

## Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

**Date:** 22 September 2004

**Title :** Minister's Report

This report updates the Committee on specific issues raised by members and on issues of current interest. Annex A sets out major engagements since the last report

### **1. Education Psychology in Wales**

Educational psychologists are a key element of the LEAs strategy for supporting children and young people in their area. They spend a considerable proportion of their time working with schools to improve the learning opportunities of all children and young people including those with SEN and in many LEAs they undertake a broader role relating to the School Improvement Agenda.

In January 2004 I launched a consultation document on the future of Educational Psychology services in Wales. This document sought to clarify the various roles and responsibilities undertaken by educational psychologists and set out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for the future of the service. This vision relies crucially on there being an adequately trained workforce, sufficient in number who are prepared to continually up date their knowledge and expertise in the light of the changes to the educational system in Wales.

We received 38 responses to the document, which was generally welcomed by respondents many of whom commended its clarity and positive approach to the future of educational psychology services in Wales. A summary of the responses will be made available on the learning Wales web site by the end of this month.

### **2. Speech and Language Services for Children and Young People – Working Together**

The Speech and Language Therapy Action Group (SALTAG) was established by the Minister for Health and Social Services and I in August 2002, following growing concerns over the escalating demand for speech and language therapy services and the lack of a coherent approach, by the statutory agencies, to meet the needs of children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties (SLCD).

In July 2003, a joint consultation paper "Working Together" was launched which considered the findings of the SALTAG in detail. The consultation paper consisted of over 80 recommendations to which there have been over 180 responses. A summary of the responses will be available on the learning Wales web site by late September.

Respondents clearly supported the principles of close and collaborative working between health and education. This recognises the fundamental relationship between language development and educational attainment. The difficulties identified are, however, not just in respect of recognised disabling conditions such as hearing impairment, autistic spectrum disorders and specific language difficulties but extend to the relatively large group of children and young people whose attainments are adversely affected by impoverished language experience.

The Working Together consultation document suggested local health boards (LHBs) and local authorities should work within the partnership arrangements as described within the Health Act 1999 for the delivery of speech and language services to children and young people.

Proposals to taking this matter forward are contained in the report to the committee on "An Outline of the Respective Prime and Ultimate Responsibilities of the Education and Health Sectors in the Co-ordination and Delivery of Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Provision in Wales." This report is being considered today as part of our agenda item on the review of SEN.

### **3. Modern Foreign Languages**

I launched our national languages strategy, "Languages Count" in 2002. The Strategy aims to:

- improve the take up and standard of foreign language learning, particularly beyond age 14 and 16;
- increase recognition by schools, pupils and parents of the importance of language learning; and increase recognition by employers of the importance of foreign language skills;
- ensure that foreign language learning builds on the learning of English and Welsh and brings learners to value diversity and gain understanding of other cultures;
- enable Wales to play its part on the world stage and position our country even more firmly in an international context.

We are supporting the Strategy with investment of £600,000 each year, including funding CILT Cymru which was established under the Strategy in April 2002 as our primary partner in supporting language learning.

Key areas of progress from the Strategy include:

## CILT Cymru

- Established April 2002 to support language learning. CILT Cymru provides a wide programme of events for schools and teachers.
- Training courses held around Wales supporting continuing Professional Development for teachers
- 67 secondary schools received languages careers talks from CILT Cymru in Spring 2004.
- ‘Compact’ agreements with 50 secondary schools and pilot of ‘LEA Compact’ agreement (Denbighshire) underway – ‘Compacts’ aim to raise standards and take-up.

## Key Stage 2 foreign language pilots

- 96 primary schools in 21 clusters, based on secondary schools, across Wales have been participating in this scheme from September 2003. A further 9 primaries joining the scheme from September 2004.

## Guidance documents

- Estyn guidance ‘Aiming for Excellence in Foreign Languages’ issued to all schools in Wales in Autumn term 2002.
- New Estyn guidance issued to Welsh-medium secondary schools in June 2004.
- ACCAC published "Making the Link" in early 2004 which helps teacherds to make links between English, Welsh and MFL.

