

## Summary of 'The Great Debate - The Donaldson Review'

Evidence collected for the review showed there was an overwhelming case (and desire) for change. The current curriculum does not meet the needs of learners in Wales and has become too bulky and unwieldy. There are 68 recommendations in the report, covering the areas below.

### Purpose of the Curriculum - 4 purposes

**Donaldson recommends that there is a clear purpose to the curriculum. He suggests 4 key areas:**

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

### Areas of Learning and Experience - 6 areas

**Donaldson recommends that we look at how subjects serve the curriculum rather than defining the curriculum by subjects. He suggests that learning is structured through 6 areas:**

- expressive arts
- humanities (including RE which should remain compulsory to age 16)
- health and well-being
- languages, literacy and communication (including Welsh and modern foreign languages)
- mathematics and numeracy
- science and technology (including computer science)

### Progression

**Donaldson suggests that Key stages have contributed to too many transitions for learners and put a ceiling on learning. He recommends that:**

- the curriculum needs to be a continuum of learning from 3 to 16
- progression should be signalled through progression steps at 5 points along the continuum (relating broadly to expectations at 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16)
- duty for schools to provide a curriculum that enables most learners to reach, or go beyond each progression step within the broad three year window
- achievement outcomes should be developed for each progression step in each area of learning
- achievement outcomes would be best described using 'I can....' for outcomes; 'I have...' for experiences; moving on to 'I need to...' for next steps

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### Pedagogy -12 principles

**The recommendations of the review do not imply an emphasis on any particular teaching approach. However, a number of pedagogical principles relate directly to the suggested curriculum and assessment changes. The curriculum needs to encourage good teaching. When collecting evidence, good teaching was often seen despite the curriculum not because of it.**

- Good teaching and learning maintains a consistent focus on the overall purposes of the curriculum.
- Good teaching and learning challenges all learners by encouraging them to recognise the importance of sustained effort in meeting expectations that are high but achievable for them.
- Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching.
- Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including those that promote problem solving, creative and critical thinking.
- Good teaching and learning sets tasks and selects resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest.
- Good teaching and learning creates authentic contexts for learning.
- Good teaching and learning means employing assessment for learning principles.
- Good teaching and learning ranges within and across the 'Areas of Learning and Experience'.
- Good teaching and learning regularly reinforces cross curriculum responsibilities, including literacy, numeracy and digital competence, and provides opportunities to practise them.
- Good teaching and learning encourages children and young people to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Good teaching and learning supports social and emotional development and positive relationships.
- Good teaching and learning encourages collaboration.

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### Assessment

You don't need to have experiences measured for them to be valuable.

Professor Donaldson says that we need to be careful we don't mix up assessment for accountability and assessment for developing learning. Both assessment and accountability are for learning. We need to use as many probes as possible. In regards to the national tests he said that it is not the testing that is the problem, it is how it is used. His recommendations in relation to assessment include:

- alignment of assessment with the four purposes of education
- emphasis on assessment for learning
- use of a wide range of assessment techniques
- self-assessment and peer-assessment developed
- external, standardised testing combined with school tests and teacher assessment
- frequency of testing reduced
- sampling to measure the performance of the education system at a national level

In addition, accountability arrangements (including the role of Estyn and the categorisation model) should be aligned with the four purposes and the wider recommendations in the Review.

Further information is available at

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/great-debate/?lang=en>