
CYTŪN POLICY BULLETIN

JUNE 2019



BIG STEP FORWARD FOR NEW SCHOOLS CURRICULUM

On April 30 Welsh Government published a [new draft curriculum for all schools in Wales](#) which are funded through local authorities – primary and secondary, Welsh and English medium, church schools and community schools. Preparation of this material began after the publication of Professor Graham Donaldson’s report, *Successful Futures*, in 2015, and is the result of four years’ work by the Government, pioneer schools and teams of teachers and experts. You can see a summary of what has happened and the next steps [here](#).

The faith communities of Wales have been part of the discussion around the new curriculum, and from the first meeting the [Faith Communities Forum](#) has had two representatives on the [Stakeholder group for education reform](#), alongside a host of other organisations with interest in the field. We have taken a particular interest in the development of the curriculum for Religious Education, but have also contributed to discussions about the whole curriculum and related matters – such as training teachers, developing school leadership, and so on. The Catholic Church and the Church in Wales have also had a joint representative on the [Change Board](#), due to their role as providers of education through their denominational schools.

What is the basis of the new curriculum?

Welsh Government accepted all the recommendations in *Successful Futures*, and Professor Donaldson has continued to participate in the discussions. As a result, that document has formed the basis for this work, and the new curriculum is based on the four purposes identified by Professor Donaldson, that *children and young people should develop as:*

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

Achieving these purposes is the aim of the curriculum. School education for pupils aged 3 to 16 years old will be taught across six areas of learning and experience, which are:

- Expressive arts
- Health and well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, literacy and communication
- Mathematics and numeracy
- Science and technology.

Work was undertaken with teachers, schools and educational experts to draw up across these six areas an overview of ‘What Matters’ – that is those things in each area which pupils will need to know, experience or develop in order to fulfil the four purposes.



Picture: Welsh Government

What is the content of the curriculum?

In contrast to the national curriculum introduced in 1988, and partially revised since then, the new curriculum offers only a framework for individual schools and teachers to populate with content appropriate to their pupils and local area. As long as schools develop a local curriculum which pays due regard to the national framework, covers the six areas of learning and experience, and aims to fulfil the four purposes, they will have extensive leeway to develop their own ways of working.

As one head teacher who spoke to the stakeholder group for education reform about how their school is developing the new curriculum, *Each new pupil who arrives at the school changes the curriculum, as each pupil brings new experiences, background and talents which will contribute towards it.* But the curriculum will still be led by professional teachers – it is not intended that educational techniques should be introduced which allow pupils simply to decide for themselves what they wish to learn.

Revd Dr Philip Manghan has written a detailed account of how Catholic schools will develop the new curriculum in the [June 2019 edition of Catholic People](#).

What about Religious Education?

Religious Education will be included in the [Humanities](#) area of learning and experience – although religious aspects may arise in any area (e.g. religious stories could be part of the expressive arts or language, literature and communication; spiritual aspects of health and well-being may be discussed in that area; and so on).

Each part of the curriculum aims towards *progression steps* which describe what pupils can do as a result of their studies. For example, in progression step 3 for the Humanities (which corresponds roughly to the progress of an 11 year old child) the aim is that pupils will be able to say (amongst other things):

- *I can explain the importance of special times, events and traditions in my community and in the wider world, and can communicate my feelings about them.*
- *I can understand that different experiences, religions, world views, beliefs and practices contribute to the diverse societies in Wales and the wider world.*
- *I can understand the diversity of cultures and societies that exist beyond my own experience, and appreciate the importance of language, beliefs and values in the formation of cultural identities.*

Regarding the Religious Education element within the Humanities, the intention is that each county's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – which includes representatives from local religious communities – will continue to draw up a syllabus for the county, and the dioceses of the Church in Wales and the Catholic Church will draw up syllabi for their schools. These syllabi will have to pay due regard to the content of the new curriculum, and schools will need to teach Religious Education in accordance with the appropriate syllabus.

In January 2019 the Welsh Government published a white paper entitled [A Transformational Curriculum](#), which included consultation on whether the right of parents to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education curriculum, and also the curriculum for Relationships and Sexuality Education (part of the [Health and Well-being](#) area of learning and experience). Some members of Cytûn and a number of individual church members responded to this consultation. Welsh Government has assured us that they will continue to consult with faith communities about these matters.

Are there opportunities here for churches and chapels?

Yes. The curriculum says that children of all ages should have opportunities to experience

outdoor learning and opportunities to visit museums; historical sites; places of political, religious or spiritual significance; geographical features or sites; and businesses or retailers.

Welsh Government has said that it will encourage schools to engage with local organisations in order to enrich the curriculum and root it in their area – the curriculum uses the Welsh word *cynefin* to describe the deep relationship between pupil, school and community which is intended. Many schools do this already, but this will give a new impetus to the creation of such relationships.

