collaboration with other schools; collaboration with HE partners).

8.6 Finally, survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent their school had undertaken the following activities:

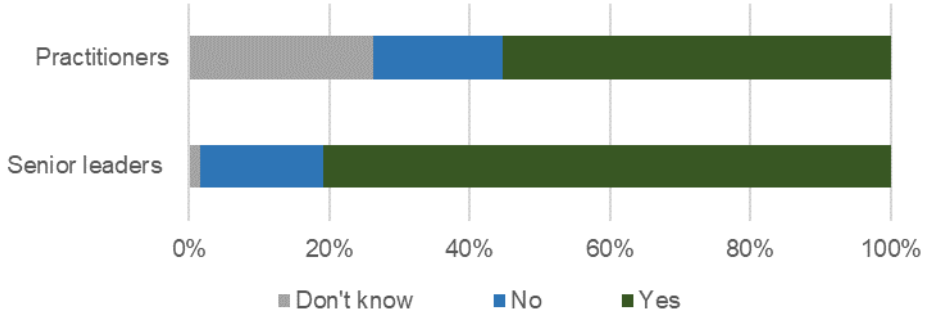
- 'Our school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum'
- 'Teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum'
- 'Our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum'.

Responses to the question 'Has your school developed a vision for your new curriculum?'

8.7 A clear majority of senior leaders (81 per cent) stated that their school ***'has developed a vision for its new curriculum'***; 18 per cent stated that they had not, and 1.6 per cent did not know.

8.8 Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage of practitioners stated that their school has developed a vision for its new curriculum, although this was largely due to a considerably higher proportion answering 'Don't know'. Just over half (55 per cent) of practitioners stated that their school had developed a vision for their new curriculum, 19 per cent said they had not and 26 per cent said they did not know.

Figure 25. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the question 'Has your school developed a vision for your new curriculum?': all sectors



N= 320 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

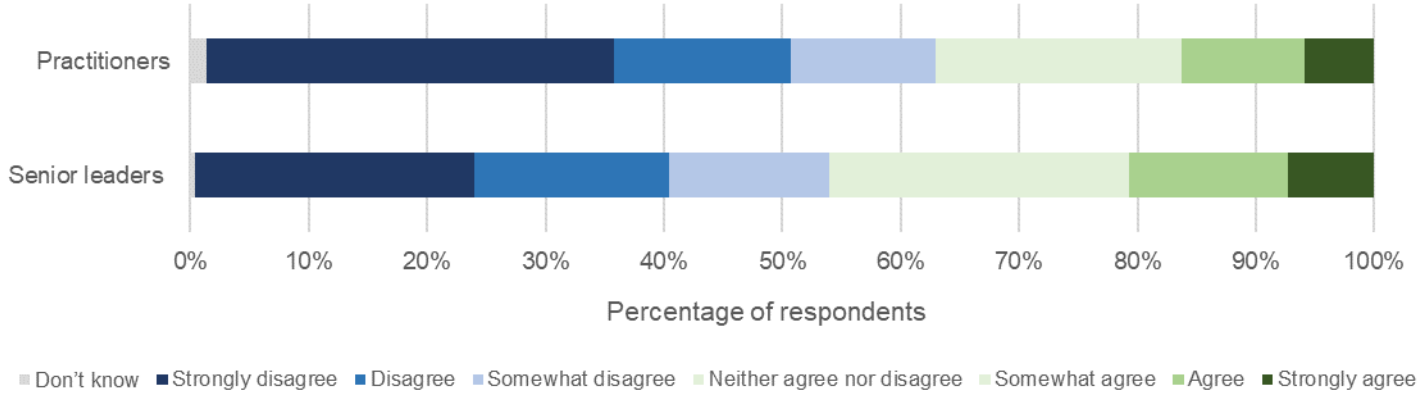
8.9 The proportion of primary school practitioners who answered 'Yes' to this question (70 per cent) was higher than that from secondary school respondents (47 per cent).

8.10 Senior leaders in the North region (65 per cent) were less likely than those in the South East region (89 per cent) to state that their school had developed a vision for their new curriculum.

Responses to the statement 'To date, sufficient time has been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum'

8.11 Just over half of senior leaders (54 per cent) and 62 per cent of practitioners disagreed with the statement '***To date, sufficient time has been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum'.***

Figure 26. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the question 'To date, sufficient time has been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum': all sectors



N= 325 senior leaders, 221 practitioners

8.12 Practitioners in secondary schools (76 per cent) were more likely than practitioners in primary schools (36 per cent) to disagree with the statement.

Involvement of practitioners and stakeholders

8.13 Respondents were asked to what extent the following groups have been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum: *senior leaders, teaching staff, learners, governors,* and *parents and carers*.

8.14 Responses from senior leaders indicated that senior leaders and teaching staff had been more actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum compared with support staff, learners and governors:

- The vast majority of senior leaders (98 per cent) stated that ***senior leaders*** in their school have been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with 88 per cent noting they had been involved 'a lot';

- The vast majority of senior leaders (98 per cent) stated that ***teaching staff*** in their school have been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with 77 per cent noting they had been involved 'a lot';
- Just over half (58 per cent) of senior leaders stated that ***learners*** had been actively involved 'a little' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with a third (32 per cent) stating they had been involved 'a lot';
- Just over half (55 per cent) of senior leaders stated that ***support staff*** had been actively involved 'a little' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with a third (32 per cent) stating they had been involved 'a lot';
- Two thirds (67 per cent) of senior leaders stated that **governors** had been actively involved 'a little' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with 11 per cent stating they had been involved 'a lot';
- Just under half (49 per cent) of senior leaders stated that ***parents and carers*** had been actively involved 'a little' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, with 5 per cent stating they had been involved 'a lot'.

8.15 Responses from practitioners revealed a perception that *teachers*, *support staff* and *learners* had been less actively involved than *senior leaders* in designing or informing their new school curriculum:[31]

- A smaller proportion of practitioners (34 per cent) stated that ***teaching staff*** had been involved 'a lot' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with 77 per cent of senior leaders;
- Less than half of practitioners (37 per cent) said that ***support staff*** had been involved either 'a little' or 'a lot' in designing or informing the curriculum, compared with just over half of senior leaders (55 per cent);
- Less than half of (40 per cent) of practitioners stated that ***learners*** had been actively involved 'a little' or 'a lot' in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with just over half (58 per cent) of senior leaders.

