

Successful futures for all? Additional learning needs in Wales in the light of curriculum reform

Carmel Conn and Matt Hutt

School of Education, Early Years and Social Work, University of South Wales, Newport, UK

Abstract

Wales is undergoing a major programme of educational reform, including the development of a new curriculum and transformation of the system for supporting learners with additional learning needs (ALN). This paper reports on a research project investigating how these two elements are being brought together, drawing on interviews with policy leads and school-based practitioners. Findings indicate that the new curriculum is perceived as broader, more focused on the quality of teaching and more relevant to all learners. Tensions were apparent, however, in the core belief systems of interviewees. For those with a curriculum-focused role, what is in the best interests of specific learners was a core belief that subsumed the idea of inclusivity and necessitated the continuation of arrangements for ALN in their current form. It is argued that clearer articulation of teachers as agents of change is required if educational transformation is to be achieved.

Keywords: additional learning needs, curriculum, inclusive pedagogy, transformation.

Introduction: educational reform in Wales

Wales is in the process of developing a new curriculum that is designed to transform pedagogical practices in schools and colleges. The new curriculum, which has the aim of raising standards and reducing the impact of disadvantage on educational attainment, puts an emphasis on broadening the experience of learning for children and young people, and on providing greater flexibility in educational decision-making to schools and teachers (Welsh Government 2019b). Assessment for learning practices, professional judgement, reflective practice and a holistic approach to development are foundational principles of curriculum renewal, seen as key to delivering good outcomes

for the greatest number of learners (Donaldson 2015). The concept of progression replaces more generalised stages of attainment and underpins the idea of a learning continuum that is more suited to those who experience the most challenge in terms of their learning (Camau Project 2018).

Taking place alongside curriculum reform is a transformation programme for additional learning needs (ALN) as set out in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. Important rationales for ALN reform are the need to address systems that are inequitable and the desire to introduce new systems to ensure learners' additional learning needs are identified early and addressed in a timely way (Welsh Government 2018). The new Act introduces a unified legislative framework for children and young people across the broader age range of 0-25 years, along with a single category of 'additional learning needs' (ALN) to replace the statutory definition of special educational needs (SEN). ALN reform is seen as a way of establishing fairer, integrated and more efficient systems for assessing, planning and monitoring provision for learners with additional learning needs and for resolving conflict and appeals (Welsh Government 2018). Statements of SEN are replaced with Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for learners who experience significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age as well as those who have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, now including post-16 students in further education colleges.

Inclusive education and the promise of reform

Principles of practice underpinning the ALN transformation programme are aligned with ideas about practice as set out in the reform of the curriculum. Both reforms seek to transform the expectations, learning experiences and outcomes for children and young people in schools and colleges (Welsh Government 2017a, 2019a). Reform documents emphasise a fully inclusive education system which balances equity of access to the curriculum for all learners with addressing the needs of individual learners (Welsh Government 2018, 2019b). These principles link strongly to current theorising of inclusion which posits inclusive education as the ability of teachers to adapt ordinary teaching methods in a way that supports learning but recognises difference (Florian and Beaton 2018). Inclusive education has been notoriously hard to define, but currently the

trend is to move away from deficit and deterministic ideas about the ability of some learners, in favour of the development of rich contexts for learning that support the participation of everyone (Black-Hawkins 2017). Teachers are viewed as ‘agents of change’ who are able to adopt an inclusive pedagogical approach that involves working relationally with pupils, other professionals and families to address structural and cultural barriers to learning (Pantić & Florian 2015). Teachers’ beliefs are important, since it is how they understand learners, what they believe in relation to inclusivity and how they reflect on their role and actions that centrally determines learner access to the curriculum (Scottish Teacher Education Committee 2014). Meeting the needs of all learners is thus a challenge for professional development which requires teacher development in terms of knowing, believing and doing, with change in any one of these areas resulting in change in the other two (Florian 2008).