Results from the various initiatives under the strategy will, inevitably, take some time to work through, but I am pleased that a great deal of work is underway to raise the profile of language learning in Wales.

The proportion of students gaining A\*-C in GCSE has risen this year, nearly 77% of our GCSE French candidates achieve A\*-C, for instance. This increasing level of achievement in GCSE bodes well for higher level language learning. This year A level and AS Modern Foreign Languages level entries in Wales rose – A level up from 1680 to 1734, AS level up from 1869 to 1944.

## **4. National Insurance Costs for Local Authorities**

I undertook to provide a note for Committee on the issue of whether fixed costs such as National Insurance contributions and pensions were included in the overall increase in school budget provision.

I can confirm that National Insurance contributions and pension costs were included in the overall increase in education budgeted spend by local authorities for the financial year 2003-04. These costs were also taken into account in local authority budgets for education services for 2004-05 as reported to ELL Committee on 7 July 2004. Increases in fixed costs are taken into account in arriving at the Assembly's annual revenue settlement for local government.

## **5. Minister's Trip to New Zealand**

During 27 August to 7 September 2004, I undertook a collaborative learning visit to New Zealand. The New Zealand Ministry of Education hosted the visit. During my time in New Zealand a full programme of meetings and visits enabled me to forge links with partners and benchmark Wales's progress as a Learning Country against a highly regarded education service. My private secretary, an official from the Department for Training and Education, and officials from the British High Commission accompanied me during the visit.

The visit focused on collaborative learning based on the similar socio-economic patterns, and education systems in both countries, forged links with partners in New Zealand and enabled me to benchmark our own progress as a Learning Country against an education service that is dealing in an innovative manner with many of the key issues that we ourselves wish to address.

Following the visit I intend to support the continued development of evidence based education and skill policy in Wales by exploiting opportunities for shared learning with the education community in New Zealand. New Zealand monitors and evaluates its policy programmes as we do. The visit allowed for facilitated discussions with teachers, school leaders, education managers, policy makers and academics. I am actively following up opportunities for future networking between officials.

The programme for the visit was designed to develop links between education and training policy makers and providers in New Zealand, following key thematic areas of "The Learning Country".

The visit enabled me to link Wales with best practice gained from a flexible and innovative education system, that has institutions working in challenging circumstances and shares a number of common interests with us as regards lifelong learning and community centred learning. There was a clear focus on collaborative learning in areas that would be particularly beneficial to achieving education policy objectives in Wales.

My visits to Early Childhood Education (ECE), were particularly inspiring. This has, in New Zealand, been a key focus of reform. In 1993 a new curriculum, "Te Whariki" was introduced. This applies to children from birth to 5 years of age.

This curriculum focuses on developing dispositions towards learning and looks at the child's holistic needs in terms of health, housing and welfare. To support this, the Ministry has put in place a 10-year development programme for teachers in the early years' sector. Minimum qualifications have been

agreed and set, and targets set. By 2012 all teachers will have achieved the entry level qualification and be subject to registration requirements. The teacher/pupil ratios have also been revised and are to be reduced from 1-15 to 1-13. There has been significant investment in this initiative. There will have been a 50% uplift in funding for this part of the sector by 2007. It is intended that by 2007, 20 hours of education will be provided free of charge for all 3-4 years old.

There was major new funding for ECE announced in the Budget 2004. The first instalment of funding aimed at implementing the Pathways strategy was announced in the Budget delivered in May 2004. Of the \$365mil in new funding committed to the ECE Sector, \$307million has been earmarked to achieving the Pathways objective of making ECE more accessible and affordable for families, and to ensuring quality of teaching.

Whilst in New Zealand I visited two of the pilot Early Education Centres involved in the Centres of Innovation Project. The first focused on language immersion and the second was an ICT project looking at dispositions to learning. From the visits and discussions on the innovative approaches that they each were taking I was able to draw on similarities with our proposals for the foundation phase in Wales, and our recent initiatives to increase provision for under 5's in Wales, where we are ahead of the New Zealand objective for 3 years old.

