

Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 24 April 2002

Time: 2.00pm

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

Attendance:

Members

Gareth Jones, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Mick Bates	Liberal Democrat	Montgomeryshire
Cynog Dafis	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru	Llanelli
Huw Lewis	Labour	Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh, Deputy Minister	Labour	Clwyd West

Apologies (second-half of meeting)

Cynog Dafis

Alun Pugh

Jonathan Morgan

Committee Secretariat

Chris Reading

Clerk

Holly Pembridge

Deputy Clerk

Officials

In Attendance:

Richard Davies

Director, Department for Training and Education (DfTE)

Keith Davies

Head, Standards and Performance Division

Mike Harper

Head, Teaching and Leadership Division

Sue Lovell

Teaching and Leadership Division

Tony Widdrington

Office of the Counsel General

Also in attendance

Catrin Redknap

Committee's expert adviser on the Welsh Language in Education

Edwyn Williams	General Secretary, UCAC
Julia Burns	National President, UCAC
Mair Heulyn	Member, UCAC
Dr Cen Williams	Welsh Medium Teaching and Development Officer, University Board for Welsh Medium Teaching
Professor Wynn Thomas	Board Member, University Board for Welsh Medium Teaching

Susan Lewis	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Wales, Estyn
Liz Kidd	Head of Post-16 Education and Training, Estyn
Ann Keane	Managing HMI: Welsh Language, Bilingualism and Further Education
John Andrews	Chair, General Teaching Council for Wales
Gary Brace	Chief Executive, General Teaching Council for Wales

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; wife is a Head Teacher, School Inspector, member of ACCAC and Estyn committees
Jonathan Morgan	School Governor
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

Chair's Opening Remarks

1. The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the meeting and asked members if there were any new declarations of interest. Jonathan Morgan informed the Chair that he was a school governor.
2. The Chair asked the Committee if it was content for him to assume membership of the Public Appointments Panel, in his capacity as Chair, as the previous Chair had done. The Committee was content.
3. Members were thanked for attending the brainstorming session regarding the Committee's forthcoming policy review on the School of the Future. Members were to contact the Clerk if they had any further suggestions. The draft terms of reference for the review would be an agenda item in the near future.

Item One: Minister's report

1.1 The Minister briefly summarised the main points in her report. The Chair thanked the Minister for her report and invited questions from members.

1.2 Members raised the following issues:

- **New Education Bill** - Members were interested to know the likely timetable and the extent to which the Bill would include enabling powers, effectively transferring more control to the National Assembly. Members were particularly concerned that the Bill should enable the Welsh Assembly Government to have more flexibility in the areas of restructuring education and training organisations, funding, greater scope for job-sharing, teachers' pay and conditions and implementation of the Rees Report on student support. The Minister noted these comments and pointed out that powers with respect to teachers' pay and conditions were not devolved to the Assembly, nor did she want them to be. The Minister stated that the teachers' unions did not support demands for a separate Welsh system for teachers' pay and conditions. With regards to the Rees report, the Minister stated that her officials were still preparing analysis and advice and so it was too early to speculate on what might be included in the Bill. The Minister supported extension of job-sharing in education and training and said that she had asked her officials to examine this issue, with a view to preparing proposals for consultation. The Minister stated that this was a bid for a Welsh Education Bill to be included in the primary legislation programme in Westminster. It would have to compete with other UK bids and so there was no timetable yet. The Minister said that she did not wish to maximise the transfer powers to the Assembly but wanted sufficient flexibility to drive forward the Learning Country agenda.
- **Narrowing the Gap** - Members referred to media reports of the survey carried out by NASUWT (a teachers' union), alleging widespread dissatisfaction in the teaching profession. The Minister said that she had attended the NASUWT conference in Cardiff earlier in the day and stated that she did not agree with the media reports. The union survey showed that about 70% of teachers were satisfied with their job and that they broadly supported the Welsh Assembly Government's education policies. The Minister agreed to bring the final report of the Task Group to committee, once the Voluntary Sector Partnership Council had approved it.
- **PE and School Sport** - Members welcomed the fact that the Minister was implementing the main recommendations of the task group's report (Action Plan for Wales). Members asked when New Opportunities Fund (NOF) funding would be available and also raised the issue of linking the school sports initiatives with related topics, such as healthy eating. The Minister replied that she did not have to hand the detailed timetable against which NOF would be distributing the £48 million available in Wales over the next four years but she would write to the member concerned and copy her reply to the Committee. The Minister agreed that there should be better co-ordination of related education and health initiatives in schools and stated that she was discussing this matter with the Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt AM).
- **Voluntary Sector Partnership** - Members thanked the Minister for keeping them informed and raised the issue of how global citizenship could be incorporated in the school curriculum. The Minister replied that she had set up a task group, including officials and representatives of the voluntary sector, to advise on this matter. The Minister stated that the task group had met several times and was due to report to her later this year. The Minister agreed to report to the committee on