Curriculum renewal in Wales places quality teaching, reflective practice and professional development as the drivers of change (Donaldson 2015; Welsh Government 2017b). It is perhaps the Donaldson report, *Successful Futures*, which sets out this vision for change most clearly, holding out the promise of reform as the realisation of a fully inclusive education system according to current theorising. In this document, little mention is made of learners with additional learning needs as a group. Inclusion is mentioned frequently, however, and, as a term, is associated with processes of teaching that support quality in assessment and ensure fairness and equity of access to the curriculum. This makes teachers’ practices and beliefs central to the process of change, but findings in relation to the implementation of Scotland’s *Curriculum for Excellence*, which has strong parallels with the new Welsh curriculum, indicate that a major issue for this reform programme was the existence of a gap between teachers’ practices and beliefs about education, and the implicit aims of the curriculum (Priestley, Minty & Eager 2013). In developing the research reported here, therefore, there was an interest in exploring what beliefs about practice are held by policy and practitioner communities within Wales in the context of curriculum reform, particularly in relation to learners with additional learning needs. The overall aim of the project was to investigate how additional learning needs are being considered in the development of the new curriculum for Wales, with the specific objective of investigating discourses, values and beliefs being drawn on by key professionals in thinking about curriculum reform and the additional learning needs of learners in schools and colleges. Specific

research questions addressed what participants saw as the key features of the new curriculum as it was developed, the opportunities and challenges it presented for learners with ALN and how far there was perceived alignment between curriculum reform and the ALN transformation programme.

Method

The research was focused upon the detailed perceptions of a small number of carefully selected professionals from the Welsh education system. In order to capture a variety of perspectives, the study identified key professional positions where practitioners were likely to have detailed views on both curriculum reform, and the current and future procedures, practices and philosophy associated with ALN. At the design stage, it was decided to draw on four participants from school contexts, and four from the broader educational superstructure of the regional consortia, Welsh Government and HEIs. The four school-based participants were divided equally between primary and secondary schools and included a SENCO and a Professional Learning Lead from both phases. The school-based participants were located in Pioneer Schools because, in the current Welsh system, these schools have significant responsibility to develop and trial aspects of curriculum and professional reform. The non-school based participants included ALN policy leads at government level and regional ALN co-ordinators.

Potential participants covering these professional roles were identified and approached using the professional contacts of the research team. Consent to engage in the research was obtained following ethical approval for the study, and two overlapping, semi-structured interview schedules were developed, one for the school-based participants, and one for the non-school-based set of policy leads. This interview-based approach to data collection was selected to allow the participants to explore their perspectives and constructions of ALN reform and curriculum renewal in rich detail. The schedules included questions on their views on curriculum development, on ALN and pedagogy, and on the alignment of ALN reform and curriculum renewal. In addition, there were some broader questions to explore their more general hopes and fears for future educational development in Wales, and to get them to identify the

groups of learners who they thought might benefit or be disadvantaged by the proposed changes.

The interview transcripts were subjected to a content analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018) to allow the researchers to explore the varying ways interviewees constructed the relationships between the ALN transformation programme and curriculum reform (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole 2016). Analytical codes were derived from the data themselves, and from the categories introduced by the interview schedule, and coding structures were developed independently by different members of the research team and subsequently cross-combined. Codes were then synthesised into a final agreed format. In addition, the transcripts were considered through a lens of narrative inquiry (Clandinin 2016) to help identify the individual narratives that participants used to interweave their perceptions of ALN and the new curriculum with their more general experiences as educational professionals. From analysis of the data recurrent themes emerged in relation to key features of the new curriculum and are set out below.

The new curriculum is seen as benefitting all learners including those with additional learning needs

A strong finding of the research is that the new curriculum was perceived by both school-based practitioners and policy leads as more open in its approach to learning, less prescriptive about what is taught and less driven by standards than the curriculum in its current form. This was seen as of benefit generally to children and young people, but particularly to learners with ALN, who were described as benefitting from the focus on pedagogy and the quality of teaching. As one ALN Transformation Lead described it:

If the focus is on developing a broader approach to teaching and learning, using pedagogy really intelligently, then that can only support young people with additional learning needs... Pedagogy is at the heart of the new curriculum and pedagogy, if it's done properly, should take account of differences in learning.

