

# Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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[The Children, Young People and Education  
Committee](#)

30/09/2015

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

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Public from the Remainder of the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are recorded in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
Suzy Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymru Welsh Conservatives
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
David Rees	Llafur (Cadeirydd Dros Dro y Pwyllgor) Labour (Temporary Chair of the Committee)
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Simon Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Jo-Anne Daniels	Cyfarwyddwr y Gyfarwyddiaeth Seilwaith, Cwricwlwm, Cymwysterau a Chymorth i Ddysgwyr Director of the Infrastructure, Curriculum, Qualifications and Learner Support Directorate
Huw Lewis	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau) Assembly Member, Labour (The Minister for Education and Skills)
Dr Brett Pugh	Cyfarwyddwr Cyfarwyddiaeth y Gweithlu a Safonau Ysgolion Director of the School Standards and Workforce Directorate

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**  
**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
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Michael Dauncey	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk
Sian Thomas	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod am 09:29.  
The public part of the meeting began at 09:29.*

### **Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions**

David Rees: Good morning. Can I welcome Members and the public to this morning's session of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, where we will be continuing our evidence on the regional consortia? We'll also then have a second session on the progress of the Donaldson review and the curriculum. This morning, we have the Minister with us, and we'll move onto that in a minute.

Can I remind Members, please, to turn your mobile phones and any other equipment that makes noises off so it doesn't interfere with the broadcasting equipment? There is no scheduled fire alarm, so can you please follow the directions of the ushers if the alarm does go off? The meeting is bilingual, and the headphones are available for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1. If people require amplification, it's available on channel 2 via the headphones. We've received apologies from Ann Jones, John Griffiths and Lynne Neagle. Can I welcome Sandy Mewies, who is substituting for Ann Jones this morning?

09:30

### **Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf gan y Gweinidog ynghylch y Consortia Addysg Rhanbarthol Ministerial Update on Regional Education Consortia**

[1] **David Rees:** We now move on to the next item of business, and that's actually an evidence session with the Minister for education in relation to the regional education consortia. Can I welcome Huw Lewis, the Minister, to this morning's meeting? With you, you have Jo-Anne Daniels, the director of

infrastructure, curriculum, qualifications and learner support directorate, and Brett Pugh, director of the school standards and workforce directorate. Good morning. Can I thank you for the written paper that you provided to the committee, Minister? Clearly, there are some questions because we've been having sessions with the regional consortia themselves. With your paper and the Estyn report, clearly there are some questions that we wish to pursue. We will we go straight into those if it's okay with yourself.

[2] **The Minister for Education and Skills (Huw Lewis):** Okay.

[3] **David Rees:** I'm going to start with Angela.

[4] **Angela Burns:** Good morning. Thank you very much indeed for the paper. I'm probably going to ask you a fairly repetitive question, because we've asked this of all of the education consortia. There are two questions. First of all, how do you know that the improvements that have been made—if any, and where they've been made—are down to the influence of the regional consortia? The second question is: how confident are you, as Welsh Government, as to your monitoring of the regional consortia as they go forward? Now, we've had some consortia come and they've been very much sort of saying, you know, 'We're just off the blocks, we're just getting going'. We've had others who have been absolutely, 'No; every single bit of improvement that's happened in this region has been entirely down to the work that we've brought to the party'. When we think that those regional consortia are made up of all the local authorities, that starts begging the question: 'Well, why weren't the local—?'; you know, has this really happened because the local authorities didn't deliver that school improvement agenda when it was just the local authorities. You take the same bunch of people, stick them in a consortium and suddenly they're claiming that they are delivering enormous school improvement changes. So, it's really what your take is on that, how you are analysing and assessing it, and how you intend to monitor that going forward.

[5] **Huw Lewis:** Well, it bears remembering, I think, Chair, that the genesis of the consortium idea is to be found way back in Robert Hill's work a few years ago in which he was emphatic, really, that 22 local authorities acting as they were—that that model was insufficient, really, to drive a national uplift in terms of standards and results; and that, of course, you would find good practice operating in some of those 22. Let's remember that, at that time, which I believe was 2010, we were talking about seven of the 22 being in some form of measures. So, it seemed obvious at the time that bringing local

authorities together in larger groups would, first of all, boost their capacity in terms of drawing in expert advice, for instance, as well as, of course, boosting authority-to-authority and school-to-school co-operation, which was very much a theme that we wanted to promote. As well as obvious things like economies of scale, all these things were on offer if we could get a consortium model agreed, working to a national framework. But the other key element of this—and this, I think, is certainly something that is a new feature in the schools landscape—was that commissioning those local authorities' responsibilities towards school improvement through the four consortia enabled a much easier and more fluent link between the national level, between my office, and organisations like Estyn and the schools themselves. The lines of communication became much simpler and much more direct.

[6] So, I would like to say that there is no coincidence that the uplift in standards that we're seeing, particularly through—most recently—the GCSE results of this summer, has not happened by accident; and there is a definite causal connection between what's happened in terms of implementation of the national model and the uplift in standards, particularly amongst free-school-meal pupils, that we're seeing.

[7] Of course, it is a very complicated business, school improvement, even a single school is a very complicated organism and no doubt it will take a great deal of research, but I'm sure that research will happen over time, into how the improvements have actually come about in each and every area. That, at present, is a complex area and it's very difficult for me to show you a definitive piece of researched proof to say that that is the case. But, I think it is self-evident that we've seen an uplift in standards and what has changed in the landscape is the coming of a national model for school improvement.

[8] **Angela Burns:** But, Minister, would you not also say that there have been a number of other initiatives that have been running? There's been the whole standards agenda that has been talked about and there's been a much greater use, anyway, of peer-to-peer mentoring—of lead schools going out to others in their family of schools and helping them. You know, I'm prepared to accept that the uplift is a mixed basket of responses that will have contributed to it, but I just find it really hard to see that it's all entirely down to the consortia, especially when so many of the consortia had such rough births—some of them still don't have a full complement of staff.

[9] Also, at the other end of the scale, when you go and talk to schools,

even the ones that are lead schools and are going out there and trying to demonstrate best practice, they talk about the chaos of having a phone call because a school that's being challenged has got 16 days' worth of training that they can put their teachers out on and it's like, 'Can everybody come? Can they come next week?' So, the impact there on the schools—those who are seeking help and those who are trying to give help—according to the schools, is definitely there. So, excepting all of these differences that are going on—all of these changes and all of these initiatives—I do come back to that central point about how we make sure or how we identify what bit of it is down to regional consortia. I don't want to pick too much of a fight over this, but actually, I'm slightly uncomfortable with you saying that it's hard to measure that. Surely, any policy that we put out, we want to have a measure attached to it, so that we do understand what works and what doesn't work.

[10] **Huw Lewis:** Well, of course, first of all, Chair, I didn't claim that the consortia had cured all ills and was responsible for absolutely everything good that's going on in the system. Of course that's not true. We've also had initiatives that have had longer to bed in, like the literacy and numeracy framework, for instance, which has made an enormous difference. I think the peer-to-peer and school-to-school working that Angela Burns has mentioned is extraordinarily important and has been boosted, incidentally, in terms of its reach and the sheer expectation that there is now within the system, as a result of consortium working, that each school ceases to regard itself as an island unto itself. The answer to spreading best practice is to actually make contact with best practice, to work alongside it; to share staff, share ideas and get people talking to each other.

[11] But, there are elements within this conversation, I think, that would simply not be possible without the consortium working. One is, I think, the sheer ability of our 22 relatively small local authorities to be able to command an agenda of this ambition. I think that some of the smaller authorities, in particular, simply would have found it beyond their capacity to do this kind of work. The kind of conversation we're having here this morning, for instance, about the efficacy or not of national initiatives being rolled out, and yourselves, quite rightly, picking over the efficacy of those national initiatives—I don't think that kind of conversation could really have been had in these terms without there being a mechanism to deliver a national model at a classroom level. This is the mechanism. This is the mechanism that was missing prior to the coming of the consortia. I think Ministers without this kind of mechanism in the past have been able to issue documents to encourage, cajole and incentivise within the system various

means of working, but as to actually having a conversation about, ‘Well, across Wales, does this work? And across Wales, how do we measure how much it has worked?’, those would have been very difficult questions to answer prior to the consortia coming along. Now, we’re entering a new phase when we’re beginning to be able to have that conversation and to answer those questions. There are many measures, obviously, one of which is the GCSEs, and I’m very pleased with what we’re beginning to see as a consolidating pattern around the improvement in GCSEs. They’re not the only ones, of course.

[12] **David Rees:** Can I ask, Minister: you’ve identified measures of the outcomes that are basically student outcomes, effectively, from what we’ve talked about—the processes you’ve put in place; have you set any targets or measures for the consortia themselves, by which you can measure whether they are effective or not?

[13] **Huw Lewis:** Well, each consortium, of course, has its own plan. For instance, they would have a pupil deprivation support plan. That then is overseen by myself and my officials, and we would have a similar conversation to the one we’re having today in our challenge and support events, which happen fairly regularly, in which I and my officials dissect what the consortium has been up to—in that instance, for example, with the pupil deprivation grant support plan, we get to the bottom of exactly how that’s being delivered and what effect it is having. Similarly, we would be looking at how well the literacy and numeracy framework is reaching every corner of the system and we would look at how school-to-school working is operating in that consortium area. As well as myself and my officials, obviously, you also have the oversight, and you’ve had the reports to mull over from the Wales Audit Office and Estyn, similarly. So, the consortia are not separate from the system or divorced from oversight; their workings are very well examined and open for public scrutiny.

[14] **David Rees:** Angela, do you want to come back?

[15] **Angela Burns:** Yes, I guess what I was hoping for, somewhere in amongst the evidence from the consortia and the responses from you, Minister, was some chain of evidence that could be shown that said—. And I’m not talking about global targets that this particular school needs to move from red to amber; I’m not talking about even the national targets, that we want our GCSEs to increase by this or that; but perhaps the real issue about an effective change to the individual’s life, and improving their life chances.



I've seen nowhere and felt nowhere that real understanding of the individual pupil and how that then translates through the school. It's all top-down and driven down rather than—. You know, they come in—. Teachers will tell me, for example, that the challenge advisers come in and they will tell them where their failings are, but it's about the support, it's about how you're monitoring and changing that, and about who is monitoring that, because it's all about cracking the whip.

[16] I certainly do appreciate that perhaps the consortia have brought a prism to the school improvement agenda that I absolutely do not argue with, but it's really hard to see how that translates all the way through to the changes that are being made on the ground, because I don't see it in a lot of schools that I have visited, and I don't hear it from the staff that people are sucking up that, you know, this individual here comes from this background and needs this in his or her education stream in order to improve their life chances, and then that whole cohort has got that happening to them, and that cohort moves forward, at the same time that the teachers are getting the training and the support and the motivation and the inspiration that they need to make an extraordinary sea change to the way it's been run in the past, and then that's making a whole-school difference, which then makes an area difference, which filters up.

09:45

[17] So, I suppose that's why I keep asking the same question, and I'm not satisfied about how we monitor that change, because I do think that there's been some amazingly good initiatives that have been run. I think the numeracy and literacy focus is paying dividends in certain areas, and I would like to really be clear that, if we were to pursue this for the next few years, we would be able to say categorically at the end of it that the regional consortia have made this and they have owned this step-change in school improvement. I can't find anyone who can really say, 'Yes, look, there's this and this', even if it's only in a small area that we want to then replicate out through Wales.

[18] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I could certainly, Chair, show Angela Burns some schools where she'd get a very comprehensive answer to the worries that she's raised. Look, this is not all about cracking the whip; there is challenge in what's being attempted here, and it has to be rigorous, but there is also support and co-production.