this matter in due course.

- **ICT** - Members noted that tenders had been received to establish the ICT Task Force and NGfL Cymru, in accord with recommendations in the committee's policy review report on ICT in Education. Members asked whether the Minister intended to report on the outcome of this tender process before the summer recess. Members also sought clarification on the duration of NOF funding for ICT training for teachers. The Minister invited the Deputy Minister (Alun Pugh AM) to respond, as this was a matter for which he had special responsibility as chair of the ICT Advisory Panel which would be guiding the work of both the Task Force and the NGfL Cymru team. The Deputy Minister stated that a sub-group of the Advisory Panel had already received presentations from the tenders and that further detailed evaluation was now taking place. The Deputy Minister stated that the Task Force and NGfL team would be required to prepare an action plan for consideration by the ICT Advisory Panel and this would be presented to committee, in due course. Keith Davies, a senior official, stated that NOF funding for ICT training for teachers had been made available for a three-year period but was now finished to the extent that it had been allocated to schools. However, NOF ICT training could continue until March 2003. Mr Davies said that, in future, was likely to make Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST) funding available to local educational authorities and schools for such training.
- **National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)** – Members asked who would be responsible for monitoring this scheme and expressed some concern that the mandatory requirement might deter some teachers from applying to become headteachers. Members asked the Minister to ensure that the training should take account of the Assembly's three main themes; equal opportunities, sustainable development and social inclusion. With regards to equal opportunities, some members pointed to the existing gender imbalance between classroom teachers (mainly women) and headteachers (mainly men). Members referred to the existing Leadership College in England and asked if this would still cater for teachers from Wales, or if new arrangements would apply. The Minister stated that officials from her Department would monitor the scheme. The Minister stated that the training would take account of the issues raised and that initial teacher training (ITT) institutions would be closely involved. The Minister stated that some of the training programmes would be specific to Wales but that teachers from Wales would still be able to attend courses at the Leadership College in England.

Item Two: Policy Review – Welsh Language in Education

Papers: ELL 07-02(p.2), (p.3) & (p.4)

2.1 Mair Heulyn an Athrawes Bro based in a language centre in Ceredigion, gave a short oral presentation on her experiences as an Athrawes Bro. She highlighted the following issues:

- She had worked in a language centre for latecomers for eight years.
- The children would attend the centre for two days every week for two-and-a half terms. It was felt to be more beneficial for the children to attend the language centre for a whole term.
- Currently, pupils in Welsh medium schools would realise that newcomers were unable to speak Welsh, so they would speak English out of courtesy. However, an unfavourable pattern of not conversing in Welsh would ensue.
- There were some success stories with regards to language centres but it was felt that the provision could be expanded upon.

- Mair Heulyn told the Committee that as a peripatetic teacher she worked in seven schools in Ceredigion. It could be beneficial to have two teachers leading in the classroom at the same time, as children could practice their Welsh language skills and be closely observed and encouraged.
- There was a need for more peripatetic teachers for pupils to have a good standard of Welsh language skills. Also, it was important to raise opportunities for people who spoke Welsh to use it socially, outside of the school environment.
- Welsh lessons should also be provided for parents of latecomers to enable parents and children to learn Welsh at the same time. It was felt that had lessons been free of charge, then more people would have learnt Welsh over time.
- It was desirable to have a Wales where everyone acknowledged that speaking two languages was acceptable.

