

## Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

**Date:** 8 May 2002

**Time:** 2.00pm

**Venue:** Committee Rooms 3 & 4, National Assembly Building

### Attendance:

#### Members

Gareth Jones, Chair	Plaid Cymru	Conwy
Lorraine Barrett	Labour	Cardiff South and Penarth
Mick Bates	Liberal Democrat	Montgomeryshire
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru	Llanelli
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh, Deputy Minister	Labour	Clwyd West
Owen John Thomas	Plaid Cymru	South Wales Central

#### Apologies

Cynog Dafis

Huw Lewis

#### Substitutions

Owen John Thomas for Cynog Dafis

## **Committee Secretariat**

Chris Reading	Clerk
Holly Pembridge	Deputy Clerk

## **Officials**

### **In Attendance:**

Richard Davies	Director, Department for Training and Education (DfTE)
Derek Adams	Head, Higher Education Division
Keith Davies	Head, Standards and Performance Division
Andrew Felton	Office of the Counsel General

### **In attendance:**

Professor Richard Daugherty	Chair of the review's Steering Committee (UW Aberystwyth)
Professor John Furlong	Director of the review and co-author of report (Cardiff University)
Professor David Egan	Chair of UCET Cymru (UWIC)
Dr Joan Netten	Memorial University Newfoundland, Canada
Professor Claude Germain	University of Quebec Montreal

## Also in attendance

Catrin Redknap	Committee's expert adviser for the review of Welsh Language in Education
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## 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; Member of Court, University of Wales
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; Member of Court, University of Wales
Lorraine Barrett	School Governor
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

## Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the meeting and asked Members if there were any new declarations of interest. The Chair and Jonathan Morgan both declared they were members of the Court, University of Wales.

## Item One: Report on 'Educational Research Capacity in Wales'

### *Paper: ELL 09-02(p.1)*

1. Professor Furlong spoke from a PowerPoint presentation emphasising the main points stipulated in paper ELL 09-02(p.1). The Chair thanked the presenters and invited Members to comment. The following issues were raised:

- The Minister readily acknowledged the importance of addressing the issues surrounding research infrastructures and networks in Wales. She explained that proposals were well advanced for establishing a new Liaison Group to provide a focal point for promoting joint working and collaboration and for taking forward core policies in training and education.
- The draft terms of reference that had been drawn up for the new Group would enable it to concentrate not only on establishing priority areas for research, having regard to perceived gaps in the existing knowledge base but also on considering how best to improve research capacity and infrastructure. It would receive dedicated support from a new post within the Training and Education Department and from a proposed secondment of a post-doctoral researcher from the HE sector.
- The suggested timetable for implementation anticipated that the Liaison Group would be appointed during July and have its inaugural meeting by mid-August. The appointment of a secondee would proceed in parallel, with the post being filled by early October.
- Referring to her "Reaching Higher" (HE strategic document), the Minister re-emphasised that it was vital not only to support educational research but also to assess its contribution to and impact on educational policy. The Minister would be inviting HEFCW to review the current funding methodology. And additional funds would be considered to promote a research base and to support and encourage research groups to achieve even higher standards. It was the Minister's desire to have evidence-based information to help tackle various issues identified in the Report on 'Educational Research Capacity in Wales'.
- The presenters welcomed the establishment of the new Liaison Group. However, they nonetheless remained concerned that research specialists were leaving Wales to take advantage of enhanced opportunities elsewhere – and that this was leading to serious capacity problems. By way of illustrating these concerns reference was made to a perceived gap in capacity for conducting early years educational research. ELL Committee had been fortunate to have acquired the services of early years expert Margaret Hanney for its policy review of that field of education.
- In response to a question about greater co-ordination and staff development in educational research in Wales, presenters replied that institutions seemed not to have taken research capacity seriously as a staff development issue. If institutions were outside the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), as were half the institutions in Wales, they would have neither incentive nor funds to carry out such research. However, it was submitted that all staff, even those from institutions that were not in the RAE, needed to be part of research networks and part of institutions with staff development policies and resources.
- Research capacity was also interconnected with teacher research in education. Teachers were

expected to be researchers too, yet they were not being developed in terms of research expertise. In response to the Committee's HE Review, it had been stated that Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be looked at holistically. ITT was time-consuming and expensive.

- Members were surprised to learn that there appeared to be few strong links between educational research and psychology/social policy. They heard that there had been a significant break between education departments and psychology departments through distributions of incentives, notions of hierarchy and status – all of which hindered collaboration. It was hoped that the Liaison Group would examine this issue and provide a strategic lead in redressing it.
- There was some interest in how research inside Wales was perceived by academics elsewhere. Members were told that wider recognition was enjoyed by some groups of high quality researchers in Wales e.g. the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University – which had a strong cohort of individual experts. Such recognition was also enjoyed by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, albeit this was confined to only two areas of research activity, each comprising just one researcher.
- Members commented on the good RAE results that had been achieved in Wales, both recently and in the past, prompting some discussion as to whether this would attract people into research at institutions in Wales. In presenters' experience, however, it had been difficult to recruit post-doctoral researchers of a high enough calibre from within the UK. This reinforced the need to develop existing staff and provide networks – something that had been capitalised on only at Cardiff University and was not servicing the rest of Wales. It was difficult to find credible academics in the field of educational research.
- Asking why organisations such as the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the National Assembly itself routinely commissioned research from institutions outside Wales, Members were informed that it was difficult for local authorities to commission research. Outside the UK, there was a well-developed sense of research but this was not occurring in Local Education Authorities (LEAs). ACCAC was a major commissioner. When the National Curriculum was reviewed in 1997/98, the University of Aberystwyth worked jointly with the Scottish Research Council for Education. The Minister added that there were different types of research commissioned. For example, the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) carried out evidence-based work in collaboration with Estyn on the recruitment and retention of teachers whilst also contributing to the Scottish Research Council's (SRC) research programme.
- Members asked about the effect of competition on educational research in Wales and were told that the competitive nature of research assessment was in fact having a damaging effect on current capacity. Presenters highlighted the fact that Wales was home to one of only two departments in the UK which had been awarded a 5\* RAE rating in RAE 2001. That apart, however, research capacity in Wales was very widely diffused, often in very small "pockets" of only one or two researchers who had little or no realistic chance of attracting significant Research Council funding.
- The Minister responded by reference to her HE strategy and to the funding it foreshadowed for supporting collaborations both between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with those isolated "pockets" of research excellence. The Minister had invited institutions to collaborate and make proposals to her.

- Members commented on the differences between the systems operated in England and Wales, and asked how links between the two might be improved. Presenters told the Committee that beneath the umbrella of the National Education Research Forum (NERF) a funders' forum had been established which included the Research Councils, the major charities etc. Though not formally a member of the Forum the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) was nonetheless a partner in the peripheral networks and was arranging to receive copies of agendas etc. There was also the opportunity to tap into some of the research activity in England. Mention was also made of the "EPPI-Centre" which was concerned with establishing the extent of research knowledge-base in particular fields and which could, as necessary, be harnessed to focus in on Welsh issues.
- One Member asked about the extent to which the new Liaison Group would be expected to assist in addressing the funding issue and was informed that the Group be set a clear agenda which would provide an appropriate national perspective. Wales needed a lively research culture that could be opted into as appropriate.
- The issue arose of designated research-active staff in Wales and how this compared with departments in Scotland and England. There are currently eleven education departments in Wales, all providing vibrant teacher training. Of these, the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, with 50 staff, represents the largest educational research community but– despite this, the School had not entered for the RAE. In Scotland, a major rationalisation had slimmed down the number of education departments six departments, compared with only four in Northern Ireland.
- Presenters referred to the GTCW's evaluation of CPD. There were encouraging signs: from the first batch of funding, 150 teaching research scholarships would be available from the second batch, another 250 people would be able to pursue CPD opportunities. There was an increased need for opportunities for the teaching profession to engage in educational research.

1. The Chair thanked presenters for their contribution to the meeting.

## **Item Two: Policy Review – Welsh Language in Education – Experience of bilingual teaching in other countries**

***Papers: ELL 09-02(p.2) and ELL 09-02(p.3)***

2.1 Dr Joan Netten, Professor Claude Germain and Nick Gardner all spoke from PowerPoint presentations to highlight specific issues set out in their papers. The Chair then invited Members to ask questions. The following issues were raised in discussion:

- There was some discussion regarding the Basque immersion system and whether parents had the choice to opt out of the system. There were four change-points: age six, age 12, age 16 and university entrance. It was pointed out that one feature of vocational training was the difficulty of getting viable groups of students together. One Member asked at what stage parents were opting into the Basque-medium school system. Members were informed that generally, parents had opted for their children to receive Basque-medium education from the age of three, at the age full-time

education commenced. Education was not compulsory until the age of six but for the last ten-fifteen years, children had tended to start at the age of three. In-migration from other parts of Spain ceased in 1980 due to the oil crises. However, it was felt that the Basque Government might have to consider the incoming number of foreign immigrants from South America and North Africa.

