

Frequently asked questions

Curriculum for Wales: foundation learning in schools and funded non-maintained nursery settings

What is foundation learning?

Following the implementation of Curriculum for Wales in September 2022, the use of the term 'Foundation Phase' (and 'key stages') was removed from the curriculum to reflect a continuum of learning without stages or phases.

Foundation learning forms part of the 3 to 16 Curriculum for Wales and is designed to reflect the specific learning and development needs of children up to the age of 8 or learners who have additional developmental needs.

Foundation learning focuses on the pedagogical teaching and learning approaches which scaffold the learning and development for all children in the early years, or learners who might have similar developmental needs. This reflects the importance we, as the Welsh Government, and our partners place on this unique period of teaching and learning, and is designed to support practitioners in consistent discussions to meet the needs of these learners.

Does the term 'foundation learning' replace 'Foundation Phase'?

The term 'foundation learning' is not a direct replacement for 'Foundation Phase' and the terminology used will depend on the context.

Here are some examples of how terminology might be used in Curriculum for Wales.

- 'Foundation Phase is the statutory curriculum for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales' might become 'Curriculum for Wales is a 3 to 16 curriculum for all learners'.
- 'Professional learning to support understanding of Foundation Phase pedagogy can be accessed through Hwb' might become 'Professional learning to support understanding of foundation learning pedagogy can be accessed through Hwb'.
- 'The Foundation Phase can be delivered in schools or funded non-maintained nursery settings' might become 'Nursery education can be delivered in schools or funded non-maintained nursery settings'.

'Foundation Phase nursery' terminology may also need to be changed depending on the context.

- 'Children are eligible to receive Foundation Phase nursery provision following their third birthday' might become 'Children are eligible to receive nursery education following their third birthday'.
- Use 'nursery' when referring to the 'class' or 'building' the child resides in.
- Use '3 and 4 year olds' when referring to the age of a child while in 'nursery'.

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Curriculum and assessment arrangements for foundation learning

What guidance is available to support practitioners in understanding foundation learning pedagogy in Curriculum for Wales?

School curriculum

The [Curriculum for Wales](#) framework requires schools to design their own curriculum and assessment arrangements considering the views of parents, carers and the local community.

To support foundation learning approaches, we published [Enabling learning](#) guidance to support schools in developing their curriculum for learners in the period of learning leading to Progression step 1.

School assessment arrangements

The approach to assessment has also changed to ensure progression along a continuum of learning from ages 3 to 16.

Summative end of phase or end of stage assessments have been removed with a strengthened focus on ongoing assessment for learning. The Curriculum for Wales framework recognises that schools are best placed to design the most appropriate assessment arrangements for their learners and their contexts.

Assessment should help practitioners determine what learners know, understand and can do, in addition to supporting teaching and learning. It should not be used to measure school performance for accountability.

[Supporting learner progression: assessment guidance](#) outlines the key principles and purpose of assessment recognising the fundamental role in enabling each individual learner to make progress at an appropriate pace and in ensuring they are supported and challenged accordingly.

Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings

We have published [A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#). This was designed by and for the sector, and was co-constructed with setting practitioners along with experts in child development and early education.

Providers of funded non-maintained nursery education should adopt the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings to support planning for learning and development of individual children who receive their nursery education in their settings.

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The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings has been developed to support learners at the start of the 3 to 16 learning continuum, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). It supports the learning and development of these learners to ensure they have the best possible start on their learning journey.

Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings

Providers of funded non-maintained nursery education must also make and implement initial and ongoing assessment arrangements to support children's progression within their setting. Taking the principles of [Supporting learner progression: assessment guidance](#), we have worked with partners to co-construct draft assessment arrangements for settings to complement their curriculum which outlines the most appropriate ways to assess and support progression.

A consultation on the [draft assessment arrangements](#) was published on 30 September 2022 and will close on 23 December 2022. Final assessment arrangements will be published by September 2023.

Between September 2022 and the publication of final assessment arrangements in 2023, settings are expected to use suitable assessment arrangements for their learners using the draft arrangements to help them in developing a shared understanding of progression and implementing initial assessment arrangements.