The curriculum was described as broader in terms of expectations about learning, allowing for multiple pathways to learning and different kinds of ‘learning journey’. Practitioners were described as having more freedom to innovate in terms of what to teach and to tailor this more to the particular learning requirements of their class or subject groups. This greater flexibility was seen as particularly important in the context of Welsh education which was described by some participants as involving greater diversity within the classroom. The person-centred focus of reform documents, which many felt emphasised needs and aspirations over qualifications, was described as allowing children and young people to have more control over their learning and, in this way, to increase their engagement. This was seen by some as enhancing the relevance of the curriculum for learners, particularly those not motivated by a content-driven curriculum. The primary school Professional Learning Lead felt that the new curriculum would put greater emphasis on experiential learning linked to children and young people’s real-life interests and concerns, and that this element would especially benefit learners who are disengaged. She commented:

If you’re given a task that you’re interested in, you’ll do a much better job than something you’re not interested in, and it’s the same with the children. So, I think yeah, igniting their interest and giving them some sort of idea, ‘ah, I see why, ah, I see where this links’.

An important innovation of the new curriculum was described as the use of ‘stage not age’ in thinking about learner progression. This was felt to be particularly useful for learners with ALN, who may be progressing at a slower rate to other learners. The primary SENCO noted that this feature of the curriculum ensured that teachers were focused on children’s actual abilities and allowed children to progress in a way that made sense to them:

Working at stage not age means the children are working at their level. It allows them to access the curriculum where they are and they’re aware then of what they need to do for their next steps.

Related to this, the association in the new curriculum of effective pedagogy with formative assessment was felt to put more emphasis on quality in assessment and

teacher reflection on practice, than on the operation of standards and prescribed curriculum content. More flexibility to make decisions about teaching and learning and greater trust in teachers' professional judgement, which were also described as key features of reform, were seen to benefit learners, including those with ALN. An ALN Transformation Lead described it in the following way:

The new curriculum makes it absolutely clear that it is the quality of assessment that leads to improvement in teaching and learning. From that point of view, it caters very well for children with additional learning needs because it doesn't look at standards as such. It will look at wherever the child is at now, according to good quality assessment, and whatever you are going to do in order to help that child to become an independent and creative learner in his or her own right.

The new curriculum centrally involves continuity with existing ideas about good practice

A recurrent theme in interviewees' responses was that curriculum reform does not introduce new ideas about practice and concerns more the reinforcement of ideas that already exist. This was something that several participants noted, commenting that part of the purpose of curriculum reform was to underline practices that were recognised but not yet fully embedded in the Welsh education system. The secondary Professional Learning Pioneer remarked on this point saying:

I don't think the introduction of Successful Futures changed anything in that respect as far as I'm concerned. It might focus people's ideas on the idea of pedagogy. That wasn't a word that anyone used five, ten years ago probably was it... in that respect a good teacher has always been a good teacher I think but I suppose it's a sense of knowing how and why you've been a good teacher more than actually just being a good teacher, and I think that's probably an important kind of a distinction.

Both school-based practitioners and policy leads noted that teachers already had responsibility for all learners, including those with ALN. Effective practices for inclusion were seen to exist already and were described as putting the learner at the

centre of the planning process, thinking about what is important to them and tailoring learning support to their individual needs. Relationships were described by one policy lead as fundamental to learning, who said that this was not something that would change. Several participants – from both groups of policy leads and school-based practitioners – commented that good teachers were already carrying out effective practices in this way. Good teachers were described as engaging in quality formative assessment practices and responding effectively to individual learning styles. Some teachers were described as already confident about their ability to teach all pupils, whatever their learning needs. One ALN Transformation Lead saw curriculum reform and the ALN transformation programme as having the same aim of ensuring that these practices are carried out by a greater number of teachers:

The whole of the reform is about enmeshing the ALN system into the curriculum, a curriculum for all learners. Even though it's already written in other guidance, for the first time, we will have a mandatory Act that says we are all teachers of ALN. Therefore, the expectation is of skilling all of our workforce to be able to meet the needs of learners in their classrooms, without the need for creating some kind of second-class citizenship.

The Welsh Government policy lead confirmed that the policy position on inclusion remains the same, that is, a commitment to all learners following the same curriculum. ALN reform was described by this interviewee as designed to bring about a change in the mind-set of teachers in relation to learners with ALN, whilst essentially promoting existing ideas about best practice. According to this interviewee, professional learning was a core element of both reform programmes since the involvement of teachers in the development of the new curriculum was a mechanism by which they would feel more invested in the inclusive practices that are being promoted. She commented:

In terms of Welsh Government intervention, we're not going down that route of the big stick approach, you know, you must do this, you must do that, you must do the other. That's really not what the intention of the reforms are about. Both the curriculum reforms and the ALN reforms have a much more...collaborative and moving forward together ethos about them.