[19] Take categorisation, for instance—it's a classic example. The key difference between categorisation and every other single measure of school performance that has gone before—league tables and all the rest of those things, and all the systems that have been tried in England, and then in England and Wales, and then in Wales, and all the various permutations that we've seen—is categorisation stands out because it is a co-production. It isn't a judgment imposed upon the school, either by the consortium, the local authority or me; it is negotiated between the school and those people offering challenge and support to it, including the advisers who are out there in the system. In other words, it demands honest self-assessment. The school signs up to the fact that it is an amber category school, or a yellow category school, or a green category school. It puts its honesty out there on public view, and parents and everyone else realise that that is the accepted level of attainment, if you like, of that school at that time. So, it's a classic example of challenge being absolutely rigorous, and no excuses being made, but also support within the system in terms of the conversations that need to be had in order to explain why a school is in that particular category and then what needs to be done to take it out of that category and to improve.

[20] The education improvement grant is still out there, the pupil deprivation grant is out there. For our challenge schools, there is resource over and above that as well. On some of the shortcomings that Angela was describing there, really I would say very, very simply that that's the schools' job to sort out. That's why you have a headteacher, who is well-paid incidentally, to be able to cope and deal with steering their way through this system of challenge and support. If a headteacher is complaining to me that they are feeling challenged but not finding any support, then the question that would immediately form in my mind would be, 'Well, do you really understand what your role is in this system, and have you asked yourself some very awkward questions, some difficult questions, about exactly how you're steering your staff and their professional development as well as, of course, the life chances of your pupils, through the reform agenda?' There are very clearly signposted ways of gaining all the support that a head, in particular, might need through the consortium, through expert advice, through Welsh Government initiatives and, critically, through working with other heads and other schools.

[21] **David Rees:** Thank you, Minister. I want to move on, now. Simon.

[22] **Simon Thomas:** Thank you. Minister, how many local authorities are still in some sort of measure?

[23] **Huw Lewis:** At the moment?

[24] **Dr Pugh:** There are four in special measures, one in significant improvement, and I believe there may be one other in Estyn follow-up.

[25] **Simon Thomas:** Yes, so when you said that seven local authorities were in special measures when this started, we still have six in some form of measures. That's not a sign of a huge improvement that the consortia have brought to local authorities, at least. This is the difficulty that I have with the evidence we've had: when you ask the consortia whether they are responsible for the school improvement that we have seen—minimal though it is, it is perceptible—they say, 'Yes, of course, we're responsible for all of it'; when I ask them who's responsible for the lack of progress on free school meals and closing the gap with deprivation and poverty, they say, 'It's nothing to do with the consortia; we've only just started on that; we've only just had the report; we've only just responded to Estyn; we've only just thought about what we might be doing; we're only just rolling out best practice'. Are the consortia just picking the low-hanging fruit? Are they deceiving you?

[26] **Huw Lewis:** The consortia are young; let's be very clear about this. The audit office report and the Estyn report, valuable as they are, take a snapshot of the situation when the national model was not even a year old. It is true that we still are in an unacceptable situation in terms of Estyn's take on those six authorities that you mentioned, but let's also remember that Estyn's timetable for working through such a thing wouldn't allow, at this stage, 18 months, a couple of years on, for there to be have been a rapid turnover in that regard.

[27] So, we have to be realistic about timescales. These sorts of things don't happen overnight, and I suppose it's very human—success has a thousand fathers and failure is an orphan. Who was that? Was that Chairman Mao? We'll look this up by the end of the meeting. [*Laughter.*]

[28] **Simon Thomas:** Somebody will Google it while you're there. [*Laughter.*]

[29] **Huw Lewis:** This is absolutely true. It is very clear, to my mind, where lines of responsibility lie within this system. Ultimately, headteachers are responsible for their school and local authorities are responsible for the school improvement agenda within their area; that's where the legal responsibilities lie, and there's not really any way to pass the buck away from

that. The consortia are just what it says on the tin: they are consortia of local authorities coming together to deliver improved school improvement services, both in terms of challenge and the targets that are being set, tailor-made to each individual school and in terms of much better support than has ever been available before. There will be a thousand different individual takes, I suppose, on what's happening at any given point in a particular school, but the lines of responsibility are very clear and the targets are very clear. When it comes to things like last summer's GCSE results, there is nowhere to hide in terms of how the school is doing, and that, at the end of the day, will be the sort of measure upon which everyone is judged.

[30] **Simon Thomas:** From the evidence we've had, there has been nothing produced, to my mind, that says that the consortia have brought anything to the table above that which could have been achieved by local authorities working in collaboration together. In other words, local authorities should have been doing this anyway, and the fact that seven went into special measures shows that they weren't. And we know, of course, that one of the smallest local authorities actually managed to be an excellent local education authority. So, it's not just about size; it's about attitude and your attitude towards your collaborators and your co-workers. We now have local government reorganisation. Are we going to continue with the same number of consortia?

[31] **Huw Lewis:** On the first part of your question, I could show you many heads who have described to me the way in which the consortium is available to them—

[32] **Simon Thomas:** Absolutely; I'm not disputing that. All I'm saying is—

[33] **Huw Lewis:** —as being transformational.

[34] **Simon Thomas:** —that I strongly feel local authorities should have been delivering this over the last 10 years.

[35] **Huw Lewis:** Of course they should.

[36] **Simon Thomas:** And it took the consortia perhaps to kick them into action. But, anyway, we'll move on. The question I was asking was about whether you're going to continue with the four consortia post-local government—. You've published your map of local government; that doesn't necessarily always match the consortia that are going on now.

[37] **Huw Lewis:** First of all, Chair, I'm not going to miss the opportunity to pocket Simon Thomas's comments about the consortia kicking the system into action. I'm going to write that one down. That's a very valuable quote, I think, but I'm pleased to hear it. In terms of local government reorganisation, I'm on record as having taken a look at this. I don't think anyone here is in a position to say precisely what the local government map might look like in two or three years' time; we don't really know the answer to that. That's a process that's under way; it's not resolved. To my mind—

[38] **Simon Thomas:** I wasn't asking about the map; I understand that. But, whatever the map is, do the consortia stay, or does this responsibility go back to these new larger authorities, if you have our way, your Government?

[39] **Huw Lewis:** I can't see a short or medium-term future that can do without consortia. There may be, for practical reasons, some adjustment to consortia that may have to be looked at if certain kinds of local government map are forthcoming. It could make geographical sense to rearrange things a little around the edges. But the way I read it is that I think if you took a poll of key people in the education and schools system at the moment, in local government or in schools, and you asked them, 'Would you like to do away with consortia?', I think the answer would be a resounding 'no'. I think people are beginning to see the worth and the value, and even given local government reorganisation, I see a role for the consortia and for them continuing pretty much as they are.

[40] **David Rees:** Sandy, do you want to come in with a quick supplementary on this one?

[41] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes. Can I apologise in advance, Minister, and to colleagues? I'm a bit of a cuckoo in the nest, as you know, so I've no idea, really, what's gone on before except for what I've seen today. Minister, my experience of consortia working, and a challenge school, are in my own area; you visited the school with me and it's a school that has made progress. One of the things I saw and observed were the good relationships—obvious ones—between the primary schools—the primary feeder schools—and the secondary school, but also between the individuals involved, and I've since seen improvements in results. I've got no real experience of anywhere else. But I notice that reports have said that two of the consortia are weaker in areas than the others and work is going on to strengthen those, and that will be, in some part, I expect, due to the relationship with challenge advisers.

The challenge adviser I saw worked very well. How is that improvement going on, because those partnerships are vital to the outcomes?

[42] The other question I have is on relationships with the diocesan authorities. There has been quite a separation, particularly in voluntary-aided schools, primary schools in particular—and I can speak only of the inspection regime, where you would have an Estyn inspection team in and also the diocesan team, and in a small school, it could be a very crowded little room. But it seems to be indicated that more work needs to be done to ensure that there's a joint ethos and joint working together. How is that being done and what progress is being made?

[43] **Huw Lewis:** I can update you on that, I think. First of all, I think you're quite right to point to the importance of challenge advisers and the calibre of challenge advisers being absolutely critical. We have done work, and I think we have seen an improvement along the way in terms of the quality of co-working with consortia between challenge advisers and the consortia, and that needs constant attention. There are national standards for those challenge advisers that they have to meet, but it's important that we keep a weather eye on how those relationships develop, and they should never, ever become—. I want them to be good relationships, but I don't want them to be cosy relationships. There should always be an edge, really, in terms of—again coming back to that idea of support alongside challenge for everyone involved.

[44] In terms of the diocesan authorities, my officials did meet with them in terms of the development of the regional consortia in the first place, and, as you know, we're refreshing the model at the moment. There is representation from the diocesan authorities on the executive group of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, and through that means, we'll be making sure that we maintain that line of communication as we refresh the consortium model. My officials meet on a regular basis with the directors of the dioceses and also with the representative groups of the headteachers of the church schools in Wales. So, there should be no less in terms of quality, no less in terms of communication between the diocesan schools and others.

[45] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you.

10:00

[46] **David Rees:** Suzy, you wanted to come in with a question here?

[47] **Suzy Davies:** Yes, and thank you, Simon. Just going back to Simon's question about what could happen with consortia, as local authority boundaries change over time, we've had very concrete evidence, actually, from all four consortiums that uncertainty about what local authorities might look like in future played no role in whether they were good or bad. In fact, they said that, 'We do most of our work school-to-school, and we offer a sense of resilience, actually, against any uncertainty on changes to boundaries.' Bearing in mind what they've said, that most of their work is school-to-school, and that they've taken on the primary role in school improvement, what is left for local education authorities to do?

[48] **Huw Lewis:** Well, local education authorities run schools. What they have done is they've come together to—

[49] **Suzy Davies:** Schools run schools—you've said that yourself.

[50] **Huw Lewis:** The law is very clear—local authorities have the legal responsibility for oversight within their boundaries. What they've done, very simply, is come together, they've grouped together, to increase their fire power, and their spending power—the economies of scale and so on, which they can call upon, by pooling their school improvement functions. All the other functions—you know, small matters of day-to-day running of schools, and hiring and firing of staff, and all those things—are all the things that are involved in terms of running a school system; they're all squarely with the local authority, as is, legally, the school improvement agenda. The line of accountability is to the local authority. What we have here is a level of regional co-operation, essentially, that's been set up, which all 22 local authorities have signed up to and I don't believe any one of the 22 would want to retreat from at this stage.

[51] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. This is Simon's question, but I will come back to this, if that's okay, Minister. Thank you.

[52] **David Rees:** [*Inaudible.*] Just for clarification, on that point, if a school that is requiring support and improvement doesn't actually achieve that improvement, who is therefore responsible—the consortia or the local education authority?

[53] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I'd want to know what the consortium's been up to,

but, legally, the local authority is responsible.

[54] **David Rees:** Okay, we've got that clear. Simon.

[55] **Simon Thomas:** Thank you. Can you tell the committee what evidence you used in your decision to bring the support for the literacy and numeracy framework from an educational trust, which you've commissioned to deliver it, back a year early and put it through the consortia?

[56] **Huw Lewis:** There was always going to be a difficult judgment to be made here, and a call to be made, in terms of the readiness of the consortia to deliver this. The literacy and numeracy framework—it is obviously connected; it is an inherent part of the school improvement agenda. It ought to be where school improvement is, it ought to be where it's discussed, and it ought to be in the hands of the people who are driving school improvement, which is the consortia. The reason for accelerating the handover, I suppose, is that I was satisfied that the consortia—which, as I say, are still quite young—had reached a sufficient level of organisational maturity to be able to handle it; I didn't see any reason to delay.

[57] **Simon Thomas:** But Estyn disagree with that. They said that support for schools in literacy and numeracy is appropriate, but its support in non-core areas is weak, inconsistent or unavailable.

[58] **Huw Lewis:** Well, far be it for me to pick holes in anything Estyn says, I make no apology for concentrating upon the literacy and numeracy elements of school improvement; they're the foundation stones for everything, and they have to be out there as a priority. Clearly, everyone, from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development down to an individual headteacher, would be able to tell you that that's where school improvement begins—that's where better life chances for kids begin. As to Estyn saying that other forms of support are not available, I think maybe they should re-examine, perhaps, the sweeping nature of that statement. Nothing's been removed from the system; schools still have their educational improvement grant, schools still have access to CPD, which they can buy in, and there is a welter of CPD that is subject based and it's all still available, and we would, of course, encourage more than ever now that school-to-school working in order to develop subject-based excellence, if that is what a headteacher wants to prioritise. That is all there and available. There are 2,500 schools in Wales. If you're running, let's say, a geography department in a school, you should be able, through, for instance, Hwb—our national



electronic connection, if you like, between teachers across Wales, where professionals can meet in cyberspace—to identify the five best geography departments in the country. There is nothing to stop you, alongside a willing headteacher, working with those standout examples of best practice in that subject-based area, from starting tomorrow. There is no Minister standing in your way. This is for professionals to shift for themselves.

