

New plan for national mission to raise standards – Kirsty Williams

The Education Secretary has revealed details of a plan to continue to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and public confidence.

Objectives also include introducing a new accountability model and ensuring strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence and well-being.

The plan sets out the actions the Welsh Government will continue to take to keep improving the education system, including:

- Reducing class sizes
- Reforming teacher training
- Strengthening support for learners with Additional Learning Needs
- Establishing a national approach to long-term career development for teachers
- Establishing a new National Academy for Educational Leadership
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy for teachers
- Investing £1.1 billion to upgrade the quality of school buildings.

The Education Secretary also set out a revised timeline for introducing the new Curriculum for Wales, with statutory roll out to schools now set to begin in 2022 to give the teaching profession and schools more time to help develop, and prepare for, the changes.

The new curriculum will be introduced from nursery to Year 7 in 2022, rolling into Year 8 in 2023, Year 9 in 2024, Year 10 in 2025 and Year 11 in 2026. All schools will have access the final curriculum from 2020, to allow them to move towards full roll-out in 2022.

Kirsty Williams said:

“We are entering a fast-changing world that is increasingly competitive, globally connected and technologically advanced. Schools have to prepare our young people for jobs that have not yet been created and challenges that we are yet to encounter. Education has never been more important and, working with the teaching profession, we will continue our national mission to raise standards.

“Our plan is aimed at ensuring every young person in Wales has an equal opportunity to reach the highest standards and their full potential. We can’t achieve those ambitions if we just stand still. Teachers and educators across our system are working together to raise standards and reduce the attainment gap. It is an exciting time to be involved in education in Wales.

“We all share a responsibility to inspire and challenge the next generation. That is why we will support teachers with continuous learning and development, better support and identify our leaders, and reduce class sizes so that we can raise standards for all.”

Commenting on the new curriculum, she added:

“Since becoming Education Secretary I have visited schools across the country, spoken to a range of teachers, parents and experts and held talks with unions.

“It’s the right decision to introduce the curriculum as a phased roll-out rather than a ‘big bang’, and for that to start in 2022. This approach, and an extra year, will mean all schools have the time to engage with the development of the curriculum and be full prepared for the changes. As the OECD have recommended, we will continue our drive to create a curriculum for the 21st century.”