

1) Critical analysis of the importance of support, guidance and collaboration for the implementation of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022

Curriculum reform may be demanded for a number of reasons including political social and economic (Donaldson, 2015), and standing on the worldwide stage. With Wales having the lowest rankings of the UK nations and below average for developed nations in the Pisa test results (Wales Online, 2019), seeking change could be justified. There has been increasing emphasis worldwide on the importance of the early years in children's learning and development, partly informed by advances in neuroscience which has emphasised the importance of early experiences (Samuelsson et al, 2006). However, the challenges of far-reaching change are numerous and well-documented (OECD, 2019), and implementing a new curriculum can take many years. The implementation of the Early Years Foundation Phase in Wales illustrates this.

Following devolution, in 1999, Welsh Government became responsible for implementing its own curriculum and educational policies and the Foundation Phase became one of a number of flagship policies that were introduced in relation to childhood and education. A report by Hanney in 2000 was pivotal in its inception, in that it called for a national policy to eradicate the regional variations in provision, and a system that began with the child, rather than with documentation (Thomas and Lewis, 2016). Following pilot schemes, the Foundation Phase was fully rolled out in Wales in September 2010 for settings providing education for children aged 3-7 years (Welsh Government, 2015a).

By now, Welsh Government is in the process of implementing further change, and the Early Years Foundation Phase, along with Key Stage 2 and Secondary education are undergoing a gradual transition into the New Curriculum for Wales 2022. This will be the first overhaul of the whole education system in 30 years (BBC, 2020), and has been largely welcomed, but with some trepidation, particularly on the part of teachers and practitioners. Welsh Government state that change is needed to reflect changing society, digital technology and the demands of the modern work market (Welsh Government, No date a). Questions remain about why changing a relatively recent early years curriculum is necessary – does the Foundation Phase have inherent faults, or does the fact that it is being replaced so soon reflect a failure to effectively implement the curriculum? If so, what are the reasons behind this insufficient

implementation, and how can the new curriculum learn from this and other early years curricula to ensure the same does not happen in the implementation of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022?

It would be untrue to state that the Foundation Phase has been an abject failure or that it has not led to any improvement in outcomes, as the majority of practitioners report improved literacy, numeracy and attitudes to learning (Taylor et al, 2015). It is also too soon to be able to evaluate any impact on Pisa test results as the first cohort are only now reaching the age to participate in these tests (MacDonald, No date). Indeed, Donaldson in his report *Successful Futures* (2015) found that the Foundation Phase was often reported as one of the most positive elements of the education system in Wales, and something to be built on.

A recurring theme in the literature surrounding curriculum change is the need to support and train professionals at all levels to embrace a whole new pedagogy, which will enable them to work effectively to introduce and implement a new curriculum (Siraj, 2014; Taylor et al, 2015; Donaldson, 2015; OECD, 2019), something which was found to be inconsistent with delivery of the Foundation Phase (Siraj, 2014; Taylor et al, 2015). The way that education is delivered in Wales means that the Foundation Phase is delivered by a range of practitioners from qualified teachers, to teaching assistants and leaders in a *Cylch Meithrin*. All of these may be educated to different levels, although the qualification structure for Foundation Phase Practitioners is currently under review by Welsh Government (Social Care Wales, 2021), what is currently in place varies from those with an NVQ Level 2, to those with Qualified Teacher status and post graduate qualifications. It can therefore be assumed that their level of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and understanding may also vary greatly.

This also poses the question of who should have training about the New Curriculum and what that training should look like. If Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is to be taken as a theoretical underpinning – as it is in the *Te Whariki* early years curriculum in New Zealand (Lee et al, 2013), then it becomes apparent that everyone involved in the lives of children should be informed and knowledgeable in the early years curriculum where they live. Indeed, the Independent Stocktake of the Foundation Phase (Siraj, 2014) recommended compulsory cross-sector training, which is underpinned by theory and research and which is bespoke to its audience.

This would ensure that practitioners understand what is expected of them, but also why their role and input is important, and what their part is in embedding the pedagogy. Taylor et al (2015) found a link between the amount of training undertaken and effective implementation of the Foundation Phase pedagogy in their evaluation.

