

Minutes of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Date: 26 June 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
Cynog Dafis	Plaid Cymru	Mid and West Wales
Jane Davidson, Assembly Minister	Labour	Pontypridd
Janice Gregory	Labour	Ogmore
Ann Jones	Labour	Vale of Clwyd
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru	Llanelli
Jonathan Morgan	Conservative	South Wales Central
Alun Pugh, Deputy Minister	Labour	Clwyd West

Apologies

Huw Lewis

Substitutions

Ann Jones

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

Elizabeth Taylor

Head, Schools Management Division

Mike Harper

Head, Teaching and Leadership Division

Judith Cole

Central Support Unit (DfTE)

Sue Lovell

Teaching and Leadership Division

Andrew Felton

Office of the Counsel General

Also in attendance

Catrin Redknapp

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
Helen Mary Jones	Registered Teacher
Alun Pugh	Wife is a college lecturer

Chair's Opening Remarks

1. The Chair welcomed Ann Jones who was substituting for Huw Lewis. The Chair extended the Committee's congratulations to Huw Lewis and Lynne Neagle on the birth of their son.
2. The Chair welcomed the Committee and members of the public to the meeting and asked members if there were any new declarations of interest. There were none.

Item One: Minister's Report

Paper: ELL 12-01(p.1)

1. The Minister introduced her written report to the Committee. The Chair asked members to question the Minister in the order of specific topics as outlined in her report.
2. The following issues were raised in discussion:
 - **Teacher's Pay** – members welcomed the additional £18.7m to be made available to local education authorities (LEAs) for 2002-03 as a special grant. Members were concerned that head teachers would have to meet ongoing costs for performance management, in relation to teachers moving up the pay spine. The Minister stated that this was the first year for new arrangements for the upper pay spine and that these addressed the concerns of unions such as NAHT and SHA with regard to pay pressures and performance management. The Minister stated that the Finance Minister had established a treasury working group with local government to review mechanisms for pay and performance management. The Minister stated that the new Education Bill outlined proposals, which would facilitate a dialogue between LEAs and schools on budgets. In response to a question, concerning the timing of her announcement on teachers' pay, the Minister said that she had decided to make the announcement as soon as practicably possible, to allay the concerns of teachers, and

before the end of May as expected.

- **Timetable on HE Collaboration** – one member referred to the Committee's report on the policy review of higher education and the recommendation concerning the Minister, ELWa-HEFCW and HEW entering into dialogue with the University of Wales, to critically review the appropriateness its present structure. The Minister was asked if she would meet these bodies to discuss the proposal outlined in the recommendation. The Minister indicated that she would be meeting Higher Education Institution (HEI) Chairs and Governors indirectly in due course. The issues raised by Sir David Williams in his recent report on the University of Wales would be discussed.
- **Assembly Learning Grant (ALG)** – in response to a question from a member, the Minister replied that information on the ALG was available, as an information campaign had been launched on 12 June. Those students already pursuing higher education courses would automatically assessed for eligibility of the Grant. The process of assessing eligibility criteria would be started as soon as possible. The Minister would write to members with a note outlining the programme for the application process. There was some concern from members about ongoing pressures on budgets in the FE sector, owing to the widening access agenda. The Minister stated that the National Council-ELWa was responsible for funding FE colleges. The Minister stated that she had allocated £12m across the further and higher education sectors for financial contingency funds. The Deputy Minister expressed concern about misrepresentation concerning the ALG in the national media.
- **Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs)** – in response to a member's query, the Minister confirmed that all CCETs were receiving both secretarial and developmental support from the National Council-ELWa. The Minister stated that the 21 CCETs were an ad hoc group of local stakeholders who made recommendations concerning the way learning opportunities should be delivered locally. The Minister stated that all CCETs wanted to expand provision opportunities in their local areas. Members asked how the National Council-ELWa would monitor the delivery of schemes. The Minister stated that this was a matter for the National Council-ELWa.
- **Pay in the FE Sector** – members raised the issue of the disparity in pay between secondary school teachers and FE college lecturers. The Minister paid tribute to the success of the FE sector in Wales, particularly the large increase in students participating in learning opportunities. The Minister assured the Committee that she was committed to helping achieve parity of esteem between school teachers' pay and that of FE college lecturers. The Minister explained that she was in dialogue with FE trades unions, Fforwm and individual FE colleges. The Minister stated that she had invited Fforwm to provide evidence to the National Council-ELWa concerning the need for extra resources for the FE sector for 2002-03.

Item Two: Policy Review - Welsh Language in Education – final consideration of draft report

Papers: ELL 12-02(p.2)& ELL 12-02(p.3)

2.1 The Committee considered and ratified the draft report of its policy review of the Welsh Language (in Education) and identified the report's key recommendations.

2.2 The Chair asked for members' comments and suggestions, a summary of which is below:

- Helen Mary Jones, the Clerk and the Minister all submitted proposed amendments in writing to the Committee. These can be viewed at Annexes A, B and C respectively;
- Amendments proposed by Helen Mary Jones; *A1 and A2 were accepted with modification and A3*

was withdrawn. A4 related to recommendation 14 and it was agreed to delete recommendation 14, therefore A4 was redundant. A5 was agreed in principle and the Minister's officials would provide revised wording. This has subsequently been undertaken. A6 was accepted with additional text to be included in the report. This would be provided by Minister's officials and has since been received. Amendments B1-B7 were agreed but B8 was withdrawn.

- The Clerk's proposed amendment was accepted but it was decided that there was no need for an associated recommendation;
- The Minister's proposed amendment was accepted;
- There was some discussion concerning the powers of the Welsh Language Board to ensure the implementation by LEAs of agreed Welsh Language Schemes (recommendation A1, submitted by Helen Mary Jones). It was determined that, in such circumstances, the Board could instigate a judicial review but that it had no direct powers to enforce compliance. The Committee agreed to replace "monitor and evaluate" with "ensure" in this recommendation.
- In response to a query from Jonathan Morgan, the Clerk confirmed that recommendation number 14 in ELL 12-02(p.3) should not have been included, as this matter was covered by recommendation number 8.
- The Committee identified six key recommendations and these are listed at Annex D.

2.2 The Clerk informed the Committee that the joint report on this policy review would contain two parts: Part 1 - Culture Committee's contribution and Part 2 - Education and Lifelong Learning Committee's contribution. The report would contain a summary of all the recommendations and the key recommendations of both committees would be clearly identified. There might also be some minor changes to the format when the two parts were merged, to ensure consistency.

2.3 The Chair thanked Catrin Redknap (the Committee's expert adviser for this policy review) for her advice, commitment and dedication.

Item Three: Budget Planning Round (BPR) 2002

Papers: ELL 12-02 (p.4a) & (p.4b)

3.1 The Minister presented her paper to the Committee and then invited members to determine their budget priorities for the coming year.

3.2 Members raised the following issues:

- Special Education Needs (SEN) provision;
- Disparity in pay and conditions between FE lecturers and teachers;
- Small/rural schools – resource implications;
- ICT investment – ring-fenced funds;
- Assembly Learning Grant;
- Welsh Language Policy Review;
- Schools to have three-year budgetary cycle;
- Disaffection;
- Knowledge Exploitation Fund in HE;
- Research and development capacity in HE;
- Reducing class sizes for Key Stage 3;
- Equal of Opportunities – implementation of the Stephen Lawrence report;

- School buildings - capital refurbishment programme;
- Training of professionals in the field of Special Educational Needs;
- Reducing Bureaucratic burdens in schools; and
- Safe Routes to School (within the portfolio of the Minister for Environment, Planning and Transport).

3.3 The Minister responded to the issues raised as summarised below:

- **SEN** – the Minister stated that the new SEN Code of Practice made it easier for parents to make demands. SEN care/provision would also have an ongoing cost over the years;
- **FE** - the Minister noted members' concerns;
- **Rural schools** - £3.5m would be allocated to rural schools next year;
- **ICT** – the Minister endorsed the commitment to the learning agenda, and stated that extra funding that had been allocated;
- **ALG** – the Minister stated that this was the 'pathfinder' year and confirmed that take-up would be monitored from inception;
- **Class sizes** – the Minister stated that the reduction of class sizes at Key Stages 1 and 2 had been delivered and the statutory requirements for Key Stage 3 would be assessed;
- **Stephen Lawrence Report** – the Minister stated that appropriate funding would be available through Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST);
- **Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens** – the Minister reaffirmed her commitment to addressing this problem, in partnership with schools and LEAs;
- **Continuing Professional Development** - the Minister drew attention to bespoke programmes for CPD currently being implemented;
- **HE** – the Minister stated that she had set out her strategy for the HE sector in *Reaching Higher*;
- **School Buildings** – the Minister stated that she was taking a keen interest in this matter and was pleased to report that LEAs had improved their performance, in terms of spending their funding for capital works, compared with last year; and
- **Disaffection** – the Minister stated that appropriate funding would be available through GEST.

3.4 The Chair summarised the Committee's advice as representing an endorsement of the priorities set out in the Minister's paper for the whole period covered by the BPR adding that for the first year additional priority should be given to:

- FE provision;
- Special Education Needs (SEN); and
- Welsh Language in education and training.

The Committee also expressed support for the Safe Routes to School initiative.

The Chair stated that he would write to the Minister, confirming these priorities.

Item Four: Minutes of 12 June meeting

Paper: ELL 11-02(mins)

4.1 Members accepted the minutes of 12 June meeting as a true record.

There was one paper to note:

GTCW Legislation

Paper: ELL 12-02(p.5)

Committee Secretariat June 2002

Annex A

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

POLICY REVIEW OF WELSH LANGUAGE

Amendments proposed by the Clerk

Paragraph 6.94 - delete second sentence and insert the following:

The progress made by many pupils learning Welsh as a second language was acknowledged, as was the valuable work carried out by the *Athrawon Bro* and Centres for Latecomers. The Committee heard that the *Athrawon Bro* represent a key aspect of the language support service for pupils and their teachers, offering classroom support, teaching materials and assistance with policy matters. As noted above, they also have an important role to play in the bridging projects designed to ensure continuity of linguistic provision between Key Stages 2 and 3.

Recommendation: before the current Recommendation 9 ('Schools should comply ...'):

The review currently being undertaken by Estyn of the *Athrawon Bro* service should form the basis of a strategy to expand and enhance the service provided by them.

Policy Review of the Welsh Language

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee 25 June 2002

A) Amendments to Draft Report - proposed by Helen Mary Jones

Amendment 1

Page 11 – insert new recommendation before current recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that the Minister prepare a national strategic framework to ensure that rigorous mechanisms are in place for co-ordinating the planning, evaluation and development of Welsh medium and bilingual education, and that the Minister present an Action Plan to the National Assembly to outline how the objectives set out in the framework are to be delivered and which bodies are responsible for which aspects of delivery.

Amendment 2

Page 11 – add at end of recommendation 2:

", to ensure that the Action Plan is effectively delivered"

Amendment 3

Page 16 - recommendation 5, in line 2 after "increasing" insert "Welsh medium," before "bilingual"

Amendment 4

Page 23 – recommendation 14

re-draft to read:

The Assembly Minister should, in due course, critically review the appropriateness

Page 24 – recommendation 17, re-draft so as to read:

The Committee recommends that the Assembly Minister should consider, with the National Council – ELWa and HEFCW, the scope for introducing should introduce pilot language learning sabbaticals in the school and FE sectors, similar to those proposed in the HE sector, to expand the pool of practitioners able to teach Welsh and through the medium of the language.

