

Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 6 March 2002

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

Attendance:

Members

Cynog Dafis, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Mick Bates	Liberal Democrat	Montgomeryshire
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Gareth Jones	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Huw Lewis	Labour	Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh	Labour	Clwyd West
Owen John Thomas	Plaid Cymru	South Wales Central

Committee Secretariat

Chris Reading	Clerk
Holly Pembridge	Deputy Clerk

Apologies

Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister

Pauline Jarman

Substitutions

Owen John Thomas for Pauline Jarman

Officials

In Attendance:

Keith Davies Head, Standards and Performance Division (DfTE)

Catrin Huws Office of the Counsel General

Presenters

In Attendance:

On behalf of ACCAC:

Brian Connolly Chair

John Valentine Williams Chief Executive

On behalf of NASUWT Cymru:

Geraint Davies Secretary

Jean Campion Chair, NASUWT Cymru Education
Committee

On behalf of ELWa-National Council:

Enid Rowlands Chair

Steve Martin Chief Executive

Declarations of Interest

Cynog Dafis	Registered Teacher; wife is a Registered Teacher
Jane Davidson	Registered Teacher; husband is a college lecturer and member of the NATFHE Executive
Gareth Jones	Registered Teacher; Member of Conwy County Borough Council
Huw Lewis	Registered Teacher
Mick Bates	Qualified Teacher, member of the General Teaching Council Wales; wife is a Head Teacher, School Inspector, member of ACCAC and Estyn committees
Pauline Jarman	Member of Court L Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council; member of the WLGA
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

Chair's Opening Remarks

1. The Chair asked members to make any new declarations of interest. There were none.
2. Apologies had been received from Pauline Jarman and Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister. The Minister could not attend as she was briefing the House of Lords re the Education Bill.
3. Members were informed that the Education Bill had completed its remaining stages in the House of Commons on 6 February and had now moved to the House of Lords.
4. The Chair referred to the Committee summer term timetable and said that three dates for optional committee meetings had been identified: 2 May, 30 May and 4 July. The Chair had previously discussed this with the Clerk and recommended that the Committee opted for 2 May and 4 July. The Committee agreed.
5. The Chair had received an invitation from Swansea University to speak on Tuesday 14 May at a conference for library and IT professionals in higher education. The Chair was unable to attend but the invitation had been extended to any other member of the Committee. After some discussion, Huw Lewis indicated that he would wish to attend, subject to approval from his party business manager.

Item One: Policy Review - Welsh Language in Education - Oral evidence

Papers: ELL 05-02(p.1), (p.2), (p.3)

The Committee heard evidence from the following organisations:

- ACCAC
- NASUWT Cymru
- ELWa - National Council

Presenters from ACCAC and NASUWT spoke from their papers (ELL 05-02 (p.1) and (p.2). Presenters

from ELWa -National Council spoke from their PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is included at Annex 1.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- **Continuum between Welsh First Language and Welsh Second Language** - Members were interested in the difference of this definition which existed between ACCAC and the Welsh Language Board (WLB). There was concern that the terms first and second language were unclear and that there was a need for greater co-operation between ACCAC and the WLB in order to come to a consensus on the definition. ACCAC stated that they had not been in recent discussions with the WLB on this matter but acknowledged that it was an important issue. 'They explained that the concept of a continuum (i.e. a single Programme of Study for both Welsh and Welsh Second Language) had been explored when the National Curriculum was first established and again in the 1997/2000 Review. On both occasions it had been concluded that it was not possible to devise a single Programme of Study that sensibly encompassed all pupils in Wales whilst, at the same time, providing sufficient differentiation in performance. However, as a result of the last Review, there was now a better read-across between the two Programmes of Study and a better relationship between the two sets of Levels of Attainment. NASUWT added that a lot of the good work was going in a vacuum and that there was a need for a firmer partnership between organisations like ACCAC and the WLB.
- **Models** - Members asked whether it was desirable to establish schools which taught some subjects in Welsh and other subjects in English rather than the traditional Welsh and English medium schools. NASUWT stressed the importance of a continuum from primary to secondary level though he stated that some schools who operated a bilingual policy found it desirable to teach some non-examination subjects through the medium of Welsh. He used the example of subjects such as Physical Education, Art, Music and perhaps I.T.
- **Statistics** - Members were concerned that some of the figures provided were contradictory and whether there was a need for a body to take responsibility for them. ACCAC replied that they had used statistics published by the Assembly to highlight the inconsistency and vulnerability of the interpretation of the figures. They added that what was needed were reliable statistics and the reliable interpretation of reliable statistics and that a number of bodies including the National Assembly should take responsibility for their collation.
- **Funding** - The presenters from NASUWT were asked to identify which issue would provide best value for money in light of financial constraints. NASUWT replied that it was felt that the 15 - 16 year old, Key Stage 4(KS4) area was particularly key. They stated that pupils of this age were either focused on continuing through the medium of Welsh or not. Funds and attention could then be directed to other areas and in particular the nursery sector. They added that there was a need to introduce children to the language as early as possible and at this age, children were much more receptive to learning another language. Members asked ELWa - National Council whether the cost based competencies which were recommended in the ETAP Report were being taken into consideration. In particular, reference was made to the cost effectiveness of the £10m provision for Welsh Further Education Institutes. They replied that research base for this provision had come from the former FE Funding Council and that they awaited confirmation that this provision was accurate.
- **Curriculum** - Members were interested to know, whether ACCAC considered the methods of teaching languages were successful and suffice. 'ACCAC replied that the 1997/2000 Review had provided a better inter relationship between the Welsh and Welsh Second Language Programmes of Study and that this should be of assistance to teachers. They emphasised the need to make

