

**Independent Review
of Assessment
and the National
Curriculum
Wales**

Call for Evidence

Background

On 12 March 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills announced the appointment of Professor Graham Donaldson to lead a wide-reaching and independent review of assessment and the national curriculum. Professor Donaldson is to articulate a clear, coherent vision for assessment and the national curriculum in Wales from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 linking directly to our new qualifications system.

Some important changes to curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales are already in place and some are underway. The Welsh Government has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and the National Reading and Numeracy Tests. It is also currently consulting on the detailed content of its revised Areas of Learning (Foundation Phase) and programmes of study (Key Stages 2, 3 and 4) that complement and consolidate the approach taken in the LNF, and on proposals for an extended LNF, from age 3 to 16. Professor Donaldson's review will build on these important developments and ensure that they form part of a coherent, relevant, challenging and rewarding curriculum which is fit for the twenty-first century.

This call for evidence is a crucial part of this process and debate and you are urged to participate in it by completing the questionnaire below – either as an individual or as part of a group discussion. Examples of group discussions could include, but are not limited to: a school governing body making the call for evidence a special item on their agenda; a school inviting a group of parents/ carers in to discuss; or teachers setting time aside to discuss with their classes. Your responses will form an important part of the evidence base for Professor Donaldson's recommendations for changes to the curriculum in Wales.

Further information on the review is available at:

www.wales.gov.uk/curriculum-review

If you would like to speak to someone regarding the review or the call for evidence please contact:

email: CurriculumReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

A note from Professor Graham Donaldson



We all understand the importance of education for the future of our children and young people, and for Wales, both socially and economically. Schools provide the fundamental building blocks of that future and it is therefore essential that the education they provide is as relevant, challenging and rewarding as possible. There is much to be proud of in Welsh education and we must build on these strengths. At the same time, we must also identify and address areas which can and should be improved. That is why the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis, AM, has asked me to carry out a fundamental review of the national curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales.

The terms of reference for my review are available at:

www.wales.gov.uk/curriculum-review

It is vital that I'm informed by the views of as many people in Wales as possible: teachers, academics, parents/carers, businesses, the wider community and, vitally, young people themselves. Everyone has a stake in the future and I want to be sure that all of your views are taken into account as I form my recommendations. I would therefore urge everyone to consider the questions in this call for evidence, either individually or as part of a group discussion.

I am very much looking forward to reading your thoughts and thank you in advance for taking part and helping to shape the future of education in Wales.

Further information on the review is available at:

www.wales.gov.uk/curriculum-review

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Donaldson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Graham Donaldson

May 2014

Call for Evidence

Purpose

The purpose of this call for evidence is to generate debate and seek your views. The questions are therefore often open-ended and broad.

Instructions

You are invited to complete the following questionnaire. You may wish to answer some, or all of the questions posed.

The questionnaire can be completed by an individual or in a group.

Please record your views against each question you wish to answer in the box provided. Where possible please give reasons for your answers to help Professor Donaldson understand your views in full. Space for you to provide additional information is available at the end of the document.

Questions 1–8 are applicable to all.

Question 9 is aimed specifically at parents/carers.

Please take time to complete the personal details section at the end of the form. This will assist with the analysis of the call for evidence.

The questionnaire can be completed either electronically or as a hard copy. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Curriculum Review
Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Government
Freepost NAT 8910
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3BR

email: CurriculumReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Please return your completed questionnaire no later than 30 June 2014.

Additional information, evidence and research can be included with your response. Please submit this along with your completed questionnaire. Please use the space on page 19 to record any additional items submitted.

If you have any queries about the call for evidence please contact the review team on:

email: CurriculumReview@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Questionnaire