2.2 Julia Burns, a teacher from an English medium secondary school in East Cardiff gave her own personal perspective:

- She had learnt Welsh as an adult and was now teaching Welsh as a second language in the school.
- A major problem was the lack of core status with Welsh as a second language, especially with SATs. In the secondary sector, it was dependent on the whim of individual schools.
- Pupils who received minimal contact with Welsh were less likely to progress and feel respect for the language.
- Currently, she was teaching second language Welsh GCSE with four hours a fortnight allocated. Last year, this had been achieved with three hours a fortnight. She considered that every subject should be allocated five hours as a minimum.
- Second language teachers were teaching a very academic subject. ACCAC had raised the profile of Welsh as a second language and this would be seen from September onwards.
- Second language Welsh teachers tended to have very heavy workloads, as the few hours given to Welsh meant that they had to take on other subjects.
- She felt that it would be desirable to show pupils examples of practical usage of the Welsh language, rather than just to teach them how to jump through 'hoops' to pass exams.

2.3 Edwyn Williams explained that there was a need to attract newcomers to the Welsh medium teaching sector. He emphasised to the Committee that UCAC were calling for an Extended GCSE Welsh qualification, as opportunities must be provided to stretch pupils studying Welsh as a second language.

2.4 Professor Wynn Thomas and Dr Cen Williams, University Board for Welsh Medium Teaching spoke from their paper **ELL 07-02(p.3)** and highlighted the following points:

- The paper updated that submitted to the Committee's Higher Education Policy Review. The modifications were based on two themes: reduction of staffing levels at the Centre and the extension of the doctorate/fellowship schemes.
- The revised paper/ proposal for the virtual centre had been prepared in consultation with those with experience in the Welsh medium education sector. It had been made clear that Welsh medium provision could not be extended without ensuring the use of existing provision.
- There was an urgent need to address training and recruitment, as some 40 per cent of Welsh medium teachers in HE were over 50 years of age.
- Over a period of ten years it was proposed to offer 128 research positions consisting of doctorates and fellowships. Funding could be increased through the financial savings made by a reduction in staff at the Centre. Doctorates would help keep young academics in research in Welsh education.

Fellows would serve colleges for half of the time and serve the sector nationally (by developing modules) the rest of the time.

- The Board would liaise with the Terminology Centre at Bangor and the Board of Celtic Studies.
- The modified paper ELL 07-02(p.3) confirmed the need to plan strategically and for Welsh medium teaching to be given a central role in the sector. It was hoped that there would be close collaboration with ELWa-HEFCW, the University of Wales and the National Assembly.

2.5 The Chief Inspector of Estyn, Susan Williams spoke to her paper and highlighted the key issues concerning all the sectors of education in Wales. She stated that the recommendations set out in the paper ELL 07-02(p.4) would require extra resources.

2.6 The Chair invited members to question the presenters. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Members asked if students, who had been taught through the medium of Welsh in secondary schools, felt they lacked the skills and confidence to then teach (others) through the medium of Welsh. Estyn pointed out that there had been examples of good practice of people now teaching bilingually who had not been before. There had been some courses in the Northwest where teachers had been trained to change medium, i.e. between English and Welsh. This example of best practice could be disseminated on a national level. UCAC suggested that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) could be used to help teachers who speak Welsh but who lack the confidence to teach in Welsh, to gain more confidence.
- There was interest in the benefits of releasing teachers out of the workplace for a period of a year or so, to learn a language. A similar scheme in the Basque Country had proved to be successful. Members asked what difference this type of scheme would make to Wales in terms of the growth of the Welsh Language. Dr Cen Williams said that he had been running a successful seven-month course every summer, for several years. He referred positively to the Minister's reference to piloting language learning sabbaticals for practitioners in the document, 'Reaching Higher: A Strategy for the Higher Education Sector in Wales'. He pointed out that there were different requirements for the primary and HE sectors but the Basque model would be a feasible approach for schools.
- In response to a question regarding the WLB and LEAs' effectiveness in strategic planning for the Welsh language, UCAC replied that this was an area for concern. LEAs in the past had tended to respond to parental pressure rather than to plan for anticipated demand. Some plans had not been carried forward. There was a need for a body to monitor and ensure the implementation of such strategic plans.
- Members raised the issue of language promotion and asked whether, if new Welsh-medium HE courses were developed, the concept of enterprise could be incorporated. The Board replied that in terms of enterprise culture, young people were being restricted by not having language skills. It was important that influential Welsh speakers had the language skills and confidence to use it in the appropriate areas of expertise and influence, including the business sector.
- There was some interest in the proposition that the removal of testing regimes could enhance the teaching and learning of Welsh as a second language. UCAC's representatives agreed that there was too much emphasis on testing and added they were heartened by the fact that the Minister had abolished tests at Key Stage One.
- The Minister asked if presenters thought that the way in which schools were categorised served as a help or a hindrance in moving towards a bilingual Wales. The Board responded that schools' categorisation could, in some cases, serve as a hindrance to the development and promotion of bilingualism. Schools should be thought of in the context of the communities that they served. It was felt that more flexible models of bilingualism were required; there was a challenge for every school to show how they had developed bilingualism. UCAC replied that it still believed that Category 'A'