[59] **Simon Thomas:** Just a final question on that point: where in that range of support for those professionals is there any expectation that they must get that support from the consortia? Can they use the educational trust that was delivering this service, or other third sector organisations and charities out there offering support for schools? Is there a rule that it all has to go through the consortia, because the money is in the schools' hands—most of it—isn't it?

[60] **Huw Lewis:** No. The person making the strategic decision about the spend here is the head, I suppose, in terms of how—. And it's the school development plan that really sets out the framework around what's going to happen over the next year with regard to professional development within the school, for instance. I do accept, though, that there is a problem for professionals, and any teacher would tell you this, I think: the landscape of stuff on offer in terms of professional development is so varied and so vast and so variable in quality that it is itself a problem and that steering through it is an issue. That's why I'll be working towards reforming and expanding the role of the Education Workforce Council, as you know. The workforce council will evolve into the go-to organisation for advice to professionals about just what is of merchantable quality in terms of good CPD that can be bought in and whether or not that's a good idea for the school and for the individual professional at that point in their career. There is a gap here, to my mind, that the Education Workforce Council needs to fill in terms of professionals quality accrediting CPD and offering advice to professionals as to the best way to steer their way through the multiple offers that are out there at the moment.

[61] **David Rees:** I want to move on. Aled.

[62] **Aled Roberts:** Rwyf eisiau **Aled Roberts:** I want to ask one gofyn un cwestiwn ar y strwythur i'r question on the structure for the dyfodol, ac yna ar y ffordd yr ydym future and then on the way that we yn mesur llwyddiant. Rydych wedi measure success. You have referred cyfeirio at y cyfrifoldeb gweithredol o to the responsibility operationally in

ran y consortia a'r cyfrifoldeb statudol o ran yr awdurdodau lleol. Rwy'n meddwl bod nifer ohonom ni'n pryderu bod yna rhywfaint o ddryswch yn hyn. Os ydych chi o'r farn ein bod ni ddim yn edrych ar newid patrwm y consortia, heblaw am dincro rownd o ran y manion, a ydych yn derbyn bod yna gyfle wedi'i gollu wrth adael y cyfrifoldeb statudol efo awdurdodau lleol ac a oes angen ail-edrych ar hynny o ran gwella ysgolion, os nad o fewn meysydd eraill?

terms of the consortia and the statutory responsibility belonging to the local authority. I think that many of us are concerned that there is some confusion here. If you are of the view that we shouldn't look at changing the pattern in terms of consortia, apart from tinkering around the edges, do you accept that an opportunity has been missed by letting the statutory responsibility remain with local authorities and is there a need to re-examine that in terms of school improvement, if not in other areas?

[63] **Huw Lewis:** Aled might think so; I couldn't possibly comment. The conversation I needed to have, prior to the consortia being set up, was an urgent conversation about school improvement. It was also very much part of my thinking that what we desperately needed to do, first of all, was to establish a consensus around the inadequacies of the prevailing system—the 22 local authorities all trying to essentially do the same thing, but on their own—which was an inadequate system, because it was leaving some authorities with all sorts of difficulties, some in relation to capacity, for instance. So, it was a very focused conversation around moving school improvement, its challenges and the support available, to the regional level to boost that capacity. I think if I got into a conversation with local authorities about the regional—essentially, what you're talking about is regional education authorities—then we would have spent two years, three years, wrangling over the legislation and so on that would have been necessary to shift to regional educational authorities, their existence, who would run them, who would fund them, and so on, and so on and so on, whilst the schools would have been left as observers to this political and legal conversation. Now, there is a conversation going on about what local authorities in Wales should look like, and maybe some of those original worries about capacity, for instance, amongst the 22, well, maybe some of those questions will be answered by the outcomes of the review around the local government map and so on. But, I think, in pursuing this method of reform, no-one had to wait; schools, particularly, didn't have to wait. We moved as quickly as we possibly could to a regional model for school improvement with all its concurrent advantages, and that was done rapidly

on the basis of consensus and I'm very proud of that. We are now talking through a very valid scrutiny of this school improvement agenda, which is 18 months to two years old. If we'd followed the legalistic route of new types of education authority, I think we wouldn't be able to have this conversation now; we'd still be talking about the legislation, and not the school improvement.

[64] **Aled Roberts:** Océ. A gawn ni ddychwelyd, felly, at y patrwm sydd gennym ni ar hyn o bryd a'r ffordd rydym ni'n mesur llwyddiant? Rydych chi wedi cyfeirio mwy nag unwaith at y ffaith bod cyrhaeddiad neu ganlyniadau TGAU yn un o'r mesurau llwyddiant. Rydych chi hefyd wedi cyfeirio at y grant amddifadedd ac wedi dweud mai un o'r ffyrdd rydych chi'n herio perfformiad consortia ydy drwy'r cynllun cymorth ar gyfer y grant amddifadedd. Faint o ddadansoddi ydych chi'n ei wneud, fel adran, o'r wybodaeth rydych chi'n ei dderbyn gan y consortia? Mi oeddwn i mewn cynhadledd ddydd Llun lle'r oedd yna gryn bryder yn cael ei ddatgan ynghylch bod yna nifer cynyddol o blant sydd yn derbyn prydiau ysgol am ddim nad ydynt yn cael eu cyflwyno ar gyfer arholiadau TGAU, ac eto nad yw hynny'n ymddangos o fewn unrhyw adroddiad gan y consortia. A ydych chi'n ymwybodol, hwyrach, fod tipyn bach o fanipiweiddio yn cymryd lle o ran y ffordd rydym ni'n mesur llwyddiant?

**Aled Roberts:** Okay. Can we return therefore to the pattern that we currently have and the way that we measure success? Now, you have referred more than once to the fact that attainment or GCSE results are one of the measures of success. You've also referred to the PDG and said that one of the ways that you challenge the performance of consortia is through the support scheme for the deprivation grant. Now, how much assessment have you undertaken, as a department, of the information that you receive from the consortia? I was in a conference on Monday where there was some concern expressed regarding the fact that an increasing number of children who receive free school meals were not being put forward for GCSE examinations, and yet that didn't appear in any report from the consortia. Were you aware that there was a bit of manipulation going on in terms of the way that we measure success?

[65] **Huw Lewis:** Well, no. I've not heard this reported to me at all. If there is any unprofessional gaming of any aspect of the system, then as soon as I know about it I will act on it. We're not in the business here of trying to encourage people to find imaginative ways around the system, and I would have a very blunt conversation with people that were engaged in any sort of

manipulation like that. This system is there to support the child, and anyone who's trying to duck it is also ducking their responsibility to that young person. So, you might be reluctant, Aled, in the meeting here to name names or organisations, but, if you did want to write to me about any concerns, I'd be more than happy to investigate.

[66] **Aled Roberts:** Ocê. Rwyf hefyd yn derbyn beth rydych chi'n ei ddweud—mai eich bwriad chi ydy bod yna gynhyrchu ar y cyd o ran yr ysgolion a'r consortia—ond a ydy hynny yn fater o ymarfer ar lawr gwlad? Rwy'n derbyn bod pob ysgol yn cynhyrchu adroddiad hunanasesiad, ond mae yna esiamplau lle mae'r consortia wedi gyrru'r llythyr categoreiddio allan i ysgolion cyn iddyn nhw gael cyfarfod efo'r ysgol. Felly, a ydych chi'n fodlon bod y systemau rydych chi wedi rhoi yn eu lle yn cael eu cyflwyno yn ymarferol, felly, o fewn ein hysgolion ni? Rwy'n derbyn mai dyna'ch bwriad chi, ond a ydy hynny'n digwydd ar lawr gwlad?

**Aled Roberts:** Okay. I also accept what you say—that your intention is that there is to be coproduction between the schools and the consortia—but is that a matter of practice on the ground? I accept that every school will produce a self-evaluation report, but there are examples of where the consortia have sent a categorisation letter out to a school before they've had a meeting with the school. So, I wonder whether you're content that the systems that you've put in place are being rolled out in practice, therefore, in our schools. I do accept that that is your intention, but does that really happen on the ground?

10:15

[67] **Huw Lewis:** Well, again, if that had actually happened, I'd want to know about it, because it should be impossible for a school to end up with this final categorisation without its head and governors, and so on, being well aware of the process that led towards that level of categorisation. I can't see how it's possible to arrive at a final categorisation for a school without the process having been gone through. If that's happened somewhere, I would really like to know about it, because there are some people there who need to be sharpening up their curriculum vitae for the future, if that was the case.

[68] **Aled Roberts:** Ocê. Rwyf eisiau symud yn olaf at rai o'r datganiadau sydd o fewn yr adroddiadau gan

**Aled Roberts:** Okay. I want to move finally to some of the statements that are made within the Wales Audit

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru a hefyd gan Estyn. A ydych chi'n fodlon â'r ffordd y mae'r consortia yn targedu cymorth? Roedd nifer ohonyn nhw yr wythnos diwethaf a'r wythnos cyn hynny yn dweud mai'r ffordd y maen nhw'n targedu ysgolion ydy ar sail cymorth i ysgolion coch ac oren, ond, yn adroddiad y swyddfa archwilio, mae yna un enghraifft lle'r oedd cymorth heb gael ei dargedu yn benodol at ysgolion coch, a'r esboniad a gafwyd gan y consortiwm oedd bod yr ysgolion coch yna yn derbyn cymorth gan ffynonellau eraill. A ydych chi'n meddwl bod hynny'n dderbyniol, neu a oes yna ryw fath o ddatganiad cenedlaethol y dylai bob consortiwm dargedu bob ysgol goch ac oren?

Office report and also made by Estyn. Are you happy with the way that the consortia are targeting support? Several of them last week and the previous week were telling us that the way that they are targeting schools is on the basis of supporting red and amber schools, but, in the audit office report, there is one example given of where support was not targeted specifically towards red schools, and the explanation given by the consortium was that those red schools would be in receipt of support from other sources. Do you think that that is acceptable, or is there some sort of national statement that every consortium should be targeting every red and amber school?

[69] **Huw Lewis:** I'm not familiar with the instance to which you refer, Aled, but the consortium's job is to target school improvement in every school in their area—every school, without exception, whatever their categorisation. Of course, we would expect that amber and red schools would receive particular forms of support, perhaps in different measure, but it's certainly not the case that a consortium should stand back from the school improvement agenda in any school at all. There is no school in Wales that could not bear improvement. So, if there was any consortium that was just standing away from a particular school and not offering it anything in terms of challenge or support, I would have no hesitation in intervening. If I could find out more detail about that, I'd like to take that to the challenge-and-review events that I'll be having with that consortium and getting to the bottom of what exactly is allegedly going on.

[70] **Aled Roberts:** Rwyf jest eisiau gofyn hefyd beth oedd ymateb swyddogion yr un consortiwm sy'n cael ei gyfeirio ato gan Estyn, os ydych chi'n cael y cyfarfodydd yma ynglŷn â'r cynllun cymorth grant

**Aled Roberts:** I just also wanted to ask what the response of officials was in one consortium that is referred to by Estyn, if you are having these meetings about the deprivation grant support plan. Estyn does tell us

amddifadedd. Mae Estyn yn dweud bod un consortiwm heb ddull strategol cydlynus o leihau effaith amddifadedd ar gyrhaeddiad, ac nid oedden nhw wedi monitro'n ddigon agos pa mor dda y mae ysgolion wedi defnyddio'r grant amddifadedd disgyblion. Beth oedd ymateb y consortiwm yna o fewn y cyfarfod her cynllun cymorth grant amddifadedd?

that one consortium does not have a coherent strategic approach to reducing the effect of deprivation on attainment, and hadn't sufficiently monitored how the schools had used the pupil deprivation grant. What was the response of that consortium within the challenge meeting that you had in relation to the deprivation grant support plan?