Can schools use the curriculum and draft assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings?

The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings and draft assessment arrangements have been designed for use in settings only. However, we recognise that schools may find the principles helpful in developing their own curriculum and assessment arrangements in supporting younger learners during this period of learning.

Do the twelve pedagogical principles in Curriculum for Wales differ from the pedagogy within the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings?

The [twelve pedagogical principles](#) of Curriculum for Wales are embedded throughout the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings. The curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings builds on these principles by highlighting specific aspects of pedagogical practice, which are of particular importance for learners at the beginning of the 3 to 16 continuum.

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Can you explain the changes to Foundation Phase terminology and how this aligns with Curriculum for Wales?

The development of [Enabling learning](#) guidance and [A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) has provided an opportunity to consider how to describe practice and provision. For example, Foundation Phase pedagogy referred to ‘continuous provision’, ‘enhanced provision’ and ‘focus tasks’. While this terminology does not appear in Curriculum for Wales documentation, high-quality Foundation Phase pedagogy and practice should continue.

We have strengthened the language used in the curriculum documents to support pedagogy by focusing on the key principles that are essential for holistic and meaningful learning. Fundamental to this are ‘enablers’ – enabling adults, engaging experiences and effective environments – which are interrelated, and it is their connectivity which is key to teaching and learning across Curriculum for Wales.

Although there is no direct translation of continuous provision, enhanced provision and focus tasks, these are key to successful foundation learning pedagogy within the enablers. The importance of the interplay between adults, environments and experiences are consequently not limited to children aged 3 to 7 and therefore meets the ambition of a 3 to 16 continuum of learning.

Will there be templates provided to assist with delivery and implementation?

Curriculum for Wales is not an ‘off-the-shelf’ programme for delivery. [A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) and [Enabling learning](#) guidance has been designed to support practitioners to deliver effective early education. Engaging experiences within effective environments that respond to children’s interests to engage them further in their learning and development underpins this pedagogy. Enabling adults should get to know children and plan in a way that suits them best, trialling and reviewing different approaches within the setting.

We recognise that practitioners may need further professional learning support to implement planning and assessment arrangements. Advisory staff from local authorities and regional consortia, as well as national umbrella organisations, will be supporting settings to implement curriculum and interim assessment arrangements over the coming months.

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What resources are available to support practitioners in foundation learning pedagogical approaches?

Schools and funded non-maintained nursery settings

[Professional learning: foundation learning support for practitioners in schools and settings](#) modules are available on Hwb. These will support practitioners in reflecting on practice and provision when delivering the curriculum. They are based on 6 themes:

- authentic and purposeful learning
- child development
- observation
- outdoor learning
- play and play-based learning
- transitions

Funded non-maintained nursery settings

[Professional learning: A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) modules are also available to support funded non-maintained nursery settings in implementing their curriculum. These modules are titled as follows:

- Understanding Curriculum for Wales and the development of a curriculum for funded for non-maintained nursery settings
- Understanding the five developmental pathways and pedagogy
- Schematic development
- Leadership in non-maintained nursery settings

Delivering professional learning modules in the maintained and non-maintained sectors

Is it compulsory to use the modules?

The modules have been designed to support greater understanding of the core concepts that underpin effective foundation learning pedagogical practice in Curriculum for Wales, including the curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings.

It is not compulsory for the modules to be used, though we would expect staff and practitioners to understand the core principles of the modules to help ensure effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales.

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When will staff and practitioners be expected to use the modules?

Local authorities, regional consortia and national umbrella organisations which support funded non-maintained nursery settings should plan a suitable method and timeframe of support to schools and settings to ensure that learning from the modules supports the practice of all practitioners, as part of a continuous programme of professional learning.

Learning drawn from the modules should not be seen as a one-off event. We encourage practitioners to regularly revisit their learning and to refresh their understanding while reflecting against continuing and evolving practice.

Leaders and practitioners may choose to develop their understanding by using the modules at a time and pace convenient to them.

