

Education and Life-Long Learning Committee

ESTYN REMIT: 2000-01

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The purpose of this letter is to set out the National Assembly's remit for Estyn for the financial year 2000-01. The remit reflects the National Assembly's statutory responsibilities. It also reflects the priorities for education and training set out in the Better Wales strategic plan.

This is the first remit issued to Estyn by the National Assembly. It is also the first to reflect your extended remit covering the inspection of most aspects of education and training in Wales. Increasingly we will look to Estyn to offer advice which reflects this breadth of perspective. Over time our aim should be to ensure that the development of education policy within each phase of education is informed by an evidence base that stretches across all others.

In taking forward its extended remit it will be important for Estyn to reflect the National Assembly's statutory responsibilities with regard to social inclusion, equal opportunities and sustainable development. The Assembly is committed to pursuing an inclusive policy towards education that seeks to ensure that as many young people as possible are able to fulfil their potential. There needs to be a continuing focus on those schools and pupils that have furthest to travel to reach national targets. The National Assembly is placing an increasing emphasis on inter-agency initiatives aimed at promoting social inclusion and combating youth disaffection and related issues. Estyn will have a crucial role in monitoring the effectiveness of these interventions. Estyn inspection will also have an important part to play in ensuring that a sufficiently inclusive approach is present within mainstream settings so as to minimise the

need for these sort of additional initiatives in future.

I will also look to Estyn to act in support of the Assembly's responsibilities for promoting equal opportunities. During 2000-01 it will be particularly important that we make progress in relation to our commitment to raise levels of attainment for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The evidence that Estyn has already gathered in relation to the teaching of English as an additional language should provide a significant input to this work. We will in addition look to Section 10 inspections to monitor the response of schools to the need to promote greater community understanding and to tackle racial harassment even more strenuously than at present. The new framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE) to be introduced from September will provide a clear focus for work to promote equal opportunities throughout each Key Stage. Our aim should be to narrow the gap between the best and worst performing schools in this as in all other aspects of performance. Estyn's monitoring work in this area will have a crucial contribution to make to the National Assembly's decision as to the final status of the PSE framework in due course.

More generally Estyn's survey and inspection evidence will be a key factor enabling the National Assembly to realise the overriding aim set out in Better Wales of extending educational opportunity as well as securing improvement across all phases of education and training. For the Early Years the National Assembly is committed to developing a National Child Care Strategy alongside the additional provision being created by early years partnerships. Estyn will have an important contribution to make to this work and in monitoring the implementation plan which emerges in due course. Estyn will also need to remain in close contact with the emerging findings of the Pre-16 Education Committee as to the most appropriate forms of provision for our youngest children.

Within maintained settings Estyn inspection will play a key part in ensuring that the provisions of the new National Curriculum for Wales are introduced in all schools from September 2000. The new curriculum confirms our commitment to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum for every child. Estyn will be the main source of evidence as to whether this commitment to breadth is being maintained. The new curriculum also reflects the importance of young people gaining mastery of the key skills. Estyn will continue to have a crucial part to play in support of the continuing emphasis we will want to see given to work in this area. During 2000-01 there will be a particular focus on the development of pupil skills in relation to Information and Communications Technology (ICT). I will also look to Estyn to play a part in the parallel evaluation of teachers' ICT skills arising from the New Opportunities Fund ICT training programme.

Within secondary schools in particular there should also be an even stronger focus on the importance of young people developing those wider personal and social skills that will better prepare them to face the challenges of adult life and to become valued members of the communities in which they live. ACCAC's new framework for Personal and Social Education will provide an important strand of this work. Estyn's perspective covering both education and

training will also leave it well placed to monitor and support the development of vocational education within schools and the implementation of ACCAC's framework for Work Related Education.

Estyn will also have an important and a developing role in relation to post 16 education and training as we implement the recommendations flowing from the Education and Training Action Plan. The ETAP implementation team should be able to draw on Estyn's expertise across all aspects of Post-16 education and training as necessary. Estyn will also need to stay alongside the work aimed at refocusing the Youth Service and the proposals to develop a basic skills strategy for Wales. It will also be important that there is no disruption to the arrangements for inspecting Post-16 provision. I see this as an important means of ensuring the maintenance of standards across a range of programmes over the coming months and as the Council for Education and Training in Wales assumes its full range of responsibilities.

Across all sectors Estyn will continue to have a critical role in highlighting through its work the importance we attach to improving levels of educational attainment for all our young people. Estyn's work with schools and colleges will provide opportunities to stress the need to continue to make progress towards the all Wales targets for education and training. As we move towards the BEST performance targets we have established for 2002 I will expect Estyn to place a growing emphasis on the still more stretching targets that the ETAP report has suggested for 2004. During the course of 2000-01 I would like Estyn to continue to work with the National Assembly to ensure that we are targeting as effectively as we can those areas of weakness which stand in the way of further progress towards the targets. Some of the issues that this work might focus upon include progress towards the core subject indicator, the gap in performance between boys and girls and the worrying drop in performance that your evidence suggests occur when pupils transfer from primary to secondary schools. Estyn will also need to work closely with the National Assembly in strengthening a range of programmes aimed at securing improvement within schools. These include the National Headship Development Programme, initiatives to improve education for children with special educational needs, making greater use of ICT and a still sharper focus on the continuing professional development of teachers funded through GEST.

I will look to Estyn to develop in conjunction with SSIW, the Audit Commission the Probation Service and others a coherent framework governing the inspection of local authority services which should whenever possible be conducted jointly. This framework should encompass LEA inspection by Estyn as well as inspection under the Best Value regime. I would like to reach early agreement on the proposals for LEA inspection once the current cycle of inspection reports is complete. The aim in each of these areas should be to develop an inspection regime which is rigorous, fit for purpose, clearly understood by those to whom it is directed whilst avoiding duplication and unnecessary burdens being placed on local authority staff. Proposals with regard to the inspection framework should reflect the modernising government agenda as well as the National Assembly's commitment to simplified and joined-up government.

In addition to the above I am anxious that during the coming year Estyn should continue to take action aimed at improving corporate planning and internal management arrangements. It will be important for Estyn to build on the outcome of the management review conducted last year with a view to securing further gains in efficiency and effectiveness. Wherever possible this work should reflect the principles of modernising government being pursued within the National Assembly and the rest of the civil service. Estyn has a demanding but crucial part to play in support of the Assembly's challenging agenda to improve education and training. If we are to achieve our aims it will be essential that Estyn's resources are aligned alongside those of the Assembly so as to secure the maximum possible impact. The Assembly's officials will continue to provide every support as this work unfolds. I know that on their respective policy portfolios Rosemary Butler and Tom Middlehurst are also looking forward to continuing mutual collaboration between the National Assembly and Estyn.

Remit Annex

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES' REQUIREMENTS OF ESTYN IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2000-01

A. SURVEYS : Continuing work (commissioned in 1999-2000 programme)

Survey Target Date

Good practice in ICT April 2000

Good practice in Topic Work in primary schools April 2000

Summary report on LEA work in improving literacy May 2000

English as an Additional Language June 2000

Good practice in SEN work in Secondary Schools June 2000

Good practice in RE (primary) September 2000

Good practice in History (primary) September 2000

Good practice in Geography (primary) September 2000

Self evaluation in primary schools October 2000

Standards and Quality in Writing in primary schools October 2000

Provision for looked after children November 2000

Standards and Quality in Science in secondary schools December 2000

Standards and Quality in History in secondary schools December 2000

Standards and Quality in Geography in secondary schools December 2000

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B. SURVEYS : New work commissioned for 2000-01

1. Work Related Education in secondary schools. A broad exercise looking at how careers education, education business links and support provided by the Careers Service contribute to a coherent programme of work related education for young people - and good practice guide. May 2001
2. Standards and quality in PSE in primary and, secondary schools - good practice guide (to include particular focus on the "hidden" curriculum and equal opportunities in the broadest sense) . September 2001

3. Joint Estyn/National Assembly framework for raising standards of ICT in primary schools. November 2000
 1. Leadership and Management in primary schools - linked to initiative in training for Headteachers. June 2001
 2. Development of key skills across the curriculum in primary schools. April 2001
 3. Dual literacy - making use of bilingual skills - a guide to good practice in primary and secondary schools. July 2001
 4. Partnerships between schools and colleges - a position paper. A look at the collaboration between pairs or groups of schools and of projects that involve other partners/providers, and also looking at strategic planning by LEAs, schools and FE institutions (reporting on retention of pupils in education, completion of education and employability). December 2000

5. Raising standards in spelling in English in primary schools. March 2001
6. Raising standards in Mental Mathematics in primary schools. July 2001
7. Cwricwlwm Cymreig - a position paper reflecting good practice in primary and secondary schools [this should be linked to the forthcoming guidance being prepared by ACCAC] March 2001
8. Modern Foreign Languages - a paper on the trends and issues in teaching learning and standards and policy implications for reversing what appears to be a downward trend in take up in key Stage (4). Paper will be required by October 2000. October 2000

C. INSPECTION OF INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS AND OTHER PROVISION

One-day monitoring visits to:

- a. Independent schools approved by the National Assembly for the admission of pupils with statements of special educational needs apart from the schools being inspected in 2000-01 under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

b, All provisionally registered independent schools.

c. 10 substantively registered independent schools.

A report of a visit to each school to be provided to Pupil Support Division not more than 1 month from the end of each visit; HMI shall mark up for possible full inspection any independent school where grounds for Notice of Complaint might be indicated.

The full inspection of independent schools shall result in a report to be published within a term of the end of the inspection.

During 2000-01 Estyn should continue to review the implications of the Waterhouse report for its work.

D. INSPECTION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS AND THE CAREERS SERVICE

As detailed in a separate Memorandum of Understanding between the National Assembly's Industrial & Training Policy Division.

Estyn to undertake 40 training provider inspections, including joint inspections with the Training Standards Council.

Estyn to undertake the following work with the Careers Service:

- two full company inspections
- one thematic inspection to cover the work of the careers service in schools with young people in years 9 and 10

E. INSPECTION OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Inspection of Further Education, at the request of the Further Education Funding Council for Wales. Detail agreed in a separate memorandum of Understanding between the Further Education Funding Council for Wales and Estyn.

F. INSPECTION OF LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

Inspection of the implementation of LEA education strategic plans - linking in with the Best Value inspection programme. Include inspection of eleven LEAs with respect to their numeracy strategies.

G. SPECIFIC ESTYN PROJECTS LINKED TO "BEST"

Provision of a School Improvement Course for primary teachers.

A joint National Assembly/Estyn school improvement project to take forward Estyn's work on tackling low performance in secondary schools.

Developing an evaluation framework for school-based INSET funded through GEST.

Further consideration of successful strategies for maintaining momentum during Key Stage 3.

H. GENERAL ADVICE TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Specific advice on the following subjects:

a the evaluation, formulation and review of education policies, including the National Assembly's consideration of the Education and Training Action Plan, and in taking forward the BEST and LIFE programmes; e.g. assessment, implementation of National Curriculum; lessons for the next NC review and the quality of local authorities' FE provision; and careers education.

b grant applications, e.g. GEST, research, traveller education and youth work.

c matters relating to the 16-19 qualifications framework in the light of the Government's response to Qualifying for Success.

d the preparation of Assembly guidance for schools on the use of available data to help them reach their targets.

e further guidance as necessary in taking forward the distinctive approach to literacy and numeracy in Wales.

f matters relating to school based actions to promote inclusion and tackle attendance and behaviour issues, including continued evaluation of the Youth Access Initiative.

g the inspection of Local Education Authorities and matters related to Best Value.

h the inspection of schools and nursery education.

i matters relating to the six monthly progress reports to be submitted by the three SEN regional planning pilot consortia.

j preliminary preparation of a joint protocol between Estyn and the National Assembly for education and social care inspections in early years settings

k initial consideration of the scope of a study to assess the impact of the

National Curriculum and teaching practices on 5 year olds with a view

to assessing the merits of delaying the onset of the Curriculum until 6;

for completion in time for the next comprehensive Curriculum review

l National Assembly proposals for a refocusing of the youth service

m matters relating to adult education and the role of the Council for Education and Training in Wales

n impact of New Opportunities Fund supported training for training for teachers and school librarians on the use of ICT in subject teaching.

o follow-up action to the "Waterhouse Report" and related childcare issues.

p specific issues as they may arise, e.g. proposals for the establishment of schools, school closure/reorganisation proposals, or special needs education.

q advice, and attendance at meetings on Education Strategic Plans.

r briefing, where possible, on schools to be visited by Ministers or Members of the Assembly Cabinet.

s general briefing, where possible, in support of Parliamentary and National Assembly debates and responses to PQs/AQ's, Treat Officially cases and Departmental/Assembly correspondence.

t comments on Honours Recommendations; and prospective nominations for appointment to committees for NDPBs/ASBs.

u advice to be given in accordance with timetable agreed between Estyn and National

Assembly Officials in respect of individual items.

I. ADVICE TO AND ON OTHER INSTITUTIONS

a. Ad hoc advice to and on, educational organisations and attendance at meetings as

assessors/observers/representatives as Estyn resources allow and as directed by the National Assembly For Wales.