8.16 Primary school practitioners were more likely than those in secondary schools to report that ***support staff****,* ***learners, governors,*** and ***parents and carers*** have

[31] Considerable percentages of practitioners answered 'don't know' to these questions.

been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum (a considerable percentage of secondary practitioners responded 'don't know' in relation to each option presented this question):

- 14 per cent of secondary practitioners said ***support staff*** had been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with 75 per cent of primary practitioners;[32]
- 9 per cent of secondary practitioners said ***governors*** had been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with 51 per cent of primary practitioners;[33]
- 27 per cent of secondary practitioners said ***learners*** had been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with 65 per cent of primary practitioners;[34]
- 6 per cent of secondary practitioners said ***parents and carers*** had been actively involved in designing or informing their new school curriculum, compared with 35 per cent of primary practitioners.[35]

8.17 Senior leaders in English-medium schools (35 per cent) were more likely than those in Welsh-medium schools (16 per cent) to state that ***support staff*** had been actively involved 'a lot' in designing or informing their new school curriculum.

8.18 Senior leaders in the South East region (45 per cent) were more likely than those in the North (19 per cent) and Mid and West (22 per cent) regions to state that ***support staff*** had been actively involved 'a lot' in designing or informing their new school curriculum.

Collaboration to support the design of the new curriculum

8.19 Respondents were asked to what extent practitioners in their school were working collaboratively with partners to support the design of the new curriculum, namely

[32] A considerable percentage of secondary practitioners responded 'don't know' to this question (50 per cent).
[33] A considerable percentage of secondary practitioners responded 'don't know' to this question (74 per cent).
[34] A considerable percentage of secondary practitioners responded 'don't know' to this question (38 per cent).
[35] A considerable percentage of secondary practitioners responded 'don't know' to this question (59 per cent).

collaboration with: *other practitioners within their school, other schools and HE partners*.

8.20 The vast majority (98 per cent) of senior leaders stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively 'a lot' (75 per cent) or 'a little' (23 per cent) with ***other practitioners within their school*** to support the design of the new curriculum. Compared with senior leaders, a lower proportion of practitioners (76 per cent), though still a clear majority, stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively 'a lot' (32 per cent) or 'a little' (45 per cent) with ***other practitioners within their school*** to support the design of the new curriculum.

8.21 The vast majority (89 per cent) of senior leaders stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively 'a lot' (28 per cent) or 'a little' (61 per cent) with ***other schools*** to support the design of the new curriculum. Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage of practitioners (41 per cent) stated that practitioners in their school were working collaboratively 'a lot' (11 per cent) or 'a little' (31 per cent) with ***other schools*** to support the design of the new curriculum.

8.22 Over half (55 per cent) of senior leaders stated that practitioners in their school were not working collaboratively with ***HE partners*** to support the design of the new curriculum. Less than half (43 per cent) stated they were doing so 'a little' (33 per cent) or 'a lot' (10 per cent). Just over half of practitioners (56 per cent) did not know whether their school was collaborating with ***HE partners*** to support the design of the new curriculum.

8.23 Senior leaders in primary schools (30 per cent) were more likely than those in secondary schools (17 per cent) to note that they were collaborating 'a lot' with ***other schools***. A higher proportion of practitioners in primary schools compared with secondary schools reported that they had collaborated with ***other schools*** (63 per cent primary, 29 per cent secondary), and ***HE partners*** (34 per cent primary, 7 per cent secondary) to support the design of the new curriculum.[36]

8.24 Senior leaders in Welsh-medium schools (58 per cent) were more likely than those in English-medium schools (35 per cent) to state that their school was collaborating with ***HE partners*** 'a lot' or 'a little' to support the design of the new curriculum.

[36] Considerable percentages of secondary respondents answered 'don't know' to these questions.

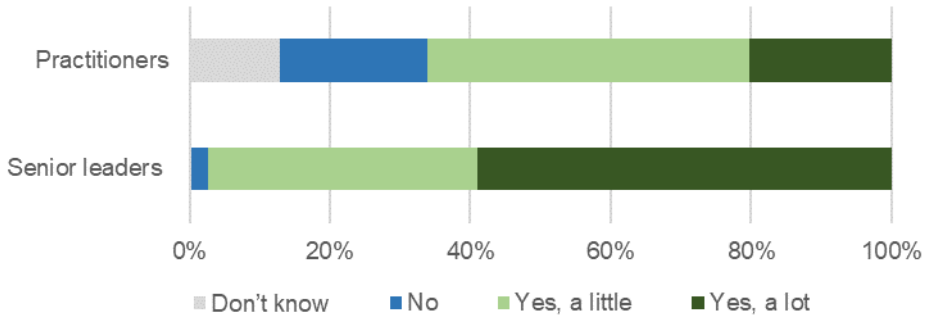
8.25 Senior leaders in the North (43 per cent) and South East (36 per cent) regions were more likely than those in the Mid and West region (9 per cent) to state that their school was collaborating with ***other schools*** 'a lot' to support the design of the new curriculum. Senior leaders in the Mid and West region (79 per cent) were more likely than those in North (51 per cent) and South East (57 per cent) regions to state that they were doing so 'a little'.

Responses to the statement 'Our school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum'

8.26 The vast majority of senior leaders (97 per cent) stated that their school has '***trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum'***, with 59 per cent stating they had done so 'a lot' and 38 per cent stating they had done so 'a little'; 2 per cent stated they had not done so.

8.27 Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage of practitioners (66 per cent) noted that their school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum. A fifth (20 per cent) of practitioners stated they had done so 'a lot' and 46 per cent stated they had done so 'a little'; around a fifth (21 per cent) stated they had not done so.

Figure 27. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the question 'Our school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum': all sectors



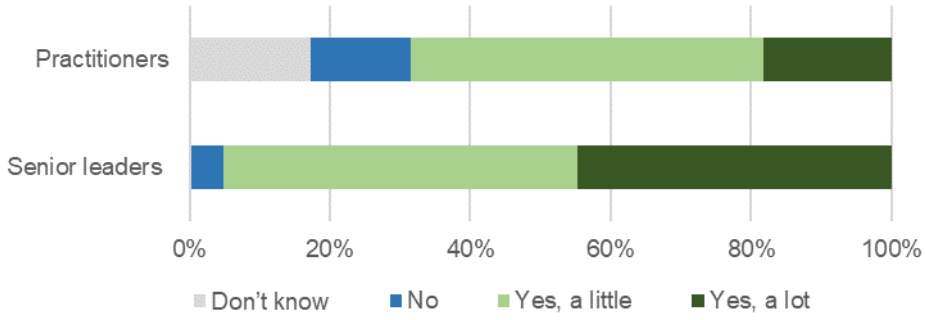
N= 322 senior leaders, 218 practitioners

Responses to the statement 'Teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum'

8.28 The vast majority of senior leaders (95 per cent) stated that ***'teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum'***, with around half (50 per cent) stating they had done so 'a little' and 45 per cent stating they had done so 'a lot'.