Challenges to the success of the new curriculum

Interviewees were asked about their hopes and fears in relation to the new curriculum and described a range of issues that were felt to be critical to its success. These were seen as issues which, if not adequately addressed, could undermine the vision for curriculum renewal. The primary Professional Learning Lead described the new curriculum as essentially aimed at ‘the average Joe’ and found it hard to conceive of progression steps that would be suitable for all learners, especially those with complex needs. The curriculum innovation taking place in this Pioneer’s school, which was focused on developing children’s independence as learners, made it hard for her to imagine how the needs of all learners could be met:

I don’t know how it’ll work with your severe ALN in school, maybe I think that’s my only question mark or concern. I think people are worried and saying where does the ALN child fit into this, where does the autistic three-year-old sit on this journey of learning. They are always just going to be at that beginning point. Are they ever going to become an expert in a field? Possibly not.

Other participants agreed that it was the severity of a learner’s needs, more than approaches to pedagogy, that would determine access to the new curriculum. The academic policy lead noted that the most contentious issue for Pioneers within the Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) working group she helped to facilitate was the accessibility of the curriculum for those with additional learning needs. This interviewee hoped that the involvement of teachers in curriculum development would provide them with an understanding of the evidence base in relation to good practice, but saw this as the greatest challenge for reform.

The increased accountability of schools and colleges in relation to the education of individual learners, which was perceived as a feature of ALN reform, was seen as significant in this respect. Both SENCOs pointed out that there would be more pressure on schools to be seen to be meeting individual needs as the result of changes to systems for ALN. Parents were viewed as having more power to hold schools and colleges to account, which were depicted as having sole responsibility for the education of children

and young people under future arrangements. The secondary SENCO said that the greater accountability of schools was the aspect of change which worried him most:

The new ALN reform will hold us [schools] far more accountable than at the moment. The threat of having solicitors circling around the school like sharks because we haven't done our job properly in terms of putting in the right provision for students worries me significantly.

The complexity of needs and perceived increased accountability of schools and colleges were the threats to reform that were mentioned most often by participants, particularly school-based practitioners. However, a further challenge was described as resistance to change from some groups of teachers, for example, professionals in non-Pioneer schools and subject specialists. Professional development, which was viewed by many as a key feature of change, was seen as vulnerable to teachers not having sufficient time to carry out enquiry and critically reflect on their practice and constituted a further challenge to the success of the new curriculum.

Divergent narratives exist about the outcome of reform with only one of these leading to a vision of fully inclusive education

Related to interviewees' hopes and fears about the new curriculum, the data revealed two divergent narratives of possible outcomes of processes of change. One narrative was of the new curriculum and ALN reform supporting the creation of universal provision for learners based on an inclusive pedagogical approach as it is currently theorised. This narrative was expressed most clearly by interviewees whose roles focused on ALN. They described a hope that reform would lead to greater understanding that addressing additional learning needs did not involve applying something different within education. The following comment, provided by an ALN Transformation Lead, sums up this idea:

It is about de-mystifying additional learning needs and part of the process of de-mystifying it is saying, there's nothing special about this. We've come away from the word special actually. This is just: everybody has different needs in education,

everybody has a different way in which their brain works, all of your learners do, not just those with ALN. It's kind of starting to understand that approach. The person-centred practice approach, which is very much at the centre of the Act, gives the opportunity for that.

This view was represented in each of the two groups of policy leads and school-based practitioners. For example, the secondary SENCO expressed the same idea in the following way:

Basically, teaching of ALN is just good teaching. If you look at a teacher who's either excellent or good, the way they care for one child is the same way they care for generally most of the kids. You should be trying to give them work, you should be varying your pace, you should be varying your questioning. You should be looking at different types of resources that engage kids. You should be giving kids ownership of the lesson objectives, so that they feel they're part of the lesson rather than just being talked to. I think just good teaching is good ALN teaching, there's no difference really.

