

## **AMBITION AND CURRICULUM REFORM**

**Professor Graham Donaldson**

**RSA Cardiff  
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Creating the conditions for all young people in Wales to experience education of the highest quality requires 2 complex challenges to be addressed successfully –

### **The Curriculum Challenge -**

Creating an inclusive, engaging and challenging set of learning experiences in pursuit of ambitious and agreed purposes of education.

*“What our children and young people learn during their time at school has **never been more important** yet, at the same time, the task of determining what that learning should be has **never been more challenging**.”*

*Successful Futures 2015*

### **The Realisation Challenge –**

Bridging the gap between aspiration and the reality of day-to-day classroom life.

*“A major, sustained change programme will be required to convert the recommendations of the Review into practice.”*

*Successful Futures 2015*

# THE CURRICULUM CHALLENGE

**Agreeing and pursuing relentlessly ambitious goals for all our young people**

**Raising ‘standards’ across the board – particularly (but certainly not exclusively) in basic literacy, numeracy and digital competence**

**Defeating destiny – deprivation/expectation/aspiration**

**Establishing a broader, more secure and enduring base of education before qualifications**

**Creating space for engaging teaching and learning**

**Sustaining high quality and relevant education**

## Society

- Inequality increasing
- Demography
- Life expectancy
- Single households
- Civic participation
- Changing family structures

## Resources

- Scarcity
- Efficiency
- Accountability

Technological developments  
Nature/pace/lag/digital divide

## Globalisation

- Interdependence
- Competition
- Offshoring
- Reshoring
- Migration
- Scarcity
- Climate
- Security

## Employment

- Skill demand changing
- Portability
- Employability
- Digital competence
- Fluid job market
- Lifelong learning

## Education

- New and growing expectations
- Instrumental pressure? Education is for work?
- Education for democratic participation / citizenship?
- Uncertainty and lifelong learning
- New conceptions of knowledge?
- Creativity, teamworking, problem-solving?
- Deprivation and educational achievement?
- Better learning or different learning?
- Anywhere, anytime learning? Hand-held connectivity?
- Social networking
- Internationalisation – PISA/PIRLS/TIMMS



- New markets and jobs but also volatility, insecurity and migration
- Complexity, diversity and inequality
- Ambiguity and citizenship
- Connectivity, collaboration and cybersecurity
- Personal and collective learning and innovation or obsolescence

**“If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow.”**

John Dewey (1915) *Schools of Tomorrow*

## Importance of

- **strong basic skills**
- **deeper conceptual understanding**
- **connected and coherent knowledge**
- **authentic knowledge in context**
- **creativity and problem solving**
- **learning in collaboration and to collaborate**
- **ethics and values**
- **personal agency**

**Move from what students should be learning towards what they should become?  
(Priestley and Biesta 2014)**



## **WALES (2015)**

Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives  
Enterprising, creative individuals ready to play a full part in life and work  
Healthy, confident individuals ready to live fulfilling lives as valued members of society  
Ethical, informed citizens ready to be citizens of Wales and the world

## **SINGAPORE**

Confident person;  
Self-directed learner;  
Active contributor;  
Concerned citizen.

## **SCOTLAND (2004)**

Successful learners  
Confident individuals  
Effective contributors  
Responsible citizens

## **AUSTRALIA**

Successful learners  
Confident and creative  
individuals  
Active and informed citizens

## **FINLAND**

Knowledge and skills for life and for further study  
Support each pupil's linguistic and cultural identity – passing on the culture  
but also create new culture  
A tool for developing educational capital and enhancing equality and a  
sense of community

## **ALBERTA**

Engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an  
entrepreneurial spirit;  
Strive for engagement and personal  
excellence in their learning journey;  
Employ literacy and numeracy to construct  
and communicate meaning; and  
Discover, develop and apply competencies  
across subject and discipline areas for  
learning, work

## **NORTHERN IRELAND**

Empower young people to achieve their potential  
and to make informed and responsible decisions  
throughout their lives;  
Develop the young person as an individual, as a  
contributor to society, the economy and the  
environment

## **ENGLAND**

Provide pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge they  
need to be educated citizens  
Introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said, and help  
engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

- **Ambitious goals**
- **Balance between development of basic skills, subject knowledge, application, creativity and broader preparation for future life**
- **Broader purposes usually relate to lifelong learning, citizenship, creativity/entrepreneurship, personal efficacy**
- **Pervasive tension between purposes and the curriculum as experienced by students**

# SUCCESSFUL FUTURES

## Key Curriculum Recommendations

Four purposes

Six Areas of Learning and Experience

Three cross-curriculum responsibilities

Progression Steps at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16  
(including 'Routes')

