This response is also available in Welsh.

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training In Wales

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Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Dyddiad / Date:	16.07.21
Pwnc / Subject:	**Draft progression code**

Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Assembly on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This response is not confidential.

Response

Introduction

The five principles of progression are useful for education practitioners as they work to design a bespoke curriculum for their school or setting. They should help promote breadth and depth of learning throughout and across the curriculum. They help to emphasise important principles, such as the importance of learners being able to apply their learning in more unfamiliar and challenging contexts over time.

In many cases, the overarching principles are clear and should help to provide a consistent framework that leaders and practitioners can use to develop their curricula. They should help to promote a collective understanding of progress across areas of learning. However, in a few cases, terms are ambiguous and would benefit from simplification or exemplification. In our response we have suggested improvements for clarification for each Area of learning and experience.

Respondent type (please select one from the following)

Child or young person	☐	Employer/business representative	☐
Parent/carer	☐	Professional body/interest group	☐
Schools governor or member of school management committee	☐	Voluntary sector (community group, volunteer, self-help group, social or co-operative enterprise, religious, not for profit organisation)	☐
Mainstream school practitioner (head, teacher, teaching assistant, etc.)	☐	Regional consortium	☐
EOTAS provider (PRU staff, independent school staff, other provider, etc.)	☐	Local authority	☐
Higher education (including universities/academic institutions)	☐	Further education	☐
Politician (Senedd member, county councillors, MP, etc.)	☐	Other respondent group not listed above, please specify: **Estyn**	✓
Lobbyist	☐	Prefer not to say	☐

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of a school, setting or organisation?

☐	As an individual
✓	On behalf of a school/setting/organisation

Question 1 – How useful are the principles of progression for education practitioners in designing and developing their curriculum? And how might they be improved?

The five principles of progression are useful for education practitioners as they work to design a bespoke curriculum for their school or setting. They should help promote breadth and depth of learning throughout and across the curriculum. They help to emphasise important principles, such as the importance of learners being able to apply their learning in unfamiliar and challenging contexts over time. If they are to be fully effective, leaders and practitioners will require time and support to fully understand and embed these principles into their curricula.

In a few cases, they could be improved with clarification, as outlined in our response to the other questions in the consultation.

Question 2 – In terms of the overarching principles of progression, are these <u>clear and accurate</u> in setting out what it means for learners to progress in their learning, 3-16 across the whole curriculum?

Agree	✓	**Disagree**	☐	**Neither agree nor disagree**	☐

Supporting comments

In many cases, the overarching principles are clear and should help to provide a consistent framework that leaders and practitioners can use to develop their curricula. They should help to promote a collective understanding of progress across areas of learning. However, in a few cases, terms are ambiguous and would benefit from simplification or exemplification. For example, in 'Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills', the term 'intellectual skills' is unclear.

Question 3 - In terms of the principles of progression specific to each area of learning and experience, are these <u>clear and accurate</u> in setting out what is unique and distinct about progression, 3-16 within each area?

Agree	✓	Disagree	☐	Neither agree nor disagree	☐

Supporting comments

We agree that the principles of progression specific to each area of learning and experience, are clear and accurate in setting out what is unique and distinct about progression in many of the Areas. In a few Areas, there are some sections where guidance needs further clarification.

In the Expressive Arts Area, the individualised nature of the guidance, and the examples provided, should be helpful to leaders and teachers as they provide professional learning opportunities for colleagues. Referring to the principles when constructing their curriculum should help schools and settings ensure that they adhere to the principles of progression.

In the Health and Wellbeing Area, there is suitable emphasis on developing knowledge over time by revisiting concepts and by building upon lived experiences to develop learners' skills and understanding. This can help them make appropriate choices in different areas of their lives. Importantly, these principles of progression consider the general development of learners: physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially, over time. The principles of progression link well to the four purposes.

In the Humanities Area, there are a few sections where guidance needs further clarification:

- In the section 'Increasing breadth and depth of knowledge', the term 'propositional knowledge' needs explanation. In addition, there needs to be guidance and/or clarification on what is an 'underlying concept'.
- In the section on 'Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills' the phrase 'relating to representation' is difficult to interpret.

The principles of progression for Languages, Literacy and Communication emphasise well the importance of learners' progress in this Area, as well as progress in disciplinary literacy in the other Areas of learning and experience. We have identified aspects where this guidance could be strengthened:

- The principles of progression for Languages, Literacy and Communication could be enhanced further by including information about young children's language acquisition. In most cases the acquisition of language follows the same sequence, although the speed at which it does so can vary considerably (Law et al, 2017[1]). Children learning languages other than English, such as bilingual learners or learners with English as an additional language, may not necessarily show the same pattern of development as first language English speakers. Provided that

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[1] Law, J., Charlton, J., Dockrell, J., Gascoigne, M., McKean, C. and Theakston, A. (2017). *Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, A Report for the Education Endowment Foundation October 2017*. Education Endowment Foundation: England.

they do not have language difficulties[2], typically children acquire the grammar for the main constructions of their native language, irrespective of the language, by the age of five (Kuhl, 2004[3]; Messer, 2006[4]).