8.29 Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage (69 per cent) of practitioners noted that ***'teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum'***. Around half (50 per cent) of practitioners noted that this had happened 'a little' and 18 per cent said 'a lot'.

Figure 28. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the question 'Teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum': all sectors



N= 321 senior leaders, 219 practitioners

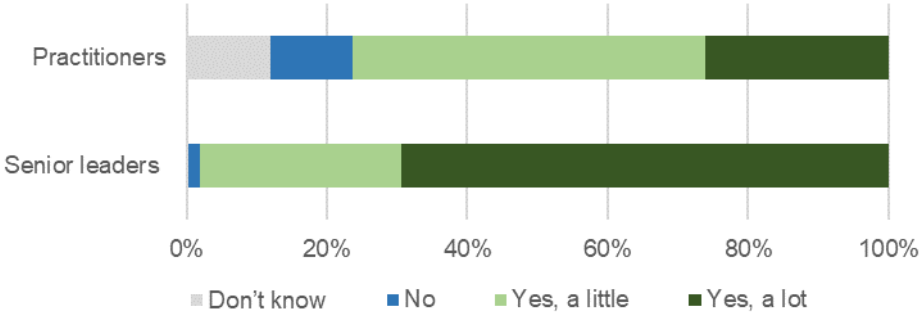
Responses to the statement 'Our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum'

8.30 The vast majority (98 per cent) of senior leaders stated that ***'our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum'***, with over two thirds (69 per cent) stating they had done so 'a lot' and over a quarter (29 per cent) stating they had done so 'a little'; 2 per cent stated they had not done so.

8.31 Compared with senior leaders, a lower percentage (76 per cent) of practitioners stated that ***'our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for***

teaching under the new curriculum'. Half of practitioners (50 per cent) noted that this had happened 'a little' and 26 per cent answered 'a lot'.

Figure 29. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'Our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum': all sectors



N= 322 senior leaders, 219 practitioners

8.32 A higher percentage of primary school practitioners (90 per cent) reported that their school is reviewing their preparatory work compared with secondary practitioners (69 per cent).

8.33 Senior leaders in the South East region (85 per cent) were more likely than those in the Mid and West region (57 per cent) to note that their school is reviewing the work they are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum 'a lot'. Senior leaders in the Mid and West region (41 per cent) were more likely than those in the South East (13 per cent) to state that they were doing so 'a little'.

Qualitative responses to open text question on preparation for curriculum reform

8.34 Respondents were asked to provide additional comments in relation to the statements regarding preparations to design, adopt and implement their curriculum. In total, 101 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

The impact of the pandemic on preparations

8.35 As has been noted in previous sections of this report, a lack of time was reported as the main reason that some senior leaders and practitioners felt that curriculum preparations had not progressed as far as had been hoped. Senior leaders and practitioners in secondary schools reported that the pandemic diverted a significant amount of time and attention away from curriculum preparations. The work involved in delivering centre-determined grades, in ensuring the wellbeing of staff and learners through the pandemic, and in overseeing COVID-19 related health and safety processes all contributed to delays to timelines for curriculum reform.

8.36 Senior leaders in secondary schools expressed feeling apprehensive about the time involved in co-constructing a new curriculum, particularly where the emphasis is on developing an approach through in-school collaboration and discussion. Issues relating to the impact of COVID-19 that impacted on preparations included staff isolation, social distancing rules preventing effective collaboration within the cluster, adjusting to blended learning, and staff fatigue.

> 'COVID restrictions has made networking and collaborative work extremely difficult. It also meant that developing our own curriculum had to be put on hold somewhat as practitioners re-learnt how to teach using on line methods and as leaders developed risk assessments and safety information as well as teaching through hubs during the first lockdown.' Senior leader, primary school
>
> 'Work within the school in preparation for the new curriculum has taken a back seat whilst dealing the demands of the pandemic and its effects on our school community.' Practitioner, primary school

Overview of comments in relation to developing a school vision

8.37 School leaders reported that developing a vision for their school's new curriculum is central to their preparations. Where this is reported to have worked well, schools have taken a phased approach, extending involvement in the process at each phase. This has typically involved:

- Developing an initial vision as a senior leadership team (with involvement of governors in some cases);
- Refining this through discussions with Area leads;
- Consulting on this / these visions with all staff;

- Collecting feedback from learners and further refining the vision in response;
- Disseminating the vision with parents (most schools plan on doing this during the course of the current academic year).

8.38 Respondents noted that reported that discussions about their curriculum vision can help create a shared sense of purpose, ensure a sense of ownership at all levels of the school and give teachers confidence in their role as co-constructors of the curriculum. Area leads are also developing visions for their specific Areas, informed by the broad vision and involving teachers in this process. In some cases, schools have consulted with other schools in their cluster (including pioneer schools) to seek insights into how they have approached the process.

8.39 In developing their visions for the curriculum, schools emphasised the importance of: developing an authentic curriculum; rooted in Welsh values and culture; a responsive and inclusive curriculum that is responsive to learners' needs; an inclusive curriculum; setting ambitious goals and high expectations; focusing on well-being.

8.40 In the minority of cases where schools had not yet developed a vision for their new curriculum, this was attributed to a shortage of time available for staff to dedicate to it, in the face of competing priorities over the past year.

<u>Collaboration to support curriculum design</u>

8.41 Senior leaders and practitioners reported that curriculum development is based on strong principles of collaboration through groups of staff discussing, planning, trialling and reviewing activity. Staff are developing and sharing curriculum plans, discussing the strengths and weakness of different approaches and feeding back after trialling approaches and topic-based learning. Practitioners reported having started working both in their Areas and across Areas to develop curriculum plans.

8.42 Senior leaders reported that CfW has been a catalyst for increased dialogue about teaching practice in their schools. There is more discussion about pedagogy both informally and at staff meetings.

> 'Staff are continually sharing ideas and practices and reflecting and learning from each other.' Senior leader, primary school

8.43 Examples were provided across primary and secondary sectors of how practitioners were collaborating, although many pointed out that much of this activity was in its early stages:

- INSET days provide opportunities for discussion and collaboration.
- Practitioners reported working in teams within Areas to explore progression steps and descriptions of learning, developing ideas on how these could be incorporated into curriculum plans.
- Development of planning templates in schools to support consistency across Areas and across different year groups.
- Collaboration between practitioners in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

9. Capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum

9.1 This section outlines the findings of the survey in relation to capability to practice in ways that realise the curriculum.