As with other modern early years curricula, in Wales there has been a significant shift away from instructional methods to more child led and play-based methods of learning and development. Much of this thinking stems from the work of Froebel, and the principles of self-directed activity and respecting child requires adults to understand when they need to intervene (Smedley and Hoskins, 2018). This has been hard to put into practice for practitioners who are used to being imparters of knowledge, and who may that they are not doing their job if expected to observe and wait for the appropriate time to provide support, and indeed it was reported that in settings not effectively implementing the Foundation Phase, some practitioners were not gainfully occupied (Siraj, 2014). Although there seems to have been a move away from the theory of Spencer, that play was simply a means of burning off excess energy between periods of learning, which saw it separated from education, and towards Froebelian principles of the importance of play as a mode of learning, there still remains some confusion over the purpose of play and the role of the adult (Bruce, 2018).

The Early Years Foundation Phase and the New Curriculum for Wales both aim to offer a blend of play-based learning and intentional teaching (Welsh Government, 2015 a; Welsh Government, No date a), but these two methods of learning can seem to be at odds with each other from a pedagogical perspective. The use of a Pedagogical Play Framework could enable practitioners to understand the value of all play types, and to use them in multiple combinations (Edwards, 2017). There is also an argument that the therapeutic and educational purposes of play need to be merged with the idea of playfulness, which is given less weight, but can lead to deep learning and a disposition towards learning (Bruce, 2018).

There is also an emphasis in modern curricula on the importance of interactions with others, which is part of Social constructivism and the work of Vgotsky and Bruner (Beckley, 2012). However, there is an increasing body of evidence to suggest that the most effective theoretical base to follow may be Critical social constructivism, which acknowledges not just the relationship between the person and the environment, but

how individuals form their identity within an environment. The role of children, their power relationships and level of agency within an environment are changing, and environments are dynamic and changeable too (Guo, 2015). Therefore, practitioners are expected to adapt practice which they may have developed over a number of years, to accommodate changing perspectives and pedagogy, which demands commitment from staff to buy into the new curriculum (OECD,2019) .

Donaldson (2015) recognised how critical the understanding and support of all stakeholders is to ensure effective implementation, and used past experiences to advise what steps should be taken in order to achieve this. He states that the purposes and benefits of any change must be clearly communicated, and that practitioners should be scaffolded in terms of any guidance and support they are offered to enable implementation. However, many of the facilitating factors associated with successful implementation at a school and classroom level will be reliant upon the level of funding which accompanies such change. It is acknowledged that child-centred curricula are significantly more expensive to implement than more traditional curricula which rely on instructive methods (Power et al, 2019), and a need for substantial training and preparation time in the implementation stage will result in additional cost. It is acknowledged that the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Phase led to an increased spend per pupil of some 11% (Taylor et al, 2016), and the introduction of further change will lead to further increased costs.

Donaldson (2015) recognised that capacity implications will need to be recognised throughout the education system, not just with practitioners, but within Government Departments and regulatory bodies too. This will be the only way to ensure that the support and scaffolding which are critical for successful implementation are available. The recognition that training and change need to be embedded throughout the system, is also reflected in the call for bespoke training for strong leadership in schools and settings to increase skills, understanding and commitment to the new curriculum (Siraj, 2014; Donaldson, 2015).

Linked to the need for support, guidance and training at all levels is the need for those in leadership positions to be fully informed on the intention and pedagogy of any new curriculum (OECD, 2019). As they will be overseeing any change and cascading information to practitioners, those in leadership roles may also pass on

misconceptions and misunderstandings which could lead to a watering down of the pedagogy at classroom/setting level (MacDonald, No date; Siraj, 2014). Instructional leadership accompanied by sound curriculum knowledge is a key facilitating factor in curriculum implementation (OECD, 2019). The evaluation of the Early Years Foundation Phase (Taylor et al, 2015) recommended specialist support and guidance for senior leaders in schools and non-maintained settings, particularly in relation to the use of frameworks within such a pedagogy.

This call for supported, knowledgeable and strong leadership ties in with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and the impact that professionals within each of the layers of the system, from those furthest removed at Government level, to those closest to the child at practitioner and family level, can have upon the way a curriculum is experienced by the child (MacDonald, No date). Connected to this is coworking and cooperation between different organisations and individuals. The introduction of regional consortia in Wales was seen as key to this through bringing together groups of education authorities with aims to improve quality of leadership, ensure all learners reach their potential, improve teaching and learning experiences, delivering bespoke support to schools and communicating effectively (ERW, no date). Though their introduction did not fully remove the patchy implementation and regional variations in effectively implementing the Early Years Foundation Phase (Siraj, 2014; Taylor et al, 2015).