- It is important to include the main elements of children's oral language development in the principles of progression, particularly as this is the foundation for the development of other language and literacy skills. Oral language precedes and underpins pre-literacy skills, as well as later reading (and especially reading comprehension) and writing (Law et al, 2017, p.3). The role of adults in modelling the conventions of language, and scaffolding children's language learning to support their progression in communication, is specific to this area of learning and experience. Strengthening this aspect of the principles of progression for the Area would also align with Welsh Government's 'Talk With Me: Speech, Language and Communication (SLC) Delivery Plan' (Welsh Government, 2020).

- Currently, the principles of progression do not make the social and cultural aspects of language development as explicit as they should, and therefore the link between language and identity outlined in the 'Languages connect us' statement of what matters, has to be inferred.

- Overall, the text provides a clear picture of the progression for a learner at the higher end of the continuum, and the intended outcomes for learners in Languages, Literacy and Communication. Given the explanation that the descriptions of learning in this particular Area include a higher level of detail at the early stages of learning than can be found in other Areas of learning and experience, there is relatively modest indication of the progression in the early steps, in these principles.

- The guidance notes that 'Descriptions of learning in this Area include a higher level of detail at early stages of learning than may be found in other areas of learning and experience'. This reflects that these early literacy skills are foundations of effective learning across the curriculum.' This is not universally the case across English, Welsh, and international languages. For example, the descriptions of learning in the early stages for international languages do not include a higher level of detail.

- In the section 'Making connections and transferring learning into new contexts', guidance states 'They progress in parallel in languages, literacy and communication in this Area and in disciplinary literacy in the other areas of learning and experience'. Guidance needs to be clear about what 'progress in parallel' means in this context.

- Under the section 'Deepening understanding of the ideas and disciplines within Areas' it notes that learners may be at different points of progression in different languages. It would be helpful if progression within languages also recognises that a learner may progress at different rates and be at different points in terms of their expressive and receptive language.

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[2] Children often move in and out language difficulties between four and seven years (McKean et al., 2017; Zubrick et al., 2015). Law et al (2017, p.19) note, 'this instability is, in part, due to children making small changes which place them just above or just below the threshold where language difficulties are defined.'

[3] Kuhl, P.K. (2004). 'Early language acquisition: Cracking the speech code', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 5(11) 831-843.

[4] Messer, D. (2006). 'Current perspectives on language acquisition', in J.S. Peccei (ed.), *Child language: A Resource Book for Students.* London: Routledge.

In the Mathematics and Numeracy Area of learning, the principles are useful and demonstrate the need to develop pupils' depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding. It would be helpful for the guidance to be clear that the interdependent proficiencies should not be taught in isolation, and that practitioners do not need to plan for, or teach, all of the proficiencies in every lesson.

In general, the principles of progression for the Science and Technology Area will be useful to support teachers developing curricula and learning experiences that are distinct to this area of the curriculum. Most principles explain how they should be developed and how pupils can make and demonstrate progress across, for example in moving from the concrete to the abstract or engaging with ethical dilemmas. However, in a few instances clearer explanation or exemplification is needed:

- The section 'Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills' helps to explain how learners need to apply skills and knowledge with growing sophistication. It may be helpful to refer to an 'increasing sophistication' about how learners apply their prior learning within this Area when 'they explore and investigate problems and the resulting formulation of creative solutions.'
- The description 'Increasing effectiveness as a learner' does not focus strongly enough on what is unique about this Area. Also, the first sentence is unclear. It needs to explain more clearly that a 'trial and improve' approach will allow learners to apply skills, develop resilience as they understand the benefit of failure in this area to discover new ways of doing things. In addition, Science and Technology encourages peer interaction as well as individual discovery which can increase the effectiveness of learners.

Question 4 – How well do the overarching principles and the principles specific to each area of learning and experience form a clear and coherent whole? Are the specific principles consistent with the overarching ones?

In the Expressive Arts the overarching principles of progression for each area of learning and experience provide an effective and coherent whole. They are outlined clearly for practitioners. The guidance is practical and emphasises the importance of consistency throughout. The examples included are useful for practitioners. For example, there is useful reference to progress in elements of dance which successfully exemplify the growing sophistication in the use and application of skills.