I was particularly attracted to the Research component that had been built into each project that included support for the staff undertaking the work from a University researcher. This is a model I would wish to consider for our own pilot activity for the future to build on my commitment to evidence based policy making. Both projects were keen to develop links with Foundation phase pilot sites in Wales.

I then moved on to look at how statutory school level qualifications are approached. New Zealand has recently developed a National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). This qualification has similarities with the Welsh Baccalaureate, which has entered the second pilot phase. The comparison of these two contrasting initiatives at this stage of development that I was able to make was constructive and useful. This was particularly timely given the plans I have to transform learning pathways from 14-19 on a broadly similar basis.

Effective transition featured throughout the visit as a key issue needing to be addressed. There are opportunities here for collaborative working at all stages of the education process, and New Zealand policy makers were extremely interested in our statutory proposals in this area. They were also very interested in our assessment agenda as schools in New Zealand are provided with optional material and there was no National Assessment for learning agenda as we are developing here. Many schools set up their own arrangements.

I met with Ministry of Education officials to discuss the approach being taken to ICT in schools. The objectives of the initiative are to integrate ICT into the curriculum, for all learners to use ICT to develop the skills and knowledge they will require to participate in the global economy. There were a number of exciting initiatives that I would wish to consider in terms of our approach to ICT in Wales.

The Ministry of Education has entered into a partnership with Australian State and federal governments to produce digital learning objects that will be used by teachers and students in their learning programmes. Digital Opportunities was established in 2001 to assist schools in low decile and/or remote areas to utilise ICT to help overcome issues and barriers related to teaching and learning, and to enhance learning opportunities for students. In 2002, Digital Opportunities won the Computerworld Excellence Award for the Most Significant Contribution to IT. In the 2002 Budget the government announced it planned to fund high-speed Internet access to all schools and most provincial communities by the end of 2004 Project PROBE. This will provide provincial areas with a similar level of service to that currently available in the main urban centres.

Government initiatives in ICT include; Laptops for teachers (TELA), and "Computers in Homes" that provides recycled computers, training, and Internet access to students in low decile schools. In 2001, Computers in Homes was one of 3 winners in the education section of the prestigious Stockholm Challenge Award.

I was able to have useful discussion with Ministry officials and tertiary education providers of teacher education and professional development.

Recruitment and retention is a key issue for the teaching profession. Officials and educators alike were interested in looking more closely at our Induction for newly qualified teachers, NPQH, PHIP and LPSH. Like us the Ministry is looking proactively at what can be done to increase opportunities for secondment, sabbaticals and study leave for teachers. I hope that this is an area we will be able to work collaboratively on in the near future.

I was particularly interested in looking at tertiary education in New Zealand, how it is funded and managed. I was able to visit providers from each of the key sectors within tertiary education, a polytechnic, a work based provider, an open learning provider, a Wananga (Maori learning centre) and two universities. The focus across this diverse sector is that learning is for all and for life. Education is accessible to anyone who wishes to participate via a broad spectrum of methods from home, work and institution based providers. Though fees have been introduced numbers participating in tertiary education in all its forms has continued to increase. Officials were particularly interested in the 14 to 19 framework that I have introduced and the opportunities that affords young people. This is a dialogue we will seek to continue to our mutual benefit.

I was able to meet with a number of Industry Training Organisations and representatives of their Federation. I was pleased by the constructive debate we were able to have, as our workforce issues are very similar in terms of the demography of both countries. One innovative programme which has been recently introduced as part of the new national certificate for educational achievement level one (similar to Welsh Bac. Level 2) is modules for industry standard qualifications pre 16. I am keen to explore this in Wales in the context of our 14-19 agenda.

Bilingual Education was a topic that was to feature strongly throughout my visit. The Ministry is

working hard to address this as an issue from early years through to tertiary education. Officials and practitioners alike were impressed at the inroads that had been made in Wales, and were keen to seek out opportunities for mutual learning and evaluation in each country of our strategies to date. Immersion has featured strongly in New Zealand.