For participants invested in this narrative, inclusive pedagogy was presented as more than a matter of differentiating learning. This was seen as important, but meeting the needs of learners was represented by these interviewees as a challenge for professional development that rested on quality within formative assessment practices. Within this narrative, effective practice was constructed as a sophisticated and interactive process of assessing, questioning and making sound judgements about learners. Assessment for learning was described as the mechanism by which teachers could come to know the learners with whom they worked, including knowing the basis of any difficulty and the nature of possible support. Part of this narrative of universal provision concerned the idea that no specialised practices exist for learners. As an ALN Transformation Lead noted:

You go back to basic principles of what does good quality assessment look like, and once you've assessed where the child is at, it's about using professional knowledge and bread and butter teaching.

A second narrative that emerged from the data focused on the continuation of arrangements for additional provision in the current form. One version of this narrative, which was again represented in both groups of interviewees, emphasised differentiation as the means by which additional learning needs could be addressed. This was described as a process of providing something ‘additional to’ learning contexts that remained otherwise unchanged, for example, teachers making small adjustments that provided learners with better access to learning tasks. Another version of this narrative focused on the presence of learners who had complex needs and the continuing possibility that some teachers would be unable or unwilling to address these. Within this narrative, the perceived increased accountability of schools meant finding the right balance between the ‘moral responsibility’ of teachers for all learners and meeting the needs of individual learners. Extra support systems that already operate in schools and colleges, such as ability-based groupings and withdrawal sessions, were seen as needing to continue. As the secondary Professional Learning Pioneer commented:

I honestly don't see any change because I think how we teach students and what we do, that won't fundamentally change. How the curriculum is organised maybe will, but what we do won't. We will still be doing small catch-up sessions, we'll still be doing support interventions, those kinds of things. That will remain the same as far as I can see.

For some participants, these practices remained important not only for those with complex needs, but also for learners more generally who progressed at a slower pace and who might otherwise ‘get lost’ in a class of thirty children. This view was expressed by the primary SENCO who believed that smaller groups could benefit such learners greatly. This practitioner said that she did not want to withdraw children from class, but saw this practice as essential for ensuring the progress of some learners:

Some children, especially ALN children, need scaffolding before they're able to progress. I think with some children they can be shown something once and they're able to use that skill elsewhere, but I think with our ALN children, we just need to make sure they are still scaffolded by a teacher... I think small groups help children and give them the time also to talk to the teacher. I think feedback is key as well to supporting the children's learning.

For some school-based interviewees, curriculum reform and the greater flexibility in pedagogical decision-making it promised, meant greater freedom to organise teaching differently for learners with ALN. Both schools, for example, had employed more teaching staff and created smaller groups for teaching purposes. Some of these groups were organised to deliver the same curriculum to all learners, but some to deliver intensive skills-based sessions for learners with ALN. This was viewed as effective practice that supported better outcomes for learners with ALN. A central theme of this narrative was that no child or young person should ‘fall through the net’ and experience failure in terms of their education.

Discussion

This qualitative study explored beliefs about practice held by policy and practitioner communities within Wales during a period of educational reform. Participants included policy leads and school-based practitioners in two Pioneer schools. Findings indicate that these key professionals generally welcomed the ideas promoted by curriculum reform and saw these as underpinning an education system that is more able to meet the needs of learners with additional learning needs. Findings also indicate, however, that different ideas existed about the basic principles of reform and what it means for the future of the education system in Wales. In this respect, findings from this research are similar to those from research into the development of the Scottish curriculum. For example, Wallace & Priestley (2011) and Priestley & Minty (2013) also found that, though Scottish teachers welcomed the overarching aims and principles of the new curriculum, they held different ideas about what this meant in practice.

Priestley & Minty (2013) note that it is important to understand the different levels at which teachers and others invest in policy ideas. They identify ‘first order engagement’ of teachers as a general level of agreement, and ‘second order engagement’ as a more thorough level of engagement and deeper understanding by teachers of relevant ideas. This seems applicable to the research reported here. All participants endorsed the idea of inclusive education, but valued different approaches to meeting the needs of learners with additional learning needs which were based on different ideas about inclusive practice and the differences between learners. Analysis