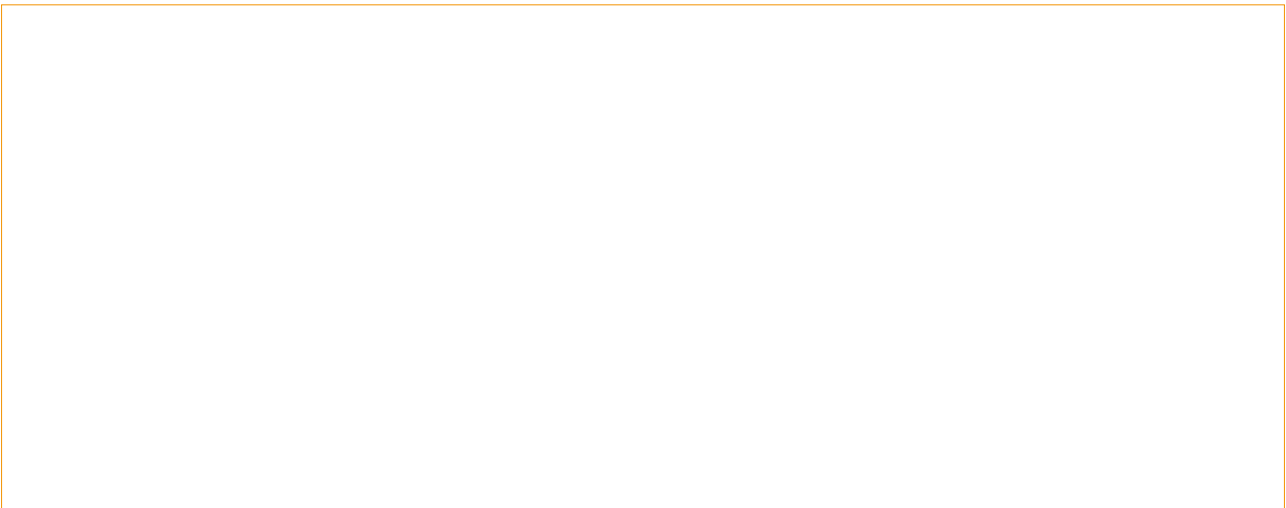
Q1a. Besides qualifications, what are the three most important things young people should gain as a result of their time in school? Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Q1b. Do you think these things will remain important in ten years? Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Q2a. What are the three best things about education in Wales? Please give a reason(s) for your answer



Q2b. What are the three main things that we need to change to improve education in Wales? How would you change them? Please give a reason(s) for your answer



Q3a. How much freedom should schools be given to decide for themselves what they should teach? Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Q3b. Is it important that all children in Wales learn the same thing as each other until the age of 16?

Yes

No

Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Q4a. In Wales, children aged 3 to 7 study broad Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase. This is followed by a focus on individual subjects for the rest of their primary and secondary education. Do you think this is the right way to arrange our curriculum?

Yes

No

Q4b. If not, what alternative models would you suggest?

Q5. Should any subjects be added to or removed from the curriculum?