I was privileged to be invited to attend the "Hui Taumata Matauranga by the Honourable Trevor Mallard. This was a high level meeting between the Ministry and Maori Chiefs. I was able during the closing ceremony to speak as one bilingual country to another about the importance of the sustenance and growth of language and culture, and the critical contribution that education can make to achieving this.

The meetings and visits that I participated in throughout my visit provided an opportunity to have a productive dialogue about both the education systems in Wales and New Zealand. The meetings helped to clearly identify a number of similarities and distinctions between both education systems and emphasised the importance placed by both on outcomes rather than structures. Meetings held with senior officials focused on the school system in New Zealand including matters such as early years' provision, ICT, teacher development, tertiary education, funding and vocational education. It was clear from this useful series of meetings that a number of initiatives being implemented in both countries are aimed at tackling a range of similar issues and that definite opportunities for co-learning between both countries could and should exist. We have much to learn from each other's experiences and expertise. Schools and early Childhood Centres were keen to develop partnerships with their Welsh counter parts.

A range of issues common to higher education both within Wales and New Zealand were discussed and shared during informative exchanges. These included discussions around student fees and entry routes to higher education, widening participation in higher education, strengthening HE, FE and community links and the nature of teacher education and professional development. HE institutions were also keen to develop partnership with their Welsh counter parts.

This visit helped reaffirm my vision for education and lifelong learning in Wales against an internationally renowned education system, one that is recognised as such by OECD. New Zealand is a country, like Wales, which puts learners' interests first; offers wider access and opportunities for all, aspires to excellence across the board for both its teachers and students (across all sectors) and is intent on making lifelong learning a reality.

I am confident following my visit to such a well regarded education system that we are moving in the right direction in terms of meeting the outcomes that I have set out in "The Learning Country". I am particularly grateful to colleagues within the New Zealand Ministry for Education, and the British High Commission in Wellington for their support and time in facilitating the

programme for this visit that I believe will bring tangible benefits to the education of young people both here in Wales and in New Zealand. The full report of my visit is attached at Annex B.

## **6. EARLALL**

On 8<sup>th</sup> September, I attended the biannual General Assembly meeting of EARLALL (the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning) in Gothenberg, Sweden. Members, including Wales, provided updates on significant developments within their regions. I am currently awaiting copies of these papers from the EARLALL Secretariat and will circulate them, along with the Welsh paper, to the Committee once they become available.

Wales produced a number of key papers for consideration at the EARLALL General Assembly, including a proposed Action Plan setting out how the Association might become more active in seeking to influence EU policy making. This paper was endorsed during the meeting, as were two further papers from Wales on EU cohesion policy post 2006 entitled 'Strengthening the Lifelong Learning Dimension to the European Union's regional policy – the regional response to the Third Cohesion report' and 'The European Social Fund post 2006: Reinforcing the local and regional dimension'. The General Assembly also endorsed a paper prepared by the Tuscan Government offering comments on the new EU lifelong learning programme for 2007-2013 – subject to an amendment proposed by Wales calling for an explicit reference in the new programme to projects with a regional or indigenous minority language dimension being eligible for funding support. The agreed papers are due to be forwarded to the Commission shortly and once this has taken place I will circulate them to Committee members for information.

EARLALL members also endorsed the recommendations of the Adult Education report that was produced following the Brussels Adult Education seminar that Wales hosted earlier this year. Members agreed that the recommendations of the report should be communicated to the Commission. The report can be accessed via the Assembly's Learning Wales website at <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/>.

I am also pleased to report that Baden Wurttemberg's application to join EARLALL, following my invitation to Herr Helmut Rau to consider doing so, was endorsed by the Association. I am sure that the already healthy relationship between Wales and Baden Wurttemberg will be further strengthened by our shared membership of this regional network. Other changes to the Association include the filling of a vacancy on the EARLALL Board by Maria Jose Vazquez Morrillo of Andalucia.

This was a very constructive and successful meeting of the Association. EARLALL is rapidly maturing into an active and cohesive organisation which has the potential to play an important role in shaping both policy and practice in lifelong learning throughout the European Union.