[71] **Huw Lewis:** Well, you'd need to—. I don't believe that I've met these consortia since Estyn has done its work, so I wouldn't be able to answer that question. Obviously, if that's a feature of what Estyn has said about that consortium, I'd want to follow it through, but I would expect, by the time I got there, that this would have been sorted out.

[72] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'n rhaid bod eich swyddogion chi wedi cyfarfod y consortiwm yna.

**Aled Roberts:** Your officials must have met that consortium.

[73] **Huw Lewis:** Are you aware of the reference?

[74] **Dr Pugh:** I'm not, as such. What we can say is that, when Estyn carried out this work, it was over a year ago, and we have, in terms of the second year of the PDG, had some quite rigorous reporting into ourselves, as Welsh Government, which actually shows much more clearly the strategic use of that money. We're talking about research that was undertaken by Estyn probably about 14 months ago.

[75] **Aled Roberts:** Ond mae hynny'n gwneud y cwestiwn yn un hyd yn oed yn fwy pwysig, felly, os ydy hynny wedi digwydd ers dros flwyddyn ac nid ydych chi yn gallu dweud wrthym ni beth oedd esboniad y consortiwm yn y cyfamser. Mae hynny'n destun cryn bryder i mi, a dweud y gwir. Hwyrach y gallwch chi roi nodyn i ni ynglŷn â beth ydy ymateb y consortia i'r datganiad yna.

**Aled Roberts:** But that makes the question even more important, then, if that took place over a year ago and you can't tell us what the explanation of the consortium was in the meantime. That is a cause of some concern, I would say. Perhaps you can give us a note regarding what the consortium's response is to that statement.

[76] **David Rees:** I'm sure the Minister will provide that.

[77] **Huw Lewis:** Well, yes. It would help enormously if Aled would let us know exactly who he's talking about.

[78] **Aled Roberts:** Nid wyf yn **Aled Roberts:** I don't know; this is gwybod; Estyn sy'n dweud yn eu coming from Estyn's report. hadroddiad nhw.

[79] **David Rees:** As you said, Estyn's findings were that no consortia has a coherent strategy to reduce the impact. I appreciate that was 12 months ago and I suppose the question is: are there now strategies in place within those consortia?

[80] **Huw Lewis:** I've already referred to the plans that each consortium has to have in relation to the use of the PDG, and the plans will be available for the committee to see.

[81] **David Rees:** Okay. Can we move on, then, to Keith?

[82] **Keith Davies:** Diolch, **Keith Davies:** Thank you, Chair. Gadeirydd. Mae pethau yn mynd Things go round in circles, and I'm rownd mewn cylch, ac rwy'n falch o pleased to hear a great many of your dderbyn nifer o'ch atebion chi bore responses this morning, Minister. If I yma, Weinidog. Os caf fynd yn ôl cyn can go back to before 1996, you've 1996, rydych wedi dweud, ac rwy'n said, and I agree with you entirely, cytuno'n llwyr gyda chi, bod gormod that there are too many authorities— o awdurdodau—22 ohonyn nhw—ac 22 of them—and it's better to go mae'n well mynd yn ôl i gael llai back to having fewer of them. I'll give ohonyn nhw. Dwy stori i chi nawr: you two stories now: when I was amser oeddwn i'n gweithio yn un o'r working in one of the larger awdurdodau mawr— authorities—

[83] **David Rees:** We don't have a lot of time—[*Inaudible.*]

[84] **Keith Davies:** But they're important stories.

[85] Swyddogion—. Achos beth Officials—. Because what we have sydd fan hyn nawr yw bod Estyn a'r here now is that Estyn and the WAO swyddfa archwilio yn sôn am are talking about the scrutiny

drefniadau craffu yr awdurdodau— bod yr awdurdodau ddim yn eu gwneud nhw. Wel, amser oedd yr awdurdodau'n fawr, roedd gan yr awdurdodau system o graffu ac wedyn roedd ganddynt dîm oedd yn gallu mynd mewn i helpu'r ysgolion oedd eisiau help, a dyna beth rwy'n credu rŷch chi yn ei wneud nawr. Nid yw'r consortia wedi bodoli ddigon hir i mi. Nid ydynt yn adnabod yr ysgolion yn ddigon da eto, ond fe ddaw e. Y broblem rwy'n ei gweld nawr yw nad ydym yn mynd i gael yr awdurdodau newydd hyd nes 2020, ac felly mae cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdodau am addysg yn mynd i bara, sbo, tan 2020. Beth ydym yn ei wneud i sicrhau bod y swyddogion yn yr awdurdodau yn gwneud eu gwaith, mor belled ag y mae addysg yn y cwestiwn, i wella safonau? Rwy'n gwybod—beth ddywedoch chi—bod chwech neu saith o dan fesurau arbennig, felly mae eisiau cwrso nhw, achos yn y pen draw mae'n rhaid i rywun weithio gyda'r ysgolion sy'n tangyflawni. Rwy'n derbyn, yn y pen draw, taw'r consortia yw e, ond mae eisiau mwy o gymorth yn yr awdurdodau lleol i weithio gyda'r consortia. Achos peth arall ddwedan nhw—nid wyf yn cofio'n awr pa un ai'r swyddfa archwilio neu Estyn oedd—oedd ein bod ni eisiau recriwtio'r bobl orau i'r consortia, ac taw cyfrifoldeb—. Mae'n rhaid i'r awdurdodau sylweddoli taw nhw sy'n gyfrifol am y consortia, ac, os yw'r consortia yn mynd i weithio ar eu rhan nhw, mae'n rhaid i'r consortia

arrangements of the authorities—that the authorities aren't undertaking those processes. Well, when the authorities were larger, the authorities did have a scrutiny process and then they had a team that could go in to assist those schools that required that assistance, and I think that's what you're doing now. The consortia haven't existed for long enough yet. They don't know the schools well enough yet, but that will come. The problem that I foresee now is that we're not going to have those new authorities until 2020, and so the responsibility of the authorities for education is going to continue, I suppose, until 2020. What are we doing to ensure that officials in those authorities are doing their work, as far as education is concerned, to improve standards? I know—what did you say—that there are six or seven under special measures, so they need to be chased up, because ultimately somebody does have to work with the schools that are underachieving. I accept, ultimately, that it's the consortia that will have to do that, but there needs to be more support within the local authorities to work with the consortia. Because another thing they said—I don't remember whether it was the WAO or Estyn—was that we need to recruit the best people to the consortia, and that it's the responsibility—. The authorities need to realise that they are responsible for the consortia, and, if the consortia are going to work on their



gael y bobl orau. Beth ydym ni yn ei wneud am yr awdurdodau? Dyna'r cwestiwn sydd gen i—ac nid un stori o gwbl nawr. [*Chwerthin.*]

behalf, then the consortia do have to attract the best people. What are we doing about the authorities? That's my question—and I haven't given you any stories now. [*Laughter.*]

[86] **Huw Lewis:** I think, in part, Keith has described the answer to his own question. We have to remind ourselves that the consortia belong to the local authorities; they are an arm of local government; they are essentially a pooling within that region of the school improvement services of each of the local authorities involved, and it's their responsibility to make sure they get the very best out of them; it's their responsibility that they recruit the very best people to them.

[87] In relation to Keith's point that he made first of all there, I've made it very clear to everybody that wants to listen within the system that there is no reason, in my mind, for anyone to hesitate or wait within the school improvement agenda for local government reorganisation to come along. There's no reason to pause. There's no reason to suppose that you have to wait for a larger local authority to come along with a definite boundary in order to be able to get on with this work. We all know what needs to be done. It was always what needed to be done, whether it was the 22 local authorities, or the four consortia now, working together. There is no mystery about school improvement. Estyn's been writing the same stuff for some years now. Organisations like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have been writing the same stuff for quite a while now. Everybody knows what best practice looks like and where it is, and the job of the consortia is simply to make sure that the best practice is normalised throughout the school system. That is not dependent on the local government reorganisation Bill. It is dependent on people, as Keith has said, making sure that the consortia in particular are driven organisations made up of the very best people available.

[88] **David Rees:** Thank you. Bethan.

[89] **Bethan Jenkins:** Firstly, I just want to go back to a point that Aled Roberts made in terms of different consortia and then your response earlier that you analyse what the consortia do. For me, I'm just finding it a bit difficult because we've sat here and we've heard from the regional consortia, and lots of them amend or adapt national policy so that they can make it relevant to their own areas. So, when we are looking at successes, can you

tell us, as the Minister, how you analyse the data that come back from the consortia to be able to have a national perspective on what is being done? We did hear, did we not, that some consortia would put more into one area—amber— and not the other? So, I'm just a bit confused about how you, as Minister, then can get an idea as to where things are going if they are very varied locally between the consortia and then some consortia, it seems, are more hesitant than others to speak to each other as well, between consortia. So, could you shed some light on that? That's where I'm feeling a bit uncomfortable at the moment with knowing how you can see and track progress for the future—yes, it's new, but it's not going to be new forever—to know how we can then progress on this particular agenda.

[90] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, you're right. I don't want to keep on saying things are new. In fact, I suppose that's really only a legitimate observation in terms of these Wales Audit Office and Estyn reports, which are now a year or so old anyway. You're right. The oversight of the consortia is very detailed and happens in depth. In terms of my direct involvement, of course, those challenge and review events that I've been referring to are really the driver for it, but a great deal of work goes on between my officials and the consortium prior to each challenging review. I chair these, and a great deal of work subsequently flows from the conversations that have been had at those events. They are also overseable, if you like, through things like the pupil deprivation grant support plan that they now have to draw up.

[91] It is, though, the case, and it is only reasonable, I think, to understand, that even though the consortia are relatively large compared to the 22 individual local authorities, there are differences between the consortia. Some have a very different geographical situation that they're dealing with, with sparse populations and the difficulties of, for instance, physically getting people together at regular intervals. Others are facing concentrations of deprivation within their areas, which are standout problems for them. So, there is bound to be, and there should be, something of a difference in emphasis among some ways of working.

[92] I think you're right. Your last point is absolutely valid, and something that disappointed me greatly, actually, was when we began to hear—and hear from the consortia themselves—that they had developed a sort of competitive edge within a consortium, trying to outdo the consortium next door. I must admit, I was dismayed by that attitude when it bubbled to the surface. I'm glad, now, that conversations have been had within and between consortia to try and drive out that competitive element, if you like, between

consortia. It does nothing for a 14-year-old in Flintshire to know that there are groups of bureaucrats in Carmarthen and in Cardiff trying to outdo each other as to what their latest report looks like and to try and outdo each other by withholding a little bit of best practice from each other to gain an edge.

10:30

[93] That is perhaps understandable at a human level, but it undoes the whole philosophy behind what this school improvement agenda is about, which is about co-operation. It's about the best practice, in a co-operative way, being spread across the whole of Wales. Consortia need to be a part of that as much as the schools are.

[94] **Bethan Jenkins:** Are we able to, as Assembly Members, access any information at all with regard to those challenge and review events—any information that you would want to trickle down to them so that we can scrutinise in some way?

[95] **Huw Lewis:** Each consortium has its own website. All the meetings are minuted and the actions are published.

[96] **Bethan Jenkins:** So, this will be reflected in those minutes, then.

[97] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. We'll send you links to all the relevant information.

[98] **Dr Pugh:** Rather than detailed minutes of the meetings, there are actions flowing from the minutes, which can actually be followed up on in each review and challenge session.

[99] **Bethan Jenkins:** Well, the question that I wanted to go on to was with regard to trade unions. The NASUWT said that they questioned Estyn's view that the consortia do have a positive relationship with trade unions. It was only one particular consortium that had discussions with them. They were taking on extra work that they didn't deem to be within the remit of the consortia, such as pay and conditions. I wonder what your view is on this and whether there needs to be more consistency within the system.