9.2 Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- 'I have the skills to support the design of our school's new curriculum'
- 'I am confident I will be able to access the professional learning that I will need to help design the new curriculum'
- 'I am confident in my ability to adapt my professional practice in ways that enable me to implement the new curriculum'

9.3 Senior leaders (only) were subsequently asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a second set of statements:

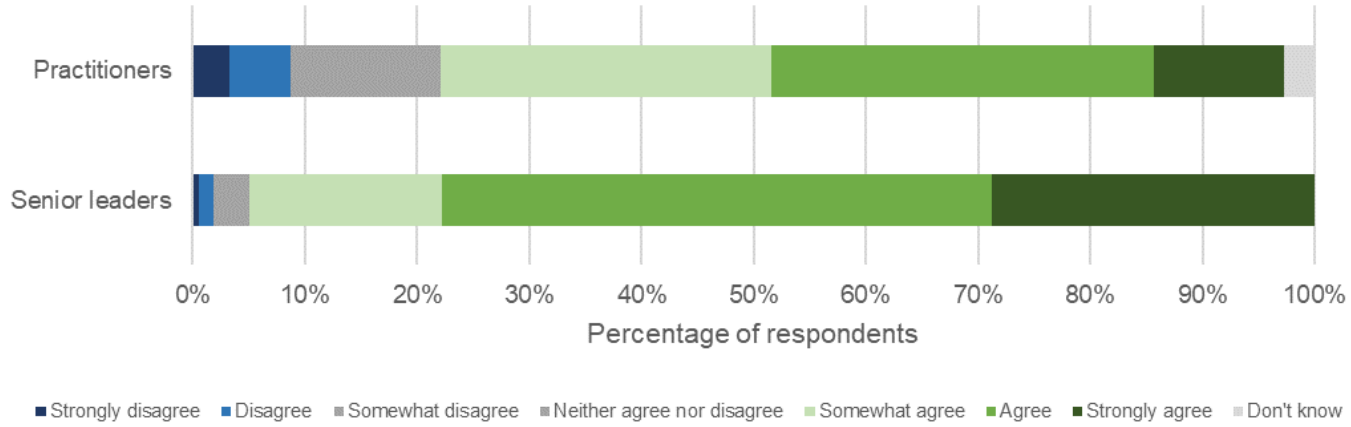
- 'My school has the staff with the skills required to design the new curriculum'
- 'My school has sufficient staff capacity to design the new curriculum'
- 'My school's staff have the necessary skills to plan and deliver lessons in line with the new Curriculum for Wales'
- 'My school has the hardware and digital infrastructure required to implement the new curriculum'
- 'My school has the software required to implement the new curriculum'
- 'My school has the teaching and learning materials/resources required to implement the new curriculum'

Responses to the statement 'I have the skills to support the design of our school's new curriculum'

Senior leaders

9.4 The vast majority (95 per cent) of senior leaders and 75 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'I have the skills to support the design of our school's new curriculum'***.

Figure 30. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I have the skills to support the design of our school's new curriculum': all sectors



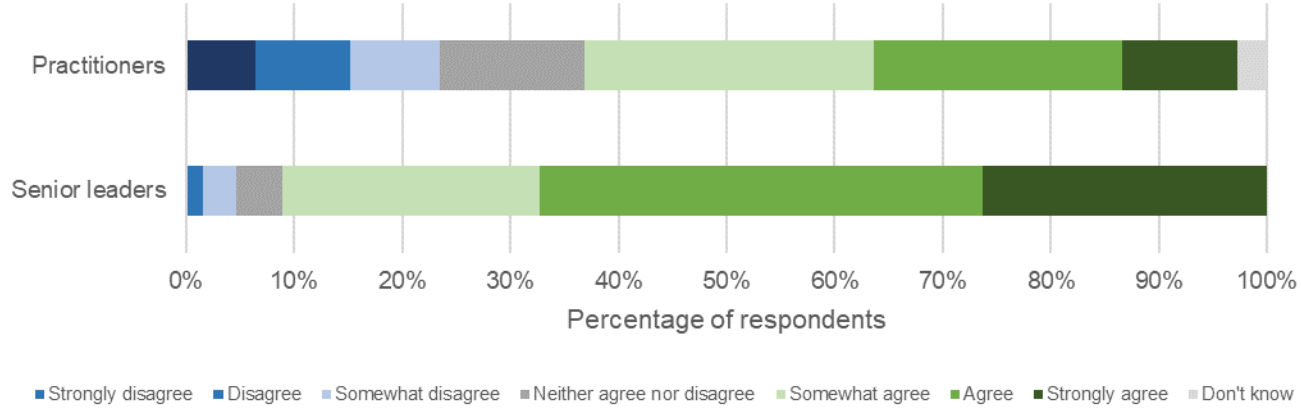
N= 322 senior leaders, 217 practitioners

9.5 A higher percentage of primary school practitioners (90 per cent) agreed with this statement compared with practitioners from secondary schools (65 per cent).

Responses to the statement 'I am confident I will be able to access the professional learning that I will need to help design the new curriculum'

9.6 The vast majority of senior leaders (91 per cent) and 60 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement 'I am confident I will be able to access the professional learning that I will need to help design the new curriculum'.

Figure 31. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am confident I will be able to access the professional learning that I will need to help design the new curriculum': all sectors



N= 323 senior leaders, 217 practitioners

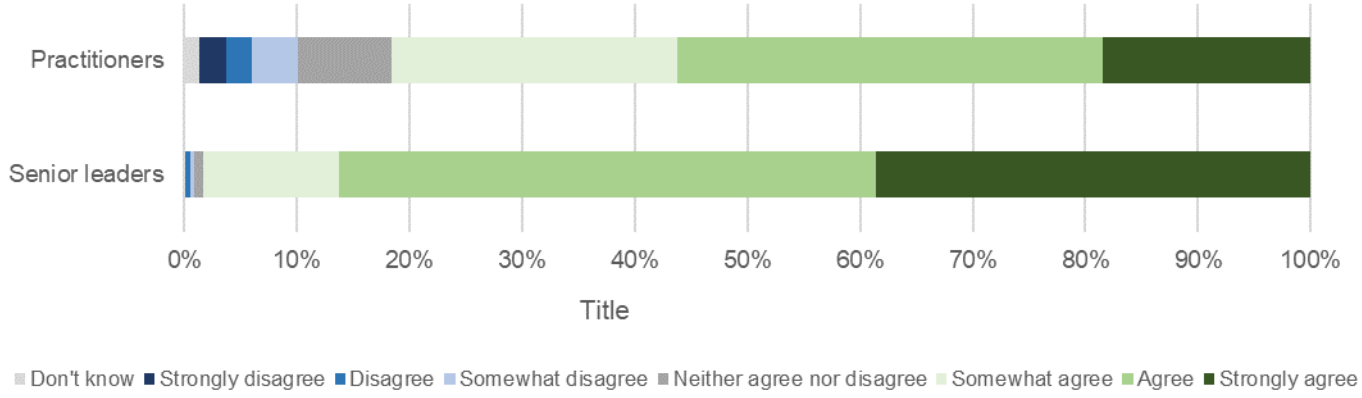
9.7 A higher percentage of primary school respondents (82 per cent) agreed with this statement compared with practitioners from secondary schools (49 per cent).

9.8 Senior leaders from the South East region (83 per cent) were more likely than those in the Mid and West region (60 per cent) to 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement.

Responses to the statement 'I am confident in my ability to adapt my professional practice in ways that enable me to implement the new curriculum'

9.9 The vast majority of senior leaders (98 per cent) and 82 per cent of practitioners agreed with the statement ***'I am confident in my ability to adapt my professional practice in ways that enable me to implement the new curriculum'***; 2 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Figure 32. Senior leaders' and practitioners' responses to the statement 'I am confident in my ability to adapt my professional practice in ways that enable me to implement the new curriculum': all sectors



N= 317 senior leaders, 217 practitioners

9.10 A higher percentage of primary school practitioners (93 per cent) agreed with this statement compared with practitioners from secondary schools (76 per cent).

Questions to senior leaders on school capability

9.11 The following questions about school capability were only asked to headteachers and senior leaders.

Responses to the statement 'My school has the staff with the skills required to design the new curriculum (senior leaders only)'

9.12 The vast majority of senior leaders (95 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school has the staff with the skills required to design the new curriculum'***; 2 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Responses to the statement 'My school has sufficient staff capacity to design the new curriculum (senior leaders only)'

9.13 A clear majority of senior leaders (84 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school has sufficient staff capacity to design the new curriculum'***; 13 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Responses to the statement 'My school's staff have the necessary skills to plan and deliver lessons in line with the new Curriculum for Wales (senior leaders only)'

9.14 The vast majority (97 per cent) of senior leaders agreed with the statement ***'My school's staff have the necessary skills to plan and deliver lessons in line with the new Curriculum for Wales'***; 2 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Responses to the statement 'My school has the hardware and digital infrastructure required to implement the new curriculum (senior leaders only)'

9.15 The vast majority of senior leaders (85 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school has the hardware and digital infrastructure required to implement the new curriculum'***; 10 per cent of senior leaders disagreed with this statement.

9.16 A higher percentage of senior leaders in primary schools (89 per cent) agreed with the statement compared with those in secondary schools (66 per cent).

Responses to the statement 'My school has the software required to implement the new curriculum (senior leaders only)'

9.17 The vast majority of senior leaders (85 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school has the software required to implement the new curriculum.'***; 10 per cent disagreed with this statement

9.18 A higher percentage of senior leaders in primary schools (88 per cent) agreed with the statement compared with those in secondary schools (67 per cent).

Responses to the statement 'My school has the teaching and learning materials/resources required to implement the new curriculum (senior leaders only)'

9.19 A clear majority of senior leaders (83 per cent) agreed with the statement ***'My school has the teaching and learning materials/resources required to implement the new curriculum'***; 10 per cent disagreed with this statement

Qualitative responses to open text question about capability to support curriculum reform

9.20 Respondents were asked to provide further comments to support their answers to the statements in relation to capability to support curriculum reform. In total, 81 respondents provided written comments in response to this question. This section summarises the main points raised.

9.21 In the majority of cases, senior leaders expressed confidence in the skills and capability of their staff in survey responses. They stated that teachers had the commitment, knowledge and capability to co-construct and deliver a successful curriculum in line with the vision of Curriculum for Wales.

9.22 Senior leaders and teachers expressed enthusiasm for the new curriculum in all but a very small minority of cases. The new curriculum, it was noted, continued to be a source of motivation and excitement within schools. Respondents reported having invested time into upskilling and learning to ensure they can contribute effectively to

curriculum design. Many spoke about being re-enthused as teachers and having a renewed sense of purpose in their work.

> ‘I have been teaching for 31 years but after receiving encouragement and leadership from a younger teacher in the school I have tried experimenting with a new method of teaching. I am delighted – it has sparked something in me again and I look forward to going to class on some days! I had become stale and I needed this. The children see purpose in the work and want to do it!’ Senior leader, primary school[37]

9.23 Senior leaders and practitioners also, however, raised a number of concerns:

- They repeated points about insufficient time available to leaders and teachers to engage with the curriculum design process;
- There was a feeling among some that there had not been enough support available to give them the skills, competencies and practical resources to realise the curriculum. Senior leaders (and also practitioners) felt that professional learning opportunities were limited and difficult to access. In other cases, leaders felt that the training available were of poor quality and did not instil sufficient knowledge. Specifically, many of these responses mentioned that more practical support and examples would be more useful than the content of some training which focused heavily on the theoretical reasons behind the curriculum changes.

> ‘The training so far has been poor. The modules on managing change and vision were largely a waste of a considerable amount of time on the part of my whole SLT. I only attended out of loyalty to our school improvement advisor and the team. There has been too much theorising and not enough "how to" suggestions.’ Senior leader, primary school

- Some leaders expressed the concern that they and their staff lacked expertise in curriculum design, and that they had not been trained to ‘know how to build a curriculum’.

9.24 Senior leaders referred to funding as a barrier to equipping their schools with the capabilities and resources to take forward curriculum design. Some felt that funding

[37] ‘Rwyf wedi bod yn dysgu ers 31 o flynyddoedd ond ar ôl derbyn anogaeth ac arweiniad gan athrawes iau yn yr ysgol rydw i wedi mentro i arbrofi gyda dull newydd o ddysgu. Rydw i wrth fy modd- mae wedi tanio rhywbeth ynddo fi eto ac rwyf yn edrych ymlaen i fynd i'r dosbarth ar rai dyddiau! Roeddwn wedi mynd yn stêl ac angen hyn. Mae'r plant yn gweld pwrpas i'r gwaith ac eisiau ei wneud o!’.

was needed to release staff from some of their teaching commitments to be able to research and support curriculum development. Leaders also noted that additional funding would be required as part of curriculum roll-out, including: subscription fees for more online materials; new resources for outdoor learning; IT funding for enhanced blended learning; and funding to schools to afford teaching staff planning time away from the classroom.

> ‘Although there has been an increase in funding through the 3Rs [Recruit, recover, raise standards] programme there needs to be year on year increase in funding to find that elusive 'time' for staff to plan this new curriculum. Schools cannot be expected to implement such a significant shift in practice without a huge investment. However the investment should be at school level not at regional or national level. We need to reduce the contact time of staff so they can engage and this costs money!’ Headteacher, secondary school.

10. Conclusions and issues for consideration

10.1 The conclusions and issues for further consideration set out below have been developed based on the findings set out in Sections 4-9.

Knowledge, understanding and commitment to curriculum reform

10.2 Overall, responses from senior leaders and practitioners in relation to their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum reforms were positive. The survey found that a vast majority of senior leaders and a clear majority of practitioners agreed that the reasons for reforming the curriculum were clear to them and that they knew what was required in their school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved. The findings also indicate strong levels of commitment to curriculum reforms among senior leaders and practitioners.

10.3 A clear majority of senior leaders indicated that they are well-placed to design their own curriculum and make changes to their professional practice ready for the planned roll-out from September 2022. A lower proportion of practitioners – around half – noted that they felt their school was ready to design their curriculum and adapt their professional practice in preparation for roll-out. Knowledge and understanding of how to respond to curriculum reform were consistently lower among secondary practitioners compared with senior leaders and primary practitioners.

Opportunities associated with preparing for curriculum reform

10.4 Senior leaders and practitioners recognise the opportunities presented by the reforms, including flexibility and freedom to shape their school's curriculum; the prospect of greater innovation and experimentation in teaching practices; the development of more tailored learning that is relevant to learners' interests. Many survey respondents expressed excitement about the new curriculum, noting that they felt re-enthused about their teaching practice and having a renewed sense of purpose about their work.

10.5 Survey respondents demonstrated their understanding of how their school and their own professional practices are changing in preparing for the new curriculum. Senior leaders and practitioners noted that they had seen progress in relation to:

- In-school **collaboration** to develop a shared vision for the curriculum, plan and discuss pedagogy and trial new approaches;
- Access to **professional learning** – often delivered in-school – to give teachers the confidence and capabilities to be co-designers of the curriculum;
- Fostering a shift in **mindset and in teaching practice**: teachers are being encouraged to be more innovative, experimental and to have confidence in more creative approaches;
- Placing greater emphasis on **learner voice** to inform curriculum planning;
- Focusing on **cross-curricular and integrated learning** as part of their planning and teaching practice.

Reported differences between sub-groups

10.6 There were recurring patterns in overall survey responses. Primary school respondents were equally or more positive in their responses to all questions compared with their secondary school counterparts. In virtually all areas explored in the survey there was at least a small minority of senior leaders and practitioners who indicated a lack of commitment, knowledge or readiness.

10.7 Knowledge and understanding of how to respond to curriculum reform were consistently reported to be lower among secondary practitioners compared with senior leaders and primary practitioners. Practitioners in both primary and secondary also reported lower levels of confidence than senior leaders in their ability to incorporate various aspects of the curriculum into their practice by September 2022. This included the pedagogical principles, the principles of progression and the statements of what matters, which are considered to be central to the realisation of the curriculum.

10.8 While most school senior leaders reported that they had developed a vison for their curriculum, practitioners' responses showed that they were not always aware of this. Similarly, senior leaders reported higher levels of collaboration taking place to support the design of the new curriculum compared with practitioners. In qualitative

responses to open-ended questions, some respondents reported that there had not been time to engage practitioners as fully as had been hoped in curriculum reform discussions.

10.9 High levels of collaboration were reported by senior leaders, but many practitioners appear not to be aware of collaborative activity in their school and of key actions such as the development of their school's vision. This suggests schools should continue to be encouraged to adopt a 'whole-school' approach to engagement, and to communicate progress to all practitioners in the school.

10.10 This raises questions about how effectively some senior leaders are engaging staff at all levels in their schools as part of the curriculum reform process and whether information and guidance are being shared effectively.

10.11 Survey data showed relatively little notable difference in the responses from leaders and practitioners by region and by language medium of school. For both sub-groups there were some variations in responses to specific questions (see 10.14, for example).

Issues for consideration

i. Welsh Government and partners should consider what actions could be taken to ensure all practitioners, particularly those in secondary schools, gain the skills and knowledge they need to design and implement their own curriculum and assessment arrangements.

ii. Welsh Government and partners should support senior leaders in ensuring that all practitioners are aware of their school's curriculum vision and understand their role in helping to achieve this vision through their practice.

iii. Welsh Government should work with school improvement services, including regional consortia, to identify schools that are less engaged with the curriculum reform process, and provide targeted support for leaders and teachers at all levels within these schools.

Time and capacity to engage in curriculum preparations

10.12 Most senior leaders and practitioners reported that insufficient time had been available to them to prepare for the roll out of the curriculum. It is clear from the survey data that the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic impacted schools' preparations for curriculum reform severely during the 2020/21 academic year. During the time the survey was open (July 2021), the Welsh Government announced that formal implementation of the new curriculum will not be mandatory for secondary schools until 2023, with roll-out in that year to years 7 and 8.

Issue for consideration

iv. As the capacity, morale and well-being of teachers continue to be tested during the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, Welsh Government should closely monitor schools' preparations towards milestones in September 2022 and 2023 and respond swiftly to specific needs identified.

Assessment to support learner progression

10.13 Many senior leaders and practitioners reported a need for more guidance and support on assessment to support learner progression. They reported a lack of knowledge about how future assessment approaches should be developed and what measures would be taken to ensure consistency of assessment arrangements and hence progression between schools. Practitioners (particularly in secondary schools) were less likely than senior leaders to indicate that they understood assessment arrangements under the new curriculum; half of secondary practitioners reported that they do not understand what their school is required to do to plan their own assessment arrangements to support learner progression.

10.14 Many respondents also noted anxiety about how assessment and learner progress more generally would be recorded and used as part of accountability processes.

Issue for consideration

v. Welsh Government and partners could consider what additional professional learning and guidance could be provided to schools to clarify expectations in relation to assessment and progression processes.

Additional support and resources

10.15 Most senior leaders and practitioners reported that they needed more support or resources to be ready for September 2022. Practitioners, particularly in secondary schools, reported lower levels of confidence than senior leaders that they will be able to access the professional learning they need. Senior leaders in Welsh-medium schools were notably more likely than those in English-medium schools to report that their school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022.

Issues for consideration

vi. Welsh Government and partners should continue to engage with schools (e.g. through the National Network for Curriculum Implementation) to ensure that appropriate professional learning and support, including examples of good practice and support materials, are available to schools in the lead up to September 2022.[38]

vii. In doing so, the planning of all professional learning, support and resources should take into consideration the needs of Welsh-medium and bilingual schools.

[38] See National Network for Curriculum Implementation - Hwb (gov.wales)

11. Annex A: Survey questionnaire

Curriculum and assessment reforms: preparations for 2022

About your school or setting

1. Name of school or setting (required) *

2. What type of school or setting do you work in?

- [ ] Primary school or nursery school
- [ ] Secondary school
- [ ] Special school
- [ ] PRU
- [ ] All-through school (3-16, 3-18 school)
- [ ] Non-maintained early years setting
- [ ] I do not work in a school, PRU or non-maintained early years setting

3. Is your school...

- [ ] English-medium
- [ ] Welsh-medium
- [ ] Bilingual
- [ ] Dual stream
- [ ] Other / not applicable

4. In which regional education consortium area is your school?

- [ ] North Wales (GwE consortium area)
- [ ] Mid and West Wales (ERW consortium area)
- [ ] Central South Wales (CSC consortium area)
- [ ] South East Wales (EAS consortium area)
- [ ] N/A – not part of a consortium

5. Please note if your school was, or is, a (tick all that apply):

- [ ] Pioneer school
- [ ] Innovation school
- [ ] Lead ITE partnership school / Part of an ITE partnership
- [ ] Lead creative school
- [ ] None of the above / don't know

About you

6. What is your main role in the school? (required) *

- [ ] Headteacher
- [ ] Senior leader
- [ ] Middle leader
- [ ] Teacher
- [ ] Learning support worker
- [ ] Other (please specify):

7. How many years of experience do you have working in teaching/education?

- [ ] Under 3 years
- [ ] 3-10 years
- [ ] 11-20 years
- [ ] 21-30 years
- [ ] 31 years +

Structure of the following questions

The following sections of the survey are structured according to five aspects of readiness. This is an adaptation of a model developed by a member of the research team, Professor Claire Sinnema. The questions are based on**:**

- **Knowledge about** curriculum change
- **Understanding of how to respond** to curriculum change
- **Commitment** to curriculum change
- **Preparation** to design, adopt and implement the curriculum
- **Capability to practice** in ways that realise the curriculum

Knowledge about curriculum change

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The reasons for reforming the curriculum are clear to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know what is required in my school to ensure the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales are achieved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new **curriculum arrangements**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am clear about both what will be the same and what will be different in my school under the new **assessment arrangements**	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your responses.

Understanding of how to respond to curriculum change

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand what my school is required to do to **design our own curriculum** in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand what my school is required to do to **plan our own assessment arrangements** in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales Framework	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand what I need to do to prepare for and implement curriculum changes in my school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your responses

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Does not apply to me
The four purposes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The areas of learning and experience (Areas)[39]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The statements of what matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The 12 pedagogical principles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Principles of progression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The descriptions of learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: Based on progress to date, I am confident that I will be able to incorporate the following elements of the Curriculum for Wales into my professional practice from September 2022.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Does not apply to me
The mandatory curriculum elements: Religion Values and Ethics, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Welsh and English	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The mandatory cross-curricular skills: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The cross-cutting themes of the curriculum: Careers and Work-related Experiences; Human Rights Education; Diversity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

[39] Labelled 'AoLEs' in the original questionnaire.

Below are optional open-ended questions. Please provide brief comments in response to these statements:

12. The main things I will do to prepare for our school's new curriculum are...

13. The most significant changes to my professional practice in response to the Curriculum for Wales will be...

Commitment to curriculum change

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ insufficient knowledge
I am committed to the aspirations of the Curriculum for Wales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am committed to making changes to my professional practice to help learners realise the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am committed to learning more about the Curriculum for Wales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your responses

Preparation to establish the conditions required to realise the curriculum

15. Has your school developed a vision for your new curriculum?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ insufficient knowledge
To date, sufficient time has been available within the school calendar to prepare for the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Please note to what extent the following groups have been actively involved in designing or informing your new school curriculum:

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Don’t know
Senior leaders in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Governors	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learners	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents and carers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other representatives of the local community	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. Please note to what extent practitioners in your school are working collaboratively to support the design of the new curriculum:

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Don’t know
Collaboration between practitioners within the school	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration with other schools	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration with HE partners	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Please note whether and to what extent your school has undertaken the following activities:

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Don't know
Our school has trialled classroom approaches linked to the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers in our school have engaged in professional enquiry to support preparations for the new curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our school is reviewing the work we are doing to prepare for teaching under the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your responses

Your capability to practice in ways that realise curriculum aspirations

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ insufficient knowledge
I have the skills to support the design of our school's new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am confident I will be able to access the professional learning that I will need to help design the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am confident in my ability to adapt my professional practice in ways that enable me to implement the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your answers.

Your main role in school

- [ ] Headteacher
- [ ] Senior leader
- [ ] Middle leader
- [ ] Teacher
- [ ] Learning support worker
- [ ] Other (please specify)

School's capability to practice in ways that realise curriculum aspirations

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ insufficient knowledge
My school has the staff with the skills required to design the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school has sufficient staff capacity to design the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school's staff have the necessary skills to plan and deliver lessons in line with the new Curriculum for Wales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school has the hardware and digital infrastructure required to implement the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school has the software required to implement the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school has the teaching and learning materials/resources required to implement the new curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any comments to support your responses

Overarching questions

22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / insufficient knowledge
My school is well-placed to design our own curriculum ready for the planned roll-out from September 2022	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school is well-placed to make changes to our professional practice ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My school is in need of additional support or resources to be ready for the planned roll-out of the new curriculum from September 2022.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify the additional support you need.

Follow-up contact

23. Further qualitative research is planned in Autumn 2021 to explore a number of the issues discussed in this questionnaire in more detail. If you are interested in taking part in a follow-up discussion, please provide your name and email address below.

Name

Email address

12. Annex B: Profile of respondents

12.1 This section sets out the profile of respondents to the survey and of the qualitative interviewees. The profile of survey respondents and interviewees is compared with the profile of the population, where possible, to illustrate how representative the samples of respondents and interviewees are.

By type of setting

Senior leaders

12.2 Just over three-quarters (76 per cent) of the 345 responses received by senior leaders in unique schools were from primary schools, with just under a fifth (19 per cent) from secondary schools. The remaining share of the sample comprised senior leaders from all through schools (1 per cent), special schools (2 per cent) and PRUs (1 per cent).

12.3 By examining the percentage of the sample drawn from each type of setting alongside the percentage of settings of each type in the survey population,

12.4

12.6 Table 2 shows that:

- secondary schools were slightly over-represented in the sample (19 per cent of unique responses), compared with the survey population (12 per cent of settings).[40]
- primary schools, all through schools, special schools and PRUs were slightly under-represented in the sample.

