

'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.'

Single Steps Learning



NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE
A curriculum for Wales - a curriculum for life

Thursday 22nd October 2015

Notes from the Webinar: Main Points from the Speakers

(Disclaimer - we are happy to share our notes, but they are 'notes' taken as quickly as possible during the webinar. There may be mistakes. We do not include any of our own reflections/responses - these notes are purely for capturing the information shared by the speakers)

SESSION ONE

Welcome and Introduction: Dr Dylan Jones HT

- Pupil voice is a core element of what we are talking about today. Parents/Pupils/Parent Governors will be participating.
- #curriculumforwales - Twitter
- Purpose of today is to launch the 'curriculum for wales' plan
- Consider how HT's are working towards putting the 4 purposes into the heart of what we do in education in Wales
- Opportunity to have table discussions
- Outcome - Leave conference with understanding of the implementation plan for future reform

Keynote Speech: Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister

- Education is at the heart of Welsh government - The vision is for a curriculum that is fit for purpose
- Today is about putting the learner first - learners are an exceptional resource
- Results and statistics aren't everything - education is about integrity
- Importance of providing quality environments for learners which also 'give teachers a place where they are inspired to teach and feel valued'.
- Reference about the work so far in Wales - putting into place innovative programmes such as the Foundation Phase, Welsh Bac etc.
- Wales is bouncing back from recession faster than any other nation or UK region
- 'Made in Wales' GCSEs, A-levels, Welsh Bac - produce 'work ready' young people.
- There will be justified fear in this room of endless change - we want to look now to put things in place that are sustainable.
- Raising standards - much sharper focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Cambridge University are valuing the Welsh Bac ALONGISDE other A-levels.
- Promote skills valued by employers
- Aware it has been difficult times for schools and colleges around Wales - offers thanks for patience and cooperation and commitment
- Delighted when ESTYN noted a new momentum in Welsh education early this year
- Foundation Phase - evidence is positive - 6.3% increase since 2011 on the number of pupils reaching expected outcomes in FP. Improvements in both literacy and numeracy

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- Next step - introduction of FP assessment tool to monitor progress - not let any child's potential move out of their grasp - I know there is already work being done to make that happen
- Improvement in data across the board - want to see this trend of improvement continuing.
- Curriculum will put learners at the centre, moves away from narrow subject approach, assessment will be about pupil progress not narrow accountability measures.
- Literacy and numeracy - big focus on continuing to narrow the gap
- PISA - next month taking part in PISA 2015
- "If you believe education in Wales can and will be better, we are on your side. If you think it was better in the past, my response is forget it, we are not going back. Evidence is not on your side, history is not on your side. There is more to come - a better curriculum - harnessing your expertise
- The measure of true success is not how much we promise but how much we deliver for those who need us most.
- It will be about what we deliver together - government, those with expertise, those with skills - those who day in and day out work with or young people - move towards a world class education system that we want.

Beyond Improvement: Professor Graham Donaldson

- Title meant to signal that improvement matters - but not to lose sight of what we are trying to improve - need to improve the things that matter.
- Context - the world is changing fast and expectations of school is highly contested - what is the purpose - chart a path that helps us meet those expectations - strategic purpose based on values.
- Curriculum is the expression of our desire to do well by our children - reflect those visions values and purpose.
- One thing to know 'what', but it will only happen because of what our teachers do in the classroom and what our HT support those teachers to do
- Top down has, at best, a limited and short term impact - schools quite rightly sceptical about people on the outside saying what is best. The record of attempts to MAKE these teachers change is, at best, patchy.
- What it means to be a teacher? - they are going to have to be special people.
- Not enough to build capacity of teachers, high quality teachers - need to build a context too.
- Need teachers/schools NOT set in their ways but continue to learn and grow. Mindset.
- A strategic exploration of whats possible - thats why I've called it BEYOND improvement.
- Changes in technology - think of the way it has changed, the way it will change teaching and learning - you can get access to the best quality teaching in the world by the press of a button - pupils no longer limited by their geographical position.
- Paradox - skills that are easy to test are the ones easiest to digitize, automate and outsource. What **was** a USP (Unique Selling Point) is no longer a USP. 21st century school is about deeper conceptual understanding - being able to connect knowledge.
- Pupils are increasingly working in collaborations - see that in the dramatic increase in social networking.
- Vision - young people leaving school thinking they are in control of their own life - confidence and competence to address the issues of life
- What kind of teachers matter? 'Goodbye mr chips' - those very good in the past will struggle in todays classroom.
- Hattie - 85% teachers resistant to change what works for them, 10% willing to change to be more efficient, 5% willing to try new innovations.
- 21st century leadership is distributive and encourages innovation in their staff.
- Most important thing a headteacher can do - participate in teacher learning and development