## **7. Devolution of Student Support and Higher Education Act 2004**

The Devolution of Student Support project is progressing well. The HE Act received Royal Assent on 1 July, and the independent study group chaired by Professor Teresa Rees, the second "Rees Review" met for the first time on 15 July.

- HE Act: Policy decisions and regulatory framework



The Assembly Government has already made a number of policy decisions on its future tuition fee and student support regime.

The Welsh Assembly Government Cabinet has reiterated its policy not to introduce variable fees in the lifetime of this Assembly.

The Assembly Government will raise the maximum rates of the student maintenance loan from September 2006 to help students meet their basic living costs at university. The higher rate of maintenance loans will be available to both new and existing students from 2006. Repayments on loans will be repaid by graduates in line with their income once they are earning over £15, 000.

In 2006, for all new full-time students from lower income households, the Assembly will provide a new income assessed non-repayable maintenance grant, incorporating the Assembly Learning Grant, of up to £2,700.

The Assembly Government has also decided, in line with the Department for Education and Skills in England, that any outstanding student debt will be written off after 25 years.

- Providing a bilingual student support system - Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group held its fourth meeting in Wrexham, on 14 July. The Group considered a first draft of their recommendations and considered how they should be prioritised. The Group will hold its final meeting to agree the recommendations in September and the recommendations will be presented to the Project Board and to myself in October.

### Rees Review Update

The second Rees Review will inform the Assembly Government's decisions on the future of the tuition fee and student support regime in Wales. The second meeting of the review group takes place on 20 and 21 September. It is anticipated that the group will meet monthly.

It is required, as laid out in the remit, to produce an interim report on questions relating to variable fees to be submitted by mid February 2005. A final report will be submitted by April 2005, which will make recommendations for the future student support system in Wales.

### The Schwartz Report

The Schwartz Report published on Tuesday 14 September was a report to the Secretary of State on the admissions process in England. Sir Alan Wilson will lead a working group on the implementation of a Post Qualification Application (PQA) system. I have already endorsed the introduction of the PQA in principle subject to satisfactory dialogue with schools and the sector about implementation. We will

work closely with DfES to progress this further given the UK-wide impact of this proposal. Charles Clarke's statement indicated his willingness to work with the devolved administrations on achieving a UK wide outcome. The Executive Summary is attached at Annex C.

## **8. Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative**

### Research and Evaluation

The contract for the evaluation of the pilot of this initiative has been awarded to Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics (CISHE), Cardiff University, following a competitive tender exercise. The evaluation will include up to 70 schools from across the 9 LEAs that agree to be involved in the pilot from January 2005.

The broad purpose of this evaluation is to examine the impact of providing free breakfasts in schools, to examine the processes employed by schools and to assess the potential impact on pupils eating habits. This will enable clear evidence to be gathered to determine the best way of providing breakfast in schools before rolling it out to all primary schools in Wales.

It will run over a two-year period subject to satisfactory completion of the first year. The second year of the evaluation will allow the contractor to include schools from outside the pilot, i.e. will allow inclusion of non Community First schools to assess whether the impact is different from that observed in the initial pilot, before the final roll out to all schools.

Baseline data collection in schools will start shortly with the research work commencing in January 2005.

### External Reference Group

An External Reference Group of stakeholders is now being established from the groups of key participants identified by those who attended the three regional workshops. This Group will provide the opportunity to take opinions from and exchange views with representatives from practitioners and other bodies on issues relating to the development and implementation of the Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative in Wales. The aim of this Group will be to ensure good communication between Assembly officials and stakeholders, to promote better joint working, to assist in co-ordinating training and development beyond the pilot and to involve practitioners, including closer working with parents. The first meeting will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

### Roll-out

Nine LEAs are involved in the first phase of the pilot of this initiative which commenced this September. There are three in west Wales (Pembrokeshire, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire), three in south Wales (Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff) and three in north Wales (Anglesey, Wrexham,

Denbighshire). Start dates for individual schools currently range from 6<sup>th</sup> September to the end of October to allow schools and LEAs to prepare fully for implementation. Schools are also working in partnership with LEAs to promote the benefits to both parents and children of a healthy breakfast to start the day. This is a long term initiative which is intended to help improve the health and concentration of children to assist in the raising of standards of learning and attainment.