In the Humanities and in the Health and Wellbeing Areas, the overarching principles and specific area principles are coherent and consistent with each other. Importantly, in the Health and Wellbeing Area, both encourage growth over time and the revisiting of concepts and ideas to develop deeper knowledge and sophistication of thought and understanding.

In the Languages, Literacy and Communication Area, the overarching principle of 'Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills' recognises a range of skills that learners need to develop in the early stages of learning, including a focus on developing gross and fine motor skills, communicative and social skills. Given the importance of the early stages of language acquisition to learners' progress across the curriculum, this does not have sufficient attention under the principle of progression in languages, literacy and communication. Similarly, the paragraph that identifies that progression can be seen in 'the production of language', describes only more advanced skills, rather than illustrating early language production, as well as the skills learners develop, as they 'become more accomplished'.

In the Mathematics and Numeracy Area of learning, the proficiencies link well to the overarching principles outlined in the Code.

In the Science and Technology Area, the overarching and specific principles are consistent and clear in many cases. For example, in the 'Making connections and transferring learning into new contexts' the science and technology principles expand well on the overarching guidance and give it more clarity and focus for this particular Area of learning.

In the section 'Deepening understanding of the ideas and disciplines within areas of learning and experience' the description focuses on how disciplinary learning can be strengthened by making links across this Area and uses the application of investigative skills as an example. It would be helpful to be clear that it is not just skills, but scientific knowledge and understanding that are developed within one area of science and technology should be applied across the Area of learning and experience.

Question 5 – What further support could be provided to help practitioners develop their approach to progression and assessment as an integral part of their curriculum, in line with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales?

In terms of supporting assessment and progression, the 'Supporting Learner Progression: Assessment Guidance' guidance outlines principles for assessment arrangements. However, in a number of places schools and settings require more detail and clarification:

- The guidance points to the importance of 'developing a shared understanding of progression within and across schools' and identifies that 'dialogue for this purpose provides opportunities for leaders and practitioners to share and reflect on the impact of their school curriculum.' Schools and settings need further guidance to

> outline how they can take this forward and what, if any, statutory requirements Welsh Government will place upon them.
>
> - Welsh Government need to share guidance about any specific assessment arrangements they plan to make that may affect this area, for example if there will be a statutory baseline assessment.

> While this guidance can support schools and settings to build progression into learning, this does not guarantee that learners will make suitable progress. Effective pedagogy is paramount, and plans must be flexible enough to adapt to learners' needs. Further support and professional learning on effective pedagogy remains vitally important.

> Schools and settings need clear guidance about effective ways of tracking learners' progress. Tracking learning effectively should help leaders and practitioners to monitor learners' progress. This will help to ensure that they can make effective decisions about the next steps for learners and can also guide teaching. Schools and settings will require additional support to develop these systems.

> Welsh Government needs to be clear about the distinction between schools' and settings' monitoring of learner progress and accountability systems, so that leaders and teachers can focus their efforts on learner progress.

> Professional learning and guidance will need to help practitioners develop an understanding of what effective progress in mathematics looks like and exemplify what the proficiencies look like at different stages and in different statements of what matters.

> The reference to concepts within specific disciplines is a useful starting point. Practitioners would benefit from support to understand the continuum of progress within disciplinary concepts, for example in humanities, concepts such as imperialism, colonialism, space outlined by the Geographical Association and Historical Association.

Question 6 – We would like to know your views on the effects that the Curriculum for Wales Framework Progression Code would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

i)   opportunities for people to use Welsh
ii)   treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

We welcome the principle that the linguistic context of each school is taken into consideration when looking at the descriptions of learning for languages, literacy and communication, such as for Welsh/English, for Welsh in English-medium settings/schools/streams and for international languages.

In general, where the focus in the principles of progression is on 'different languages/plurilingualism' it would be beneficial to include Welsh specifically.

Question 7 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed Curriculum for Wales Framework Progression Code could be formulated or changed so as to have:

i)   positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
ii)   no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

The statements need to state the importance of the ability to use Welsh, English and international languages in order to give equal status to each language. This would have a positive effect and increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.

In order to ensure opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, there needs to be a clearer link between the Welsh Government 2050, A million Welsh speakers within the rationale for this Progression Code.

It is crucial that resources to support the curriculum across the different Areas of learning and experience are available bilingually, and that the Welsh versions become available at the same time as any English medium resources. Any pilot events, or events/resources to celebrate and promote the curriculum and the principles of progression should be developed with a view to ensuring linguistic equality.

Question 8 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

In the Science and Technology Area it states that 'Progression in learning is a process of increasing sophistication, rather than covering a growing body of content'. While we understand this principle, guidance needs to be clear that this is not advocating a move away from the importance of increasing scientific knowledge. Guidance needs to be clear that depth and breadth of knowledge, alongside associated skills, enables links to be made, reinforced and built upon.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: