

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Hynt y gwaith gan Lywodraeth Cymru wrth ddatblygu Cwricwlwm newydd Cymru | Welsh Government's progress in developing the new Curriculum for Wales

CR 29

Ymateb gan: Tim Cymorth Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig & Ieuenctid Cymru Response from: Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales (EYST Wales)

About EYST Wales

EYST Wales coordinates the All Wales BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) Engagement Programme, a three-year project to gather views and experiences of BAME people living in Wales and improve the evidence base from which to positively influence Welsh Government policies and public services to better reflect the needs of BAME communities. This project is one of seven Welsh Government Equalities and Inclusion Grants. Our team are building four regional fora which covers the whole of Wales and acts as a platform to unify and amplify the voices of various groups and people working to further racial equality in Wales.

Background and additional information supporting our responses in this consultation

Ethnic minority pupils in Wales account for more than 10% of children in Wales' schools and 32% of children in Cardiff schools. At the same time as ethnic diversity is increasing in Wales and the UK, there is an "overriding view" that race and race-related issues are at the margins of the current political agenda. This paper seeks to illuminate how issues of race and ethnicity are affecting ethnic minority children in Wales, particularly within the schools setting.

EYST Wales, in collaboration with partners Show Racism the Red Card, Race Council Cymru and TGP Cymru, has recently published a paper on racism and "race" in schools in Wales. Based on both academic research and personal testimonies, the paper presents the ways in which young people encounter racism in schools, highlighting overt and covert forms of racism and institutional discrimination. It concludes with a consideration of diversity in the curriculum, both for the transformative effect it can have on tackling racism, but also the way in which a white-centred Eurocentric syllabus can disadvantage and further push BAME experiences from the mainstream. We

conducted five focus groups across Wales, engaging 30+ high school pupils with a wide range of racial and ethnic identities.

The voices of BAME Young people foregrounded within this document express loud and clear that for a significant proportion of the growing number of BAME pupils in Wales, the experience of racism is an everyday almost normalised one with lasting and damaging impact. These voices also bring into sharp focus the critical role of schools and teachers in how they respond to racism, with this response found to be severely lacking on the whole, compounded by a lack of BAME teachers, particularly at senior levels in Wales. Also illuminated is the way in which a 'white-washed' curriculum distorts both the BAME pupils' sense of self-worth as well as their own and their white peers' understanding of their place and value in the world.

In this paper, we present the following recommendations:

- Specific requirements for regular anti-racist education throughout key stages and robust monitoring of racist bullying and incidents in schools;
- An authentically ethnically diverse and representative curriculum which
 - involves engagement with BAME pupils and community in its creation;
 - represents the contributions of Black and Asian people to UK and Wales society;
 - showcases achievements of people of multiple ethnicities in all subjects (thus embedding representation of multiple ethnicities across the curriculum);
 - and presents an accurate and balanced view of British colonial history.
- Teachers being trained in a) cultural competence, the skills to reflect on their own identity and privilege and how that may affect pupils; b) to recognise and respond effectively to racism and c) to develop authentic diversity in curriculums;
- Increasing the representation of BAME teachers and employees at all levels of the education system.

The ongoing redevelopment of Wales curriculum after the Donaldson review presents an excellent opportunity to achieve a curriculum which challenges racism in wider society by embedding anti-racist education and crafting a curriculum that counters previous Eurocentric, White-centred curricula.

Reponses to specific consultation questions presented by the CYPE committee:

- *The role of Pioneer Schools and any opportunities and challenges in their involvement in curriculum design;*

The experience of pioneer schools present an excellent opportunity to monitor the degree to which the four purposes and the development of AOLEs are resulting in a curriculum which rejects eurocentrism and embeds ethnic and racial diversity across the curriculum.

EYST Wales recommends that the CYPE committee and all people working on the development of the New Curriculum survey whether pioneer schools' implementations of the framework continue to result in a predominantly White and Eurocentric curriculum or whether they have transformed into an experience where multiple ethnicities and races are included and represented. This must be surveyed, documented and scrutinised at this stage. Such scrutiny will give the opportunity to identify best practices which may be replicated.

- *The involvement of academic and other external expertise in informing curriculum design;*

It is not clear that enough attention has been paid to scholars with expertise in the ways in which racism manifest in the classroom, in schools as institutions and in curriculum development. There is a large body of literature at the intersection between pedagogy and critical race theory. There are people in Wales who have a lot of knowledge in this subject. There may have been some attention to scholars who practice critical pedagogy, but we would argue that the abundance of scholarship which evidences bias against ethnic minorities on many facets in the classroom, including bias in setting/banding, discipline and assessment as well as the importance of representation of ethnic diversity in the curriculum have either have received short shrift or have not been heeded in the documents produced thus far. Developing an anti-racist and authentically representative curriculum would contribute to each of the four purposes but doing so will take a conscious effort to unpack previous racial and ethnocentric hierarchies which have been present in both UK-wide and specifically Welsh curricula.

- *How the 'What Matters?' statements, published in December 2017, are evolving into the design of curriculum content in each of the six AoLEs;*

In 2014, the Welsh Government organised a workshop for educators to discuss how to improve the school experience and educational outcomes and for Black and Mixed ethnicity students. One topic discussed was diversity in the curriculum. They reached three conclusions:

- 1) Need more diverse content including Black history, minority ethnic history and world studies. There is very little positive context about

Black people. The units which refer to Black people are too narrowly focussed on slavery, colonialism and civil rights and topics with Black people represented are restricted to Black History Month rather than being integrated into the whole curriculum and presented steadily throughout the year.