Each of the 9 LEAs participating in the first phase of the pilot has a nominated contact appointed to support the development and implementation of this initiative in their LEA. Officials have been working closely in collaboration with the LEA Co-ordinators on the detail of rolling out the initiative to those schools participating in the first phase and a key part of these discussions has been agreeing the timetable for the first phase of the pilot.

Detailed guidance covering all the main areas associated with providing the breakfast has been prepared by Assembly Officials in discussion with key stakeholders. This guidance is being used as the basis for operating the first phase of the pilot from this September.

## **9. Cabinet Written Statement on Iaith Pawb and Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2003-04**

The Iaith Pawb and Welsh Language Scheme Annual Report 2003-04 was published on 13<sup>th</sup> July with the following press release.

### **Iaith Pawb - Excellent Year for the Welsh Language**

The last year has seen the Welsh Assembly Government make significant progress in its ambition to create a truly bilingual Wales, Welsh Language Minister Alun Pugh said today (Tuesday 13 July).

The Minister was speaking at the publication of the annual report on Iaith Pawb, the Assembly Government's strategic action plan for the future of the Welsh language.

The annual report details the progress made to promote and sustain the language across the whole spectrum of Welsh life, including early years education, lifelong learning, community regeneration, the arts, healthcare, business and enterprise, tourism, housing and social care.

"Reviving and revitalising the Welsh language is much more than simply a cultural policy," said the Minister.

"To achieve our goal of a truly bilingual Wales, we have to ensure that the promotion of the Welsh language is a key consideration in everything we do - in other words, to 'mainstream' the Welsh language throughout all policy areas. We are backing this with more than £28m over the three years from 2003-2006.

"We got a real boost from the results of the 2001 Census, which showed that the number and percentage of Welsh speakers increased for the first time since 1911. I am determined to sustain this increase and encourage further progress."

Highlights of Welsh Assembly Government achievements in relation to Iaith Pawb this year include:

- Doubling the funding for the Welsh Language Board
- Bringing water companies under the Welsh Language Act
- Rolling out the Twf project, which encourages bilingual parents to speak Welsh to their children, to the whole of Wales and committing an additional £1m to the project over the next three years
- Establishment of Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru and the successful completion of its first new production and tour
- Funding the new Welsh medium Early Years Centre at Abercynon
- ELWa's approval of its bilingual learning strategy, including a long-term strategy for Welsh medium provision
- The production of HEFCW's study on supply and demand for Welsh medium provision in Higher Education
- NHS Language Awareness Video and Training pack successfully piloted and rolled out.
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The Welsh Assembly Government's progress in implementing its own Welsh Language Scheme was reviewed in the second part of the report, which also took a more in-depth look at Welsh language mainstreaming and its application across policy areas and in policy-making more generally.

The Welsh Language Scheme sets out how the Welsh Assembly Government will ensure that, in the conduct of all public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages will be treated on a basis of equality.

The report shows that performance against Scheme commitments was generally good, with some particularly strong areas, such as correspondence, written material, reception areas and providing simultaneous translation.

The Assembly Government's public face and corporate identity was overwhelmingly bilingual and there were some excellent examples of mainstreaming the Welsh language into policy areas. Comprehensive guidance on mainstreaming was also issued to all Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs).

"We have never pretended that we can work overnight miracles. Creating a truly bilingual Wales is very much a long-term strategy - dyfal donc a dyr y garreg," said the Minister.

"However, we can be proud of the progress we have made this year. We have built some solid foundations to continue our work in the future."