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- Create the conditions to allow you to do the job you are doing...and the context to support it
- 6 big messages



- Downside of standards agenda - it focuses on the group not the individuals. PROGRESSION is more important than standards - it trumps standards
- Effort is much more important than assumption of ability - sometimes we lose sight of that and forget to praise effort.
- Don't make the complex complicated - address the complexity.
- Culture of respect for evidence - this goes *beyond* data, data is important but not enough. It's what you do after it.
- Isolation is the enemy of quality and improvement
- Are we thinking about schools like McDonald's franchises - reflect a vision that the gov is trying to do - need more humility than that - agreeing strategic direction and exploring what's possible rather than **faithful implementation**.
- Implementation plan - page 5 of document.



- We need to be educational meerkats - look around - eye that goes beyond the here and now
- Red arrows - Think of ourselves as a team, highly skilled, working together, pretty spectacular
- We need to be 21st century explorers serving our young people well - how far we can achieve that vision?

Pupil Panel - "Putting the learner first"

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- **Q** What's the best way to get feedback/pupil voice? **A** Come to us, visit the school, have contact with us.
- **Q** How would you like to contribute to the curriculum? What's important for you? **A** Interesting enough for us to want to take part and useful. Like Maths - fair enough learning about pythagoras, but we don't learn about tax and we need that in life. Have opportunities like this, like going to London to work, we don't have that opportunity enough.
- **Q** What's the best kind of lesson for you? **A's** Something like a starter to get you right into the lesson, not sitting around waiting for the teacher, something on the board to engage you straight away. Interact with each other. Communicating with other pupils in the school.
- **Q** How important is the digital element? **A's** Interactive elements - new websites - each pupil have an ipad and there's a quiz - it's more enjoyable interactive and everyone wants to learn more. Technology is really important for developing the lesson, technology is part of society, incorporate it. Using iPads to access Bristol University website - example given by pupil.
- **Q** One thing you would change? **A's** The teachers! In college, teachers talk to you like an equal - they respect you. We are not equal in schools. Treat us more as equals, not children, we are young adults. From KS3 and 4 - teachers treat you differently like you are an adult. Different ways of teaching - different responses from pupils - if they concentrated on the different responses they get from pupils, they would get more progression. Identifying learning types, there are a minority who don't get those pictures that you are showing on the board!
- **Q** Welsh Bac - thoughts and ways to improve? **A's** It's extremely helpful, useful for getting into uni, but good for little insights and options of what you want to do after school. In my school, I don't think we understand what it is and what its doing for us, it's just filling in booklets. Helpful for us - learn what is actually happening in my country. I don't really understand Welsh Bac. I've been told to do it - just copy off the board!
- **Q** How have you been involved in making changes in your school? **A** School council meetings, issues concerning our school, lunchtime menus...but it's not noticed or praised as much as it could be.
- **Q** ?? (Think it was to do with working in partnership) **A** Having the opportunity to communicate with other people. Bond with people you don't know. You are going to go to university, stay in halls, meet new people, so you need to get used to working with people you don't know. We are all totally different with common goal or interest.
- **Q** How important is it to learn Welsh? **A's** Everyone should - it opens doors. I think a good part of the world and throughout your life is being able to speak - whether it's welsh, or Spanish or French...speak to others.

Table Discussion - would be interested to read some of the notes from these discussions.