[100] **Huw Lewis:** Well, yes, I do think that there should be more consistency within the system. I don't know—we're not ever going to get to a resolution around things like pay and conditions for teachers until, of course, we have the devolution of pay and conditions for teachers. I'm disappointed if there's

been a falling out between one union and one consortium. The whole of the set-up that I'm trying to run, and the whole of the reform package that I'm trying to pursue here, is built on several pillars, one of which is social partnership with the unions. My conversations with the unions have been very positive from day one, and I'm sorry if there's some friction over a particular issue. It's not for me—

[101] **Bethan Jenkins:** No, it's only one consortium that actually engages.

[102] **Huw Lewis:** Oh, there weren't—

[103] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think it was ERW, but the other ones didn't. When they did engage with ERW, there were problems because they were saying that they were stepping on responsibilities that they shouldn't be, but, obviously, they'd had that acceptance from the local authorities to be able to do that, which was to talk about pay and conditions.

[104] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I'm disappointed if that's the case because, you know, I want social partnership to be a feature of the way we do all business in Wales, but I am not in a position—it's not part of my remit, really—to get stuck into the terms and conditions of teachers in Wales, unfortunately.

[105] **David Rees:** Minister, time has caught us up on the first session. So, I will ask you one final question, because it is important. There was discussion about the refreshing of the national model. I think that the date was by September 2015, and it's the last day today.

[106] **Huw Lewis:** We're almost there.

[107] **Dr Pugh:** We are hoping to actually publish the refreshed version during October. We want to go into some further consultation, and that's the reason for the delay.

[108] **David Rees:** So, it's not quite ready yet.

[109] **Huw Lewis:** It's not quite ready yet.

[110] **David Rees:** But we should see it before half term.

[111] **Huw Lewis:** Before Halloween, Chair.

[112] **Simon Thomas:** Will it be a nightmare? [*Laughter.*]

[113] **David Rees:** Can I thank you for that first session, Minister?

[114] **Huw Lewis:** Okay.

[115] **David Rees:** Members, we'll take a break for 10 minutes before we continue with the next session, when the Minister will be talking about the Donaldson review.

[116] **Huw Lewis:** Thank you, Chair.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:34 a 10:44.  
The meeting adjourned between 10:34 and 10:44.*

### **Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf gan y Gweinidog ynghylch Adolygiad Donaldson Ministerial Update on the Donaldson Review**

[117] **David Rees:** Can I welcome Members and the public back to this morning's session, where we have the Minister for Education and Skills giving evidence?

[118] We'll move on to the session on the Donaldson review and the curriculum. Minister, we will go straight into questions, if that is okay with you, and we'll start with Aled Roberts.

[119] **Aled Roberts:** Yn ystod mis Mawrth i fis Mai eleni, fe gynhaliwyd y sgwrs fawr. Beth ydych chi'n meddwl, fel Llywodraeth, oedd y prif wersi y gwnaethoch chi eu dysgu o'r sgwrs yna? Sut mae hynny wedi cael ei adlewyrchu yn yr adolygiad a'r cynllun gweithredu, o hyn ymlaen?

**Aled Roberts:** During March to May this year, the great debate was held. What do you think, as a Government, were the main lessons that you learnt from that debate? How has that been reflected in the review and the action plan, going forward?

[120] **Huw Lewis:** Thank you, Aled. I think the first thing that the great debate showed us was that there was an appetite for change, which was very real. This was coming from all quarters, most particularly perhaps the teaching profession themselves, and it showed that the opportunity afforded by the great debate, and the way that Graham Donaldson conducted it, I

think, was viewed almost with a great sigh of relief across the profession in particular—that here, at last, was an opportunity to mould the twenty-first century curriculum. I don't think that's hyperbole—everywhere I went, certainly, I met that attitude, particularly amongst teachers.

[121] **Aled Roberts:** Yn ymarferol, mae yna nifer o wahanol bethau'n digwydd, ac rwy'n meddwl y byddai'r rhan fwyaf ohonom ni-. Nid yw hyn yn feirniadaeth ohonoch chi oherwydd rwy'n meddwl ein bod ni yn y sefyllfa achos y ffordd y mae pethau wedi datblygu, ond, tra bod llawer iawn o gefnogaeth i neges Donaldson, mae yna gryn bryder hefyd, rwy'n meddwl, o ran y ffaith ein bod ni'n newid cymwysterau, a hwyrach ein bod ni'n newid cymwysterau cyn inni newid y cwricwlwm. Mae athrawon yn arbennig yn pryderu ynglŷn â'r ffaith bod cymaint o newid a sut yn union yr ydym ni'n mynd i allu rhoi'r gefnogaeth iddyn nhw i weithredu'r cwricwlwm newydd a hynny, ar ôl hynny, yn arwain, hwyrach, at newidiadau pellach o ran cymwysterau. Sut mae'r meysydd llafur yma'n cael eu rheoli ar y cyd gan y Llywodraeth ar hyn o bryd?

**Aled Roberts:** Practically, a great number of things have taken place, and I think that most of us—. This is no criticism of you because I think that we're in this position because of the way that things have developed, but, while there is a great deal of support for Donaldson's message, there is also quite a bit of concern, I believe, given that we are changing qualifications, and perhaps we're changing the qualifications before we're tackling the curriculum. Teachers, in particular, are worried about the scale of the change and how exactly we're going to be able to give them the support to implement this new curriculum, which, as a result, will lead on perhaps to further changes in terms of qualifications. So how are these areas of work being co-managed by the Government at present?

[122] **Huw Lewis:** Firstly, in terms of curriculum change, yes, this is of a grand scale. We are talking about remaking and remoulding—we are not revising the current curriculum; we're throwing it out. The old curriculum of 1988 will shortly be no more and we're creating, from a blank sheet of paper, a curriculum for Wales—the first one that will ever be developed in Wales, and connected to our needs and the needs of our young people. Largely, it will be based on the principles that were set out in consultation with all of the various partners that Graham Donaldson spent that time on, during the great debate itself. It will also have to incorporate those strands of curriculum review that are within discrete areas that are still unfinished

business: you remember, of course, Tanni Grey-Thompson's work on physical literacy and Dai Smith's work on the creative arts; the input on the cwricwlwm Cymreig and Welsh second language and also the digital curriculum as well.

[123] The curriculum for Wales offers us the opportunity to weave all of those strands together and make sense out of them and to give us something that is wholly new and modern. It is of a scale, that's for sure, but that's why I've signalled that we have between six and seven years or so in order to get this curriculum written and rolled out, and we are using the experience of others who have been through a similar sort of change, most notably Scotland, in order to inform that sort of timetable, which, I think, is realistic, but will demand that we proceed at pace at the same time.

[124] In terms of the qualifications, we're not going through wholesale qualifications reform here. This is actually a standout difference between ourselves and the way things were happening in Scotland, because they also went through a big qualifications reform at the same time. There are changes coming through, most particularly in English, Welsh and maths. Those changes are aimed at global shifts, really, in terms of how literacy and numeracy, most particularly, are measured in those qualifications, and how employers or further and higher education can be reassured that, in gaining qualifications like that, our young people really are literate and numerate to a competent level. But we're certainly not heading for the kind of wholesale upheaval in qualifications that was the case in Scotland. That's not on the cards.

[125] **Aled Roberts:** Mae'n siŵr eich bod chi'n derbyn y pryderon a amlygwyd yn ystod y sgwrs fawr, o'r hyn rwy'n ei ddeall o'r adroddiadau rwyf wedi'u derbyn ynghylch rhai athrawon. Rwy'n meddwl bod yna gyfeiriad at hanes yn benodol, lle hwyrach mai diffyg dealltwriaeth ydy hyn, neu beidio. Ond mae athrawon yn pryderu bod pynciau arbenigol fel hanes yn mynd i gael eu colli o fewn y meysydd dysgu yma, sy'n cael eu crybwyll yn adolygiad Donaldson. Felly, nid ydych yn gweld bod newid y

**Aled Roberts:** I'm sure that you accept the concerns that became evident during the great debate, from what I understand from the reports that I've received regarding some teachers. I think that there was specific reference to history, and perhaps it was because of a lack of understanding, I don't know. But there are teachers who are concerned that specialist subjects such as history are going to be lost within these areas of learning that are being put forward in the Donaldson review.

cwricwlwm i feysydd dysgu yn So, don't you see that changing the  
angenrheidiol yn symud oddi wrth curriculum to areas of learning  
TGAU, neu rywbeth felly, o fewn necessarily takes us away from  
pwnc penodol, a ydych chi? GCSEs, or something similar, based  
on specific subjects? Do you see that?

[126] **Huw Lewis:** No. I think it's very important that people don't read into Donaldson things that are not there. I think there's been a temptation amongst some commentators and professionals to presuppose things about what Donaldson is saying. Donaldson's described four curriculum purposes and six areas of learning and experience, and you'll have seen them. None of those four curriculum purposes or areas of learning experience use the word 'history'. Okay, they don't. The word 'history' doesn't appear, but that doesn't mean we're not going to teach history.

[127] The curriculum purposes are Donaldson's attempt, and now Wales's attempt, to actually describe in as concise a way as possible what we're doing in schools, and what the purpose of the school experience is. What kind of person do we get if they benefit from those central purposes of the curriculum, those experiences and that sort of learning? It doesn't say we don't teach them history. It certainly doesn't say that we wouldn't teach history as a discrete subject—that's certainly not the case—or that we wouldn't have a GCSE in history. Those things are not implied by Donaldson at all.

[128] What Donaldson set out to do was to strip everything down to its basic principles. Within that, of course, there are going to be important roles for history. But we will have to remake the curriculum, for instance in connection with the strand of work on the cwricwlwm Cymreig. There's a definite impact there, for instance, on what the new history curriculum might look like, but we certainly will have a rigorous history curriculum, a GCSE that goes along with it, and, if kids opt for it, an A-level, but it won't look the same as the 1988 model. It will be influenced by things like the cwricwlwm Cymreig. It will be influenced by the digital cross-curriculum element that we're working on currently. It will have demands in terms of literacy and numeracy that we've said that we have to have across all subject areas, but it will be history.

[129] **Aled Roberts:** Y cwestiwn olaf **Aled Roberts:** My final question is on  
sydd gennyf, ar yr amserlen: rydych the timetable: you've referred already  
wedi cyfeirio yn barod at y ffaith ei to the fact that it's necessary that we  
bod yn angenrheidiol ein bod yn move at pace to implementation,



symud ar frys i weithredu, er eich bod wedi dweud bod yna gyfnod o ryw saith mlynedd inni fynd drwy'r broses yn llwyr. Pa bryd, felly, a ydych—? Rydych wedi derbyn pob un o'r argymhellion yn llawn, 68 ohonynt, ym mis Mehefin. Pa bryd a ydych yn bwriadu cyhoeddi ymateb manylach i'r argymhellion hynny, a hwyrach rhoi rhyw fath o syniad o'r cynllun gweithredu o hyn ymlaen?

although you've said that there may be a period of some seven years for us to go through that process fully. So, when do you—? You have accepted each of the recommendations, all 68 of them, fully in June. When do you intend to publish a more detailed response to those recommendations, and perhaps give us some idea of the implementation plan going forward?

[130] **Huw Lewis:** Sure, yes. The high-level plan, which will outline high-level timescales and strands of work, and so on, is imminent for publication. How far away would you think we are?

[131] **Ms Daniels:** About a month or so.

[132] **Huw Lewis:** About a month or so. So, this autumn—

[133] **Aled Roberts:** So, we're going to have two plans in a month. *[Laughter.]*

[134] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. Always have a plan. So, yes, this autumn.

[135] **Aled Roberts:** Thanks.

[136] **David Rees:** Angela.

[137] **Angela Burns:** Thank you. Aled referred to the fact that you are kind of changing qualifications before you change the curriculum, and I would take that one further and ask whether we're in danger of changing the curriculum before we make improvements to our teachers. To be truthful, it doesn't matter what the curriculum is; if you don't have a motivated, inspired and excellent-quality teacher, it's irrelevant because a good teacher can teach a child and find the key to that child. So, I wonder what you are doing to improve the support and the training and the quality of our teaching profession.