of the data identified certain beliefs as subordinate, that is, loosely held personal constructs that are easily altered, but others as superordinate, that is, deeply held personal constructs that are core to a person's belief system (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole 2016). For example, findings suggest that the idea of inclusive education operated as a superordinate construct or core belief for almost all interviewees whose roles were focused on ALN, but as a subordinate construct for curriculum-focused and/or school-based participants. For this latter group, the idea of what is in the best interests of a *specific learner* appeared to operate as the superordinate idea that could subsume the idea of inclusivity given a certain set of circumstances. These circumstances included whether a learner was making progress in a larger group setting, whether a greater amount of input was required from a teacher, or whether a class teacher had sufficient knowledge to meet a learner's needs. This belief system seems to be one based on pragmatism that would result in essentially the same system that operates currently. However, this pragmatism does not appear to be a 'less pure' form of an ideal but an unrealisable vision of inclusive education as expressed by ALN-focused interviewees in their narrative of universal provision (Norwich 2014). This second narrative of universal provision could be described as focusing on the 'centre ground' of teaching (Florian 2019) and promoting a *different balance of practices*, namely, commitment to social justice, competency in assessment for learning and capacity for professional reflection. According to this narrative, such a shift would irrevocably alter teacher knowledge and identity, their perspective on learners and understanding of their own pedagogical role.

The importance of considering teachers' belief systems to processes of change has been noted in relation to other types of educational reform. In Sweden, research carried out by Lidar et al. (2017) into the introduction of national tests, found that teachers had different responses to reform, ranging from assimilation to resistance, but that certain beliefs constituted superordinate constructs and were especially powerful within a professional's belief system. Lidar et al. found that teachers held a superordinate belief in acting in the best interests of their students, but what this required in practice held different meanings for participants. Similarly, in investigating transformation of professional practice in education, Coburn (2004) found that individuals tend to see first what is possible to maintain in their practice and how proposed changes align with existing habits. Coburn's research shows that professionals

try to assimilate new ideas with existing practices, seeking functional ways of acting in response to a reform programme which relates to their personal convictions, institutional demands, and also what they perceive as expected in terms of reform. This again appears to be of relevance to this research, where the principles of reform that suggest universal provision were generally acknowledged by all participants, but subsumed for some under ideas about the continuing need for additional arrangements for learning support.

Pantić & Florian (2015) make the distinction between positioning teachers as agents within education, and positioning them as agents of change. This latter positioning, they argue, requires clear articulation of the nature of the desired change. For teachers to be agents of change for inclusion and social justice, clarity is needed about how broader forces contribute to social inequalities, why a commitment to social justice is important, and what steps are required to develop an inclusive pedagogical approach (Scottish Teacher Education Committee 2014). Teacher agency has been described as shaped by an orientation to past actions and engagement in here and now circumstances, but also by the creative imagining of possible future trajectories of action (Priestley et al. 2019). For interviewees in this study whose roles were focused on ALN, it seems they were clear about what constituted a future for inclusive education in Wales. Other curriculum- or school-based participants, however, appeared to be less able to envision a different system from the present one and were less clear about how teachers could develop practices for inclusion and social justice.

Conclusion

Taken together, findings from this study raise a question about what is transformative in the current educational reform in Wales for learners with additional learning needs. Question marks are raised over whether curriculum reform will lead to more effective pedagogy, higher expectations and improved outcomes for learners with ALN if practices are not significantly changed. Some change in practice was described, for example, in terms of greater access to teachers for learners with ALN. Increased acknowledgement of learners' wishes and feelings in planning for provision may also constitute real change since learners tend to look unfavourably on assignment to lower

ability or segregated groups. However, the research suggests a strong belief, particularly by school-based practitioners, in arrangements for ALN close to their present form, something that was also highlighted by research into the current system of SEN in Wales (Thomas et al. 2019).

It is perhaps telling that Welsh Government policy in relation to ALN increasingly emphasises *systems* in relation to ALN and the effectiveness of these, rather than pedagogical practices, teachers' beliefs and the inclusivity of these. Interestingly in this respect, the draft ALN Code has become a statement of duties in relation to ALN as opposed to a code of practice (Welsh Government 2019c). Worryingly too perhaps, recently released draft curriculum documents developed by Pioneer practitioners make little mention of inclusion, additional learning needs, disability, equity or social justice. This research suggests that more needs to be done to *acknowledge* and *address* practitioners deeply held beliefs in the continuation of current practices for learners with additional learning needs if real change is to be realised.

