

Foreword

In 2014, Wales (United Kingdom) set out to reform its education system. A curriculum reform for children aged 3 to 16 leads this long-term agenda, which was developed following a consultation across Wales on the objectives for the future of its education system. The goal of the Welsh reform journey is that its education will help children and young people in Wales become ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn through 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. In a nutshell, Wales aims to prepare its youth to thrive in the 21st century.

In this endeavour for future readiness, getting the curriculum right is crucial for Wales, given its implications for learning. Understood as a course or plan for learning, the curriculum shapes what and how learners learn in school. Systems worldwide are coming together with help from international organisations such as the OECD, to seek principles for future-oriented curricula that aspire to the highest international standards of quality in education, while also responding to national and local challenges. In a century characterised by complexity and uncertainty, determining what one needs to learn today in order to thrive into tomorrow is the test posed to students, educators and policy makers internationally, and the challenge that Wales has started to tackle.

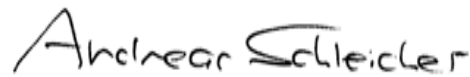
The Curriculum for Wales is a national curriculum framework motivated by Wales' vision of a holistic education, respectful of learners' well-being, and grounded in a renewed confidence in educators' professionalism. Under co-construction since 2015 with stakeholders from across the Welsh system, the national framework implies a greater involvement of schools and local communities in the design and realisation of their own curricula, and a strong provision of school support from system leaders.

As Wales moved from its review and national consultation on the curriculum and assessment arrangements, to the development of the new Curriculum for Wales, the question of implementation (or realisation, as often referred to in Wales) of the curriculum was always prominent. The road of education reform is littered with good ideas that were poorly implemented, and developing a curriculum policy with implementation in mind is the first step toward its successful realisation. The Welsh Government recognised the implementation challenge and turned to the OECD for support to review the progress made and suggest next steps for success in the realisation of the Curriculum for Wales. This was undertaken by the OECD Implementing Education Policies team, which conducts comparative analysis of education policy implementation and offers tailored support to help countries in the design and effective implementation of their education policies.

This report presents the main findings of the assessment of the progress made in the development and early implementation of the Curriculum for Wales between 2016 and 2019. In response to the Welsh Government's request, it offers suggestions on how to approach the next steps to succeed in curriculum realisation. It suggests that Wales is on the path to transform the way its youth learns and progresses in

schools, but that there are some actions the country must take in order to turn the new curriculum into reality for every learner. The report especially emphasises the importance of providing continuous support to schools and helping key actors develop a deep understanding and the relevant skillset for the curriculum, which will require further collaboration and co-ordination between stakeholders. It will also be crucial for Wales to clarify both the vision and the practical implications of the new curriculum for schools, and to align all complementary policy initiatives to the curriculum.

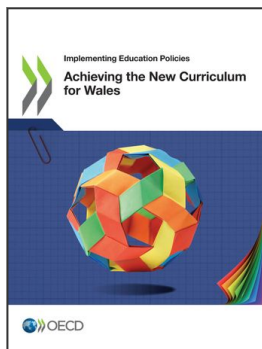
The report builds on the analysis of a wide range of documentation, visits and interviews with stakeholders from across Wales, more than 6 years of collaboration between Wales and the OECD, and international experience and best practices from OECD countries. We trust that the present report will not only help Wales on the road to successful curriculum realisation, but other education systems as well, which might learn from the Welsh experience and from the evidence collected from the literature and other countries' examples.



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Note

This report was completed in February 2020. The analysis presented does not consider any potential effects of the COVID-19 epidemic and how they may have affected education systems.



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