Amendment 6

Page 35 – before recommendation 30, insert new recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the national strategic framework contains a specific commitment to ensuring that the right of pupils with special educational needs to have access to provision to meet their needs in their language of choice on the basis of equality throughout Wales is acknowledged and acted upon.

B. Other suggestions for re-wording - not submitted as formal amendments, but to be raised in committee

1. Page 9 - in 6.35

*Establishing this national framework should involve clarifying **acknowledging***

2. Page10 - in 6.42

*The Committee feels **recommends** that the Welsh Language Board should be given sufficient resources to fulfil its statutory responsibility to ~~monitor effectively~~ **ensure** the implementation of the schemes approved by it.*

3. Page 10 – in Recommendation 1

delete "of" at end of line 3 and "dialogue" at the beginning of line 4 and insert "the understanding of accountability and responsibility, and of co-operation"

4. Page 13 – 6.59

The Committee is aware that one of supports the key recommendation of the Extending Entitlement report is that which states

5. Page 14 – 6.63

insert new sentence at the end of paragraph: *"This stage is obviously of crucial importance "*.

6. Page 16 – 6.73

add at end of paragraph: *"and that the Early Years Centres should support and contribute to these developments."*

7. Page 17 – 6.79

first line *"In Welsh **speaking** schools"*

8. Page 18 – 6.84

***There should be** a strategy to facilitate expansion of this model should be based on a comprehensive audit of demand.*

Education and Lifelong Learning Committee

Policy Review of the Welsh Language

Amendment to text of draft report – proposed by the ELL Minister

25 June

Text – to be inserted prior to the recommendation below in the body of the report

The Welsh Joint Education Committee's examination entry regulations make clear that pupils studying Welsh as a first language should **not** be entered for a second-language examination. It is inappropriate and educationally unsound for pupils who are capable of sitting a first-language examination to be entered for a second-language examination. In effect, the second-language course would represent regression and not progression for pupils who have followed the Welsh programme of study in key stage 3.

The WJEC itself is responsible for ensuring that its entry regulations are enforced. The WJEC regulations are published annually in both the general regulations booklet and the specification for GCE and GCSE Welsh second language. Further, for each examination cycle, heads of examination centres are required to sign declarations to certify that all candidates entered for GCE and GCSE Welsh second language examinations fulfil the entry requirements.

Recommendation – to replace existing recommendation no.9

Schools should comply with the WJEC examinations entry regulations and enter pupils for the most appropriate GCSE language examination

Policy Review of the Welsh Language

The Committee agreed the following key recommendations;

The Committee recommends that the Assembly Minister should provide new guidance to improve the coherence between School Organisation Plans, Education Strategic Plans and Welsh Language Education Schemes. This guidance should focus on increasing the understanding of accountability and responsibility, and co-operation between schools, LEAs, the Welsh Language Board and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Committee recommends that the Assembly Minister, with local education authorities and the Welsh Language Board, should prepare a national strategic framework to ensure that rigorous mechanisms are in place for co-ordinating the planning, evaluation and development of Welsh-medium and bilingual education.

The Committee acknowledges the crucial role of Welsh language immersion teaching during Early Years, and recommends that this provision should be expanded and the key role of the *Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin* recognised.

The Committee recommends that the Assembly Minister should commission ACCAC, Estyn and the Welsh Language Board to establish an agreed set of criteria for assessing current levels of continuity. A thorough analysis of the reasons for the apparent lack of continuity should be undertaken, and appropriate measures should be adopted.

The Committee recommends that thorough research should be undertaken into the feasibility of measuring pupils' competence in Welsh along a linguistic continuum.

The Committee recommends that the national strategic framework should contain a specific commitment to ensuring that the right of pupils with special educational needs to have access to provision to meet their needs, in their language of choice on the basis of equality throughout Wales, is acknowledged and acted upon.