



Enterprise and Learning Committee

EL(3) 28-08 (p1) : 19 November 2008

Enterprise and Learning Committee Report into the Teachers Workload Agreement

Thank you for the invitation to present evidence to the Enterprise and Learning Committee on the progress that has been made on the implementation of the Teachers' Workload Agreement in Wales. Unfortunately, the WLGA will be unable to attend the Committee sessions to provide oral evidence, but I welcome the opportunity of providing some comments below in consultation with the Association of the Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW). I hope these can be taken into consideration during your discussions and help inform your inquiry. These remarks take the form of a few general comments at the outset on the overall implementation of the Agreement followed by some specific bullet points on detailed aspects of the agreement.

The Workload Agreement aimed to allow qualified teachers more time to focus on the delivery of the curriculum with more administrative tasks being covered by other school staff and supply cover to be minimised to only 38 hours in a year.

Initial implementation of the agreement appears to have gone well but in some instances progress has been more modest. The momentum generated at the outset needed to be continued and reinforced and it is not clear that that happened in all instances. Similarly, local WAMG arrangements needed to be maintained to ensure that the momentum generated at local level was sustained and that the achievements of the initial period were consolidated. Again, this appears to have happened in most instances but inevitably there is some variation across Wales.

The following comments deal with the implementation of specific aspects of the Workload Agreement.

There has been considerable concern in some quarters over the cost of implementing the Agreement with the feeling in some instances that the funding received schools and authorities does not adequately cover costs.

In some instances there is evidence that workloads have actually increased rather than decreased and that in that sense the Agreement has had a counterproductive impact. More generally, however, it is felt that the Agreement has had a positive impact on work life balance and in that sense has delivered on expectations.

It is evident that there is mixed practice over PPA but it can be seen that some head teachers have used the opportunity to raise standards in areas where the particular schools need to improve by bringing in specialist cover for PPA. This gives schools a double benefit: the teacher prepares while the class gets specialist tuition. In some schools, blocked PPA has been very successful where teachers in the same year or key stage work together on planning. Practice is mixed also in terms of the nature of the cover provided. Some authorities use qualified teachers to provide the cover while in other instances good teaching assistants are used. Where teaching assistants are successfully employed, it is important that the necessary training is provided including access to appropriate INSET opportunities. Although inspection does not report consistently on PPA, where it does, it does not appear to be a problem.

There is increasing pressures on accommodation within some schools and suitable space for teachers to prepare appropriately is not always available. This is likely to be an increasing problem with the introduction of the Foundation Phase as changes take place in the way that space is utilized within schools.

It is clear that in general the implementation of the Teacher Workload Agreement is seen by local government as having been a success but there are some significant concerns. It is also recognised that there are some potential difficulties ahead and these will have to be addressed. There will be further challenges for schools as the work on single status and equal pay is taken forward by local authorities. In addition the proposals contained in Transforming Education and Training in Wales will provide additional challenges as greater collaboration and integration in post-16 provision is sought - the Workload Agreement does not apply within the FE sector or to other work-based providers.

In conclusion may I thank you for this opportunity of contributing to the Enterprise and Learning Committee's inquiry into the Teacher Workload Agreement. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my colleagues at the Welsh Local Government Association.

**Dr Chris Llewelyn,
Director of Lifelong Learning, Lesiure and Communications.**