The OECD (2019) comments that effective and consistent dialogue and collaboration, along with building trust with collaborators has led to effective foundations being laid for the roll out of the New Curriculum for Wales in 2022. This will see a shift from a managerial education system to a system that is based on trust at all levels and in professional competencies. Allowing practitioners to reflect and making reflection part of professional practice will enable practitioners to feel supported as part of a community and encourage the learning of new skills (Cigala et al, 2019; McFarland et al, 2009), and encouraging multidisciplinary communities of practice can be generative and challenging (Miller-Young, 2016). The importance of reflection is well documented, but being based on a shared pedagogy, development of professional knowledge and practice, and collaboration are important factors (Bleach, 2014; Trodd and Dickerson, 2019).

Professional development and reflection for practitioners delivering the curriculum would appear to have two generic aims, that of advancing the skills, knowledge, dispositions and therefore practice of educators, and that of promoting a culture of ongoing professional development and growth (Kingston and Siraj, 2017). Feeling that you are part of that culture can also lead to increased practitioner wellbeing, therefore is beneficial to practitioners and to service users (Bleach, 2014).

To summarise, in order for the implementation of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 to be effective, there will need to be significant investment by Welsh Government in providing all stakeholder with opportunities to gain knowledge and skills through bespoke training. Training will need to promote a deep understanding of theoretical influences upon the pedagogy and the importance of play and experiential learning. Training, support and guidance will need to be offered to individuals at all layers of the system in order to promote strong leadership, collaborative working and effective practice. Practitioners will need to be given time and guidance on reflective practice and the benefits of collaboration with stakeholders at all levels.

2) A critical evaluation of assessment methods and progress tracking in the Foundation Phase/ New Curriculum for Wales 2022 and the Te Whariki curriculum of New Zealand within the context of a multicultural classroom.

It is acknowledged that there is a tension between the idea of a child-led and play-based curriculum which focuses on children learning experientially, and pressure to track progression according to a fixed set of learning outcomes and progression steps (Brostrom, 2016; Edwards, 2017), and a continued debate over the need for assessment in the early years (Davies and Hamilton, 2018). Some argue that measuring competencies in a play-based curriculum betrays the real learning experiences of children (Brostrom, 2016). However, in the Early Years Foundation Phase, children are assessed in reception class, regularly tracked throughout their time within the Foundation Phase and are given a final assessment at the completion of Year 2, which follows them on to Key Stage 2 (Welsh Government, 2017). Assessment is largely through observation (Siraj, 2014) of participation in tasks or experiences provided by the practitioner or through open play experiences, in order to gain evidence of achieving certain outcomes (Welsh Government, 2017). This data is collected and published by Welsh Government at school level, Local Authority level and National level (Welsh Government, no date b) which goes some way to demonstrate the weight that Welsh Government place on such scores.

These assessments are accompanied by formative assessments for the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, which became a statutory requirement from 2013, and these outcomes must be reported annually (Welsh Government, 2017). All of the Foundation Phase outcomes are aligned to the age that a child is expected to reach them. Although it claims to recognise that children acquire skills at different rates and must be allowed to develop at their own pace, it fails to recognise that though development happens sequentially, wide variation of timescales may occur. This could be for a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to gender, home environment and circumstances, family composition and personality, which can impact on behaviour in different environments (Tierney, 2013; Alsubaie, 2015; Buzzelli, 2018).

The purpose behind any assessment and how the information will be used should be explicit. Assessment should be part of the reflective cycle and may be to build up a picture of the child in order to plan for their individual learning needs (Early Excellence

Limited, 2021). Welsh Government (2020) state that assessment contributes to the development of a holistic picture of the child and inform next steps. The question then becomes which method of assessing children is most effective for gaining information and least obtrusive for the child. The evaluation of the foundation phase (Taylor et al, 2015) recommends a greater emphasis on assessment and on observations, it notes that practitioners lack clarity over carrying out observations with children. This ties in with reports of practitioners seeing play-based learning as requiring less practitioner involvement, and a lack of understanding around much of the terminology used in the guidance (Waters, 2016).