[138] **Hugh Lewis:** I'm glad Angela's drawn attention to this area because, of course, she's absolutely right. You can have the finest curriculum in the

world; it doesn't really matter so much as having the finest teachers you can possibly get hold of. That's why Donaldson is one strand in a tripartite programme of reform that we'll push through these next few years. Donaldson is one strand. Another is the new deal, which will completely remake what we think of as continuous professional development around the existing workforce, with the workforce council coming on board to quality-assess and advise teachers as to what the best move is in terms of good-quality CPD to raise their skills. There is an expectation within that that the generality of professional development for teachers would be at a Master's degree level. They are graduates and, to my mind, they should generally be professionally developing themselves at a Master's level, unless there is some other real pressing need.

[139] We're also, of course, looking at the implications of John Furlong's review in terms of what the future workforce looks like. There would be a completely new ask, most particularly in terms of the level of quality that we expect coming through our initial teacher training set-up. Those new teachers, of course, will be coming through into the Donaldson era, so they will know nothing else. They will be trained to serve that new curriculum, but at the same time the level of expectation we'll have of our ITT providers will be ratcheted up several notches, and we will be benchmarking that against, certainly the best in Europe, and certainly not expecting more of the same when it comes to what our HEI providers are giving us in terms of teacher training. It hasn't been good enough, and it certainly will not be good enough to meet the expectations of Donaldson. So, as I say, new curriculum, yes, but, as Angela Burns has said, we need new types of teacher too, and those three reforms travel together in harness.

[140] **Angela Burns:** I absolutely concur with that. I think that we can't do one without the other, but I am very concerned about the training and support that teachers receive at present. I have had a number of discussions with recently qualified teachers who all talk—and they've all been taught at different universities—of the system that they've gone through and then the processes that they've gone through when they've gone to their first year of training at a school. If they're lucky and they go to a good school, you can actually be fairly confident that you're going to end up with a relatively good teacher. If they're unlucky and they go to a school that is struggling, they actually just get sucked up and spat out pretty quickly. I have yet to see how we're going to be able to change that to ensure that the blank canvases actually have good experiences that turn them into good and motivated teachers.

[141] The other thing that they all talk about is what they actually study on their initial teacher training courses, and they all talk about the fact that there's a lot about targets, performance, lesson planning and, if you like, the mechanics of how you would do the job.

11:00

[142] But some of the mechanics that they don't appear to have are things like: how you do crowd control, class control, behaviour management. Unless you have teachers who have social and emotional capital as individuals, then they are going to struggle to go out and teach, because if teaching is nothing else, it's about building relationships. So, I'd really like to understand, actually, how you're going to do that because, personally, I am a great fan of the ideas that Professor Donaldson has put forward, but I do not want to see those ideas crash and burn in Wales over the next five to 10 years because we haven't got to grips with the calibre of teachers when they come into the profession and then the ongoing support and development that they have.

[143] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. Angela Burns, Chair, is quite right, and that's why I want to see—. I've mentioned the different level of expectation that I'll set for what our HEIs provide in terms of teacher training, but that's one side of a coin. The other side of the coin is what those new teachers will experience in terms of their training in schools. That's why I want to go on to develop—I'm not quite sure of the terminology here, but for the sake of argument—training schools, which will work cheek by jowl with those teacher training providers. A little like teaching hospitals working alongside universities to give the very best clinical experience to doctors, what I want all our trainee teachers, within a few years—actually, within three years—to be experiencing is the very best of teaching practice in the classroom, as part of their formative teacher training.

[144] You're right; I think there's very little purpose in offering up good academic background for a trainee teacher and then throwing them into an environment that offers them second-rate teaching observation or teaching experience—an environment where teaching is not of the best. How are they going to learn what the best looks like if they haven't experienced it and been part of it? So, in the same way that we've developed pioneer schools, or we're asking schools to step forward for Donaldson to become pioneer schools to develop aspects of the curriculum, we will need to work with schools to find a sufficient number of training schools that will have it as part

of their mission to work alongside universities, offering the nuts and bolts of the very finest practical experience that the teacher can hope for in Wales. So, that's another new aspect of the system, which is coming.

[145] All of this begins, actually, with describing the professional standards for the profession. The Education Workforce Council is working with my officials at the moment in terms of a new description of professional standards that will underpin everything that we're going to expect from the outcome of the new deal, and the outcome of Professor John Furlong's work as well. This involves big reform. It involves a re-commissioning exercise by the Welsh Government in terms of which universities are supplying us with what, which may leave some universities disappointed incidentally in terms of—. No university, as far as I'm concerned, has the right to continue teacher training just because it always has. We'll need that group of schools, as I was mentioning, that will have huge expectations put on their shoulders.

[146] **David Rees:** That's fine, Minister. [*Inaudible.*]—onto the Furlong issues, when we're just trying to look at the Donaldson review.

[147] **Huw Lewis:** Okay. They do impact on these issues.

[148] **Angela Burns:** I'm really heartened to hear some of your answer, but I think that when we look over initiatives that have struggled to get off the ground—and Donaldson's had a hiccup in Scotland and the changes there—and when we look at the foundation phase, when that was first rolled out, we had an awful lot of issues there. Every single time it comes back to the fact that the teachers hadn't been trained in sufficient numbers to carry out the new project, whatever that may be. So, in the foundation phase, you know, there wasn't enough weight put behind getting the early years people on board and getting the heads on board with the early years people as to what the whole foundation phase was about. So, we do labour this point, because I know that Donaldson is going to be an incremental change throughout the curriculum, but we have to start now to make those incremental changes to the teaching element.

[149] How much discussion have you had with teachers' unions, particularly heads, over how they're going to absorb this on top of—and, Minister, you mentioned it in the Chamber only a few days ago—making sure that our current cohort of children going through under the current system doesn't get lost in all of this, whilst we put all the emphasis on the future? So, they've got to carry on doing what they're doing, but better, and they've got to carry

on, then, implementing a brand new system all at the same time in the same 24 hours. The OECD very clearly pointed out that a lot of heads are complaining of initiative fatigue. So, I just wonder how you're really going to get to the nub of that. Do you have any plans for incentivisation or even almost like an amnesty, where there can be some real training driven into some of the teachers to enable them to step in, so that, basically, you've got a rolling cohort who might travel around the country, or travel around their part of the country, trying to give space for other teachers to go off and learn? One of the things we know is that training doesn't happen at the schools, because the heads go, 'I can't spare you'.

[150] **Huw Lewis:** No, I understand the difficulties that you're pointing out and you're right to have those anxieties. In terms of the development of the curriculum, of course, the initial impact on schools will be in those pioneer schools and those will be volunteers—a volunteer, in my view, being worth 10 pressed men. These will be schools that will step forward because their leadership team has an enthusiasm for, let's say, getting to grips with what our new history curriculum might look like. So, they then will be expected to become that lead cohort in terms of how best practice around that element of the curriculum is consolidated and spread.

[151] But you're right to say that all of this stuff depends upon teachers; it depends upon the support they're offered and the calibre of the people in the profession. I hope and I'm convinced that the new deal will offer a wholly new level of support that will be quality controlled, as I say, in time, by the Education Workforce Council. It'll be resourced better, because—. Just to come to your point, yes, I've had discussions with all the unions and the heads, as well, about all these issues and I've signalled very clearly that we need a level of resource around teacher training and that can't all come from Government or local authorities; some of it is going to have to come from the professionals themselves in line with other professions, like doctors, lawyers, physiotherapists and—you name it—nurses. They contribute towards their own professional development. I think that needs to be there to answer the resource question.

[152] As I say, the burden upon the system is not such that I deliver a curriculum. This is how the national curriculum arrived in schools, actually; a great wedge of paper was dumped on the desk of a head of department. I can actually remember the paper thumping down on my head of department's desk—chemistry in that instance—'That's the new curriculum; get on with it'. This new curriculum will be formed in schools. That will be

the crucible. The school will be working with experts up to and including Professor Donaldson himself. It'll be working with the support networks through the consortium and through the Welsh Government, but the essentials of the curriculum will be born in schools, and that makes it very, very different, I think, from anything that's gone before.

[153] **David Rees:** I've got a couple of supplementaries from Suzy and Sandy and then I'll move on to Simon.

[154] **Suzy Davies:** Yes. Mine's quite short, actually, but I don't know if you can develop it, perhaps, in later answers. We've still got a cohort of teachers who exist now, including newly-qualified teachers, who'll be transferring into the Donaldson era, if we can put it like that. You talk about CPD and the kind of training in your response to Angela's questions, but there is this tricky issue, I think, of the culture that exists in schools, which, of course, has been driven primarily with this slightly science-biased, 'Let's go and get five good GCSEs'. You know, we've got a whole generation of teachers who've lived and died by that, which means that with things like certain artistic subjects, modern foreign languages, and particularly the Welsh language in English-medium schools, which I know others will ask you about, there's no culture of these being highly valued in schools, and for Donaldson to work, that's got to be evened out. And I don't think any amount of practical training is going to resolve a cultural issue. I don't expect you to have an answer today, Minister, but is that on your horizon?

[155] **David Rees:** Yes or no if you could, Minister.

[156] **Huw Lewis:** It's there in Donaldson. If you take his humanities area of experience and learning, it's one of those six areas of experience and learning which are equal to each other, as far as I am concerned. If we're aiming for a rounded individual, with a rounded education, you take all of Donaldson, not part of it—

[157] **Suzy Davies:** Sorry, Chair—I couldn't agree with you more—but my point is that if you've got a ruck of headteachers, or heads of departments, or even just standard teachers, who think 'Actually, I don't really buy into that', how are you going to get them past it?

[158] **Huw Lewis:** This is what we're going to be assessing on in years to come. This is how schools are going to— When Estyn goes into a school in 2025, this is what they're going to be looking for. If there's a gap in the

basic curriculum, they're not going to score too highly on their inspection.

[159] **Suzy Davies:** Okay; thank you. Thank you, Chair.

[160] **David Rees:** Sandy, a quick question.

[161] **Sandy Mewies:** Yes, a couple of points. In the 2000s, we would have been talking about achievement, not attainment. Now, we've changed back to achievement, which I actually think is a better measure than attainment, and so does Donaldson; I thoroughly agree with that. Questions were raised about concentration on the core subjects, and fears that history, music and other things were being ignored. That's been raised again. These are real issue for parents and for teachers. So, I'm pleased to hear—. I'm very much signed up to Donaldson and look at these six areas and understand how they can cover the whole curriculum in a broad way and not in a narrow way.

[162] But, we've been talking now about qualifications. I have to tell you that, for me, having a Master's degree is marvellous, of course it is, but I do not think that it's the only thing that makes a good teacher. And I'm talking now from experience of watching teaching in the classroom over quite a number of years. Inspired teachers are inspired teachers. They have good knowledge about the subjects they're teaching, but they also have something else—a spark that will ignite the class, and that will range from children who are having special needs teaching to those who are having history teaching or whatever else. And, so, while I agree that we have to have very well-qualified teachers—. Angela made the point about NQTs; NQTs are great when they come into schools very often; they give new life to what's gone on sometimes. What are you doing about the older teachers? There are teachers in school now who will have some of the skills that you're talking about; we're talking about NQTs. So, what about these perfectly good teachers, who will need professional development if they're going to be facing a new curriculum? And it will have to be incremental for them to do, because they will be doing the job, they'll be doing the day job and they'll be looking at other things. So, what are you putting in place to see that the evaluation of the NQTs, and all these other teachers who are going to have this degree—. There's more to that in teaching—who is going to look at them? How is that going to be looked at in the training colleges, but also, on a wider basis, and evaluated? And how are these teachers who are already in the system going to be helped to progress? There are some very good teachers in our system, but they will need support and time to be able to do that. How's that going to happen?