languages attractive to children, in particular the teenage years with regards to vocations.

- **Key Stage 4/ GCSE** - Members asked whether the introduction of Welsh language teaching at nursery level would lead to familiarity at KS4 and alleviate disenchantment with the language at this stage. They were also interested to know how many pupils choose not to pursue Welsh as an A-Level subject despite studying it for GCSE level. Members were concerned that the influence of degree subjects was a factor and wanted to know what could be done to encourage taking Welsh as an A-Level. NASUWT responded that nursery level teaching had been effective in some areas with examples of children from non-Welsh speaking backgrounds becoming fully immersed in the language. Jean Campion referred to her experience as a Welsh medium nursery teacher and emphasised how many of the children she has taught have enjoyed and responded to being taught in Welsh. They also added that the continuation into the study of Welsh as an A-Level would be desirable though he thought a better aim would be that the language was natural to pupils.
- **Recruitment and retention of teachers** - Members asked whether ELWa - National Council could elaborate on their strategy to reduce teacher shortage and whether they could play a role in NASUWT's strategy with regards to 15-16 year olds disenchantment with the language. ELWa - National Council replied that there was a shortage in teacher training but that the recruitment was going well.
- **Consultation** - Some members expressed their concern that NASUWT's early years strategy could be seen as imposing a linguistic model. They were also interested to know whether nursery provision should be NASUWT's priority due to the costs involved, in particular training and how wide a consultation had NASUWT done with it's members on this matter. NASUWT reaffirmed that nursery KS1 a KS2 should be the priority and that there had been a wide consultation with it's members. They stated that discussion had occurred within NASUWT's education committee and had gone to it's full executive council.
- **Compulsion** - Members raised concerns that NASUWT's proposal of removing compulsion of Welsh at KS4 could lead to the subject losing status. There was also concern that pupils at KS3 level would lose interest in the subject.
- **Teacher Training** - Members were interested to know whether there was sufficient teaching of the language being directed at teachers. They referred to teachers in the Basque country being given a year off to learn the language. Members suggested that ELWa - National Council should collaborate with the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) on this matter.
- **Collaboration between FE and Schools** - Members asked whether there was a need for greater co-operation between FE Institutions and schools. ELWa - National Council responded that partnerships between the two were important and that discussions were necessary regarding the future. Head teachers had been in liaison with ELWa- National Council and more importantly with each other. ACCAC stated that it was important to remember that post 16 provision also included training providers, employers, the prison service and disadvantaged youths.

Item Two: Policy Review – Welsh Language in Education

'Bilingual Wales' – a suggested definition

Paper: ELL 05-02(p.4)

2.1 Both the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee and the Culture Committee had previously agreed that their respective Expert Advisers and Clerks would jointly draft a definition of the concept of a bilingual Wales as a basis for discussion. The Chair stated that the Culture Committee had considered this definition and agreed that the committee would take any suggested amendments back to the Clerk.

2.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- Members felt that it would be helpful to allude to the actual act/process of creating a 'bilingual Wales'. The Chair pointed out that both committees were attempting to define the individual characteristics of a 'bilingual Wales', as opposed to defining the actual process of creating it.
- Members felt that the word 'truly' in the phrase, 'a truly bilingual Wales' was redundant.
- Some members were concerned about the reference to inter-generational transmission of the Welsh language being regarded as the norm. They felt it could be perceived as implying that those who did not speak Welsh were somehow inferior to those who did.
- Members suggested that the definition should include the word, 'respect' and that this should apply to both Welsh and English.
- Members were heartened to see the inclusion of the word, 'multilingualism'.
- Members felt that there should be reference to safeguarding the future of both languages. There was also a need for a bilingual Wales that was sustainable.

2.3 The Chair indicated that members should submit suggested amendments to the Clerk.

Evidence gained from school visits in North Wales – Oral Report from the Expert Adviser

2.4 Catrin Redknap described her visits to four secondary schools in Anglesey and Gwynedd which took place between 20 February and 22 February 2002. The four schools visited were:

- Holyhead Secondary School, Anglesey
- Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern, Anglesey
- Friars Secondary School, Bangor, Gwynedd
- Ysgol Tryfan, Bangor, Gwynedd

2.5 **The purpose of the visits** was to gain further evidence from school pupils on their experience of Welsh-medium education.