Places of worship of all traditions, therefore, will have an opportunity to welcome their local schools on visits and tell their stories. It is the school that will decide how to arrange this, and churches should respect the right of the school to do so. But this could be an opportunity to deepen the relationship with the schools in your community.

A visit to a church or chapel can offer opportunities to learn not only about religion as such but also about local history (war memorials etc), language (the use of Welsh, English and other languages within the building) and culture. There are opportunities also to study mathematics and technology in looking at the design and architecture of the building, and the expressive arts in looking at the use of music, words, drama and so on within the worship and other activities which take place there. The opportunities are endless!

What about collective worship (school assemblies)?

These changes in the curriculum do not change the obligation on schools to provide daily collective worship for their pupils. Cytûn and our member churches will continue to discuss with the Welsh Government matters relating to worship in schools.

Will the new curriculum be introduced immediately?

A number of schools have begun already to introduce aspects of the new curriculum, but it will not become statutory until September 2022, initially for pupils up to and including Year 7 only. That year's Year 7 pupils will then follow the new curriculum through their schooling, and so they will be the first to sit GCSE examinations on the basis of the new curriculum. The syllabi for these exams will be reformed in line with the new curriculum, and pupils will be able to choose the subjects they wish to study, so long as they continue to receive an education covering all six areas of learning and experience. The current GCSE qualifications will continue to be examined until summer 2026.

The next three years, therefore, will be a period of preparation, with opportunity for teachers to receive additional in service training to ensure that they understand the new requirements.

How can we respond?

There is a formal consultation period on the draft until 19 July 2019. Welsh Government will be arranging public meetings to discuss it in various parts of Wales, including a workshop for local churches and other community faith groups at **Jury's Hotel, 1 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3UD on Friday 28th June** between 10:00 and 15:00. Please register online at Y Cwricwlwm Newydd / New Curriculum

Anyone who wishes may respond online here: <https://hwb.gov.wales/draft-curriculum-for-wales-2022/have-your-say/> Cytûn will draw together the responses of our member denominations and organisations and contribute to the discussion on that basis. We will, therefore, welcome all comments by email at gethin@cytun.cymru – but please respond directly to the Government as well!

The final version of the curriculum will be published in January 2020.

Save lives of boat refugees on “deadliest border in the world,” urge churches

The Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) and Palermo (Italy) Mayor Leoluca Orlando have issued a joint declaration calling for a European distribution mechanism for boat refugees.



Picture: Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland

Currently there is no Europe-wide distribution mechanism to accommodate refugees rescued in the Mediterranean in the European Union. The declaration calls for a political emergency solution this summer, and urges a group of European

Union member states to act as a “coalition of the willing” and develop a sustainable migration policy.

People are still trying to cross the Mediterranean, the declaration points out, and migration movements are a historical phenomenon originating in the fundamental human right to mobility. “People move in search of better living conditions, or flee from war, poverty and climate disasters,” reads the text. “In view of the expected rise in refugee flows during the summer it is essential for the European Union to remember its fundamental values and to find solutions for the individual states so as to prevent more deaths in the Mediterranean.” Such solutions must enable the creation of humanitarian passages and give priority to rescuing shipwreck victims and saving human lives, the text notes.

“The Mediterranean continues to be the deadliest border in the world,” reads the declaration. “We know of hundreds of deaths so far in 2019.”

The declaration asks a challenging question: Do we want to help in 2019 or look the other way? “The [criminalisation of civil search and rescue operations](#) must stop,” the declaration says. “Now!” The text also states that saving lives at sea must remain a public responsibility. “This summer we need a European emergency solution, a provisional distribution mechanism for boat people,” reads the declaration. “Let’s make this happen!”

World Council of Churches

Cross-Party Group on Faith

A welcome in the hillsides: Faith groups and immigration

Guest Speaker: Revd Aled Edwards OBE, Chief Executive of Cytûn

Wednesday 26 June 2019

12.00 – 13.15

Media Briefing Room, The Senedd

To reserve a seat, email Jim Stewart on jimstewartwales@gmail.com

FUTURE SUPPORT FOR WELSH FARMERS

Following a consultation last year under the title [Brexid and our Land](#), the Welsh Government has [published its response](#) to the [many responses received](#), including that from [Cytûn](#).

The Government, and the Minister for the Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, [speaking in the Senedd on June 5](#), has confirmed that The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will come to an end as the UK leaves the European Union. However, the Government believes that there remains a strong case for continuing to support farmers.

In the light of the consultation exercise, the Government intends to make a number of changes to its policy proposals. It is now proposed to pursue an overall objective of sustainable land management. The ambition is to have sustainable farms producing both food and public goods in a system which enhances the well-being of farmers, communities and all the people of Wales. The Government says, "A farm sustainability scheme will be established to provide an income stream to farmers in return for delivering sustainable land management outcomes, such as water quality, biodiversity and animal health. Many of these outcomes can be produced alongside sustainable food production."