The report can be found on the website at:

<http://www.wales.gov.uk/subiculture/content/iaithpawb-wls-report-2003-4-e.pdf>

<http://www.cymru.gov.uk/subiculture/content/iaithpawb-wls-report-2003-4-w.pdf>

Iaith Pawb

Specifically within my portfolio, we have achieved the following :

- a package of proposals involving a grant of £4.5m over the period to 2006, which will result in an additional 450 early years practitioners being trained through the medium of Welsh. This is three times as many as envisaged in the original Iaith Pawb document. The training is to be delivered jointly by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and Trinity College, Carmarthen and involves, very importantly, the opportunities for placements and also a full range of support services
- provided funding for the new Welsh-medium Early Years integrated centre at Abercynon that opened in 2003, and for an integrated centre in Aberystwyth which is scheduled to open next April
- ensured that Bilingualism and Multi-cultural Understanding' is one of the seven Areas of Learning in the new Foundation Phase curriculum which is currently being piloted in 41 settings. This curriculum will apply to both maintained and non-maintained settings. This is the first requirement ever for bilingual learning in all playgroups, nurseries etc.
- held meetings with the Welsh Language Board, LEAs and others to discuss new, consistent definitions of Welsh-medium provision. Recommendations are expected from the Board which will be published for wider consultation
- launched pilot projects involving the teaching of Welsh intensively to pupils in Year 6 based around 3 secondary schools at the end of the 2003-04 school year – Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold; Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin ; and Ysgol y Porth, Rhondda. About 100 pupils were involved and specific provision is now being made for them at the secondary schools in Year 7
- launched a pilot project earlier this month involving teaching Welsh intensively to pupils in Year 3 in a primary school in Conwy (Ysgol Glan Conwy)
- made an additional £400,000 available to ACCAC to support their work on commissioning of Welsh and bilingual classroom materials and qualifications through the medium of Welsh
- initiated a review of the Welsh Medium Incentive Supplement scheme in initial teacher training.

- Remitted all our ASPBs and included in Planning Guidance for Careers Wales to mainstream the Welsh language in their policy and programme development.
- required the SSDA to ensure that sector skills councils develop Welsh language schemes and address Welsh language skills needs
- ELWa achieved its 2002-03 target of 8,000 Welsh-medium learners in FE. In 2003-04 (DN: please check date), ELWa's target is to increase this to 9,000 learners.
- ELWa's approval of its bilingual learning strategy, including a long-term strategy for Welsh medium provision
- conducted, through ELWa, a thorough review of Welsh for Adults, the conclusions of which are being considered alongside the Estyn inspection of Welsh for Adults with a view to securing improvements
- HEFCW has allocated £1.13m for 2004-05 for the Welsh-medium premium, which recognises the extra costs associated with delivering provision through Welsh. This is calculated on the basis of student numbers
- the production of HEFCW's National Steering Group's strategy for Welsh medium provision in Higher Education, which has been issued for wide-spread consultation. Responses were requested by 15 September 2004.
- HEFCW have determined to award a further 5 Teaching Fellowships for 2004-05. The Teaching Fellows will undertake a minimum of 5 hours undergraduate teaching in Welsh in a week and will develop the equivalent of a 20-credit module within their subject area through the medium of Welsh.
- as part of the ongoing Future Skills Wales research and to complement the FSW 2003 full survey a contract has recently been awarded by the ELWa Skills Unit to Menter a Busnes and Beaufort Research to conduct a survey into Welsh Language Skills in Business in Wales. The project is due to report in January 2005 and its findings will be used to develop policy

## **10. Review of the Key Stage 2 and 3 Assessment Arrangements**

In my statement to Plenary on 13<sup>th</sup> July I outlined my response to the recommendations contained in the Daugherty Assessment Review Group's Final Report and ACCAC's report "The Review of the School Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements 5-16". Both documents are available on the Learning Wales website. I promised then to issue a consultation paper, which set out the proposed new assessment package, and the changes needed for 2005. A paper was issued to all schools at the start of term and

members received an electronic link to the paper and all supporting material on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

The consultation period ends on 22<sup>nd</sup> October and I would encourage all members to contribute to the exercise. I should also take this opportunity to inform you that, subject to the outcome of the consultation, it may be necessary to use executive procedures to amend the statutory requirements for 2005. It is vital that schools are absolutely clear what arrangements are to operate next year and we therefore need to have the amended legislation in place as quickly as possible to enable ACCAC to inform schools of the new arrangements.