2.6 Pupils were selected by staff, in advance of the visits. A total of seven groups were seen. Groups consisted of between three and ten pupils, representing Years 7 to 11. In all cases pupils responded in a co-operative and open manner. The composition of each group determined to a large extent the precise nature of the sessions, and factors such as age and ability influenced the degree to which pupils' observations had to be prompted by questioning. Sessions were held both in Welsh and in English.

2.7 The pupils represented a broad spectrum in terms of their contact with, and usage of, the Welsh Language.

2.8 The discussions were structured as follows:

- Brief explanation of school background (year; primary school attended);
- Linguistic background (patterns of language use at home and in social networks);
- Degree and nature of contact with Welsh at school (Welsh as a subject - first and second language; Welsh as a medium; extra-curricular activities);

- Awareness/ self-evaluation of competence in Welsh;
- Attitudes towards their experience of Welsh at school;
- Looking towards the future: uses and significance of Welsh in terms of their career and future lives

2.9 Catrin Redknap's observations:

- Almost all pupils, and particularly the older ones, revealed a keen awareness of their degree of competence in Welsh. These self-perceptions appeared to correlate closely with pupils' degree of usage of the language.
- There appeared to be a close correlation between self-esteem with regards to competence, on the one hand, and consistency of usage on the other. It was also noted, that amongst those who were most aware of their limitations in Welsh, the vast majority indicated that they would like to be able to improve their skills in Welsh.

2.10 Catrin Redknap stated that she had written a paper summarising the evidence gained from her visits. This would be given to members, once it had been approved by the four headteachers.

2.11 Members thanked Catrin Redknap and suggested that more evidence should be taken from pupils. The Chair stated that the Committee would take more evidence from pupils at its meeting on 2 May. The Committee thought it would be useful for Catrin Redknap to visit more schools.

Item Three: Strategic Forward Work Programmes of other Subject Committees

Papers: ELL 05-02(p.6, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e &6f)

3.1 The Committee was invited to comment on the draft, strategic forward work programmes of other committees. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- The Chair stated that he attended the Health and Social Services Committee meetings, in respect of its Policy Review of Children with Special Health Needs.
- Members gave further support to the Environment, Planning and Transport Committee's 'Safe Routes to School' initiative.

Item Four: Minutes of the previous meeting, 13 February 2002

Paper: ELL 04-02(mins)

4.1 The Committee ratified the minutes of the previous meeting.

Chair's Closing Remarks

- The Chair invited members to attend an informal 'brainstorming' meeting to discuss possible topics to be included in the terms of reference for the Committee's next policy review: 'School of the Future'. The Clerk would undertake to make the necessary arrangements and provide a list of possible topics for discussion.

- Reference was made to ELL 05-02(p.7) - a schedule of forthcoming secondary legislation. As the Minister was not present at the meeting, the Chair advised members that the Minister could be questioned on the topic of secondary legislation after she had presented her monthly report to the Committee at its next meeting on 20 March.

Papers to Note

There were two papers to note:

Secondary Legislation

Paper: ELL 05-02(p.7)

Progress update on HSS Committee's Review of Services for Children with Special Health Needs

Paper: ELL 05-02(p.8)

Committee Secretariat March 2002

Annex 1

National Council - ELWa

Our Inheritance

Mixture of policies and operations

FE Institutions

Welsh medium/bilingual provision

- 5,483 enrolments in FEIs ie 1.3% of sector (2,288 in

1994/95)

- Total funding for this provision in 2001-02 is c£10m
- Sgiliaith (£55k) and Dysg (£100k pa) project initiatives
- Weighted funding: 40% more per learning unit than for

equivalent English language provision

Welsh medium/bilingual provision

- concentrated in small number of institutions
- but we are encouraging providers to work together e.g.

Pontypridd College and four schools are developing health

and safety learning resources

Schools

- 37 Welsh medium sixth forms
- Welsh language ethos

Private Training Providers

- patchy, unplanned provision
- inadequate data, assumed that participation is very low

Welsh for Adults Provision

- extensive provision, wide geographical choice and opportunities for progression
- 21,011 enrolments in 2000/01 (15,984 in 1994/95)
- £3.1m allocated this financial year, with a funding weighting of 1.25

Action since April 2001

- Established bilingualism as a cross cutting theme in the Corporate Strategy
- Consulted widely – Focus Group 7 – 8 November
- Reviewed our inheritance

The Council to consider policy recommendations on March 21

The Future

- Coherent policy for entire post-16 sector, building on inheritance and assimilating sixth forms
- Actions based on evidence and research
- Must raise awareness of the cross cutting theme internally
- Cannot do it alone – must work closely with others
- Must address the progression of individuals
- Must work more closely with HEFCW

We will invest more: funding for initiatives set to rise from £255k to £750k