

Wales' curriculum to put "citizens first" – Kirsty Williams

The curriculum – which is being co-constructed with teachers, universities, international experts and civic society – will be available for testing and feedback, with all schools having access to the final curriculum from 2020.

This will ensure schools are fully ready and prepared for statutory roll-out in September 2022.

Delivering the 2018 Raymond Williams Memorial Lecture at the Norwegian Church in Cardiff, Kirsty Williams said:

"I believe that the Welsh education system must be a 'citizens first' system. That's why, on taking office, I re-affirmed the Government's commitment to a new curriculum that as well as raising standards of literacy and numeracy will also develop ethical and informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.

"The curriculum will represent what we want – what we expect – the citizens of the future to become, to know, and to have gained from their teachers.

"But the process of working together to shape that curriculum also represents what we want from our education system.

"A profession that collaborates; that is open to new ideas; that is always learning and that seeks to raise standards for all pupils.

"We are setting an international example on how progressive education reforms can be undertaken through collaboration, creativity and confidence.

"A curriculum and education system that, as Raymond Williams wanted, provides everyone with the opportunity to "grasp the real nature of our society"."

During the lecture, the Education Secretary made the case that the Welsh Government's 'national mission of education reform' was "stepping forward in the spirit of a Raymond Williams's long revolution".

Covering issues such as identity politics, social mobility and human rights, the Education Secretary quoted not only from Raymond Williams, but a range of thinkers including Ted Kennedy, Mark Lilla and Orson Welles.

She said:

"I want an education system that seeks to build a common culture and ideas of shared citizenship, from our new curriculum through to adult education.

"A common endeavour that encourages questioning and challenge. To challenge the established ways of thinking and of organising.

"But also to challenge definitions and differences where appropriate. To be curious about others and the wider world beyond your own identity – however you choose to define.

"A common set of purposes, but based on combining the knowledge and skills that enable individual citizens to become part of that process of social change.

"Education itself should be a common effort and for the realisation of a common good."