Is there a way to use discrete sessions of the modules without having to go into each playlist?

'Quick links' have been added to the resource cards for the professional learning modules. They outline all the sessions available with links to each session, and include an estimated time for completion. This should allow flexibility to choose which sessions to focus on, depending on the time available and the knowledge and skills being developed.

- [Professional learning: foundation learning support for practitioners in schools and settings modules](#)
- [Professional learning: A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings modules](#)

Are users able to download the playlists for use offline?

Downloading playlists for use offline is not available via Hwb. Users who have a Hwb account can download the playlist. However, this option would only be available online and would still not allow the playlist to be accessed offline.

Is there accreditation on completion of the modules?

There is no formal accreditation for completing the modules. However, each module has a certificate of participation. These can be kept for your professional learning record.

Will there be financial support to roll out the modules to practitioners?

Funding is available to support curriculum implementation in schools and funded non-maintained nursery settings via the Welsh Government Local Authority Education Grant and the Education Improvement Grant.

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Is there a standard method for delivery of the modules?

There is no standard delivery method. Partners should have a clear understanding of the needs of practitioners and will wish to consider the most appropriate method of delivery to embed learning.

We will continue to develop case studies to demonstrate approaches to support practitioners learning from the modules. If you have a case study that could be used, please contact us at FoundationLearning@gov.wales

In addition to the videos and case studies within the modules, will additional material be made available to support understanding?

In some instances, partners may find it appropriate to provide supplementary examples or materials based on local knowledge and practice. As practice evolves, we will update case studies and examples to ensure they reflect the best examples of effective practice.

Will further materials be provided to support staff should they wish to deliver face-to-face training on the modules?

We will continue to develop further materials for the modules to support ongoing training. However, these materials are not intended to be prescriptive or essential to successful delivery of the key messages. We encourage partners to consider how to use these materials in accordance with your preferred style of delivery to ensure maximum participation and benefit.

Will teacher training institutions be undertaking training on the modules?

Higher education institutions have been involved in the development of the current and additional modules, and have attended the training sessions. Initial feedback confirms they are using and promoting the modules as part of their practitioner and initial teacher training courses.

Inspectorates

Has Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) been involved in the development of the curriculum guidance and resources for funded non-maintained settings and received training?

We have maintained close contact with Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) through the development process of curriculum guidance and support modules.

The inspectorates recognise that curriculum implementation is a journey for settings, schools and practitioners. They understand curriculum change will happen over time.

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Estyn is using case studies, where appropriate, to encourage effective practice and both Estyn and CIW have attended professional learning sessions to support the inspection process.

How will Estyn and CIW inspections take into consideration the modules in their inspections?

Estyn and CIW have welcomed the publication of the modules to support a greater understanding of the core concepts that underpin effective early learning. Inspections will not examine the implementation of the modules, whether settings have used the modules or practitioners' understanding of them during inspections.

However, Estyn and CIW would be interested to learn about how settings have engaged in any professional learning, including use of the modules, to develop their professional knowledge and curriculum.

Communication with parents and carers

Will information be provided to support parents' and carers' understanding of curriculum changes which affect younger learners?

We are working, and will continue to work, with partners to communicate changes on how the implementation of Curriculum for Wales will impact on younger learners.

We are developing a toolkit of resources to support local authorities and others in their communications with parents and carers to ensure consistency of messaging. This will complement our existing communications on Curriculum for Wales and will include posters, newsletters, key messages, social media posts and further signposting online through social media channels.

We have published two videos to help settings, schools and practitioners support parents and carers to understand how education is changing for younger learners.

- [Curriculum for Wales: Nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds](#)
- [Curriculum for Wales: Early education for 5 to 8 year olds](#)

We will promote further resources which are being produced – including an update to the existing parents' guide to Foundation Phase nursery – as and when they are published.

Further updates to 'Frequently asked questions'

We will continue to keep our 'Frequently asked questions' under review and will update regularly.

If there are any issues which you also think might need to be addressed please contact us at FoundationLearning@gov.wales