

Welsh Government

**Curriculum for Wales: Clarifying the Humanities area in
relation to the history of Wales and the world**

19 January 2023

1. The NASUWT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals to clarify the Humanities area of learning in relation to the history of Wales and the world.
2. The NASUWT, The Teachers' Union, represents teachers and headteachers in Wales and across the United Kingdom.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The NASUWT believes that all children and young people have an entitlement to access a broad, balanced, relevant and engaging curriculum. The Union is clear that all children are entitled to access a common educational entitlement, established by means of a clear statutory national framework.¹
4. The NASUWT notes the principle set out by the Welsh Government that the '*vision for Wales is for a fully inclusive education system where all learners have equity of access to education that meets their needs and enables them to participate, benefit from and enjoy learning*', and that this also meets the tests that the Union has set out.
5. In the view of the NASUWT, public education is a cornerstone of democratic society. It is an essential element in the framework of social rights of children, young people and adults. Public education, in our view, must also be defined by its universality. Public education should encourage personal fulfilment, social responsibility, knowledge, cultural acquisition and skills for life. It should deliver for society's needs for social

¹ NASUWT (2013). *Maintaining world class schools*. NASUWT | Birmingham.

and economic development, political participation, environmental responsibility and international solidarity.

6. The NASUWT continues to have profound concerns about the role out of the Curriculum for Wales. The NASUWT believes that the Curriculum for Wales is a content vacuum that will pull in content proposals to fill this void. The NASUWT will take at face value each of these proposed changes but is concerned that each one will come with a workload implication on the practitioners who will be required to implement the change. The NASUWT does not believe that the Welsh Government has ever seriously considered the impact of implementation and seems to continue to plug the gaps with little thought about the impact on the teacher workforce.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Question 1 – Does the addition of ‘history of Wales and the world’ better clarify the importance of the teaching of Welsh history as part of the teaching of heritage in the statement of what matters and associated guidance?

Yes. Heritage is not necessarily history and if the Welsh Government wants the teaching of Welsh History in schools in Wales it must specify clearly that is what it requires. There is too much obscurity in the language of the Curriculum for Wales. This clarity is welcome but the whole of the Curriculum could do with a make-over to ensure that schools are clear in what is required from them. The phrase ‘Wales and the world’ is a case in point of lack of clarity even though it is an improvement on what presently exists. Are teachers to teach the history of the world? Clearly not given the time constraints in the school curriculum. It would be clearer to state ‘Wales in the world.’

Question 2 – The statements of what matters are key elements of the curriculum structures for each Area of Learning and Experience (Area). Is the proposed addition of ‘history of Wales and the world’ to the Humanities Area statement clear and accessible, providing understanding of the breadth for curriculum development?

No. The History of Wales is broad and deep and open to a variety of controversial interpretations. The simple statement ‘history of Wales and the world’ sheds no light to practitioners upon what aspects of this vast area should be focussed upon. What do you want the learners of Wales to know and understand about the history of Wales and the world? Or do teachers just cherry pick their favourite ‘bits’?

Question 3 – The statements of what matters have been refined following consideration of issues as part of the passage of associated legislation by the Senedd in 2021. Do the proposed changes to the Humanities Area provide sufficient clarity and support to schools and settings in their curriculum planning?

The Statements of what matters in humanities are overwhelmingly sociological. It is up to the Welsh Government what it wants to see the learners of Wales know and understand regarding the history of Wales. The NASUWT requires only clarity, resources and an understanding of the workload implications of implementation.

Question 4 – To support schools in engaging with the proposed changes to the statement of what matters and the associated guidance, we will also be commissioning the development of an overarching timeline of Welsh history. How could such a timeline and any other supporting resources support schools to engage with the proposed mandatory requirements highlighted in this consultation?

Any timeline would need to reflect the sociological emphasis of the statement of what matters. Simply put it would need to include the aspects of the Area that learners are encouraged to explore ie: chronology, change and continuity, diversity, cause and effect, interconnectedness, community, identity and belonging, authority and governance.

Question 5 – We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed amendments to the Humanities Area would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

The NASUWT does not consider that these proposals would have any positive or negative effects on the opportunities for people to use Welsh or to treat the language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 6 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed amendments to the Humanities Area could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less

favourably than the English language.

The NASUWT does not consider that any changes are necessary to impact on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language, or to ensure that there are no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the language no less favourably than the English language.



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