

Main findings

Standards

When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy learning about local and Welsh history, identity and culture. For example, pupils enjoy learning about events such as Tryweryn, Cilmeri and the Rebecca Riots. They particularly enjoy activities where they learn about the significance of local events and individuals within the context of the history of Wales, Britain and the world. When given the opportunity to study Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history, pupils enjoy studying the contribution of diverse individuals to history such as John Ystumllyn, Martin Luther King, Harriet Tubman and Nelson Mandela. As they mature, pupils appreciate how their understanding of history and culture will help them develop as ethical, informed pupils of Wales and the world. Pupils enjoy handling artefacts and tangible evidence, reading novels based on historical events, using digital resources and preparing and presenting arguments when considering different perspectives.

In a majority of schools, pupils have little knowledge of the historical events that have shaped their local area and can name few significant Welsh people from history. They do not make connections between individuals and events in Welsh history to British and global history and do not develop an understanding of how key historical concepts apply to local, national and international contexts. As a result, they do not develop a progressive and coherent conceptual understanding of the history of Wales. This is often because opportunities to study local and national history are not strategically planned. In a few schools, pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of local and Welsh history. In a very few schools, pupils make meaningful connections between their local area and the history of Wales, the Britain and the world. Generally, pupils' recall of historical events and life in Wales is strongest when they have visited a museum or historical site that bring these events to life.

In most schools, pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of the histories of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples and communities. Many pupils can name individuals from international history but in general have limited understanding of their historical significance. Most pupils do not know about the history of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities in Wales. In a very few schools, where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history is prioritised and well planned, pupils develop an extensive understanding of history from multiple perspectives.

When GCSE specifications were revised for teaching from 2016, the requirement to choose one study in depth on 'Wales and the wider perspective' had a positive impact on how much Welsh history is studied. However, how much Welsh and Black, Asian and

Minority Ethnic history is studied by pupils at GCSE and A level is still too dependent on the subjects chosen by pupils and the topics chosen from the range offered by the examination board. The disparity in how much Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history is included within topics makes it difficult to assess and compare pupils' knowledge and understanding of Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. The GCSE examiners' report in summer 2019 suggests that pupils did not refer to the Welsh context well enough in their answers across all thematic papers.

Provision

A majority of primary schools plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about their local area and Wales. In a few schools, staff use local and Welsh history as a driver for their topic planning and make links between local, national and international histories to develop pupils' understanding of their place in the world.

In a minority of primary schools, local and Welsh history is not an integral part of the school's curriculum and is viewed as a 'bolt-on' element. In a few schools, staff do not consider local and Welsh history at all when planning their lessons. This is often due to a lack of knowledge about the local area and Wales or an over-reliance on commercially produced resources.

In many secondary schools, lessons include only cursory references to local and Welsh history. Teachers do not plan opportunities for pupils to develop a coherent knowledge and understanding of the local area and Wales across historical periods. Pupils have few opportunities to make links to events in British and international history and to develop their history skills in the context of Welsh history. In a few particularly effective examples, history departments think carefully about the content of their curriculum and ensure a balance between knowledge and developing pupils' understanding of concepts and skills. Opportunities to study local and Welsh history at key stage 4 and within AS and A level history are not fully exploited as teachers focus on the specific requirements of examinations.

A minority of schools include Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic histories in their curriculum. Topics mainly focus on international history and cultural diversity in countries other than Wales. Very few schools teach pupils about the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities to the history of Wales. Overall, provision is strongest in schools in multicultural and diverse areas of Wales. Very few schools audit or map their provision for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history to ensure topics such as Antiracism, Unconscious bias, prejudice and diversity have sufficient focus within their curriculum.

A lack of transition work for history in general means that teachers in secondary schools have very little knowledge of what pupils have learnt about local, Welsh or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history at key stage 2. In a very few cases, cluster primary schools work together with their secondary school to agree what is taught at key stage 2 and 3. In a minority of secondary schools, factors including the repetition of topics in key stages and a heavy focus on preparing pupils for GCSE assessments limit how much local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history pupils study.

The majority of teachers have appropriate general subject knowledge for local and Welsh history and for international Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. Where teachers have less confidence in their subject specialism or the topic being taught, they often do not provide an appropriate level of challenge for pupils. They provide pupils with tasks that keep them busy rather than developing their history skills, do not probe pupils' understanding well enough and do not make links between local, Welsh and international history. Most teachers do not have the knowledge to effectively teach pupils about the contribution of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals and communities to the history of Wales.

Many schools plan valuable enrichment experiences for pupils, including visits to local places of interest. Many primary schools invite local residents and groups to share their experiences and the history of the area. A few secondary schools plan opportunities for local history groups or societies to engage with pupils. Where this is done well, activities stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm for local and Welsh history. Most schools make suitable provision to promote Welsh culture through curriculum activities and school events including a school Eisteddfod. Most Welsh medium schools provide extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh language and culture, for example providing pupils with opportunities to take part in performances which tell local and Welsh stories and legends.

The ethnic diversity of primary and secondary schools across Wales varies widely. Most schools situated in multi-ethnic communities invite local groups and individuals to talk about different cultures, beliefs, traditions and histories. A few schools in less diverse areas use digital technology to make links with multi-cultural groups and individuals and schools located in multi-ethnic communities.

Leadership

Most senior and middle leaders in the schools contacted identify that the Curriculum for Wales provides a significant opportunity to enhance and improve the teaching of local and Welsh history. Although many leaders recognise the importance of diversity and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture, this is not always reflected in their

strategic planning for curriculum or in their professional learning offer for staff. Only a minority of schools are beginning to incorporate these aspects into their provision purposefully.

Although many senior leaders note that staff are knowledgeable about the history and culture of the local area and Wales, there is little evidence of how schools evaluate teachers' knowledge and understanding of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture. A very few schools are beginning to consider the standards and progress of pupils in local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history to identify and plan areas for improvement. In most schools, subject leaders' knowledge, understanding and passion for local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history directly influence the topics included within the history curriculum.

Of the teachers contacted who undertook their initial teacher education in Wales, only a few report that they received training on Welsh history when completing initial teacher education (ITE) courses. Very few report that they received training on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture. Current ITE partnerships include Welsh history within university-based provision. ITE partnerships are beginning to develop their provision for the teaching of antiracism and diversity within core and subject elements.

In most schools, teachers have very limited access to professional learning for local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and culture. Local authorities and regional consortia offer little specialist professional learning on these specific areas. As a result, nearly all schools rely on their own internal training for the planning and teaching of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. In a few schools contacted, staff have recently engaged with external organisations and charities that promote racial equality to provide professional learning on antiracism and diversity in Wales and the United Kingdom.

Most schools surveyed refer to a lack of suitable resources for the teaching of local, Welsh and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history. Many teachers report difficulty in finding suitable historical source material when planning authentic and meaningful learning experiences, particularly for key stage 2 and key stage 3 pupils.

Glossary

antiracism

The policy of challenging racism and promoting racial equality

Unconscious bias

A preference or prejudice of which a person holding it is not aware. The bias may affect behaviour and decisions.