Based on recommendations from the Successful Futures report (Donaldson, 2015), the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 has introduced updated guidance on assessment methods and ways of progress tracking. The new continuum is based on the idea of progression steps, which have achievement outcomes, but these have broad expectations, are related to statements of what matters, and are related to each learner being on track for their own personal development, rather than on a best-fit model. There will be a move to increased formative assessments which will involve learners in the process and in setting goals (Welsh Government, 2019). The New Curriculum has been inspired by successful examples of curricula from around the world, therefore it is expected that there be some influences from other curricula on assessment methods. A seemingly obvious choice for inspiration would be the Te Whariki curriculum of New Zealand as the two nations have features in common, including a desire to preserve and promote the language and culture of the indigenous people, whilst respecting the culture and contributions of those from different cultural backgrounds.

The method of assessment utilised in the Te Whariki curriculum is Learning Stories. These are documents created collaboratively, which consist of 3 key elements; a narrative which describes the learning experience, an analysis of what was learnt, and an element of looking forward, developing and planning, such as identifying what opportunities and possibilities this learning may lead to. The involvement of the child and their family are integral to the creation of Learning Stories and they are specifically designed to be accessible and informative, and to build connections between the home and setting (Lee et al, 2013). Under the New Curriculum for Wales, it is stated that learners should be engaged in the assessment process in order to take ownership

of their own learning (Welsh Government, 2019), but how this will look in practice is yet to be seen.

In common with learning stories, the new curriculum, the New Curriculum for Wales intends to include all of those who are involved in a child's learning in the assessment process. This involvement is not explicit, but should consist of engagement with the school, sharing of relevant knowledge, responding to any information provided and being involved with planning (Welsh Government, 2020). Learning stories take a credit as opposed to a deficit approach, and as well as including the voice of the child, they are accessible and can be added to by parents and family members (Lee et al, 2013). They use a variety of methods and media to allow contributions from practitioners, children and families and place children as active agents in the process (Buzzelli, 2018). Engaging families in assessing and planning learning for children is a relatively new development which has been found to be beneficial for pupil achievement (Estyn, 2018), but can be seen as being of particular importance when looking at the needs of children from diverse cultures (Guo, 2015; Alsubaie, 2015).

The Te Whariki curriculum, with its emergent approach, views knowledge about each child's individual interests and needs as central to their progress and development (Guo, 2015). As a sociocultural and social-constructivist inspired curriculum (Guo, 2015), it is argued that the imposition of measures which provide a one-world, standardised view of development, such as OECD international testing, would be in direct contrast and could potentially undermine the foundations of the whole Te Whariki curriculum. In Wales, the Foundation Phase Framework refers to cultural diversity within the area of social development (Welsh Government, 2015a), but does not specify the specific steps that will be taken to prevent those of different cultural backgrounds being at a deficit when placed within this curriculum. Although there are statements related to assessment in the New Curriculum 2022, that it will take into account the needs of all learners and that their background, language and identity will be recognised (Welsh Government, 2020), it does not provide detail, and therefore it may be assumed that this will form part of the training that practitioners will undertake before the curriculum is fully launched.

Increasingly multicultural classrooms provide an additional challenge for teachers, as they will need to acknowledge and appreciate that cultural differences may go beyond

a different language, and may be shaped by an experience of a different education system, curriculum and differing methods of communication (Alsubaie, 2015). There is great debate over when children develop a sense of cultural identity, with some studies suggesting that those in the early years are largely unaware of their cultural identity and that of others, whilst other research identified cultural awareness as young as the age of 5 (Murphy, 2018). Research has identified a number of factors which are important for reducing the negative outcomes which may be associated with a different cultural background. Teachers and practitioners who recognise the variation in different educational systems and curricula and who aim to learn more about different cultures will provide a better offer (Alsubaie, 2015).

