

The Humanities Curriculum

What Matters in Humanities-statements

- 1 Developing an enquiring mind enables learners to explore and investigate the world, past, present and future, for themselves.
- 2 Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
- 3 Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by physical processes and human actions.
- 4 Human societies are complex and diverse, and are shaped by human actions and beliefs.
- 5 Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered, ethical and sustainable action.

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience is all about asking questions about the human condition.

Humanities encompasses geography, history, **religious education**, business studies and social studies. These disciplines share many common themes, concepts and transferable skills, while also having their own body of knowledge and skills. Promoting an understanding of the **ethnic and cultural diversity within Wales** will also help learners appreciate the extent to which it is part of a wider international community.

The proposal is that funded non-maintained settings and schools will be required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the four purposes of the curriculum, and comprises the six areas of learning and experience. There will be **statutory duties** to teach Welsh, English, **religious education**, relationships and sexuality education, and the three cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence.

Funded non-maintained settings and schools will have discretion as to how they design their school-level curriculum to meet their curriculum duties. However, in considering the exercise of that discretion, they must have regard to statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers. In practice, that means they should follow the statutory guidance unless they have good reason not to.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive syllabus, nor a guide for organising timetables. It sets out:

- what funded non-maintained settings and schools should take into account in designing their curriculum and how it could be structured

- the broad expectations for learners for the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience at each progression step.

The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience is central to learners becoming ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.

Learners will be asked to consider the impact of their actions and the actions of others, and **how these are shaped by interpretations of human rights, values, ethics, religious and non-religious views, and philosophies.**

Learners will have the safe space for discussion and reflection which allows time to explore their personal perspectives on religious and non-religious world views, ethical challenges and social inclusion issues.

School curricula should promote a thorough understanding of what matters statements in Humanities.

These should not be seen or taught in isolation: the content, concepts and skills outlined in them are interconnected, placing emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach and a holistic view of the humanities. As a matter of principle, practitioners should be free to decide on the organisation of this area of learning and experience, and the choice of content to be covered

The first what matters statement champions enquiry and discovery within Humanities, while the second encourages learners to explore and consider how they and others view, interpret and represent human experiences. What matters statements three and four focus on the key aspects of understanding in Humanities, namely of people's relationship with the natural world and with each other. The final what matters statement places a new emphasis on the individual's role and action in response to the challenges and opportunities facing humanity.

Progression

Progression in Humanities is underpinned by the idea that subject content does not get intrinsically more complex.

Wider skills

- Critical thinking and problem-solving, Creativity and innovation and Planning and organising, and Personal effectiveness

Religious education

Religious education is a mandatory part of the current basic curriculum for 5 to 16-year-olds. Community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools without a religious character must follow the agreed syllabus. An agreed syllabus conference develops the curriculum content for religious education in each local authority area.

Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character must also provide religious education in accordance with the agreed syllabus unless parents/carers request that their child be provided with religious education in accordance with the trust deed for the school or, if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion.

Foundation schools and voluntary aided schools with a religious character must provide religious education in accordance with the trust deed for the school or, if there is no trust deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion. However, if the parents/carers request it, and if no other local school is able to provide it, the governing body of the school shall, as far as reasonably possible, provide religious education in accordance with the agreed syllabus.

In proposals for Curriculum for Wales 2022, religious education will continue to be compulsory. There is currently an exemption from religious education for registered learners in **Nursery classes. It is proposed that the exemption be repealed.** We do not propose that funded non-maintained settings will be required to teach the agreed syllabus but they will have to have regard to guidance as to how best this could be taught.

We do not intend to make any change to the requirement for schools to deliver the agreed syllabus. Voluntary aided schools with a religious character will continue to be able to deliver their denomination syllabi and parents/carers of learners attending voluntary controlled schools can continue to request that their child studies the denominational syllabus rather than the locally agreed syllabus if they wish.

A new supporting framework is being developed to provide further detail about the relationship between religious education, the agreed syllabus, and the areas of learning and experience. This is being taken forward by a group of religious education practitioners, curriculum pioneers, academics, and representatives from Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) and the National Advisory Panel for Religious Education (NAPFRE).

Religious education should reflect our historical and contemporary relationship in Wales to philosophy and religious views, including non-religious beliefs. **Therefore the current legislation will be amended to ensure the agreed syllabus for religious education takes account of non-religious world views which are analogous to religions (e.g. humanism).**

Progression – Example Step 5

Religious education

I can engage in philosophical enquiry considering the diversity, complexity and plurality of religious and non-religious world views.

I can understand that Ultimate questions are complex, and answers are often partial and inconclusive.

I can appreciate, empathise with and critically evaluate sources of wisdom and authority, and religious and non-religious world views, in order to form my own reasoned conclusions.

I can observe and investigate forms of religious expression, and can critically evaluate how aspects of religion and belief impact upon me, other individuals, local society and global society.

Enquiries exploring complex philosophical questions about the meaning and purpose of life. This includes engaging with Ultimate questions raised by the world around them, their own life experiences and aspects of religion, as well as using sources of wisdom and philosophy.