Achievement outcomes

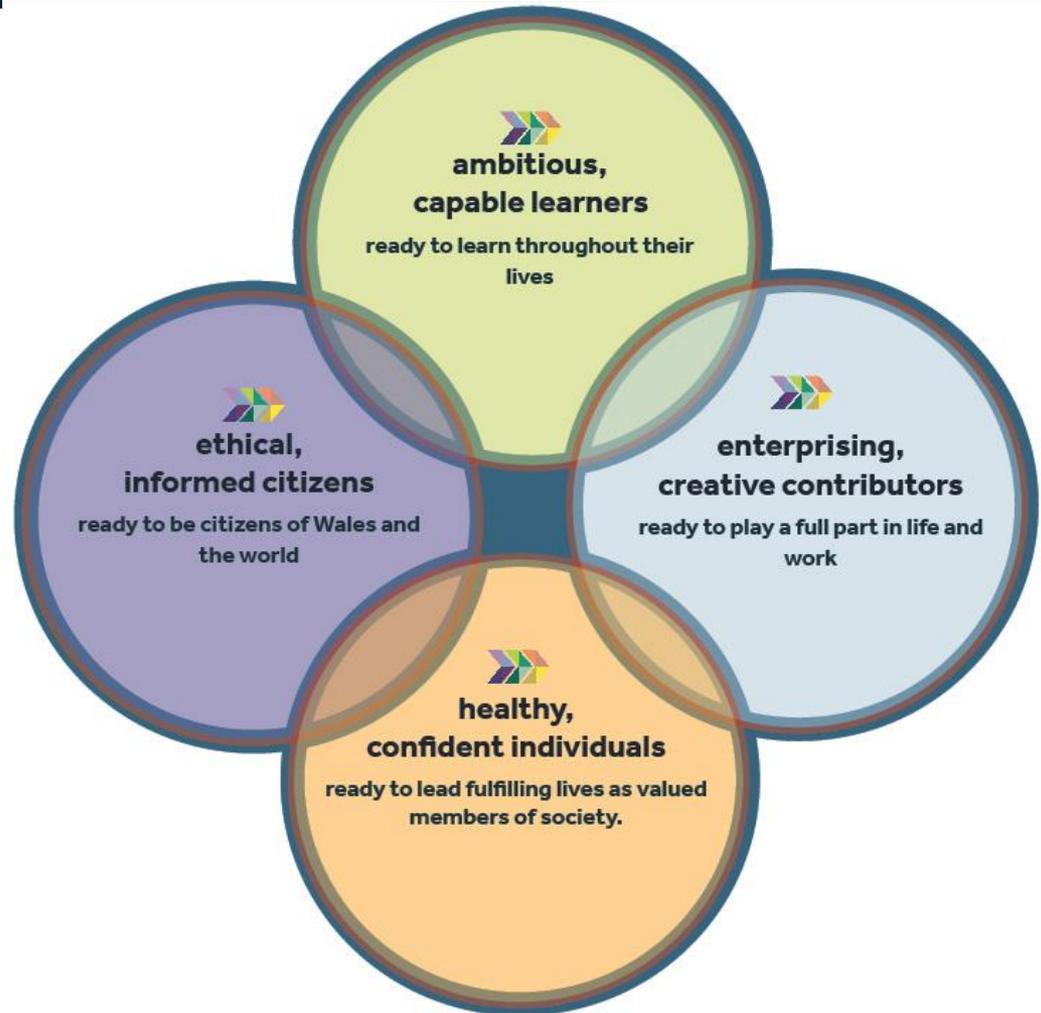
A range of pedagogical approaches

Refocusing assessment on learning, including learners'  
self- and peer-assessment



# Purposes of the curriculum

The purposes of the curriculum in Wales should be that children and young people develop as:



# THE REALISATION CHALLENGE

## **Some Interesting Elements of the Realisation Challenge**

**Winning both the hearts and the minds of diverse stakeholders for  
ambitious purposes**

**Determining and building on the interaction of non-linear and non-  
hierarchical dependencies**

**Sustaining education for all young people that is both high quality  
and relevant needs a continuous learning system**

**Establishing a dynamic and ambitious leadership culture**

**Building the individual and collective capacity of practitioners,  
particularly the teaching profession – knowledge creation and  
mobilisation**

**Establishing an accountability culture that is constructive and  
founded on mutual respect**

# The Reform Conundrum

**‘...there is strong evidence from a variety of sources that two decades of reform have not led to anticipated levels of educational improvement, and certainly not commensurate with levels of investment in education, but have led to widespread teacher and headteacher dissatisfaction’**

*Hoyle and Wallace Educational Leadership: Ambiguity, Professionals and Managerialism 2005, pp. 4-5*

**The impact of policies has been, at best, mixed. Neither general nor targeted interventions have, thus far, demonstrated substantial sustained improvements that can be spread widely.**

*Kerr & West BERA 2010 Insight 2*

**“We have in education a long history of innovation but it rarely touches but a chosen few.”**

*Hattie, Visible Learning (2009) p254*

**“Cultures do not change by mandate...the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modeling the new values and behavior that you expect to displace the existing ones.’**

*Elmore, R (2004) School Reform from the Inside Out Harvard University Press*



# Addressing the Conundrum

Agreed, inspiring, ambitious and driving purposes  
Curriculum not imprisoned by the past or the context  
Embodies principles of exploration & subsidiarity  
Confident, expert & empowered teaching profession  
Active and extended collegiate culture  
Distributive leadership  
Constructive accountability/evaluation



**A revitalised and energised teaching and learning  
community**



**Broad experiences, better outcomes & higher  
standards for our young people**

# KEY FEATURES OF THE WELSH APPROACH TO BOTH CHALLENGES

**Strategic and inclusive approach based on agreed purposes**

**Focus on deep learning, the ability to apply learning creatively and the development of personal qualities**

**Not top-down but collaborative, all-Wales reform – subsidiarity and the pioneer network**

**Reflects current evidence about successful reform in pluralistic cultures**

**Recognises the need to take time to build understanding and ownership**

**Strong commitment to capacity building and professional learning**

**Critical importance of leadership at all levels**

**Synergies across development and accountability**

# A Curriculum for Wales – A Curriculum for Life

Building our national curriculum together – a curriculum  
for Wales, a curriculum for life