Reflections on the Scottish Experience of system-wide-reform - Curriculum for Excellence (Dr Bill Maxwell, Education Scotland)

- Session will share experiences from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) reform in Scotland
- Process - Inception, design, development - 2002 National Debate, 2003/4 Curriculum Review Group, research and review 2005/6, period of engagement, 2006 progress and proposals published. 2006-10 key documents developed - BtC 1-5 (curriculum areas, EY, planning learning and teaching, skills for learning, life and work, assessment)
- Experiences and Outcomes created - backing off about being prescriptive about how they deliver these. E&Os core - tighter about outcomes, but looser about the process. All developed with engagement with a strong group of practitioners. Trialling, developing, revising E+Os - recognising 'achieving, reporting and profiling' - highlights values and broad view of the curriculum, the totality of the curriculum

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- Strong focus on interdisciplinary learning - still a challenge and pushing further - joining up areas of study.
- Phased implementation 2010-16 - 2010/11 first secondary CfE cohort. 2013/14 first new National Qualifications courses.
- A key dependency - workforce reform - teaching Scotland's future 2010 - teachers encouraged to engage in career long professional learning - masters level with 5 yr update process. Initial teacher education and induction changed dramatically, Investment in leadership - Scottish College for Education Leadership
- Need a high quality teacher workforce for the 'bottom up' approach
- Reflections - Key Assets - strong consensus around vision built at the start and keep reflecting back about whether the development is retaining the initial vision, strong understanding across the whole age range between EY, Prim and Sec.
- Importance of co-design between all stakeholders and practitioners.
- Engaging with parents - communication communication communication - not got this right all the time - why we are making these changes, cutting back the jargon - countering alarmist media stories - parents will trust most if their school is confident about this change in curriculum
- Some challenges and issues - creating the conditions for change and encourage/support/give permission for innovation - aligning incentives/removing inhibitors. Inspection process - important signal, reluctant to change because of being clobbered by inspectors - on the contrary, we are looking for well-managed, structure innovation - not looking for minimal change and schools not picking up the curriculum as they should.
- Creativity and enterprise - new quality indicator in Scotland.
- Sensed strong nervousness in system for secondary - redeployed inspectors - took a break in inspection - inspectors acted as a critical friend to support schools - example of a way we've used our national flexibility.
- New curriculum encouraging flexibility and variety - not expecting all schools to be the same. Is this a postcode lottery? It can't mean that some schools don't change at all or make superficial changes. Certain principles all schools embrace - deep changes.
- Process of promoting a virtuous cycle of system wide learning - great examples out there e.g. breaking down year groups - we want people to try these ideas, we engage with them doing that, share across Scotland, but what works for one might not work for others.
- At times we had pressure of 'just tell us what to do' - especially regarding the qualifications - 'go on, just give us a syllabus'. We were keen not to do that. Did support the exchange of local syllabus that were being developed.
- Now at a phase of going forward - the benefits and realisation phase.
- Job is not done, but now need to extract the key benefits. Is it really doing its job for young people - outcomes in all 4 capacities? Are we tackling the equity gap? Big agenda - improving pathways for young people into work - 21st century careers.
- CfE could have been seen as just another initiative coming from left field.
- Tremendous amount of mutual learning to gain from each other - we are far from finished too!
- Look forward to collaborating and sharing experiences over the coming years - Scotland and Wales - the celtic connection.

Parent Panel - "Engaging with Parents"

- **Q** How to connect with those parents we term 'hard to find'? **A's** Effective parent teacher body can reach them - entirely school led processes might result in the poor attendance. Work jointly with PTA. Pizza and pasta evening for parents, children, pupils Yr 7. Important to remember that most parents ARE involved in their child's education. It's little and often - small amounts of info as needed - don't overwhelm them with change - involve parents at whatever level that they would want to be involved. Quick response from schools to questions/concerns.

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- **Q** What strategies best to engage parents? **A** Using subtle and gentle approaches in a safe/ soft way, rather than the consultation evenings for parents - important information given in social events. Think about the range of tools in your toolbox to think about a plan that shifts from information to giving surveys for insight - consult, involve, engage together. Coffee mornings - choose a particular subject, says maths. Chat, go around school, meet head/ teacher etc. Make it more of a team with children, parents, teachers. CfE - re-invented children going to places to learn...field trips...having that experience....parent coming along as helpers....involved.
- Strategy - Liaison officers are an important resource...a great bridge...particularly where relationships have broken down...expect parent bodies to also support the work a liaison officer has started.

'A curriculum for Wales, a curriculum for success' (Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills)

- The How? How to put the learner first. How teachers need to be supported.
- Self-evident truth - there is a new momentum in Welsh Education. I can see and feel it in the schools. New drive, new height, new collaboration between schools, new developments in professional learning driven by YOU. Already seeing the impact (references results in GCSEs/ A-levels/AS Levels/Welsh Bac)
- We have been through tough times and there is a lot more tough work to do. Offers a heartfelt 'thanks' to all involved.
- Schools Challenge Cymru - first year has surpassed expectations. Majority of 40 schools involved have seen a marked improvement.
- Can be confident that we are making tangible, concrete strides forward in our reform.
- Exciting time ahead of us.
- Launched 'Qualified for Life' last year. 4 strategic objectives - raise standards, develop workforce, build self-improving schools and colleges, build a new, engaging curriculum.
- As a former teacher, always seen, and still see, teaching as a vocation. Teaching is not simply a job, it is a passion. Aim - to put the profession back where it belongs in public standing, to restore trust, standing and respect to the teaching profession.
- All practitioners to know their value and be enthused about the opportunities offered to them
- All 68 recommendations accepted in the Donaldson report.
- Build a new curriculum and embed a stronger profession.
- Stronger professional development. Stronger bond between one professional and another.
- The HOW. High level plan. In this plan we set out the steps we want to take - working with the profession.
- The plan has the 4 purposes at its heart and 8 essential building blocks. (See circle diagram above)
- **Now is not the time for another patching up of the curriculum!**
- Pioneer schools identified - they will have one of 3 areas to focus on - digital competence, the new deal (teaching tomorrow teachers) or the curriculum, leadership and pedagogy. Share thinking and guide them through the process. Design phase - embed the 4 purposes into practice, build on the experiences right now - all schools can engage in this part.
- Moving to online adaptive tests in reading and numeracy.
- Teaching professionals MUST play the central part in this new curriculum. Principles, evidence led, ambitious, inclusive, manageable with pace, passion and professionalism built in. And it has to be unified.

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- Have to be clear - you know your learners best, what their needs are, what works best in the classroom and what does not. You will not be going through this alone. MY job is to support you and make sure you have what you need.
- Training providers- work with them to make sure that newly qualified teachers are ready,
- Skilled leadership, shared responsibility - encourage colleagues/staff to experiment. Find new ways of unlocking potential of all children.
- Creative learning through the arts action plan. 130 schools receiving funding in the first round. Arts Council Wales and Welsh Gov joint commitment. Aim - ambitious, creative learners
- 'Lead' schools guided by 'purpose' of new curriculum
- Everyone would be daft not to have trepidation about what lies ahead. No mean feat. Huge deal of enthusiasm in Wales. This is a task we cannot pass on to anyone else and we cannot side step. The future is changing - complex 21st century society. The 4 purposes in successful futures support the structure of the new curriculum... and provides a prop for a new economy and new type of society that we need to build in Wales.

Code Create Collaborate (Ian Livingstone CBE)

- Games-based learning and how it can fit in the curriculum. Importance of this.
- 'We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing' - George Bernard-Shaw
- The gamification of literature - reaching the end user.
- History has not been kind to games - especially to media games
- More empowerment needed of creative people
- Games are good for you - social, art-form, cultural impact, require you to problem-solve, continuous assessment, fail in a safe environment, learn intuitively - no rule book, learn by doing, simulate real world simulations, play 'simcity' rather than geography boring lesson, civilisation - step into history, training tool for surgeons, it's a creative process - mine craft - physics, maths, architecture, design.
- games skills = life skills
- Hands on, minds on
- Not to do this to the exclusion of everything else. BALANCE
- Games are motivational
- Burn off calories!
- In old people, brain capacity increases by playing games - multi-tasking.
- How do you make games? Hard skills are needed - programmers, artists, animators
- nesta.org.uk - download available.
- It's not about using technology - it's about turning children from users into creators.
- World is being exponentially changed by technology every day
- Problem lay in schools - strange hybrid of office skills - ICT. Use technology but not create it. Almost like teaching how to read, but not write.
- Computer science - who is going to teach the teachers? Facilitate a group learning experience - a child will know and share their knowledge!
- Code clubs
- Prepare children for jobs that don't yet exist and ones that won't exist anymore.
- The connected generation - often bored in class - google can answer the facts, we need to help them process these, don't teach children to be robots, robots will be replacing them soon!! Problem-solvers, show employers you can contribute, great communicators
- PLAYFULNESS - lets put it in all sectors (EY-FE), collaborating is not cheating, engage them, let them learn to love learning, when and why to use equations, get children to make things, build a website, build a map - create, imagine, STEM subjects are vital BUT NEVER UNDERESTIMATE the contribution that the arts make.
- Embrace the STEAM age. Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths

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- Lets not punish children for making mistakes - what's the point?
- Diversity not conformity, allow collaboration, projects, equal digital opportunities for all
- We need to create.

Summary and Key Messages (St. Albans Primary HT, Cardiff)

- Curriculum, construction of curriculum and collaboration (pioneer schools and change of mindset for the self-improving school system networks) AND the New Deal.
- Learn from Scotland and be guided by their journey.
- Cohesion is the key message from today.
- Now we have a plan for how we move forward.
- Consultation opportunity with Estyn - shape inspection with the new curriculum.
- Opportunities for new professional development.
- Digital Competency (on the tables in the conference, we didn't get to see these and time was running over, so no information)

Questions to Panel Section

- Donaldson surprised that after 7 years of learning Welsh, many school leavers did not feel competent in it. Pioneer schools to look at how to define 'Welsh' in the new curriculum - to be competent and confident speakers so the language does thrive.
- Stronger focus on progression - *Donaldson responds to a delegate asking for 'ability testing' to ensure excellence in progression for all. Says 'ability testing' doesn't fit so well with progression. Building the skills of teacher so that differentiation becomes 3 dimensional not 2 dimensional. Not about ability testing, but use the assessment/skills we already have. We have a massive challenge about what we mean by assessing and tracking. Lesson for all of us, when we see that excitement in children who know they are progressing, that's when we move them on.*
- **Q** Skills curriculum will undermine subject specialism and therefore career options? **A** What we don't know is what the future careers will be....it's not a knowledge-free curriculum, idea is to create a context where the subjects are serving the curriculum. New curriculum will help us understand that space between subjects - see how the subjects fit together. Engage with a wide range of stake holders to make sure the curriculum we are building is closely aligned with the skills and needs when they enter the world of work. Gives schools a huge degree of freedom and flexibility in what they teach in terms of the curriculum - creates an agile curriculum. Determination to make sure the ideas that are in 'Successful Futures' are going to be implemented and developed this time. More mature and confident education system in Wales to implement these ideas that are not necessarily new. Now need to systemise - major cultural and curriculum shift.
- **Q** What thought is being given to the accountability pillar - organisation and culture on a day to day basis? **A** Leadership - sophisticated understanding of what that means in the education context. Range of complexity in schools that is not there in other sectors. That's precisely the role of pioneer schools to look at that process.
- Questions/Answers in Welsh - webinar translator not available/working at this point.
- Estyn will be involved and supporting the pioneer schools. Important that the inspectors are supportive. Wish to see pupils, schools, teachers being creative - this is an opportunity now for us to all to respond. Plea to respond to ESTYN consultation. ESTYN wants to make it clear that we support innovation and creativity in this new curriculum and want to venue their inspectors value this.
- Interlinked/interlaced expectations in the report. Donaldson will continue to work with Wales - guide and support through the next few years.