Yes

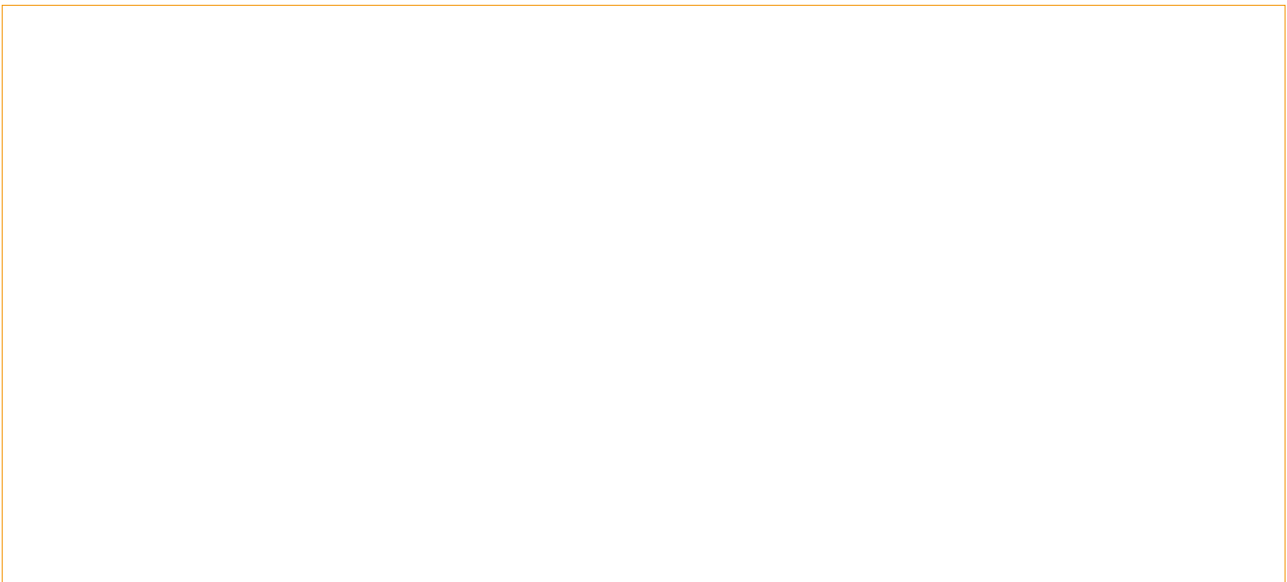
No

Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Q6. Children come from different backgrounds and have different talents and abilities. How can we make sure that their education helps all of them to achieve the best they can?



Q7. What information do you need to know about children's educational achievement as they progress through school? Please give a reason(s) for your answer



Q8. Do you feel we currently have the right balance in schools between assessment and teaching/learning? Please give a reason(s) for your answer

Additional question for parents/carers

Q9. How far do the current forms of reporting from schools help you to understand how your child(ren) is(are) progressing at school? Current methods of reporting may include for example: written reports, parents'/carers' evenings and other face-to-face contact.

What, if anything, would you prefer?

Personal details

To help our analysis please let us know who completed this response form.

Contact details (Optional):

Please only supply if you are over the age of 18

This response is from (name):

Please place a tick in the box next to the answer you wish to select

Are these views of:

An individual

Pupil/Student

Parent/Carer

Teacher/Support Staff

Governor

Other

An Organisation

A Group Discussion

A. Individual

Pupil/Student

How old are you?

3–7 (Foundation Phase)

7–11 (Key Stage 2)

11–14 (Key Stage 3)

14–16 (Key Stage 4)

16+

What language are most of your lessons taught in?

Welsh

English

A mixture of both

If most of your lessons are taught in any other language please let us know (please specify)

What type of school do you attend?

Infant school

Primary school

Secondary school

Special school

Other (please specify)

Parent/Carer

What age is/are your child(ren)?

3–7 (Foundation Phase)

7–11 (Key Stage 2)

11–14 (Key Stage 3)

14–16 (Key Stage 4)

16+

In which language does/do your child(ren) receive the majority of their education?

English

Welsh

Bilingual

Other (please specify)

What type of school(s) does/do your child/ren attend?

Nursery

Infant school

Primary school

Secondary school

Special school

Other

Please specify your local authority:

Teachers and Support Staff

How long have you been teaching (years)?

0–5

6–30

31+

Which of the following would you use to describe yourself?

Support staff

Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)

Class teacher

Subject teacher

Middle Level Leader

Senior Leadership Team

Headteacher

Other (please specify)

In which language do you teach the majority of your lessons?

English

Welsh

Bilingually

Other (please specify)

What type of environment do you teach in?

Nursery

Non-maintained setting

Infant school

Primary school

Secondary school

Special school

Other (please specify)

Please specify your local authority:

Governor

In what language is the majority of the curriculum delivered?

English

Welsh

Bilingually

Other (please specify)

What type of school are you a governor at?

Nursery

Infant school

Primary school

Secondary school

Special school

Other (please specify)

Please specify your local authority:

Other

Please specify

B. A Group discussion

Host organisation/school

Approximately how many people attended your event?

When was your event held?

What different types of people attended your event? (Please specify)

Name and role of the person completing the questionnaire

C. An Organisation

Name of organisation

Which of the following best describes your organisation?

Private sector

Public sector

Third sector

Other (please specify)

Next Steps

Responses to the call for evidence will be analysed and evaluated. The responses will help inform the next stage of the review and will form an important part of the evidence base for Professor Donaldson's recommendations for changes to the curriculum in Wales.

Additional Information

Please use this space to record any other ideas/comments you would like to make about the issues raised by this review.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for recording additional information or comments related to the review.

Please state the titles of any additional information, evidence and research that you are submitting with your response.

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Professor Graham Donaldson and Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this review is about.

Professor Donaldson may choose to publish a summary of the responses to this document. The responses may also be published in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the call for evidence was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.