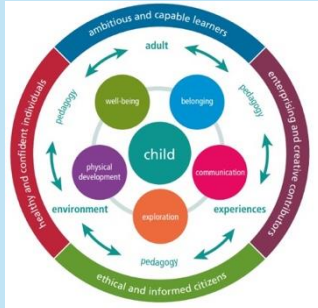


New curriculum for Wales

Introduction



This article is written to outline the issue of the New Curriculum for Wales. This introduction will give you a brief overview of what the New Curriculum for Wales is all about, why the new curriculum is important to learn and talk about education today.

The New Curriculum for Wales is a guidance focusing on 3 to 16 years olds, which aims to assist each school in creating its own curriculum, allowing students to progress towards the curriculum's four purposes, which serve as the foundation and goal for children and youth in Wales (Hwb, 2024). The four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales are :1. Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives 2. Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work 3. Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World 4. Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society (Equal Educational Partners 2025). The New Curriculum is separated into six areas of learning (Education Wales):

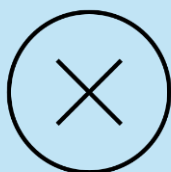
- expressive arts - art, dance, drama, film and digital media and music
- health and well-being - a holistic approach to understanding our physical and mental health and emotional and social wellbeing
- humanities - geography, history, religion, values and ethics, business and social studies
- language, literacy and communication - development of Welsh, English and international languages through listening, speaking, written and reading tasks
- mathematics and numeracy - includes the development of the number system, use of algebra, shape, shape time and measurement and the representation of data
- science and technology - biology, chemistry, computer science, design and technology and physics

The New Curriculum can be seen as important as it is making changes to education to try and improve the support for children in any stage of development. The new curriculum is being designed by teachers using guidance that other teachers have written to help them plan what the children should learn. This helps support all children by creating lessons with real-life meaning tailored to suit all children's needs and help them reach their full potential. (Hwb, 2024)



Why is The New Curriculum of Wales a contested issue?

Although most will see the New Curriculum as a positive change taking education in the right direction, after carrying out some research, I have found some people who have more negative and critical views and how it may not be as beneficial as some people may say. This is where I have decided to start this section of this article, looking at those with the opposite view to most and who make the New Curriculum of Wales a Contested issue.



A report written by Luke Sibieta talks about how the New Curriculum may not be much more beneficial than the current educational system. He outlines how although the 6 hours of learning are very 'noble and sensible aims' having a curriculum that defines things into general skills may not be the best option, with Christodoulou arguing that it would be more beneficial for the breaking down of skills into specific teachable elements. Sibieta also goes on to say that having a skills-based curriculum can make it harder to evaluate general skills and can cause a broad difference in the curriculum material that students encounter and methods that are used to evaluate them. Lastly, interestingly, Sibieta talks about how other countries like France, Finland, Australia and New Zealand, who have all decided to adopt a skills-based curriculum, have resulted in a decline in each countries education with some thinking of introducing knowledge-based learning into their curriculum (Sibieta, 2024). With this information, is Wales actually making the correct decision to go skills-based, or are we going to be the ones to shift it in the right direction?

Before heading to talk about the positives that people see within the New Curriculum, there is one more negative that may be of interest to you. In an article written by Sally Power, Chris Taylor and Nigel Newton, they talk about more negatives to the New curriculum, one being resourcing. The change over from one curriculum to another means new resources for settings to support the new lessons and individual plans for children, which, with more relaxed learning, may mean new classroom setups and learning resources to provide adequate and tailed lessons. Lastly, the article also talks about the added funding for out-of-school experiences, which is part of the New Curriculum, which have already been documented as unevenly distributed throughout the pioneer schools. There is also the added factor of their possibly needing to be second place in learning, usually, the child's home, which, depending on a child's home culture and environment, could bring a disadvantage to those in poorer homes compared to their more advantaged peers with less access to parents from work or access to resources (Power, S, Taylor, C and Newton, N 2020).

Although there are a few negatives that come with the New Curriculum of Wales, there are also quite a few positives within the curriculum, which are mostly outlined in the overview of the curriculum itself. I have started to touch on some of the positives of the New Curriculum in the introduction of this article, including the curriculum being teacher-designed, with teachers building lessons for the children to help them develop and be ready for the future. I also talked about how the lessons are being built for all children to best support their needs and requirements, which will help support children with additional needs or even anxiety, as lessons will focus on how to best support the children to develop rather than teach everyone the same. A press release written by the Welsh government, backs up these positive notes, saying, 'Schools will feel empowered to design their own curriculum', showing their agreement that the new curriculum will be a positive change to education. The curriculum also focuses on what matters, learning about what will help you now and in adult life, which will give children the skills they need for all areas and times in their lives giving them the best change (Welsh Government).



There are also more positives to the New Curriculum; It focuses on life skills such as:

- Creativity and innovation skills, which will allow children to explore, create and find solutions,
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which will give children a chance to ask questions, look for evidence and solve problems by themselves,
- Personal effectiveness allows children to learn how to make the most of their time, grow their confidence, become aware of different social, cultural and ethical views along with being able to learn from their mistakes.
- Planning and organising skills allow the children to learn to manage their time, set their own goals, make their own decisions and be able to check their own work.

The press release also states how every student will gain from education that helps them develop their creativity and self-assurance as well as the knowledge and life skills necessary to realise their full potential. The Welsh minister of education and Welsh language, Jeremy Miles, also had a few things to say, stating that the 'curriculum is designed with learners progress and wellbeing at its heart' and that 'teachers having the flexibility to tailor lessons to their students, to challenge and support every learner' will result in students being able to 'reach their full potential in today's world' showing how he supports the New Curriculum and all the positives that come with it (Hwb 2022)

Conclusion

Throughout this article, It has talked about the New Curriculum for Wales, why the curriculum is an important issue to talk about and why the New Curriculum is contested.

The article has looked into people's views and options of the New Curriculum, but along with that, the positives and negatives of the curriculum, which is what I believe makes the New Curriculum a contested issue. Although the second part of this article talked more about the positives, it also has evidence of people who agree with what the curriculum is about, which shows that people both agree and disagree with the benefits and change to the New Curriculum of Wales which shows that this issue is contested with people arguing whether its worth it or not to make the change.

Overall, I believe the New Curriculum for Wales has its positive and negative and agree the change is sending education in the right direction with support for children, though I do believe it's going to take some time for the support to show over the country within knowledge in children, and whether children will actually learn as much as they have in the past or if they will miss out on critical information that was taught in previous academic years.

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Is there enough funding for education?



(Enquire Learning Trust 2019)

Introduction

This article is written to outline the issue of whether there is enough funding for education in the UK. This introduction will give you a brief overview of what funding is and, what funding is available in an educational setting, why funding in education is an important issue to talk about.

What is funding?

Funding is any money that is provided, usually by a business, an organisation, or a government, for a particular purpose. Investments, grants, loans, and even donations are all forms of funding (papaya global)

What types of funding are available in educational settings?

State-funded schools in England receive funding through two main avenues, which determine where the money can be spent - revenue funding and capital funding. Schools can decide how they want to spend their money received through revenue

funding, which tends to be used for teachers' pay, support staff pay, energy bills, minor maintenance and teaching materials. Whereas capital funding is used for new school buildings and improvements to school estates (The Education Hub 2024)



(SENDIASS Gloucestershire)

Schools in Wales receive about 80% of their funding from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). WAG sets the funding amount for individual local authorities first, followed by two levels of local authorities deciding on an educational budget and then individual school budgets. Formulas are in place at each stage and depending on pupil number, deprivation and sparsity the amount that each school receives might vary significantly (National Assembly for Wales 2007).

Schools also receive money for children with additional learning needs. Funds and resources for special educational needs are provided to all mainstream schools, how these schools use this money is up to them. The National SEN budget is another name for the SEN portion of the school's revenue. This funding is not based on the number of students rather it is determined by a formula.

Why is funding for education important?

As talked about above funding for education is important as it keeps schools running. Funding keeps schools running day to day, helps pay teachers' salaries, pays energy bills

for the whole school like electricity, gas and water, helps cover minor maintenance work, helps buy teacher materials and resources for the children and can help with building new building and upkeeping school estates.

Do people think there is enough funding for education?

School funding has been a highly talked about subject over the last few years, with people saying they are seeing a decrease in funding within schools, although the government say they are putting more money into it than ever. Why is this? Is the government lying where their money goes? Or is money disappearing? The next part of this article is going to look into why funding is a contested issue in today's education, what teachers and staff think of the funding that is provided and how the government may think otherwise about the amount spent on schools each year.



To begin, I researched how teachers feel about the amount of funding going into their schools shockingly, in a survey taken by the National Education Union, where they surveyed 3981 teacher members working in England carried out in October 2023 online, 92% of the teachers believed that the current funding is not high enough to allow their school to employ enough staff to support pupils. 85% believe their school is not able to provide appropriate resources, while 87% of primary schools, 86% of special schools and 80% of secondary schools also agree there is not enough funding to buy resources for their classrooms and schools, and 68% say that the investment in school buildings is insufficient with primary schools having the strongest negativity towards investment in school building being at 70% with 66% of secondary schools and 65% in special schools National Education Union (2023).

Interestingly, though, 15% say they have received enough funding to be able to upkeep their buildings, with 5 % also agreeing that they are receiving plenty of funding to employ staff and teachers within their schools. 7 % agreed that finding it high enough for resources within their schools (National Education Union 2023). This is where funding in education becomes a contested issue as although the statistics of those having a negative view on funding in schools is higher; there is still a percentage of people who will argue that there is enough funding, and their schools are able to continue without more.

The survey also goes on to provide some observations teachers have made in their schools from lack of funding, with one talking about how their window can't open their windows causing it to be unbearably hot, with another saying their school roof leaks and had caused mould and wall damage. Is this really where lack of school funding has led to? And how are some schools surviving while others fall apart?

After looking at how teachers feel about funding for education in the UK I looked into what funding the government are increasing and how they think it will help. And I came across a news article by the BBC about how schools are being given £740m to adapt buildings for SEND children. Though how many schools is this spreading over and is it a little too late? After reading through the article I read how one school had already used £10,000 adapting their school for their £250,000 lift for their wheelchair student to still be left broken and no longer having funds to fix it. The school has also lost staff and helpers over the years due to a lack of funding, leaving children without the support they require to develop and learn. The article also states how funding alone won't help but a system reform needs to be considered (BBC 2024). With this in mind, although the government has the right mindset in increasing funding in certain areas of education to provide schools with the ability to adapt, change and rebuild is the costs too high for funding to be the only fix and is it too late to save some schools from the harm years of lack of funding has caused.



Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have talked about funding for education in the UK, why funding is important within education and why funding in education is a contested issue. This article has looked into teachers' views and options on funding within their schools and whether funding is enough. I also looked into how the government may have different options for teachers and how they may be trying to improve funding to schools in certain areas. Although there is not much evidence showing how funding is a contested issue within education within this article, I do believe the evidence of teachers disagreeing with each other on whether there is enough funding shows how this issue is contested and how people have opposite views on the matter alone with the government providing more funding to help the schools in certain areas.

I have some very strong feeling when it comes to funding within schools I believe there is no where near enough funding in place in school to support children to the best of their learning. Throughout school I always saw teachers having to buy their own supplies and resources for their classroom spending their own money when the schools should be providing stuff for them. I also receive less support than I needed within school due to the lack of funding for additional helpers for classrooms and children meaning I was behind majority of my school peers. I believe a ton more funding needs to be put into place for schools to be able to support children to the best of their ability. The government needs to put more funding in place for schools other than allow for more staff hires and for resources to be bought without staff having to go out their way to buy them themselves.

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