The question of why those from minority cultural backgrounds do not fare well under some assessment methods is complex and multifaceted, concerning issues of fairness, moral dilemma and the perception of ability. Fairness is a social process, and therefore difficult to measure, but assessing individuals who have varying access to time and resources, and teachers of different levels of ability and understanding would seem to be intrinsically unfair (Tierney, 2013). Teachers are viewed as moral agents (Buzzelli, 2018), but there is evidence that judgements are made based on a variety of factors including gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, behaviour in the setting and perception of ability and how much effort a child made, which must pose questions as to whether children are being offered equality or equity, and which of these can be seen as fair (Tierney, 2013).

Beliefs around the ability of a child can be based on cultural perceptions, and will in turn shape the type of activities and experiences offered. This can include offering less challenging tasks to those with English as a second language (Parekh, 2017). There is a paucity of literature around whether this is an issue in Welsh medium settings, where a large number of children may be from households where Welsh is not the primary language, as the 2011 census indicated that just 19% of the population are fluent in Welsh (BBC, 2012). Much of the focus of Learning Stories is child-centredness and teacher knowledge (Guo, 2015). However, it is worth noting that child-centred education in Wales has been of most benefit to girls and those in areas which are of a higher socio-economic status, which brings in to question the idea of “invisible pedagogies”, and the underlying attitudes of teachers (Power et al, 2019).

There is also a question over whether there is a difference between the vision of some curricula, including the perception some practitioners hold of their own practice, and what actually happens in the lived experience of the child (Guo, 2015). There are challenges within the much-praised Te Whariki system, where practitioners who are expected to be fully invested in a bicultural curriculum and also sensitive to other cultures which are increasing in number, but who lack skills, knowledge, confidence and reflective practice to sufficiently deliver the vision (Jenkin, 2016; Guo, 2015). This must lead to questions over how their personal beliefs about culture are influencing their contributions to Learning Stories, however this is also where the contribution of the family, and building good relationships is key (Lee et al, 2012).

The New Curriculum for Wales 2022 aims to see a shift in the view of assessment from one where a child's ability is measured, to one where their progression is checked. It is designed to tie in with ideas of evaluation and improvement of practice, which sees a change in the role of the adult and the child (Welsh Government, 2020). Practitioners will need to become increasingly reflective and will need to collaborate with learners and their families in a way not previously experienced under the early Years Foundation Phase. In common with good multicultural practice, this is going to require practitioners to be reflective, open to feedback and collaborative. It will also require practitioners to evaluate the learning programme, which is something already seen in Swedish early years assessment (Samuelsson, 2006), as well as tracking the progress that each child is making.

In regard to the way that learner progression will be recorded under the New Curriculum for Wales, settings are expected to use a variety of methods and media to record and share information (Welsh Government, 2020), as is stated in the Te Whariki Learning Stories (Lee et al, 2013). Annual reports to parents will remain as statutory requirement, but are intended to only make up a small part of the information that is shared and formed through collaboration (Welsh Government, 2020). What both Te Whariki Learning Stories and assessment under the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 have in common are the intention for collaboration between settings and families, with the child at the centre. The intention is for assessment to be used in order to inform planning and track that children are progressing in their learning and development, and looking at ways that practice and environments can be developed to support this learning progression (Welsh Government, 2020).

The two curricula also face similar challenges in terms of assessing children in the multicultural classroom. They are both reliant on practitioner knowledge and skills, and their deep understanding of the methods and purposes of tracking progress. Whilst allowing children the freedom to explore and learn following their own interests and at their own pace, they are expected to promote the culture of their unique areas, Maori and Welsh heritage, and to embrace other cultures, being mindful during assessment processes of any cultural variations which may colour their view of competency and progress.

As curricula and assessment processes develop to become more child-led and collaborative, it can be seen that practitioners need to become increasingly flexible, knowledgeable and reflective, particularly in the multicultural context. Each country has its own unique cultural landscape, which it will endeavour to preserve and promote, (Lee, 2013; Smith, 2016), whilst there is a need for acknowledging and appreciating the cultural beliefs and practices of every individual in their school community. Child-led practice demands that assessment processes are fair, morally sound and that they respect the unique child (Tierney, 2013; Buzzelli, 2018). Therefore, assessment processes should also be part of the ongoing evaluation of curricula, in order that equitable assessment practice becomes achievable. Testing, and indeed educating to pass tests, should not impede upon plans to instil a love of learning and development that is of real value (Defis, 2018).

The Covid Pandemic – A missed opportunity to bring about real change?



