

Bame history to become mandatory part of Welsh curriculum, government says

It comes as new report calls for every pupil to “explore diverse experiences and contributions” of Bame people in Wales

It will become mandatory to teach pupils in Wales about black, Asian and minority ethnic stories (Bame), the country’s government has said.

5 It comes after Plaid Cymru¹ last week called on Welsh history – including the history of Bame and LGBT people – to be included in a bill² over the new curriculum, due to come into force next year...

“We are immensely proud that for the first time Black, Asian and minority ethnic stories will be mandatory parts of the curriculum³ and will be taught to all pupils,” they said...

10 On Friday, Kirsty Williams, the education minister, said she has accepted all recommendations in a new Bame education report, which includes calls for every pupil to “explore the diverse experiences and contributions” of Bame people in Wales.

The Labour-led government said £500,000 would be put towards supporting the development of resources on Bame communities and their histories and improving training and development for teachers on these subjects.

15 The report recommended the new curriculum is evaluated for its teaching of themes relating to Bame communities and experiences across its entirety.

20 “Every child and young person in Wales has the right to have their knowledge base and experiences expanded though engagement with ethnic minority perspectives, themes and contributions and in all disciplines across the new curriculum,” Professor Charlotte Williams OBE⁴, says in foreword to the report.

“The curriculum can only be enriched by revealing the diversity of perspectives and contributions made by the ethnic minority communities to the development of Wales across its history and in the present.”

25 The Welsh Liberal Democrat education minister said: “If we are to achieve one of the core purposes of our new curriculum, to develop young people who are ‘ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world’, we must ensure children’s experiences are expanded though engagement with ethnic minority perspectives, themes and contributions.”

Last month, the UK government schools minister rejected mandatory lessons about empire and the slave trade by claiming they would risk lowering “standards”.

30 Nick Gibb said the government did not want to “pile on” more topics that limited teachers’ freedom in choosing the curriculum.

It came after more than 260,000 people signed a petition calling for Britain’s colonial past to become a part of the UK’s compulsory curriculum.

35 In the foreword, Prof Williams said the Welsh report “maps a way” for how “the diverse experiences and contributions of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples in Wales is made integral” to the country’s new curriculum.

It also suggests school governing bodies consider having a “diversity champion” and a whole-school approach is taken to “anti-racist professional learning”.

40 The report also looks at enhancing resources available to schools in teaching on Bame histories and experiences.

“The available resources are limited and disproportionately focused on slavery, colonialism and empire,” it says.

45 “These matters are critically important and should be covered within the curriculum but the lack of attention to the inclusion of other significant themes and contributions relating to the experiences of ethnic minority communities suggests an imbalance in the curriculum.”

The new curriculum offers “significant opportunities” for schools to explore different aspects of Bame experiences and contributions, the report says.

It continues: ...learning about diversity, identity and belonging, justice and equality, rights and social action will be mandatory in schools’ curricula...

50 Sian Gwenllian, Plaid Cymru’s education spokesperson, said the report’s recommendations “are to be warmly welcomed”.

“If implemented properly they can play a significant part in getting rid of racism,” she added.

www.independent.co, March 19th, 2021

1. a Welsh political party
2. government law
3. school programme
4. Order of the British Empire – award given by the Queen