The Government has published a [comprehensive evidence pack](#) on the current situation of agriculture in Wales. A further consultation document will be published by Welsh Government in early July this year (in time for the Royal Welsh Show). It will then work with farmers and others in a process of co-design to help determine the details.

The continuing uncertainty of Brexit means that no decisions on the timetable for reform can be made at this stage. No change will be made until the Government have considered responses to further consultation and the relevant impact assessments, and until it can be demonstrated that a new system is adequately designed.

Cytûn's Wales & Europe Working Group will continue to monitor this process on behalf of the churches in Wales.

Eisteddfod confirms 2019 site in Llanrwst

The National Eisteddfod has announced its revised plans for the site of the 2019 event this August 3-10 - confirming that it will take place in Llanrwst. Following changes over recent weeks, the site will include some land included in the previously announced site, and a number of additional nearby pieces of land.

As reported in the last *Policy Bulletin*, the Eisteddfod announced in March that changes to its site planning would be necessary as it was not possible to insure the event on the basis of plans at that time for health and safety reasons. Subsequently, the Eisteddfod team has explored a variety of alternative options for the site, with the objective of keeping the Eisteddfod as close to Llanrwst as possible.

Now, with the new plans in place, it is possible to put the exciting plans formulated locally for the 2019 Eisteddfod into action. Cytûn will as usual be hosting the churches' pavilion with refreshments served and a full programme of events, including daily worship. Sunday morning worship will be held at the stage on the Maes. Further details will be published on www.cytun.cymru as plans are finalised.

Tickets can be purchased by visiting www.eisteddfod.cymru or calling 0845 4090 800.

The planned locations of the Eisteddfod Maes and associated sites can be viewed on the Eisteddfod website [here](#)

INQUIRY INTO CHILD ABUSE IN RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has [announced](#) a new Inquiry into child protection in religious organisations and settings. The investigation is thematic and will review the current child protection policies, practices and procedures in religious institutions that have a significant presence in England and Wales. This will include non conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism in England and Wales. This investigation is separate from IICSA's ongoing investigations into the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

Religious settings such as mosques, synagogues, churches and temples are in scope. Places of faith tuition such as Muslim madrassahs and Christian Sunday schools and places where children and young people gather in connection with their religious beliefs, including youth groups and camps will also be investigated by the Inquiry.

A preliminary hearing will take place on 23 July 2019 and public hearings will take place in 2020.

FAMILY RESPONSES TO ORGAN DONATION LAW

In 2015, Wales became the first nation in the UK to [change the organ donation system](#) from an 'opt-in' system to an 'opt-out' system. Family members of potential donors still play a very important role in the new system. Bangor University was therefore commissioned to study the first two years of the new system and to interview as many family members as possible about their experiences – whether or not organ donation resulted.

Cytûn Policy Officer Gethin Rhys was invited to join the study team in order to offer advice on matters pertaining to religion which might affect how donors' families responded to organ donation or to the study itself. He is therefore a co-author of an academic paper reflecting on the challenges of research in this sensitive area which has been published online. The paper is entitled [Designing a co-productive study to overcome known methodological challenges in organ donation research with bereaved family members](#).

AN (ALMOST) BREXIT-FREE POLICY BULLETIN

This edition of the *Policy Bulletin* concentrates on matters other than the Brexit process. However, the work of [Cytûn's Wales & Europe Working Party](#) continues and the website is constantly updated. The churches' material for the May 2019 [European Parliament elections](#) is still available. The July 2019 Bulletin will include an update on Brexit matters.

CONTACTING CYTÛN'S POLICY OFFICER or subscribe to the Bulletin by email



Parch./Revd Gethin Rhys - Swyddog Polisi/Policy Officer
Cytûn - Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru/Churches Together in Wales
58 Richmond Road, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF24 3AT
Tel: 029 2046 4378 Mudol/mobile: 07889 858062



E-bost/E-mail: gethin@cytun.cymru  [@CytunNew](https://twitter.com/CytunNew)

Hapus i gyfathrebu yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg. Happy to communicate in Welsh and English

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JOIN US TO TELL
OUR POLITICIANS
THE TIME IS
NOW

**A MASS LOBBY
FOR CLIMATE,
NATURE
AND PEOPLE**

WHERE: LONDON | WHEN: JUNE 26TH

WHAT: FILLING THE STREETS OF WESTMINSTER TO TELL OUR MPS THE TIME IS NOW TO TAKE ACTION FOR OUR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT.

WHO WILL YOU BE JOINING: YOUNG, OLD, SURFERS, SCIENTISTS, BIRD WATCHERS, DOCTORS, AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN! LET'S SHOW OUR MPS WE ALL DEMAND ACTION NOW.

~~~~~ **CAID.ORG.UK/THE TIME IS NOW** ~~~~~

**SIGN UP AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

**#THE TIME IS NOW**