(Bing Images, 2021)

28th March 2021

The global pandemic has touched lives all over the world over the last year. People have had to be flexible and innovative and find new ways of working. However, it has also highlighted the inequalities in society and how they, in turn, are felt within the early years education and care sector (Geddes, 2021; Local Government Association, 2021). The effects of the pandemic have been disproportionately felt by certain sectors of society for various reasons. Women are more likely to work in the shut-down sectors and key workers make up a higher percentage of the workforce in Wales than the UK average (Cardiff University, 2020). This led to financial and work-life balance pressures at a time when it became more difficult to access childcare provision.

Parents balancing home-working with childcare and home-schooling began to realise the important job that early years' practitioners do, however, this view did not appear

to be reflected in policy at a national level (Local Government Association, 2021). This can also be evidenced by reports of children returning to settings without basic skills, such as the ability to use the toilet unaided and putting their coats on (Geddes, 2021). Early Years practitioners, often in non-maintained settings, deliver the same curriculum as Foundation Phase practitioners in schools, whilst also satisfying CIW requirements, yet are amongst the lowest paid in society, with a number claiming benefits to top-up their income (Early Education, 2019).

It could be argued that early years' settings are best placed to implement the initial roll out of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022. This is because they are already providing experiential and play-based learning through the Early Years Foundation Phase (Welsh Government, 2015a). They have a unique pedagogical approach, that values play and child-led activities (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). They are also great users of the outdoor classroom, and used to spending time outdoors everyday – pertinent as good ventilation and use of the outdoors is seen as a key element of controlling Covid transmission (HSE, 2021).

Although it is acknowledged that both National Government and Local Authorities were themselves under extreme pressure, due to reduced capacity and increased demands (Local Government Association, 2021), it could be argued that the break in delivering the Foundation Phase and the urgent need for child-centred, holistic care and education to tackle the social and emotional lapses that will be seen as children return to settings (Geddes, 2021) could be the perfect opportunity to introduce the first stages of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022.

The Foundation Phase does contain reference to wellbeing as part of one of the 7 areas of learning (Welsh Government, 2015a), but with the acknowledged difficulty of defining wellbeing (Dodge, 2012), it could be seen as generalised terminology without any specific, targeted programme for implementation. In contrast, the New Curriculum, with the Area of Learning and Experience that focuses on “healthy, confident individuals” (Welsh Government, 2015b) places greater emphasis on wellbeing, with reference to physical and mental health, confidence, resilience and positive relationships.

A number of grants have been made available by Welsh Government to early years' settings to help them adapt their offer in terms of adhering to Covid-19 protection

measures (Ceredigion County Council, 2021), these have allowed settings to adapt their learning environments to increase free-flow play which is so important for quality interactions (Tonge et al, 2018). Therefore, their environments are ready and able to accommodate increased outdoor experiences, the settings are open and following Welsh Government Covid-19 protection measures and the staff are available, with many having been opened in some form throughout the period.

The impact of the pandemic on development and wellbeing is being felt now, and any delay in responding to the needs of those impacted by the greatest degree will have moral implications. There are numerous reports of financial help for education settings and for families impacted by the pandemic (Welsh Government, 2021), but simply throwing money at a problem does not solve it. There is a need for systemic change in the way that childcare and education are integrated, a need for change in the way the role of a childcare professional is viewed by society and a need for change in the funding mechanisms that underpin the sector.

This plethora of problems will not be solved by implementing a new curriculum, but can form part of the bigger picture surrounding societal views of education and care and the equity that should come with a funded state education system. If the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 is implemented effectively, the fact that it will give increased agency to learners and to their families (Welsh Government 2015b, 2020), will raise the status and knowledge about the role of practitioners. Evidence points to the positive impact of high-quality early years provision over many years (Education Policy Institute, 2017), this now needs to be communicated to parents/carers and to policy makers.

Setting in motion elements of the New Curriculum for Wales 2022 now, will allow more children to benefit from the positive aspects of this forward-looking curriculum. Children who have seen their lives, learning and development paused for a year. There seems to be two options, the option of returning to a system that was patchy in implementation (Taylor et al, 2015), or the option of being innovative, responsive and flexible. Traits which research identifies as being necessary for the effective implementation of any new curriculum (OECD, 2019; Power et al, 2020).

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