References

Black-Hawkins, K. (2017) 'Understanding inclusive pedagogy: Learning with and from teachers', in V. Plows and B. Whitburn (eds) *Inclusive Education: Making Sense of Everyday Practice*, 13-30. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Camau Project (2018) *Learning about Progression – Informing thinking about a Curriculum for Wales*. Research report (April) University of Glasgow and University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Available at: <http://athrofa.cymru/2018/06/01/learning-progression-for-wales/> [accessed 16 June 2018].

Clandinin, J. (2016) *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*. New York: Routledge.

Coburn, C. E. (2004) 'Beyond decoupling: rethinking the relationship between the institutional environment and the classroom', *Sociology of Education*, 77 (3), 211-244.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2018) *Research Methods in Education*. 8th edition. Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge.

Denicolo, P., Long, T. & Bradley-Cole, K. (2016). *Constructivist Approaches and Research Methods: A Practical Guide to Exploring Personal Meanings*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage.

Donaldson, G. (2015) *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales*. Available at: <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf> [accessed 15 Oct 2017].

Florian, L. (2019) 'On the necessary co-existence of special and inclusive education', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23 (7-8), 691-704.

Florian, L. (2008) 'Special or inclusive education: future trends', *British Journal of Special Education*, 35 (4), 202-208.

Florian, L. & Beaton, M. (2018) 'Inclusive pedagogy in action: getting it right for every child', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22 (8), 870-884.

Lidar, M., Lundqvist, E., Ryder, J. & Östman, L. (2017) 'The transformation of teaching habits in relation to the introduction of grading and national testing in science education in Sweden', *Research in Science Education*. DOI: 10.1007/s11165-017-9684-5.

Norwich, B. (2014) 'Recognising value tensions that underlie problems in inclusive education', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 44 (4), 495-510.

Pantić, N. & Florian, L. (2015) 'Developing teachers as agents of inclusion and social justice', *Education Inquiry*, 6 (3), 333-351.

Priestley, M., Crick, T. & Alkan, S. H. (2019) 'Co-construction of a national curriculum: the role of teachers as curriculum policy makers in Wales'. Paper presented at the ECER conference, 5 September 2019, Hamburg.

Priestley, M. & Minty, S. (2013) 'Curriculum for Excellence: "A brilliant idea but..."', *Scottish Educational Review*, 45 (1), 39-52.

Priestley, M., Minty, S. & Eager, M. (2013) 'School-based curriculum development in Scotland: curriculum policy and enactment', *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 22 (2), 189-211.

Scottish Teacher Education Committee (2014) *National Framework for Inclusion* (Revised). Available at:

[http://www.frameworkforinclusion.org/STEC14%20Report%20Jun\(PDF%20V\).pdf](http://www.frameworkforinclusion.org/STEC14%20Report%20Jun(PDF%20V).pdf)
[accessed 18 June 2018].

Thomas, H., Duggan, B., Glover, A. et al. (2019) *Research to Establish a Baseline of the SEN System in Wales*, GSR report number 8/2019. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available: <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/research-establish-baseline-special-educational-needs-system/?lang=en> [accessed 1 March 2019].

Wallace, C. & Priestley, M. (2011) 'Teacher beliefs and the mediation of curriculum innovation in Scotland: a socio-cultural perspective on professional development and change', *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43 (3), 357-381.

Welsh Government (2019a) Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum – Proposals for a new legislative framework. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-01/consultation-document-transformational-curriculum.pdf> [accessed 30 April 2019].

Welsh Government (2019b) Draft Curriculum for Wales 2022: A guide to Curriculum for Wales 2022. Available: <https://hwb.gov.wales/draft-curriculum-for-wales-2022/a-guide-to-curriculum-for-wales-2022/#overview> [accessed 30 April 2019].

Welsh Government (2019c) Additional Learning Needs Transformation. Available at: <https://gov.wales/overview-draft-additional-learning-needs-code-consultation> [accessed 30 April 2019].

Welsh Government (2018) Draft Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales. Available at: https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/draft-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales_0.pdf [accessed 24 Jan 2019].

Welsh Government (2017a) Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme. Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/additional-learning-needs-aln-transformation-programme.pdf> [accessed 5 May 2019].

Welsh Government (2017b) Professional standards for teaching and leadership. Available at: <https://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/170901-professional-standards-for-teaching-and-leadership-en.pdf> [accessed 1 May 2019].