- 2) Integration of diversity in content and resources across the curriculum varies between schools. The extent to which diversity in the curriculum is addressed depends on location, community make-up, the school and pupil make-up. Some schools treat diversity in the curriculum tokenistically and cosmetically and, in some schools, ethnic minority pupils rarely see their racial, ethnic or cultural or national identities portrayed.
- 3) A diverse curriculum needs to be part of a genuine inclusive whole school ethos which positively recognises Black and Mixed identities, boosts pupil engagement and achievement and involves good relationships/positive tone between pupils and staff. Teachers need development and training on teaching a diverse curriculum.ⁱ

Participants in the same workshop also suggested that in order to ensure achievement of those aims, Welsh Government could scrutinise the new curriculum to measure how much of that content includes ethnic minority people and how much show positive content about achievements and contributions to the world developmentⁱⁱ.

The “What Matters” statements and AOLEs as they stand now, would allow for development of such a curriculum, and make some reference to diversity, but they don’t specifically make reference to multi-racial representation in the curriculum nor do they reference racial equality.

The four purposes provide a framework which is open to create a transformative curriculum – one which challenges previous racial hierarchies in Welsh and British society, which could set an international standard.

However, without clear guidelines as to creating a new curriculum which equitably represents multiple ethnicities and rejects previous ethno-centric and White-centric incarnations, we may well end up with a curriculum with a new framework but remains ethno-centric and Euro-centric and continues to privilege representations of White achievements. And which showcases “Other” ethnicities during Black History Month and “Diversity Days.”

Achieving an authentically representative curriculum must be an intentional, concerted effort and teachers must be trained to effectively create and deliver such.

- *Progress in defining achievement outcomes at the various progression steps within the new curriculum;*

If achievement outcomes include references to understanding racial equality, understanding colonial history and the racial hierarchy it created and understanding, such material is more likely to be presented to students in the classroom. Currently, outcomes are broadly defined and do not specifically reference racial equity in society.

- *How the development of the new Curriculum for Wales is aligning with the development of the new national professional learning offer for teachers;*

It is not clear that the new national professional learning offer necessarily or sufficiently equips teachers to serve multi-racial classrooms, to effectively and confidently prevent and respond to racist bullying, nor develop racially equitable and non-Eurocentric curriculum.

We argue that more attention must be paid to racial equality in both Initial Teacher Training and CPD.

Whereas pupils in Wales are becoming a more ethnically diverse group, teachers in Wales are not. BAME teachers account for less than 3% of teachers in Wales and anecdotal evidence suggests there are few BAME teachers in senior positions. In 2015/16, 25 people of colour embarked upon Initial Teacher Training in Wales – 2% of the cohort¹. This figure has been declining since 2010 and there is some evidence that aspiring BAME teachers avoid or leave the profession due to racism in schools².

As such, it is important to teach teachers who do not have lived experience as ethnic minority citizens to understand and related to the experiences of ethnic minority pupils and to recognise and watch out for unconscious bias.

- *Communication with schools and teachers of the curriculum development work being undertaken and the engagement of all schools (not only Pioneer Schools);*

EYST Wales has spoken with parents, pupils and other third sector partners regarding their desire and perceived ability to shape and

¹ StatsWales dataset <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Higher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Training-ITT/students-in-Wales/firstyearsonitecoursesinwales-by-ethnicity-year>

² BBC Wales 17 June 2017

influence the new curriculum. Until recently, it has been very difficult for BAME individuals and groups to have access to the stakeholder group. There are some signs that engagement doors may be opening, and we will welcome those opportunities. However, we argue that engagement with BAME organisations as well as BAME pupils and parents must be far reaching and not tokenistic. And it must entail accessible participation formats.

- *Progress in developing new assessment arrangements;*

Research consistently finds that White teachers disproportionately place Black students in low ranked groups and there is anecdotal evidence that some schools have a limited number of ethnic minority students placed in higher tier exams³. Professor Jonathon Brentnall suggests we need more evidence and data to understand the extent to which this is happening in Wales⁴.

The CYPE committee should inquire to what degree new assessment arrangements will impact BAME students and consider whether attention has been paid in how new assessment arrangements will racial bias in teacher assessment, a well-documented occurrence.

It is important to note that in legislation, it is differential outcomes for particular groups, not intent, that constitute institutional discrimination.

- *The steps being taken to ensure that the new Curriculum for Wales complements other Welsh Government priorities, including (but not restricted to) Cymraeg 2050;*

The Well- Being of Future Generations Act calls for a more equal and prosperous Wales as well as a Wales with cohesive communities. Thus far, documentation regarding the new curriculum does not specifically address racial equality in Wales nor does it embed anti-racist education into the framework.

The United Nations has recommended that all UK nations review the way that the British Empire and slavery are taught – to be a more balanced representation – in order ensure they fulfil obligations as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD).

³ Gillborn D “Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy: Whiteness, Critical Race Theory and Educaiont Reform,” p. 17-18.

⁴ Brentnall J, “Promoting engagement and academic achievement for Black and Mixed ethnicity pupils in Wales, February 2017.

Moreover, the Welsh Government has a statutory duty to prevent and respond to institutional institutional racism, defined in the McPherson report as “the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people,” that which, “covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions - reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn.” Embedding anti-racist education into the curriculum and creating an authentically diverse curriculum which equitably represents non-White role models, histories and achievements across all subjects and key stages, and also represents a balanced view of British colonialism is essential to fulfilling these legislative obligations.

ⁱ Brentnall J, “Promoting Engagement and Academic Achievement for Black and Mixed Ethnicity Pupils in Wales, February 2017.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.