12.7 Weighting coefficients were therefore used to adjust the representation of primary, all through schools, special schools and PRUs to reflect the population of settings. These are also shown in

12.8

[40] The number of settings was used as a proxy for the number of senior leaders in the survey population. It is acknowledged that some headteachers have responsibility for more than one school and that the number of senior leaders is therefore not the same as the number of settings. However, this is considered to be a sufficiently robust proxy measure for the purposes of analysis.

12.10 Table 2 below.

Table 2. Profile of senior leaders completing the survey by type of setting

Sector	Percentage of population of settings	Percentage of survey sample (unique responses)*	Number of unique responses from school senior leaders	Weighting coefficient applied in analysis**
Primary or nursery	82%	76%	261	1.08
All though schools (3-16 / 3-19)	2%	1%	5	1.07
Secondary schools	12%	19%	67	0.63
Special schools	3%	2%	8	1.13
PRUs	2%	1%	4	1.25
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**345**	**1**

*Unique responses count only one response per setting and therefore excludes additional responses from others in the school.
**The precise weighting coefficient varies very slightly by question depending on the number of respondents completing each question.

Practitioners

12.11 37 per cent of the 222 responses received by practitioners were from primary schools, with 59 per cent from secondary schools. The remaining share of the sample comprised practitioners from all through schools (2 per cent), special schools (1 per cent) and PRUs (1 per cent).

12.12 By examining the percentage of the sample drawn from each type of setting alongside the percentage of practitioners of each type in the survey population, Table 3 shows that:

- secondary practitioners were over-represented in the sample (59 per cent of responses), compared with the survey population (32 per cent of practitioners).[41]
- primary schools were under-represented in the sample (37 per cent of responses) compared with the survey population (57 per cent of practitioners).

12.13 Weighting coefficients were therefore used to adjust the representation of primary, all through schools, special schools and PRUs to reflect the population of settings. These are also shown in

[41] Education Workforce Council data on the number of registered practitioners in each type of setting was used to profile the survey population. See Education Workforce Statistics (Education Workforce Council).

12.14

12.16 Table 2 below.

Table 3. Profile of practitioners completing the survey by type of setting

Sector	Percentage of population of practitioners*	Percentage of survey sample	Number of responses from practitioners	Weighting coefficient applied in analysis**
Primary or nursery	57%	37%	261	1.34
All though schools (3-16 / 3-19)	4%	4%	5	2.40
Secondary schools	32%	59%	67	0.71
Special schools	6%	1%	8	3.37
PRUs	1%	1%	4	0.43
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**345**	**1**

*Based on Education Workforce Statistics (Education Workforce Council)
**The precise weighting coefficient varies very slightly by question depending on the number of respondents completing each question.

By language medium

12.17 The majority (69 per cent) of the 333 responses received by senior leaders in unique schools that are classified according to language medium were from English-medium schools, with just under a third (31 per cent) from Welsh-medium schools. Table 4 below shows that the sample was broadly representative of the survey population and therefore no weighting has been applied to the analysis by language medium of school.

Table 4. Profile of population of settings and survey sample by language medium

Medium of setting	Number of settings in population	Percentage of settings in population	Number of settings in sample	Percentage settings in sample
English-medium	984	69.1%	233	70.0%
Welsh-medium*	441	30.9%	100	30.0%
Total**	**1425**	**100.0%**	**333**	**100.0%**

*Includes dual stream primary and bilingual secondaries and all-though (3-16/3-19) schools
**Special schools and PRUs are not classified by language and are therefore excluded from the analysis by medium of learning

By role

12.18 A total of 345 responses received by senior leaders in unique schools. These comprised 248 headteachers and 97 senior leaders (including deputy headteachers

and assistant headteachers). A further 47 responses were received from senior leaders in schools where the headteacher had also responded.

12.19 A total of 222 responses were received from practitioners. These comprised 81 middle leaders, 127 teachers, 13 learning support workers and one in another role within a school. A further 6 responses were received from non-maintained early years settings.

By region

12.20 Responses from senior leaders in unique schools were fairly evenly spread across the four regions of Wales (see Table 5 below). Settings from the Central South region were slightly over-represented in the sample and settings from the Mid and West and North regions slightly under-represented. However, these differences were not considered to be sufficiently large to require the weighting of the sample and therefore no weighting has been applied to the analysis by region of setting.

Table 5. Profile of population of settings and survey sample by region and weighting coefficient used

Region	Number of settings in population*	% of settings in population*	Number of settings in sample	% of settings in sample
Central South	386	26%	114	33%
Mid & West	465	31%	89	26%
North	407	27%	84	24%
South East	237	16%	58	17%
Total	1495	100%	345	100%

*Based on 2019/20 PLASC

By free school meal eligibility

12.21 Data on the number of pupils aged 5-15 eligible for free school meals (eFSM) by school (Pupil-level Annual School Census (PLASC), 2020) was used to profile the population of schools according to whether schools had less than 20 per cent of pupils, 20-39 per cent or over 40 per cent of pupils eFSM. The number of unique responses from schools in the sample were monitored during the fieldwork period to ensure adequate representation by eFSM banding. The percentage of schools in

the sample within each band was sufficiently similar to the national data and therefore no weighting has been applied to the analysis by eFSM eligibility.

Table 6. Profile of population of schools and survey sample by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Type of setting	% pupils eFSM in population of schools (PLASC 2019/20)				% pupils eFSM in survey sample of schools			
	<20%	20-39%	>40%	Total	<20%	20-39%	>40%	Total
Primary	42.0%	30.7%	8.8%	81.4%	35.4%	26.7%	8.7%	70.9%
Middle	1.0%	0.6%	0.1%	1.7%	1.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1.8%
Secondary	8.8%	4.7%	0.3%	13.9%	14.7%	9.3%	0.6%	24.6%
Special	0.0%	1.1%	2.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.5%	2.7%
Total	**51.8%**	**37.1%**	**11.1%**	**100.0%**	**51.4%**	**37.5%**	**11.1%**	**100.0%**

Source: PLASC 2020, Welsh Government

*National data on the percentage of pupils eFSM is not available for nursery schools and PRUs, therefore they are excluded from the above analysis.

By national school categorisation system support category

12.22 The latest data on national school categorisation system support categories was published in January 2020. The percentage of schools in each category nationally was used to develop a target survey sample for each category. The number of unique responses from schools in the sample were monitored during the fieldwork period to ensure adequate representation by category. The percentage of schools in the sample within each category was sufficiently similar to the national data and therefore no weighting has been applied to the analysis by support category.

Table 7. Profile of population of schools and survey sample by the national school categorisation system support categories

Support category (January 2020)	% of schools in population	% of schools in survey sample
Red	3.5%	3.2%
Amber	10.4%	12.0%
Yellow	38.8%	36.4%
Green	47.3%	48.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: National school categorisation system: support categories