schools should remain to teach purely through the medium of Welsh, at secondary level, as it was a chance for pupils to develop their skills.

- The Minister also asked what steps needed to be taken at a local, regional and national level to promote the Welsh language through the medium of ICT. All presenters agreed that the post-16 sector was the most appropriate sector to utilise ICT. UCAC pointed out that the use of technology could facilitate a wide range of courses. It was felt that CCETS would have to co-operate in such an initiative. The Board highlighted the requirement for staff development in the use of ICT. A good example had been the project 'Welsh Video Network' based at Swansea University. Students would also benefit from training to enable them to filter the Internet for specific information. There was a danger that ICT courses may be deemed as uniform, thus negating the concept of the university system and the valuable differences between HE institutions. Face-to-face physical contact was a vital component of teaching. Estyn pointed out the use of video-conferencing facilities in the FE system. Anglesey and the Sgiliaith centre were cited as examples of good practice.
- In response to members' concern that only 2% of FE courses were followed through the medium of Welsh, Estyn replied that there were some examples of good practice in FE colleges producing language schemes, such as Coleg Menai, Coleg Meirion Dwyfor and Coleg Pontypridd.
- In respect of the lack of Welsh-medium provision in the care sector, Estyn emphasised the huge gaps in occupational areas, especially the training in the media of both Welsh and English. There was a need to address this issue at local level: to assess supply and demand and Welsh medium/bilingual issues. Menter a Busnes would be a valuable agent in researching into local labour market intelligence.
- Members raised the issue of schools entering pupils for Welsh second language examinations when they had taken Welsh as first language at an earlier stage of their education. One member put forward the idea of one exam paper that would cater for those who were learners and those who were fluent Welsh speakers. Estyn suggested the notion of a double certificate GCSE that would enable pupils to achieve the highest qualification. It was important to raise awareness amongst parents, their children and schools that pupils' efforts would be undermined if they sat exams that did not stretch their capabilities.
- There was some discussion surrounding the concept of 'translanguaging' and how bilingualism as a skill in itself, could be promoted more effectively in Wales. Estyn pointed out that it was about to publish a new paper concerning dual literacy. The concept was based around pupils developing sophisticated skills in moving smoothly from one language to another. The paper included case studies outlining the process of this type of learning: pupils' understanding of a topic would be deepened by studying it through the medium of two languages. Both languages would appear as 'real' languages.
- The Chair asked presenters to suggest what they felt to be the key considerations for the growth of Welsh medium and bilingual education and training. Estyn suggested three key issues. Firstly, an audit of teachers who were able to teach through the medium of Welsh but were not doing so. Secondly, a continuum was needed from early years onwards. The resources were already in place for early years. Lastly, there was a need for an audit of good practice. UCAC suggested that better dissemination of good practice was required. Educational consultants should also act as assessors etc. LEAs would all need to co-operate and teachers would need to utilise CPD programmes. The Board explained that at HE level, the ethos of competition militated against the concept of collaboration.
- The Chair asked the Board if the working group would continue. The Board said that a final decision had not been made but group members wished to continue with their work.