- Members were interested to hear about the background of language immersion teaching in Canada and asked about the difference between immersion schools and francophone schools. Members were told that Canada was an officially bilingual country, which promoted the concept of linguistic duality. This was one of the reasons for increasing anglophones' knowledge of French. Most bilingual people in Canada were francophones and learnt English in order to function. The majority of anglophones were currently dependent on schools for their exposure to French. A Federal initiative established in the 1960's had anticipated that 25 per cent of young people would be bilingual. The present Minister for Heritage (Canada) had an ambition for 50 per cent of young people in Canada to be bilingual by 2010. Francophone schools in minority areas were protected by charter – the French first language education system was a separate system. Anglophones could not attend French first language schools.
- Members asked whether there was any difference in pupil teacher ratios between the intensive French programme and the core French programme. Members asked how long pupils' interest was sustained in French after pursuing the intensive programme. Members were informed that students did not learn subject matter through the second language for the first six months. Students learnt the language through games and project-type activities. There would not be any children who did not succeed on this type of course as children learnt their 'own' language. Consequently, remedial activities were not required and dropout did not occur. The course consisted of an activity-orientated programme to develop communicative competence. Pupils could be given the opportunity to follow a couple of other subjects in the second language. The programme was designed to be inclusive and not selective. As for the immersion programme, parents and their children opted for that course.
- There was some discussion concerning class size. In the Canadian system, entire classes would be taken for the intensive course. Class sizes in the Basque country had dropped: very few children attended the Model A schools as there was less demand. The Basque Government, however, had to keep jobs open for Spanish speakers.
- Presenters explained to the Committee that in order to teach intensive second language French, the level of teachers' competence did not have to be as high as that of teachers of immersion French. Teachers did not have to explain concepts through the medium of the second language. To upgrade teachers, summer institutes with an additional language component, summer placements and professional development were available. Basque specialist teachers had been placed in Model A schools but this practice had been abandoned as there had been problems with these teachers integrating into the ordinary activity in the schools. They were not fully-fledged civil servants. The Basque system had already made use of Basque teachers already in the system and offered them three-month language training courses – which were paid full-time.
- There was some interest as to whether immersion for anglophones and restrictions placed for francophone schools might create psychological barriers through the development of separate linguistic skills. Historically, francophones and anglophones did not mix easily in Canada and this

was complicated by geography. Small pockets of minority francophone communities felt threatened by anglophones through the process of assimilation, as they tended to lose the (French) language. The francophone schools were strengthened by the chartered protection but much depended on geographical location. Currently, there was more of an ethos of friendship between francophones and anglophones: francophone schools and pupils on immersion programmes now met and shared some of the curriculum i.e. physical education and music. Presenters did not believe that immersion schools contributed to negative feelings, they were positive because they were protected.

- There was some discussion concerning the social impact of the centrally planned Basque Education system. The Committee was told that it was difficult to produce exact figures on linguistic usage: the census did not offer much information. The Socio-linguistic survey had suggested an upturn in the knowledge and use of Basque. There had been a clear increase in the degree of transmission in the family. There was a general awareness that measures within the education system alone were not sufficient to 'Basquise' society. As children grew up, they would become more aware of the societal awards attached to using the Spanish Language. On the subject of language transmission in Canada, it was noted that when two francophones married, the dominant language was usually French, as when two anglophones married, the dominant language would be English. However, if a francophone and anglophone married, the dominant language tended to be English; if a francophone married an anglophone who had received French immersion training, then French would be spoken at home. Core French teachers appeared to be very interested in the intensive French programme as the programme provided considerable flexibility.
- Members asked whether presenters thought that the way in which languages were taught in the UK, i.e. non-intensive as opposed to intensive. The Canadian presenters believed the intensive approach to be the more effective as pupils' skills and competence needed to be brought up to a level which would allow them to communicate. It was felt that immersion courses were at their most successful when they were intensive at the beginning. The drip-feed method (4-14 years) was felt to be wasteful of resources as so many people dropped out. Entire classes up to grade ten (on intensive courses) did not drop out. Pupils appeared to want to resume learning French because they could communicate as autonomous learners. Members learnt that in the Basque Country there had been calls for the abolishment of Model A schools but it was felt that really there was a need to see how the efficacy of Model A schools could be improved.
- Members discussed the implications of a national strategy for the Welsh Language to promote it at local levels. It was felt appropriate to have some kind of encouragement at a national level but there was provincial jurisdiction in Canada and the Federal Government could only encourage language promotion through monetary grants etc. It was felt that without this kind of encouragement, some provincial governments would be less involved in teaching French. In Canada, the approach was not to force people to learn a second language (French) but to give people the choice/opportunity to learn if they so wished. Some parents had initial hesitations in allowing their children to learn French, therefore late immersion further on in the education system was offered. However, the immersion system was selective, as only very able students would be permitted to pursue the programme. Whilst the intensive programme gave a second chance to pupils to see whether they could learn another language.
- Presenters were asked if the production of (second language) teaching materials was problematic in Canada. The national core French study programme was multidimensional and as a consequence, too translation-orientated. There had been problems in the core programme with teaching

communicative competence and so there had been a move towards a theme-based and resource-based approach. The teacher could take pupils in the direction he/she desired but the teacher would have to be well trained as the approach called for an integrated teaching methodology. In contrast, adults learning Basque were taught via a task-based approach.

- The Minister commented that there had been a growth in Model B and D schools in the Basque Country. Model B was clearly more effective than Model A in nurturing language skills in Basque but Model D was clearly more effective than Model B. Model B was highly effective in persuading many parents towards a reasonable amount of Basque-medium education. The growth of Model D schools had been largely due to demand from Spanish-speaking parents.

2.2 The Chair thanked presenters for their valuable contribution, as they had provided an important international perspective to the policy review.

### **Item Three: Minutes of 2 May meeting**

3.1 As a result of the Bank Holiday weekend, the minutes of the last meeting would be ratified at the Committee's next meeting on 22 May.

**There was one paper to note:**

#### **Strategy for Older People**

*Paper: ELL 09-02(p.4)*

**Committee Secretariat May 2002**