[163] **Huw Lewis:** First of all, on Sandy's point about the squeezing of subjects, I fear this is very much an agenda that is seeping across our borders from England. People are reading about what's happening in England, with the squeezing of drama, music and modern foreign languages and so on, in order to deliver whatever the latest nomenclature is over there—the English baccalaureate, or the super eight, or whatever the latest wheeze is in England; it's changed about three times in the last 12 months—and people are assuming that similar things are happening here in Wales, and they're not. Donaldson is very, very clear that we aim for a rounded curriculum; that the humanities are in there, alongside the arts, alongside the sciences and so on, and I'm determined the school timetable for an average year 9 kid in Wales is going to reflect that. We're not going to go down that road. What we do demand of all teachers is that our children reach a competent level of literacy and numeracy, because no kind of curriculum—rounded, or otherwise—is accessible, unless a child has those skills of literacy and numeracy, and digital competence, as Donaldson has reminded us.

11:15

[164] In terms of support for the current teachers, well this is what I'm trying to describe in terms of what the new deal looks like. Within the new deal, each professional now, very shortly—and some have already adopted this, before we even officially launched it—will have a professional learning passport. It's an electronic document, it's their document, it's lodged with the workforce council, and it describes their professional development to date, and acts as a guide for their professional development through the next stages of their career. It's negotiated between themselves and their manager, and it's very much a personal document about how they hope to progress, and they will have to keep that updated over time. And I'm glad to tell you that we've had teachers voluntarily getting into the website there, and starting to update their passport, before we've even asked them to do it. So, it's gone down very positively with the teaching unions, for instance—all of them; that must be a first, in and of itself.

[165] It is very important, though, that we do inculcate a new culture, and this comes back to the point, I think, that Angela Burns made earlier. You don't meet a heart surgeon who says, 'I've learned everything there is to know about heart surgery, and I never need now to update my practice, and for the next 30 years, until retirement, I will continue to conduct my heart



surgery exactly as I have today'. That would be regarded as insane, unprofessional, even wrong, and we need, throughout the teaching profession, every teacher to adopt that mind set too. There is never any end to updating professionalism, in any profession, and that includes teaching.

[166] **David Rees:** Thank you, Minister. I want to move on, because time is moving on. Now, we have questions from Simon and Bethan.

[167] **Simon Thomas:** Diolch, **Simon Thomas:** Thank you, Chair. I Gadeirydd. Rydw i eisiau troi at y want to turn to the curriculum itself. cwricwlwm ei hunan erbyn hyn. Wrth Of course, the Donaldson report has gwrs, mae adroddiad Donaldson wedi been accepted by you, and you will cael ei dderbyn gennych chi, a also know that all of the other parties byddwch yn gwybod hefyd bod pob in the current Assembly have also un o'r pleidiau eraill yn y Cynulliad accepted the recommendations. And, presennol wedi derbyn yr of course, as you've just outlined, argymhellion. Ac, wrth gwrs, fel there are four purposes to the rydych newydd ei amlinellu, mae yna curriculum, and six areas for bedwar pwrpas i'r cwricwlwm, a chwe teaching and experience. maes ar gyfer dysgu a phrofiad.

[168] Er ein bod ni wedi ei dderbyn Even though we've accepted it in mew'n egwyddor, pe bai rhywbeth principle, if something had happened wedi digwydd yn ystod y sgwrs fawr during the great debate that you had yr oeddech chi wedi ei chael â'r with the profession, which influenced proffesiwn, sy'n dylanwadu ar hwn, this, surely we would all be open to mae'n siŵr ein bod ni i gyd yn agored those suggestions. So, are you still i glywed hynny. Felly, a ydych chi'n sure that what Donaldson has put dal i fod yn sicr mai'r hyn yr oedd forward as the way forward is still the Donaldson wedi ei ganfod fel y ffordd way forward, and that it doesn't need ymlaen yw'r ffordd ymlaen o hyd, a to be refined following the bod dim angen mireinio ar hynny ar experience of debating with the ôl y profiad o sgwrsio â'r proffesiwn? profession?

[169] **Huw Lewis:** I'm not a seer—I can't necessarily say that things won't arise as we work through the implications of Donaldson, and I'm sure there'll be challenges along the way that need to be overcome. I do have to say that I have never, in my experience, either as a teacher, prior to becoming a politician, in that experience, or in my experience as a politician, come across an initial document—a statement of principle, if you like—that met with such overwhelming acceptance. So, I'm very optimistic that, if we stick

to the road map that Donaldson has offered us, we're not going to go far wrong.

[170] I'm sure there will be controversies along the way, about, for instance, the history curriculum—history is always controversial—there will be a lot of discussion, for instance, about how the cwricwlwm Cymreig interweaves itself with what the new history curriculum looks like. And, no doubt, we'll hammer all that out; we'll have a great deal of enjoyment, I hope, as we figure those things out. But, no, I don't anticipate any great need to revise anything.

[171] **Simon Thomas:** Ocê. Diolch am hynny. Wrth gwrs, roedd Donaldson wedi awgrymu mai un o'r ffyrdd ymlaen i sicrhau hwn fyddai deddfu, yn y Cynulliad, ar y chwe maes, *basically*, i roi hawl i bob un plentyn yng Nghymru i fynediad at y profiad dysgu yn y chwe maes yna. Gan fod pob plaid, hyd yma, wedi ymrwymo, heb feddwl beth sy'n digwydd a beth fydd y Llywodraeth nesaf—. Wedi dweud hynny, bydd unrhyw blaid sy'n dod yn Lywodraeth ar ôl fis Mai siŵr o fod yn mynd i fod yn ddiolchgar pe bai gwaith eisoes ar y gweill o ran paratoi ar gyfer deddfu o'r fath. A yw'n fwriad gennych chi, felly, i gyflwyno Mesur o'r fath ac a ydy'r gwaith yna eisoes wedi cychwyn?

**Simon Thomas:** Okay. Thank you for that. Of course, Donaldson had suggested that one of the ways forward was to legislate, at the Assembly, on the six areas, basically, to give every child in Wales the right to access to the learning experience in those six areas. Given that every party, so far, has committed to this, without pre-empting what happens and what the next Government will be—. Having said that, any party that comes into Government after May would no doubt be grateful if work were already under way in preparing for legislation of this kind. Is it your intention, therefore, to put forward a Bill in this regard and has that work already started?

[172] **Huw Lewis:** Some sketching of this has begun—yes, you're quite right. At the moment, the new curriculum, there would be no legislative basis for it. We've got to have that legislative basis. We also have to—. What has legislative basis at the moment is the 1988 national curriculum. We have to repeal all of that, and we have to describe what we want. As you say, though, this is for the next Assembly, after the elections in May. I do have some officials who are sketching out in broad outline exactly what we would need to be doing, but it's very much a sketch and I don't intend, during this Assembly, to be putting forward any kind of legislative proposals, no.

[173] **Simon Thomas:** Rwy'n derbyn hynny, ond rwy'n gobeithio'n fawr y bydd rhywbeth ar y gweill pan fyddwn ni'n dod yn rhan o'r Llywodraeth y tro nesaf. [*Chwerthin.*] Rwyf jest yn profocio pawb. Wnes i ddim dweud gyda phwy, naddo?

**Simon Thomas:** I accept that, but I hope very much that work will be under way when we become part of the next Government. [*Laughter.*] I am just provoking you all. I didn't say with whom, did I?

[174] **David Rees:** We haven't got much time to focus—

[175] **Simon Thomas:** Awn yn ôl at y pwnc. Un o'r pethau yr ydych wedi esbonio'r bore yma yw'r ffordd yr ydych yn gobeithio y bydd yr ysgolion—rwy'n credu eich bod yn eu galw'n 'ysgolion arloesi'—yn gweithio fel y pair—nhw fydd y pair—Ile mae'r cwricwlwm newydd yn cael ei baratoi ac yn cael ei bobî, bron. Un o'r problemau sydd gennym, rwy'n credu, ar hyn o bryd—. Mae pawb wedi croesawu Donaldson, ond mae'n haniaethol iawn: mae'n disgrifio'r *concept* a'r dirwedd, ond mae hynny'n bell oddi wrth beth fydd plentyn yn ei ddysgu am 9.30 ar fore dydd Mawrth. Nid wyf am eiliad yn awgrymu fod pob un plentyn yn dysgu'r un peth bob dydd. Ond rÿm ni'n bell o gael unrhyw gysyniad o sut y bydd amserlen o dan y cwricwlwm newydd yn edrych. Felly, a fedrwch chi ddweud ychydig mwy ynglÿn â sut y mae'r cwricwlwm yn mynd i gael ei bobî yn yr ysgolion arloesol hyn—yn y pair, fel petai?

**Simon Thomas:** We'll return to the subject. One of the things that you have explained today is the way that you hope that the schools—I think you call them 'pioneer schools'—will work as the crucible—they will be the crucible—in which the new curriculum will be prepared and forged. One of the problems that we have at present, I think—. Everyone has welcomed Donaldson, but it is very conceptual: it describes the concept and the landscape, but that is very far away from what a child will be learning at 9.30 on a Tuesday morning. I'm not suggesting for a second that every child should learn the same thing every day. But we are far from having any kind of idea of how the timetable for the new curriculum would look. So, can you tell us how the curriculum is going to be forged in these pioneer schools—in the crucible, as it were?

[176] Hefyd, pa bryd yr ydych yn meddwl byddwch chi'n barod, yn sgîl y profiad hwnnw, i ddechrau

Also, when do you think you'll be ready, following that experience, to start to describe and set out the

disgrifio'r amserlen? Nid wyf yn gofyn am amserlen haearnaidd unffurf, ond jest am amserlen enghreifftiol: 'Dyma fydd profiad eich plentyn saith mlwydd oed, naw mlwydd oed ac 13 mlwydd—dyna'r teip o beth a'r profiad y byddan nhw'n mynd drwyddo o dan y cwricwlwm newydd'. Hyd nes ein bod yn gweld rhywbeth fel yna, rwy'n credu ei fod yn anodd pontio rhwng Donaldson a'r hyn sy'n mynd i ddigwydd yn ymarferol.

[177] **Huw Lewis:** Okay. Well, as I say, it'll become a lot clearer, I think, when that high-level plan, which will contain suggested timelines, comes out later this autumn—probably some time in late October. So, the overall sketch will be—. I'm very reluctant, actually, to go further as a Minister and start—. I'm hoping very much, during this process, to be the antithesis of Michael Gove, okay?

[178] **Simon Thomas:** I think you've succeeded already, but carry on.

[179] **Huw Lewis:** Sorry?

[180] **Simon Thomas:** I think you've succeeded in that already.

[181] **Huw Lewis:** Well, I try my best. I don't think it's wise for a politician to start saying, 'Two thirds of a child's day ought to be taken up with—'

[182] **Simon Thomas:** No, just to be clear, I wasn't suggesting that you should do that, but you're working through the schools to prepare—. You said earlier that the schools would be the crucible, but it has to be a process, by which that—its early formations, if you like, that alchemy—starts to get shown to other schools so that people start to understand it as part of the learning process themselves before they have to implement it. A year or two before they have to do it themselves, possibly, they start to learn what it might be like.

[183] **Huw Lewis:** Yes. The earlier, the better in my view. We'll have those pioneer schools identified very soon—within the next few weeks. We'll have

the outline timetable for the first stages of their work described, and I'm sure that those with a particular interest, say, in the development of the mathematics curriculum, will start conversations. I want conversations to take place between those pioneer schools and other professionals across the country, and to start up as quickly as possible. They're not going to be working in some kind of secret laboratory and then, 'Shazam!', they produce something. I know and I'm confident it will be an open, iterative process that everyone is going through.

[184] For instance, those colleagues that assisted us so much with those specialist subject reviews that I referred to earlier, like the cwricwlwm Cymreig, like Tanni Grey-Thompson, like Professor Dai Smith, they're obviously—and the teams of people that worked with them are—going to be very interested in what's going on in those pioneer schools. I hope they'll be visiting those schools and taking a look at what's happening there. But, in terms of content, I certainly don't intend to be making any forays as a Minister into the debate save in two areas, and I've already made those clear. One is, I don't think our PSHE offer is a twenty-first century offer, I don't think the way it's delivered, how teachers are trained for it, or even the name of it, is necessarily right. And the second area is that I believe, within the humanities strand of what Professor Donaldson is talking about, we need a twenty-first century answer around religion and philosophy and ethics that speaks to a twenty-first century global view for young people, and all the challenges that the world is facing around those very important issues as well. But, even there, I don't intend to be writing any element of the curriculum and neither will my officials.