Item Three: General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) – Corporate Plan 2002-2005

Paper: ELL 07-02(p.5)

3.1. John Andrews and Gary Brace spoke to their paper. Members were invited by the Chair to ask questions. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- Members asked the GTCW to outline the system of disciplinary procedures for teachers and the stage at which the GTCW would become involved. GTCW replied that it would deal with the issue of teachers' 'registerability'; school governors would deal with teachers' 'employability'. Cases of alleged professional misconduct were referred through to the National Assembly then through to DfES who would filter and retain the case if issues of child protection, medical unfitness were evident. Cases concerning alleged professional incompetence would be referred directly to the GTCW from a school/LEA governing body.
- In response to a question concerning whether teachers had the right of union representation throughout the whole process of a disciplinary procedure, the GTCW replied that this was the case. Teaching unions had been involved in training members of the Council. The function of the union would be to act in defence of the teacher. The GTCW would perform a judicial function – overseeing fairness of procedures.
- The Chair asked what the procedure would be if a post-holder lost his/her job in a school. The Council replied that it would become involved after the dismissal/resignation of the teacher, where the cause of the dismissal/resignation was misconduct or incompetence.
- The Council was asked what the position was in relation to teachers who had not been awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The Council said that there was an anomaly in the case of some teachers who had qualified with a PGCFE qualification before 1974. In England, regulations permitted them to gain QTS whereas they could not in Wales. Teachers without QTS had to be re-classified as instructors. There was a need for regulations to rectify the position. The Minister indicated that regulations were likely to be put in place this year. The Council said that it was delighted by this news.
- Members wanted assurance that Equality of Opportunity would underpin the ethos of the work carried out by the GTCW and would pervade the teaching profession. It was felt that there had been under-representation of ethnic minorities and women, in general, who had not had much access to professional development. The Council assured members that the concept of Equality of Opportunity was firmly embedded in the document, the 'Code for the Professional Conduct of Teachers' (January 2002). It provided a fundamental starting point for principles relating to professional behaviour. The council was asked if there was a serious, persistent breach of Equality of Opportunity, whether a teacher would be de-registered. The Council responded that in the first instance the school would refer the case to the Council itself on dismissal/resignation of a teacher.
- There was some discussion surrounding funding streams for professional development. The Council stated that whole school needs were currently catered for through GEST. The needs for individual teachers had been neglected, hence an appropriate funding mechanism was needed to address individual teachers in relation to their schools' needs. The Minister outlined the unique approach to CPD in Wales, in that it served all teachers. Other funding mechanisms could be utilised, such as European Union funded programmes. The Council explained that as part of the CPD pilot project, a booklet had been issued to teachers where international visits and exchange programmes had been listed. Teachers could then pursue their applications in conjunction with their LEAs.
- The importance of attracting more mature entrants into the profession was discussed, as was the importance of the School Survey Census – and the need for timely, annual information. Also, the need to maintain and raise the status of the profession was recognised. The Council and Minister

agreed schools should not be burdened with bureaucratic requests for information. It was suggested that the annual school census could be supplemented with a limited range of additional questions, which could vary annually according to what information was required.

- The Chair congratulated the GTCW on its efforts over the last year as a new body and thanked the presenters for their positive messages.

Item Four: Consideration of the Committee's draft annual report

Paper: ELL 07-02(p.6)

4.1 In accordance with standing order 9.9, the committee considered its draft annual report to be submitted to Plenary in May for information. The Chair asked members for their comments. The following issues were raised:

- Section 6.6 should include reference to the appointment of Catrin Redknap, as the Committee's Expert Adviser to the policy review of the Welsh Language in Education.
- Section 6.7: replace 'benefits of bilingualism and education' with, 'benefits of bilingualism in education'.
- Section 8.4: the report should indicate that the GTCW will already have presented evidence to the Committee, rather than, 'it will'.

4.2 The Chair asked the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

Item Five: Consideration of the Strategic Forward Work Programme

Paper: ELL 07-02(p.7)

5.1 The committee considered its strategic forward work programme in accordance with standing order 9.9. The work programme had been copied to other subject committees and the Cabinet but for comments but none was received.

5.2 The Chair asked the committee for its comments. The following issues were raised:

- The Minister referred to the section entitled, '*Scrutiny of then Minister (SO 9.7(ii))*': remove phrase, 'the Committee also intends to scrutinise,' and replace with, 'notably in relation to'.
- It was felt that the ELL Committee should follow the work of the Equality of Opportunity Committee's policy review of Gypsy Travellers, as it would be covering issues such as access to education. It was suggested that a joint committee session might be appropriate. The text should be amended slightly to allow for such a request.

5.3 The Chair asked the Clerk to make the necessary changes.

Item Six: Minutes of the 20 March meeting

Paper: ELL 06-02(mins)

6.1 The Committee accepted the minutes as a true record.

Committee Secretariat April 2002