[185] **Simon Thomas:** My final question is simply this: how are you going to choose these pioneer schools? Are they the green schools in the categorisation? Are they chosen with relationship to the LNF? Are they chosen by the consortia and recommended to you? How are you choosing them?

[186] **Huw Lewis:** A combination of all those things, but, certainly, what a pioneer school will have as a characteristic is national levels of excellence in the area for which they're volunteering; recognised excellence. Whether that's recognised by—well, certainly, it would have to be recognised by Estyn as a class leader, if you like, and also in terms of their enthusiasm and willingness, because they will be taking on a burden above and beyond—.

[187] **Simon Thomas:** Will they get resources?

[188] **Huw Lewis:** Sorry?

[189] **Simon Thomas:** Will they get extra resources?

[190] **Huw Lewis:** Well, they'll have resources; as you know I've sketched out for the rollout of Donaldson roughly £3 million a year for Wales, so there is a pool of resource there over and above the normal school budget.

[191] **David Rees:** Bethan.

[192] **Bethan Jenkins:** Diolch. Wel, yr un peth wnaethoch chi efallai anghofio, neu anghofio ar bwrpas, i siarad amdano ynghynt oedd fy Mil addysg a chynhwysiant ariannol fel rhan o'r hyn sydd yn cael ei drafod o ran cylch gorchwyl Donaldson. Rwyf i wedi bod yn aros gryn amser am ateb gennych chi ac wedi cael un yr wythnos yma ynglŷn â'r cylch gorchwyl hwnnw. Jest yng nghydestun y cwestiwn roedd Simon yn ei ofyn yn gynharach ynglŷn â'r ddeddfwriaeth genedlaethol, a allwch chi jest ateb a fydd yna sail ddeddfwriaethol o fewn y categorïau yma—er enghraifft, rwyf ar ddeall gan *Sport Wales* y byddan nhw yn rhan o'r cylch gorchwyl? Rwy'n cymryd y bydd adroddiad Dai Smith yn bwydo i mewn i haen arall. A allwch chi roi rhyw fath o syniad i ni a fydd hynny yn bwydo at ddeddfwriaeth neu dim ond syniadau pynciol ar gyfer sut y bydd cymwysterau yn cael eu delifro yn y dyfodol?

**Bethan Jenkins:** Thank you. Well, one thing that you forgot, or may have forgotten on purpose, to mention earlier was my financial education and inclusion Bill as part of what has been discussed in terms of the Donaldson review remit. Now, I have been waiting for some time for an answer from you and I did receive one earlier this week about that remit. So, just in relation to the question that Simon asked earlier about primary legislation, can you just respond by saying whether there will be a legislative basis in terms of these categorisations—for example, I do understand from Sport Wales that they would be part of the remit? I take it from the Dai Smith report that that would feed into another level of this. So, could you give me some kind of idea whether this will feed into legislation, or are these just ideas or concepts in relation to subjects about how qualifications will be implemented in the future?

[193] **Huw Lewis:** Could I reassure Bethan Jenkins that it's not been—the sin of omission, that's all. The work that she has done—and others have contributed; I know Sandy Mewies for a long while now has been involved in

lobbying for financial education to be a stand-out part of our curriculum—that is one of the strands that's in there alongside Dai Smith and Tanni Grey-Thompson's work and Sioned's work and so on. So, it certainly is one of those things. There are implications for the maths curriculum obviously, implications for whatever PSHE becomes as well, and no doubt impinging on other curriculum activity too. I don't want to launch into speculating about what should be enshrined in law necessarily, certainly when it comes to subject content at this stage. The only thing enshrined in law about content under the 1988 curriculum was religious education, and I don't know that that necessarily served anybody very well, including RE practitioners.

11:30

[194] **Bethan Jenkins:** I wasn't saying it would be about content, but would it be that the discussion would be around content as opposed to potentially bringing forward legislation, for example, if there were developments on financial education? What I was saying was that we needed accountability within the system so that we could track where those developments had been made. Not content, but would the actual groups themselves concentrate more on that as opposed to the legislative framework? That's what I'm trying to understand. But if that's something for them to decide, then so be it.

[195] **Huw Lewis:** No, no. I mean, we are the legislators here, aren't we? The educators will be busy in the pioneer schools, and it's the educators that will be going through the content of the curriculum. Am I answering your point?

[196] **Bethan Jenkins:** I think so. It's just trying to understand what exactly those particular groups will be doing in terms of working with the pioneer schools on sport, on financial education, on the Welsh language—how they will be effective, then, in making a difference.

[197] **Huw Lewis:** Well, they'll start with Donaldson, and they'll start with, if it is available, one of the subject area reviews, like the financial inclusion work that's already been undertaken. Those two things are taken as read; they obviously have to work with that. But their remit will be to deliver a world standard set of curriculum content that fits with the basic principles that we've described through Donaldson. So, they'll have freedom to roam, really.

[198] **Bethan Jenkins:** Is there a timeline on that? You're doing the national thing in October. Is there a timeline to the—

[199] **Huw Lewis:** Overall timetable, six to seven years. Developmental stages within that—please wait for another month or so, and we'll have a timeline with stages signposted through it.

[200] **Bethan Jenkins:** My final question, quickly, if possible, was just something that was mentioned earlier—I think it was by Sandy. Some areas of work, such as music—well, yes, music comes to mind, and art, with theatre and education, the money involved there; some of us remember, some years ago, that it was cut. How are you going to look at the areas that are currently not receiving adequate funding? How are they going to be able to improve under this new structure when actually, for example, in some areas of Wales, music staff have been made redundant and no longer exist? So, how do you recreate that sector when they're potentially not there anymore?

[201] **Huw Lewis:** Colleagues will be aware that I asked the task and finish group to go away and look specifically at music, actually. There are special problems around music, not the least of which are some of the expenses involved; it can be an expensive subject to deliver. That task and finish group's report will be launched by me—I can't remember exactly when. I think it is actually this autumn.

[202] **Bethan Jenkins:** A lot's happening in the autumn. [*Laughter.*]

[203] **Huw Lewis:** It's autumn. I don't want to steal the thunder, actually, of the task and finish group that has produced the report—

[204] **David Rees:** That's fine, then; we'll wait till autumn, in that case. [*Laughter.*]

[205] **Huw Lewis:** I think, Chair, that people will find it is ground-breaking, and it genuinely does contain some very exciting ideas about a new approach to resourcing music, which could have implications for other areas, too.

[206] **David Rees:** Okay, I've got two sets of questions I want to come to, to get in before the end. So, Keith and then Suzy. Obviously, I ask for short questions, and, Minister, succinct answers would be ever helpful.

[207] **Keith Davies:** Well, mine's easy, really. The OECD told us that, when you're assessing children, the important thing is that the reason for



assessing children's work is to improve their learning and experience rather than to be accountable. But, of course, we've got the categorisation, et cetera. So, if we agree with what Donaldson and the OECD are saying—so, the OECD are supporting Donaldson—that assessment is for improvement, rather than for accountability, how does that fit in, then, with school categorisation, and, you know, red, green or whatever colours they are? Do you agree with Donaldson and the OECD that that's what assessment's all about?

[208] **Huw Lewis:** I do agree with Donaldson and with the OECD. In an ideal world, we would be formatively assessing individual pupils to diagnose what each individual pupil is understanding and where the gaps in their knowledge are and what happens next in terms of what teaching's delivered to that young person. I differ in that I think we do need, at some point, accountability in the system, because the whole system floats on public money. It's public money; the public invest in the system to a huge degree, and they need to be reassured that it's actually working. I hope we can shift to a system that is much more driven by formative assessment, by teacher assessment and so on, and that is the ambition.

[209] I simply don't believe at this point that we can be confident enough that teacher assessment for formative purposes, frankly, is good enough to give us confidence that it can diagnose each and every young person well enough in Wales to deliver better teaching for that young person. We have seen, across Wales, teacher assessment become, in some places, extraordinarily unreliable, to the extent, really, that it really does make you worry about what the purpose of that assessment was in the first place and what people are saying to young people—really not delivering any kind of assistance to young people at all. We have to get teacher assessment to a level of professionalism and rigour whereby everyone is confident that it can run with itself as part and parcel of the system, and I look forward to that, and we're working on that.

[210] **Keith Davies:** Yes, but don't you think that teachers are doing that because the youngsters are assessed at seven, at 11, at 13 and at 15, and that's what's made public—you know—what percentage has got level 2 or level 3 or whatever and that, maybe, because we've got those different stages, that's actually misleading in terms of assessment?

[211] **Huw Lewis:** Possibly, but Donaldson does signal doing away with the key stages and that work, so we'll have a different set-up, which is much

more about progression of each individual child than it is about hitting a key stage and that sort of thing. But I have to say there is a professional problem here; there is a problem that, for some professionals, needs to be addressed, and they need to get their head around it. There are parts of Wales where, at the end of primary school, for instance, young children have been assessed as being at very high levels of attainment and then, when they go into secondary school, the kids and the parents find out that, actually, that wasn't true at all and the truth was something very, very different. It doesn't do anybody any good to be offering young kids an unrealistic assessment of where they actually stand. Parents and pupils need to know exactly where they really do stand in terms of progression and development, and if there isn't that honesty in the system, frankly, we can't expect the system to deliver for young people.

[212] **David Rees:** Suzy.

[213] **Suzy Davies:** Yes. Two questions: they'll both accommodate really short answers. The first one: on the independent advisory board, which is going to be chaired by Professor Donaldson, how much of that advice is going to be publicly available and open to scrutiny for us?

[214] **Huw Lewis:** I'd assumed all. All or most. I hadn't thought about that.

[215] **Ms Daniels:** I think it's a question that we want to put to the independent advisory group about how they would like to make public their debates, discussions and conclusions.

[216] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. That's all right; as long as it's being thought about, that's fine. Then, just secondly, you said, Minister, that you'd accepted all of the recommendations in Donaldson's report. What's your view on the arm's-length structure to be established for day-to-day leadership and steering of the curriculum and assessment—the sort of bringing back of ACCAC, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales? Are you on board for that?

[217] **Huw Lewis:** Um—um—

[218] **Suzy Davies:** That'll do. [*Laughter.*] I don't quite know how that's going to be written down for the Record, but—

[219] **Simon Thomas:** Make sure you minute that. [*Laughter.*]

[220] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, in principle, yes. I think there are elements of our system yet that are not robust enough to cope with some of the demands. A case in point is—

[221] **Suzy Davies:** I'm just underlining arm's length. That's really what I want to do hear. 'Yes' or 'no'.

[222] **Huw Lewis:** Essentially, yes. I don't think it's healthy for politicians to write, for instance—as I was saying before—subject content or demand that certain proportions of pupils' time is spent on certain things, but we do need other bodies to be robust and capable before we hand over issues like that to them.

[223] **Suzy Davies:** Okay. Thank you.

[224] **David Rees:** Thank you, Minister, for your time this morning, and thank you for the additional time that you've given us. It's been much appreciated. You will receive a copy of the transcript to check for any factual inaccuracies. Please let us know if there are any as soon as possible. So, once again, thank you very much for this morning, and I thank the officials.

[225] **Huw Lewis:** Thank you, Chair.

11:40

**Cynnig o Dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42(ix) i Benderfynu Gwahardd y  
Cyhoedd o Weddill y Cyfarfod**

**Motion Under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to Resolve to Exclude the  
Public from the Meeting for the Remainder of the Meeting**

*Cynnig:*

*Motion:*

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in 17.42(ix).*

*accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix).*

*Cynigiwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion moved.*

[226] **David Rees:** If I move on, can I propose, in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix), that the committee resolves to meet in private for the remainder of this meeting? Are Members content? We will then move to private session.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11:41.*

*The public part of the meeting ended at 11:41.*